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**Political Institutions, Elites and Ethnonationalism in the West:
Belgium, Spain and Canada in Comparative Perspective.**

by

ANDRE LECOURS, M.A.

**A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Department of Political Science
Carleton University
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**POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, ELITES AND ETHNONATIONALISM IN THE WEST:
BELGIUM, SPAIN AND CANADA IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

submitted by

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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February 6, 2001

Abstract

This thesis suggests that explaining the specifics of ethnonationalism in Western societies (timing, claims, ideology, programmes, institutionalization in the political system and so on), and addressing its contingencies, cross-national differences and historical irregularities requires illuminating three central processes: identity construction and transformation; interest definition; and nationalist mobilization. It argues that approaches to ethnonationalism in the West have tended to stress culture or macro socio-economic conditions, and have produced theories lacking explanatory power. It suggests focusing on political institutions and elites to shed light on the processes of ethnonationalism using historical institutionalism and elite analysis. It uses the cases of Belgium, Spain and Canada to explore the possibilities of a historical institutionalist/elite-centred approach to ethnonationalism in Western societies.

Acknowledgements

Several people have helped me both to write this thesis and to begin an academic career. I want to first thank François Rocher who not only offered valuable advice on the draft thesis, but also provided comments on article manuscripts, created publishing/paper presentation opportunities, and gave me access to additional financing through research assistantship. I also need to thank the two members of my committee, Chris Brown and Vince Della Sala, whose theoretical insight have been of considerable help in building my argument. François, Vince and Chris have also taken the time to help build, present, and even promote, my academic record. This I really appreciate. Finally, the writing of this thesis would have been much more difficult without the theoretical grounding I gained from the teaching of many of Carleton's political science professors (singling out Chris Brown's Comparative Politics doctoral seminar), and the help of others such as Miriam Smith and Kenneth McRae who have never had me in a classroom but were kind enough to take interest in my endeavours.

My family-in-law, Bonnie, Charlie, John and Veronika, have also helped in the completion of this project by creating, both collectively and individually, time and space for my work. The most important person in my life as a doctoral candidate has been my wife Natasha. She has performed many roles: editor, critic, personal advisor/counsellor, travel companion and, most importantly, soul mate. It is to her, and to my daughter Elizabeth, that I owe the pleasure I find in my work.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The emergence or resurgence of nationalist movements in Western societies over the last thirty years is both an important and surprising event. Its importance stems from the challenge that has been issued to the centralized structures and, sometimes, to the integrity of the state. This challenge had not been foreseen by most theorists who, until the 1960s, equated nationalism with political integration. The very influential diffusionist model, best embodied by the work of Karl Deutsch¹, assumed that political integration was a uni-directional and irreversible process that worked its way from the centre towards the periphery. This model held that Western liberal-democracies were at the final stage of the integration process and immune from the centrifugal forces of ethnonationalism. As the 1970s saw nationalist movements gaining strength in countries such as Belgium, Spain and Canada, it was clear that the empirical evidence was proving the model wrong.

Two types of explanations emerged. The first one invoked the resilience of historical identities and emphasized the strength of cultural markers.² This approach provides limited insight into ethnonationalism, for cultural distinctiveness is never a sufficient condition for the existence of a nationalist movement and not always a necessary one. There are movements that do not need distinctive features to be a potent force (Scotland) and there are regions that possess such features (Brittany or the French Basque Country) but never develop ethnonationalism. While the cultural make-up of a society can

¹ Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication. An Inquiry into the Formation of Nationality*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966).

² See Walker Connor, "Ethnonationalism in the First World: The Present in Historical Perspective", in Milton Esman (ed), *Ethnic Conflict in the Western World*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977). Also appears in Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism. The Quest for Understanding*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp.165-191. See also Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Revival*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

provide clues to understand the nature of a nationalist movement, the key issue remains the political use of culture.³ Indeed, approaches to ethnonationalism that focus on a group's objective features produce theories of modest explanatory power. These theories are unable to account for the specifics of ethnonationalism (its timing, claims and institutionalization in the political system) and to address its contingencies, fluctuations and irregularities.

The second type of explanation provided to account for the emergence or revival of ethnonationalism in the West during the 1970s, and probably the most popular, centred on the structural changes associated with the forces of modernization. It produced theories that focused on the process of uneven development and held that ethnonationalism was triggered by the inequalities of the capitalist economy. While uneven development is a universal consequence of capitalism that explains why some regions are wealthier than others, it does not explain why ethnonationalism exists in some regions and not in others. Indeed, no causal relationship has been clearly established between, on the one hand, wealth and development, and, on the other hand, ethnonationalism. Nationalist movements exist both in regions that are wealthier and more developed (Catalonia and the Basque Country) and in regions that are poorer (Wales) than most other regions of a country. They also exist in regions that are neither among the richest nor the poorest of a country (Québec). Perhaps even more interesting is the fact that nationalist movements may emerge in a poor region but survive and even gain strength after that region has become richer than other regions (Flanders). Furthermore, the reliance on macro socio-economic conditions and transformations to explain ethnonationalism poses problems similar to the focus on cultural markers, for it does not favour an investigation of the specifics of a nationalist

3 For an approach to ethnonationalism that combines a sensitivity to culture and a focus on politics, see Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain. Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, (London: Hurst & Company, 1997).

movements. The shortcomings of materialist theories of ethnonationalism suggest that scholars resist 'the seductive lure of economic explanations.'⁴

These two types of approaches have produced theories sharing the assumption that ethnonationalism is a 'bottom-up' process. They situate its origins in primordial ties or development processes. The role of elites in creating, guiding and transforming ethnonationalism in Western societies has been ignored, marginalized or, at best, treated only sporadically. The influence of political institutions on ethnonationalism has been insufficiently explored. The marginalization of the importance of elites in creating, sustaining and shaping ethnonationalism in the West has limited the explanatory power of theories. This marginalization is surprising since specialists of Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe have paid considerable attention to the role of elites in constructing, politicizing and mobilizing identities.⁵ The tendency to neglect the impact of political institutions on ethnonationalism has also precluded a thorough understanding of this phenomenon. Political institutions are almost always mentioned in studies of ethnonationalism but they are rarely given primary theoretical importance. Indeed, political institutions are most often considered as instruments available to manage conflicts whose origins lie outside the institutional framework.

This study holds that ethnonationalism is a 'top-down' process and a political phenomenon. It argues that theories of ethnonationalism should be first and foremost

⁴ See Walker Connor, "The Seductive Lure of Economic Explanations", in *Ethnonationalism. The Quest for Understanding*, pp.144-164. First published as "Eco- or Ethno-Nationalism ?", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 7 (1984), pp.342-259. For a similar criticism see Saul Newman, *Ethnoregional Conflict in Democracies. Mostly Ballots, Rarely Bullets*, (Wesport: Greenwood Press, 1996), p.3.

⁵ Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison*, (London: Sage Publications, 1991); Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth A. Shepsle, *Politics in Plural Societies. A Theory of Democratic Instability*, (Colombus: Charles E. Merrill, 1972). See also Crawford Young, *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1976).

political theories, not cultural or economic theories. It suggests focusing on political elites and institutions to gain insight into ethnonationalism. Indeed, the object of this study is to examine the relationship between, on the one hand, elite behaviour and political institutions, and, on the other hand, ethnonationalism. The cases chosen to shed light on this relationship are Belgium, Spain and Canada.

1.1-Ethnonationalism as a Form of Politics: Identifying Three Central Processes.

The term 'ethnonationalism' was coined by Walker Connor.⁶ It is useful because it distinguishes state-seeking nationalism from the nationalism of already existing states, and captures the ethnic-cultural dimension of the former. Ethnonationalism is the action of a group that claims some degree of self-government on the grounds that it is united by a special sense of solidarity emanating from one or more shared features and therefore forms a 'nation.' The manifestation of ethnonationalism is a nationalist movement and, more specifically, nationalist parties and organizations.

At the broadest level, the concept of ethnic group refers to the entity for which ethnonationalism claims autonomy or independence. At a more specific level, it has been given different meanings. In some instances, it refers strictly to a human society whose

6 Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism. The Quest for Understanding*. Scholars have also used terms such as ethnicity, ethnopolitics and regional nationalism. See Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Joseph Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics. A Conceptual Framework*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981); Michael Keating, *State and Regional Nationalism Territorial Politics and the European State*, (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988). The concept of ethnicity has proven particularly confusing for it has often been equated with, while not being limited to, ethnonationalism. Indeed, ethnicity has been used to refer to groups seeking autonomy or independence from an existing state and/or to groups who, while putting their collective identities to use in political action, do not have such claims. The Basques and Québécois are an example of the former and the Italians of Toronto and the African-Americans an example of the latter.

members share one or more objective features, while in others it entails that such a society be self-conscious (or, in other words, that it has developed an 'ethnic identity'). A useful terminology is to use the term 'ethnic category' for the former meaning and 'ethnic community' for the latter. Therefore, an ethnic community is a self-conscious ethnic category. The term 'ethnic group' may be used in a more general sense for groups whose members share one or more objective features and may or may not have developed an ethnic identity.⁷

These working definitions provide solid and coherent foundations for a study of ethnonationalism. They may not attract a consensus in the academic community, but they are widely used and understood. The substantial definition of ethnonationalism is a more significant matter of controversy. In fact, three different substantial definitions are discernable in the literature. The first holds that ethnonationalism is primarily about culture. The second portrays it as an economic phenomenon. The third presents it as a form politics. The focuses on culture, the economy and politics are not mutually exclusive, but they highlight a fundamental disagreement among theorists about the very nature of ethnonationalism.⁸

Theorists who define ethnonationalism essentially in cultural terms hold that it is ultimately the manifestation of long-standing ethnic communities. They consider that the driving force behind ancient communities and modern nations is culture and that the fate of these entities rests largely with their cultural characteristics. Anthony Smith adopts this

⁷ For the distinction between ethnic category and ethnic community, see Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Revival*, pp.68-69 and Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison*, p.22.

⁸ See James Kellas, *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), p.36 and pp.54-71.

position.⁹ He stresses the continuity between nations and *ethnie*, arguing that the former is only the most recent embodiment of the latter. Theorists such as Smith who choose the cultural definition consider that ethnic communities and nations produce ethnonationalism.

Scholars adopting the economic definition do not view culture as the essence of ethnonationalism. Rather, they consider that ethnonationalism is the coincidental consequence of capitalism and modernization. They do not situate the roots of nations in ancient times but insist that they are novel, modern and almost accidental constructions whose existence is the necessary result of specific material conditions. Michael Hechter's influent theory of ethnonationalism in Britain and Ernest Gellner's seminal work on nationalism are two notable examples of studies that have used this economic definition.¹⁰

Theorists who opt for a political definition hold that ethnonationalism is first and foremost a form of politics.¹¹ They acknowledge that the highly subjective and symbolic dimension of ethnonationalism makes it peculiar political activity, but they insist nevertheless that it is the product of specific interactions between political actors. They particularly stress political competition as the motor of ethnonationalism.¹² This definition makes the phenomenon situational, contingent and irregular rather than determined.

9 Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

10 Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism. The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975). Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (London: Blackwell, 1983).

11 John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982).

12 Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison*.

positive and enduring. It also holds that ethnonationalism creates nations, and not the other way around.¹³

The definition of ethnonationalism as a form of politics presents the most potential for producing theories with great explanatory power. Indeed, this definition places the analyst in a privileged position to observe and understand how ethnonationalism actually operates.¹⁴ At the same time, it does not abstract culture from ethnonationalism. On the contrary, it is fully able to deal with the subjective and symbolic nature of ethnonationalism although it refuses to view culture as a powerful force in and unto itself. The political definition does not lose the significance of larger structural factors either, for it allows the theorist to place actors within a broad socio-economic framework and to draw connections between this context and their behaviour. It does not, however, consider that industrialization, capitalism or globalization structurally determine ethnonationalism.

The political definition is the most useful because it is the only one that can provide significant insight into the three processes that constitute ethnonationalism. These processes have generally not been clearly identified, nor have the questions they raise been consistently addressed. Indeed, while the issues of identity, interests and mobilization have figured prominently in the literature on ethnonationalism, theorists have generally failed to draw analytical distinctions between their related processes, and to organize them in a comprehensive framework where they may be treated consistently and systematically. The identification of these processes and the full appreciation of their theoretical significance represent the first step in acquiring an understanding of how ethnonationalism actually operates.

13 Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.10.

14 John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, p.36.

The first of these processes is the creation and transformation of ethnic identities. This is the process that transforms ethnic categories into ethnic communities. It involves providing objective criteria such as language with subjective meaning. Also, in this process "[T]he subjective meanings of symbols of identity are intensified and become more relational (interpersonal) than personal or instrumental."¹⁵ Language, for example, becomes a priceless community treasure rather than a simple means of communication.¹⁶ This process is neither natural nor spontaneous. Indeed, "many people, if not most people, never think about their language at all and never attach any emotional significance to it."¹⁷ The subjective meaning of language and other cultural markers is induced by elites and institutions. The creation and transformation of ethnic identities is produced by patterns of competition, conflict, influence, and sometimes cooperation, that ultimately have their source in the struggle of elites for power. The manipulation of symbols and cultural markers by competing elites represents the immediate mechanism by which ethnic identities are created and shaped. The most important factor affecting the likelihood that patterns of elite interactions will actually lead to the formation and crystallization of these identities is political institutions. There are institutional frameworks that favour such a development more than others. Therefore, state structures, party systems and schemes of territorial distribution of power are all key variables influencing the timing, structure, intensity and, indeed, the very existence of ethnic identities. They explain in large part why these identities are situational and contingent.

15 Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison*, p.22.

16 Idem.

17 Ibid., p.70.

The second process of ethnonationalism is interest definition. Ethnic groups do not have given interests that dictate specific courses of action. They are not the bearers of a specific destiny that finds its natural expression in some form of superior or national interests. Moreover, while socio-economic conditions provide the context for the definition of the interests of an ethnic group, there is no necessary relationship between these conditions and a group's interests. For example, the relative underdevelopment of a group does not necessarily translate into the idea that this position is contrary to its interests. Situations have to be interpreted. They also have to be translated into a basis for specific demands and used as the rationale for particular forms of political action. This role is played by elites who tend to project their own interests onto the group. These elites, along with the mediating, and sometimes independent, effect of political institutions, are also at the centre of the connection between the interests and identity of the group as they have defined them. The process of interest definition has profound implications for the type of claims articulated by a nationalist movement and for this movement's programme and ideology.

The third and decisive process of ethnonationalism is nationalist mobilization. The existence of ethnic identities, even when they have been associated with specific interests, does not have an inherent political significance. They have to be made politically relevant, and then mobilized. Here again, the role of political elites and institutions is crucial. The politicization of ethnic identities requires elites to articulate the idea that an ethnic group's identity has for natural and inevitable consequence the autonomy or independence of this group. This path is presented as an historical necessity and any situation short of the goals of nationalist leaders is described as abnormal. The politicization of ethnic identities entails at least a partially successful effort on the part of elites to convince the members of an ethnic group that cultural cleavages are more important and more fundamental than other cleavages. Finally, ethnic identities that have been rendered politically salient need to be

mobilized to become an active political force. This mobilization enables elites to garner some popular support for their claims and to argue that they are legitimate. In turn, these elites find in this mass support a powerful political weapon. Political institutions also play a critical role in the process of mobilization. The structure of a party system or the territorial division of power of a state may prove particularly conducive to the organization of politics in ethnic terms. The central role played by elites and institutions in politicizing and mobilizing ethnic identities explains why nationalist activity may be very intense at one moment and very weak, or even almost disappearing, at another.

This discussion of the processes of ethnonationalism (processes which are closely related and sometimes overlapping but nevertheless correspond to observable phenomena) has highlighted the role played by political elites and institutions in the development of nationalist movements. Indeed, it is impossible to address issues of identity construction, interest definition and political mobilization without involving elites and institutions. Theories of ethnonationalism in the West have marginalized the importance of these factors.

1.2-Discussing the Literature: Three Approaches to Ethnonationalism.

The literature on ethnonationalism is voluminous and diversified. Consequently, providing a comprehensive review of the scholarship on ethnonationalism is an almost impossible task, and dividing it into coherent schools of thought somewhat difficult. Nevertheless, it is essential to discuss the most important and most influential studies in the field in order to better understand what is needed to improve the explanatory power of theories of ethnonationalism. Moreover, it is possible to identify different approaches to ethnonationalism that follow closely the three substantial definitions used by theorists. They are primordialism, structuralism and instrumentalism. Primordialism holds that ethnonationalism is the natural political expression of a group's basic identity which is derived from culture. Structuralism considers it the result of specific socio-economic

conditions and transformations. Instrumentalism views it as a form of political mobilization. These categories are not fully coherent internally or mutually exclusive. Primordialist theorists focus mostly, but not always exclusively, on culture, and they operate from such fields as anthropology, sociobiology and philosophy. Structuralists insist primarily on socio-economic conditions and have done so from neo-marxist and liberal perspectives. Instrumentalists include elite and rational choice theorists and while they focus on politics, they generally connect it to cultural markers and socio-economic contexts.

The explanatory power of theories of ethnonationalism is largely connected to their ability to illuminate the processes of identity formation and transformation, interest definition, and nationalist mobilization. The following critical appraisal reflects on the capacity of the primordialist, structuralist and instrumentalist approaches to shed light on these processes.

1.2.1 Primordialism and the Power of Culture.

The classic primordialist statement may be found in the work of anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Writing in the early 1960s, Geertz viewed the future of newly independent states as being inextricably linked to the tension between, on the one hand, an integrative revolution that seeks to create a new form of community based on citizenship, and, on the other, 'primordial attachments.'¹⁸ These 'primordial attachments' result from what Geertz calls 'the givens' of social existence (assumed blood ties, race, language, region, religion and custom) which "are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness

¹⁸ Clifford Geertz. "The Integrative Revolution. Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics", in *Old Societies and New States. The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, (London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp.105-175. The term 'primordial' was first used by Edward Shils. "Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties", *British Journal of Sociology*, 8 (1957), pp.130-145.

in and of themselves.”¹⁹ Geertz argues that the strength of these ‘primordial attachments’ should not be confused with “personal affection, practical necessity, common interest or incurred obligation.” for they are the result “of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself.”²⁰ He also argues that these ties are natural, spontaneous and universal, and that “for virtually every person, in every society, at almost all times, some attachments seem to flow more from a sense of natural-some would say spiritual-affinity than from social interaction.”²¹

The work of Clifford Geertz has had a long lasting influence on the way scholars view ethnonationalism. Harold Isaacs translated the concept of primordial attachments into the idea of ‘basic group identity.’ This identity “which consists of the ready-made set of endowments and identification that every individual shares with others from the moment of the birth”²² should not be mistaken with the less fundamental ‘secondary group identities’ such as class. For Isaacs, “it is in the inwardness of group identity [that] we can learn more than we know now about the interaction of the individual, his group, and the larger politics of his time and place and more, therefore, about the nature of our common contemporary experience.”²³ This epistemological position leads to a research program that centres primarily on objective features to explain ethnic identity. Isaacs focuses on what he calls the ‘idols of the tribe’: body, name, language, history and origins, religion and ‘nationality.’

19 Ibid., p.109.

20 Idem., p.109.

21 Ibid., 110.

22 Harold R. Isaacs, *Idols of the Tribe. Group Identity and Political Change*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989, p.38.

23 Ibid., p.45.

Anthony Smith's analysis of the 'modern ethnic revival' revolves around the cultural history of groups. This research strategy follows the assumption that ethnonationalism is ultimately the result of the inherent strength and meaning of culture. Smith argues that ethnonationalism grows out of ethnic consciousness which is itself the product of a sense of common origin and destiny, and of cultural markers.²⁴ Smith's approach seems to hold that the transformation of cultural markers into identities expressing political claims is a natural and necessary phenomenon. Consequently, he is sceptical of theories that see nations and nationalism as a purely modern and constructed phenomenon.

This scepticism with the modern and fabricated character of ethnonationalism is expressed in a more radical way by more extreme primordialist approaches such as sociobiology. Pierre van den Berghe has defined sociobiology as "a systematic application of Darwinian evolutionary theory to animal behaviour, especially to social behaviour."²⁵ Sociobiology revolves around the concept of inclusive fitness which contains the idea that the degree of cooperation between humans is relative to their genetic proximity. This approach holds that ethnic sentiments have a biological as well as sociocultural basis. It argues that these sentiments may be "understood as an extended and attenuated form of kin selection."²⁶ Hence, the tendency of human beings to favour kin is behind any manifestation of ethnonationalism. In the words of Shaw and Wong: "Nationalism's

24 Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Revival*, p.66 and p.85.

25 Pierre van den Berghe, "Race and ethnicity: a sociobiological perspective", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1 (1978), p.402. On sociobiology, see also Pierre van den Berghe, *The Ethnic Phenomenon*, (New York: Elsevier, 1979).

26 Ibid., p.403.

powerful appeal lies in its inclusive fitness logic. It renders the nation a suprafamily for its members."²⁷

The influence of this primordialist tradition was observable as scholars attempted to explain the emergence and resurgence of ethnonationalism in the West during the 1960s and 1970s. Walker Connor has argued that "the surge of ethnonationalism among Basques, Bretons, Welsh, and other groups reflects a quite natural and perhaps even predictable stage in a process that has been underway for approximately two centuries" and that "the emergence of national sentiment among the still dependent ethnic groups of Western Europe represents a sequential step in a historical evolution."²⁸ Connor holds that while modernization has served as the catalyst for ethnonationalism in the West by increasing inter-group contact, its profound cause is simply the doctrine of self-determination and its demonstration effect. Hence, 'ethnically aware people'²⁹ are a powerful force in and unto themselves that becomes fully active when exposed to the idea of self-determination.

While primordialism acquired great popularity in the 1960s and 1970s through the work of scholars such as Geertz, Isaacs and van den Berghe, it has found new voices in the 1990s, as several prominent political philosophers have built theoretical frameworks centred on culture to understand, manage, and interpret the meaning of ethnonationalism.³⁰

27 R. Paul Shaw and Yuwa Wong, *Genetic Seeds of Warfare. Evolution, Nationalism and Patriotism*, (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p.142.

28 Walker Connor, "Ethnonationalism in the First World: The Present in Historical Perspective", p.25 and p.34.

29 Ibid., p.26.

30 On the recent interest of political philosophers for ethnonationalism, see Will Kymlicka's introduction to *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.1-3. Not all philosophers that have taken interest in ethnonationalism have adopted similar approaches. There is, however, a discernable school of thought embodied by the work of such scholars as Will

These philosophers are most influential in the West, particularly in Canada, for they focus on ethnonationalism in liberal-democracies. Their intellectual project is to make room for culture in social and political theory. They specifically target the traditional liberal doctrine which conceptualizes the autonomous individual independently of its cultural environment. For scholars such as Will Kymlicka or Yael Tamir, the challenge is to formulate a liberal theory that provides a cultural context for the action, rights, and responsibilities of individuals.³¹ They also seek to integrate the idea that ethnic groups are fundamental entities that may also be the bearer of rights. In short, they attempt to conciliate liberalism with collective rights and, more specifically, with ethnonationalism. For Charles Taylor, the project is to articulate a social and political theory that would be more sensitive to cultural identities than liberalism. This theory known as 'communitarianism' holds that individuals are firmly embedded in cultural communities that provide meaning to their existence.³²

Kymlicka, Charles Taylor and Yael Tamir. See Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*; (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Charles Taylor, "Pourquoi les nations doivent-elles se transformer en États ?" in *Rapprocher les solitudes. Écrits sur le fédéralisme et le nationalisme au Canada*, (Ste-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1992). For a different perspective, see Janet Ajzenstat, "Decline of Procedural Liberalism: The Slippery Slope to Secession" in Joseph Carens (ed), *Is Quebec Nationalism Just? Perspective from Anglophone Canada*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995) and Harry Brighouse, "Against Nationalism", in Jocelyne Couture et al. (eds), *Rethinking Nationalism*, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1998), pp.365-405.

31 Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*; Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*. See also Joseph H. Carens (ed), *Is Quebec Nationalism Just? Perspective from Anglophone Canada*.

32 Charles Taylor, "Atomism" in *Philosophical Papers 2. Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Guy Laforest is close to Taylor's position. see "Herder, Kedourie et les errements de l'antinationalisme" and "Libéralisme et nationalisme au Canada" in *De la prudence. Textes politiques*, (Montréal: Boréal, 1993).

The nature of these philosophers' project means that they pay little attention to issues of identity formation, transformation, politicization and mobilization. In fact, their approach to ethnonationalism rests on specific assumptions concerning the relationship between cultural markers, ethnic identities and political claims that does not allow for an investigation of the mechanisms behind the development and politicization of identities. First, these philosophers tend to consider ethnic identities as 'givens.' They assume that identities are the natural and spontaneous product of culture. This assumption is accompanied, explicitly or implicitly, by the argument that ethnic identities are more primordial and more important than identities related to gender, socio-economic status, age, or other cleavages. It also entails that individuals can have only one ethnic identity. Second, they tend to view ethnic identities as inherently political. They posit that ethnic identities necessarily lead to political claims and that self-determination, in the form of autonomy or independence, is the natural and inevitable consequence of these identities..

The idea that ethnic identities are 'givens' of social life originates in the belief that cultural markers are the natural and most fundamental constitutive elements of individual and collective personalities. This argument holds that ethnic identities are the natural and inevitable consequence of the mystical and spiritual bond between human beings and their culture, particularly language. The relationship between language and the human condition is at the centre of Charles Taylor's philosophy and his approach to ethnonationalism. Taylor has been heavily influenced by the philosophy of Johann Gottfried Herder.³³ For Herder and Taylor, language has a natural subjective meaning. It is more than a simple instrument for communication but represents the essence of the human subject. Taylor argues that man is above all a 'language animal' and insists on the mysterious and

33 Guy Laforest, "Herder, Kedourie et les errements de l'antinationalisme" in *De la prudence. Textes politiques*, pp.77-78.

enigmatic character of this relationship.³⁴ Furthermore, language is what allows individuals to ask and answer questions relevant to their existence, a process which enables them to build their own conception of the good life. The crucial role played by language in the constitution of the self translates into a need to belong to a cultural community,³⁵ for membership in such a community is essential to the fulfilment of its potential. Kymlicka argues that the bond between individuals and their own culture can be attributed in part to the key role played by culture in providing meaningful options to individuals. He also argues, however, that the profound sources of this bond “lie deep in the human condition, tied up with the way humans as cultural creatures need to make sense of their world” and that “a full explanation would involve aspects of psychology, sociology, linguistics, the philosophy of mind, and even neurology.”³⁶ For Kymlicka, the strength of the attachment of individuals to their culture is the underlying force behind ‘national identities.’ This bond is ‘a fact’ and national identities are ‘givens.’³⁷

The arguments presented by Taylor and Kymlicka on the relationship between human nature, culture and identities are shared by many of the philosophers that have recently discussed ethnonationalism. Yael Tamir, for example, holds that “[M]embership in a national culture is part of the essence of being human” and that one could not be “totally

34 Charles Taylor, “Language and Human Nature” in *Philosophical Papers I. Human Agency and Language*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.216.

35 Charles Taylor, “Pourquoi les nations doivent-elles se transformer en États ?” in *Rapprocher les solitudes. Écrits sur le fédéralisme et le nationalisme au Canada*, pp.52-53.

36 Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, p.90.

37 *Ibid.*, p.90 and p.184. Kymlicka states that ‘to some extent national identities must be taken as givens.’ His overall approach suggests, however, that he considers them *largely* givens. (My emphasis in the second italics).

dissociated from any cultural national reference and remain human.”³⁸ This statement suggests that ethnic identities are more important and more fundamental than other identities. Avishai Margalit and Joseph Raz argue that “people’s sense of their own identity is bound up with their sense of belonging to encompassing groups” and that membership in these groups provide individuals with “an anchor for their self-identification and the safety of effortless secure belonging.”³⁹ They also argue that the bond between individuals and culture is so fundamental that individual dignity and self-respect are directly connected to group status.⁴⁰

The argument for the primacy of cultural identity is also visible in Will Kymlicka’s distinction between national and civic identity (or patriotism),⁴¹ where the former has a cultural basis while the latter does not. Indeed, Kymlicka’s suggestion that individuals can adhere to a civic identity only through their national identity negates the possibility that non-ethnic identities could be as strong (or stronger) than ethnic ones.⁴² The ontological consequence of this emphasis on culture as the central force of the human condition is the

38 Yael Tamir. *Liberal Nationalism*, p.36.

39 Avishai Margalit and Joseph Raz, “National Self-Determination” in Will Kymlicka (ed), *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, pp.86-87. The authors call ‘encompassing groups’ groups that have six features: (1) their members share a common culture, (2) they are marked by this culture, (3) they find in it the key to their self-identification, (4) membership is a matter of mutual recognition (5) and of belonging, not achievement. Finally, (6) the groups are not face-to-face small groups. *Ibid.*, pp.82-85. This piece was first published in *Journal of Philosophy*, 87 (1990), pp.439-61.

40 *Ibid.*, p.87.

41 Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, 13 and p.187.

42 *Ibid.*, p.190.

conceptualization of ethnic communities as a fundamental socio-political reality. This position that the world is naturally divided and organized in 'pervasive cultures'⁴³ leads to the choice of these cultures as primary unit of analysis for socio-political behaviour. The idea that culture is the primary reference for self-identification also suggests that ethnic identities are mutually exclusive. Kymlicka's insistence that individuals need to have access to their *own* culture excludes the possibility that they may have more than one culture.⁴⁴ It assumes a rigid dichotomy between one's own culture (never cultures) and others.

The second assumption held by many of the most influential philosophers of ethnonationalism is that ethnic identities are inherently political. This argument has been developed most explicitly in discussions on self-determination. Yael Tamir makes a case for a distinction between self-rule and self-determination, where the former involves civil rights and political participation while the latter refers to the natural desire of individuals to project their ethnic identities into the public sphere. Tamir's argument for a cultural interpretation of self-determination clearly builds on the premise that ethnic identities are by nature political and that individuals naturally "wish to be ruled by institutions informed by a culture they find understandable and meaningful."⁴⁵ Margalit and Raz share similar assumptions on the relationship between ethnic identities and politics. They argue that the well-being of individuals is connected to their ability to express publicly their cultural identity and that this public expression of membership in an 'encompassing group' finds in

43 Avishai Margalit and Joseph Raz, "National Self-Determination", p.86. Will Kymlicka uses 'societal cultures'. See *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, p.75.

44 See Jeremy Waldron, "Minority Cultures and the Cosmopolitan Alternative", in Will Kymlicka (ed), *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, pp.93-119. First published in *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform*, 25 (1992), pp.751-93.

45 Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, p.72.

the political sphere an attractive arena for its manifestation.⁴⁶ For Charles Taylor, claims for autonomy follow naturally the emergence of ethnic identities.⁴⁷ These claims are the consequence of a process of self-identification whose ultimate origins may be found in the mystical bond between individuals and their culture.⁴⁸

Primordialist approaches to ethnonationalism rest on shaky grounds. The idea that ethnic identities are 'givens' and inherently political is problematic empirically and theoretically. The empirical problem is twofold. First, there is some evidence suggesting that the strength of the bond between individuals and their language is variable and situational. Paul Brass' research into one of the world's most linguistically diverse societies, India, has revealed patterns of language change that suggested to this author that "many people, if not most people, never think about their language at all and never attach any emotional significance to it."⁴⁹ The phenomenon of dual political identities also raises doubts on the mystical and spiritual character of the relationship between humans and language. The fact that most Catalans, Galicians and many Basques feel at least as Spanish

46 Avishai Margalit and Joseph Raz, "National Self-Determination", p.89.

47 Charles Taylor, "Pourquoi les nations doivent-elles se transformer en États" in *Rapprocher les solitudes. Ecrits sur le fédéralisme et le nationalisme au Canada*, p.54.

48 These criticisms directed at political philosophers are to some degree unfair since their normative methods are not really meant to explain but rather to prescribe. However, participants in a multi-disciplinary debate such as the one on ethnonationalism must be prepared to defend not only the finer nuances of their arguments, but also their more profound assumptions.

49 Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison*, p.70. See also *Language, Religion and Politics in India*, (London: Cambridge University Press), 1974.

as they do Catalan. Galician and Basque undermines the idea that language is necessarily the primary and most powerful determinant of identity.⁵⁰

Switzerland weakens this argument even more. Indeed, the Swiss case is troublesome for the philosophers of ethnic identities. Will Kymlicka argues that describing the Swiss identity as a national identity is 'misleading' since the different language groups are 'national groups'. Consequently, the Swiss identity has meaning only through membership in these groups.⁵¹ These propositions are dubious. The sense of Swiss identity is very strong and there is nothing to indicate that it is dependent on membership in language groups. It is not even clear that linguistic cleavages in Switzerland are more salient than religious or class cleavages. In fact, Wolf Linder has argued that "thanks to its political institutions, Switzerland became a nation and has found its own identity as a modern society."⁵² In sum, cultural diversity in Switzerland should not be equated with feelings of self-identification.⁵³ Second, the existence of ethnic identities that do not put forward any claims for autonomy (or do so very weakly) defies the assumption that these types of identities have natural political consequences. The presence of a strong Basque nationalist movement in Spain and the absence of such a movement in the French Basque

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- 50 See the data and analysis presented by Luis Moreno, *La federalización de España. Poder político y territorio*, (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno de España Editores, S.A., 1997), pp.123-140.
- 51 Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, p.13.
- 52 Wolf Linder, *Swiss Democracy. Possible Solutions to Conflict in Multicultural Societies*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd. 1998), p.36.
- 53 See Jürg Steiner and Jeffrey Obler's distinction between cultural diversity and subcultural segmentation "Does the Consociational Theory Really Holds for Switzerland ?," in Milton Esman (ed), *Ethnic Conflict in the Western World*, pp.332-333.

country suggests that the Basque identity may have very different consequences. The sharp contrast between the strong political claims of two of the three Spanish 'historical nationalities'. Catalonia and the Basque Country, and the weak claims of the third one, Galicia, raises more doubts on the political consequences of ethnic identities.

Primordialist approaches also have serious theoretical shortcomings. While they alert scholars to the subjective, symbolic and emotional dimension of ethnonationalism, they are unable to explain how ethnic identities are formed, transformed and crystallized. Consequently, they can not explain why cultural markers acquire a subjective meaning only in some cases, nor can they account for the timing of the emergence of ethnic identities. These approaches do not address the issue of interest definition. They are also unable to explain why and how ethnic identities become politically relevant and are mobilized. They do not explain why only some ethnic identities are politicized and mobilized, and why most of them are politicized and mobilized at certain times only. To argue that ethnic identities derive from a sense of common origins and history⁵⁴ or from a special sense of solidarity leaves these questions unanswered. Primordialism gets caught in a form of circular reasoning where the forces behind ethnic identities and their political manifestations are these ethnic identities themselves.⁵⁵ For this reason, primordialist theories tend to lack explanatory power.

Jack Eller and Reed Coughlan argue that the poverty of primordialism stems from its three core tenets of apriority, affectivity and ineffability.⁵⁶ Apriority refers to the idea

54 Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Revival*, p.67.

55 Michael Keating, *State and Regional Nationalism. Territorial Politics and the European State*, pp.15-16.

56 Jack Eller and Reed Coughlan, "The poverty of primordialism: the demystification of ethnic attachments", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 16 (1993), pp.183-202.

that ethnic identities are an a-historical objective reality that pre-exist social action and politics ⁵⁷. Affectivity alludes to the spiritual and inescapable bond which underlies these identities and makes them more fundamental than any others. Ineffability expresses the inherent strength of ethnic identities. These tenets make primordialism unable to understand ethnic identities other than as 'givens' of social existence and inherently political. They certainly do not allow for an understanding of these identities as politically generated and transformed. Indeed, primordialist theories are first and foremost cultural theories and what is needed to explain ethnonationalism is a political theory.

1.2.2 Structuralism and the Consequences of Socio-Economic Conditions.

The processes of modernization have been a favourite focus of scholars of nationalism. In both his classic *Nations and Nationalism* and in his last work *Nationalism*, Ernest Gellner presents a powerful argument for the necessary connection between nationalism and modernization. Gellner argues that nationalism is "the necessary consequence or correlate of certain social conditions."⁵⁸ These conditions are those of a 'scientific/industrial society' which needs a codified 'high culture' to function. In other words, industrialization and economic development necessitates cultural homogeneity. Therefore, nationalism is not the natural expression of cultural markers nor is it the result of a form of political mobilization. It is rather a material and structural necessity. In locating the emergence of nationalism in the wake of the major socio-economic changes of 18th and 19th century Europe, Gellner's theory has disputed with great success the universality and naturalness of nations. However, this strict materialist explanation fails to capture the

57 Marco Martiniello, *L'Ethnicité dans les science sociales contemporaines*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France. Collection Que sais-je?, 1995), p.36.

58 Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997), p.11. See also *Nations and Nationalism*.

subjective dimension of nationalism. Moreover, Gellner's theory provides virtually no insight on ethnonationalism. It acknowledges that groups may actively resist incorporation within a state in the early industrial period, but does not leave much room for the possibility that they may later seek independence or autonomy from it. The conceptualization of modernization as a powerful homogenizing force is unhelpful for theories of ethnonationalism.

This conceptualization was dominant until the 1970s, as structuralist theories equated nationalism with political integration. The dominant view among liberal scholars was embodied by the 'diffusionist' (or 'assimilationist') model which held that the processes of modernization would destroy 'primordialist ties' and create true nation-states. Hence, industrialization and urbanization would generate wealth and favour a rational-technical attitude at odds with the irrationality of primordialism. The development of communications and transportation would bring people closer together. The strong centralized state would, through educational and language policies, erase the cultural differences between its citizens and make them all members of one nation. These processes were considered necessary, uni-directional, irreversible and universal. The diffusionist model had strong normative implications, for it held that Western states had successfully integrated their peripheral cultures and could therefore serve as an example to developing countries. Therefore, the idea of nationalism as a force challenging political integration and centralization is marginal until the 1970s. This is especially the case among specialists of Western societies, for the assumptions associated with the traditional modernization paradigm rendered the concept of ethnonationalism unintelligible.

Neo-marxist scholars were among the first to challenge the diffusionist model. This challenge was part of a larger intellectual project spawned by the marginalization of nationalism by classical marxists who viewed it as no more than an epiphenomenon that would be inevitably superseded by the more fundamental class struggle. This project was

to develop a theory of nationalism rooted in Marxist thought. It produced one of the most popular explanations for ethnonationalism in the West: the internal colonialism thesis.

This thesis developed by Michael Hechter⁵⁹ states that ethnonationalism arises from a system of social stratification in which objective cultural differences correspond to, and are made salient and politically relevant by, class divisions. It holds that the cultural division of labour that occurs within a state is comparable to the relations of domination characterizing international economic relations. There are core states exploiting peripheral states in the international system and core regions exploiting peripheral regions within states. This thesis disputes the argument of diffusionist theorists that contacts between centre and periphery inexorably lead to the integration of the latter by the former. Instead, it holds that these contacts are in fact relations of domination and exploitation that generate a struggle between the dominant centre and subjugated peripheral regions. Ethnonationalism is the political expression of these regions. It is the revolt of the oppressed. The internal colonialism argument proved especially attractive to scholars of ethnonationalism in the West, for it stressed discriminatory practices of the advanced capitalist state. Hechter argued that English domination in the United Kingdom produced Irish, Welsh and Scottish nationalism.

Tom Nairn presents a similar argument as he seeks to explain why 'the break-up of Britain' has begun "to occur in the form of territorial disintegration rather than as the long-awaited social revolution."⁶⁰ Nairn associates ethnonationalism with the uneven development of the capitalist economy. He argues that uneven development produces a domination of the centre over the periphery and that ethnonationalism represents a form of

59 Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism. The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966*.

60 Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain. Crisis and Neo-Nationalism*. (London: New Left Books, 1977), p.14.

resistance of this periphery. This resistance is led by a peripheral bourgeoisie that emphasises culture because it has no material resources to use in its struggle with the centre. While Nairn's theory contains some insight on the mechanisms leading to the politicization of cultural markers, it focuses primarily of macro structures and provides an essentially materialist explanation to ethnonationalism. Indeed, Nairn finds quite ironic that "the most notoriously subjective and ideal of historical phenomena is in fact the by-product of the most brutally and hopelessly material side of the history of the last two centuries."⁶¹

The most obvious problem with these neo-marxist theories is that ethnonationalism has emerged and proven quite strong in regions such as Catalonia, the Basque Country and Flanders, which are not underdeveloped, but rather overdeveloped, when compared with other regions in the same country. Indeed, Hechter himself has acknowledged that the case of Catalonia shows the limitations of the internal colonialism thesis.⁶² Nevertheless, macro socio-economic structures, especially uneven development, have remained a very popular focus among scholars of ethnonationalism in the West. Many of them, confronted with the failure of the diffusionist model, renounced the view that the processes of modernization were assimilationist and proceeded to argue that they were instead 'conflictual.'⁶³

At the broadest level, the conflictual modernization approach suggests that fundamental socio-economic changes produce ethnonationalism. One version of this approach holds that ethnonationalism represents a means to cope for the many left disoriented and in a state of *anomie* by these changes. This argument tends to suggest that

61 Ibid., pp.335-336.

62 Michael Hechter, "Internal Colonialism Revisited", in Edward A. Tiryakian and Ronald Rogowski (eds), *New Nationalism of the Developed West. Towards an Explanation*, (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985), p.25.

63 The expression 'conflictual modernization' is Saul Newman's. See *Ethnoregional Conflict in Democracies. Mostly Ballots, Rarely Bullets*, p.3.

ethnonationalism is essentially a reactionary phenomenon. Eric Hobsbawm characterizes 'movements of ethnic identity' as "reactions of weakness and fear, attempts to erect barricades to keep at bay the forces of the modern world."⁶⁴ He argues that "what fuels these defensive reactions (...) is a combination of international population movements with the ultra-rapid, fundamental and unprecedented socio-economic transformations so characteristic of the third quarter of our century."⁶⁵ Hobsbawm points to the Québec case as an example of ethnonationalism serving as a substitute for old certitudes that have collapsed under the forces of modernization.⁶⁶ While the elegance of Hobsbawm theory is attractive, the reactionary character of ethnonationalism is largely a question of interpretation. In fact, many nationalist movements (Québécois and Catalan for example) welcome all aspects of modernity.

The conflictual modernization approach has also produced theories of ethnic competition. These theories hold that modernization increases inter-ethnic contact and that ethnic mobilization occurs, not as a result of a cultural division of labour, but rather when such ethnic segregation breaks down.⁶⁷ They consider that the competition between members of different ethnic groups for scarce resources, most importantly jobs, is the ultimate cause for ethnic conflict. Consequently, competition theorists tend to consider immigration a catalyst for ethnic mobilization. These theorists ask good questions. They seek to determine the conditions under which cultural markers acquire a subjective meaning

⁶⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.170.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.171.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.172.

⁶⁷ Susan Olzak and Joane Nagel "Introduction, Competitive Ethnic Relations: An Overview" in *Competitive Ethnic Relations*, (Orlando: Academic Press, 1986), p.4.

and become politically salient. Their core idea that competition is at the heart of ethnic conflict is promising but their focus on competition in the labour market rather than in the political arena does not allow them to take full advantage of the concept. The relationship between competition for jobs and ethnonationalism poses some problems. While it may be argued that competition between French-speakers and English-speakers for employment in the 1960s and 1970s was a factor in the rise of Québécois nationalism, the same argument can not be used to account for the continued strength of this nationalist movement through the 1980s and 1990s.

The revised version of the classic modernization paradigm that was at the centre of the diffusionist model led many scholars to stress economic conditions in explaining ethnonationalism. In fact, some have argued that "[E]conomic modernization was elevated to the level of a sufficient condition for the emergence of political ethnic conflict."⁶⁸ The key to economic explanations of ethnonationalism is the concept of uneven development which is viewed, not as the result of a deliberately oppressive state policy as in the internal colonialism thesis, but rather as the natural consequence of economic forces.⁶⁹ The concept of uneven development is often operationalized using the relative deprivation argument which emphasizes a group's hopes and perceptions.⁷⁰ Consequently, it is possible to argue that ethnonationalism in underdeveloped regions is the result of a collective feeling of resentment caused by a relative lack of wealth while ethnonationalism in overdeveloped

68 Saul Newman, *Ethnoregional Conflict in Democracies. Mostly Ballots, Rarely Bullets*, p.3.

69 James Kellas, *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, p.62.

70 Joseph R. Rudolph Jr. and Robert J. Thompson, "The Ebb and Flow of Ethnoterritorial Politics in the Western World" in *Ethnoterritorial Politics, Policy and the Western World*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), pp.4-5.

regions may be attributed to feelings of frustration resulting from the belief that wealth could be even greater if it were not for the poor regions.

Milica Zarkovic Bookman explains ethnonationalism in 'high income regions' using the idea of uneven development and the complementary concept of relative deprivation.⁷¹ She argues that regional conflicts are the product of regional disparities⁷², for "the existence of discontinuous development (...) sets the stage for economic relationships that are perceived as unjust at the regional level."⁷³ Bookman gives Lombardy, Slovenia and Punjab as examples of regions whose demands for autonomy or independence are the result of regional disparities while naming Switzerland as a country not affected by such disparities and therefore free of inter-regional conflicts. In the case of Québec nationalism, she argues that "the economic basis of the separatist aspirations rests with the recognized fact that the francophones of Canada did not enjoy the same economic benefits and opportunities as other ethnic groups."⁷⁴ She does not explain, however, why nationalism in Québec still thrives after these inequalities have been gradually erased. In fact, the relationship between economic disparities and ethnonationalism is never clearly demonstrated. Bookman's strict materialist approach to ethnonationalism fails to capture the subjective dimension of the phenomenon and is unable to account for its specifics, fluctuations and irregularities.

71 Milica Zarkovic Bookman, *The Political Economy of Discontinuous Development. Regional Disparities and Inter-regional Conflict*, (New York: Praeger, 1991).

72 Ibid., p.15.

73 Ibid., p.2.

74 Ibid., p.42.

Anthony Mughan uses the concepts of uneven development and relative deprivation to present a slightly different picture of the conditions that trigger ethnonationalism.⁷⁵ Mughan focuses on the impact of uneven development on pre-existing patterns of distribution of resources. He argues that nationalist conflicts are unlikely to occur if the processes of development reinforce the position of groups that already enjoyed a disproportionate share of resources while they are more probable if these processes do not favour any particular groups.⁷⁶ He points to the Industrial Revolution in the West as an example of the former and to the contemporary West and Africa as illustrations of the latter. As is the case for most scholars approaching ethnonationalism using the concepts of uneven development and relative deprivation, Mughan never really demonstrates the causal relationship between resource distribution and ethnonationalism. Moreover, reliance on macro structures, and the enigmatic and unobservable relative deprivation, constitutes a serious impediment to understanding the specifics of nationalist movements.

The centre-periphery model suggests different structuralist explanations for ethnonationalism. This model does not constitute a theory of ethnonationalism *per se* but is presented as a general framework for understanding territorial politics including such issues as regionalism and intergovernmental relations. It leads to an approach to ethnonationalism that focuses on macro structures and processes without operating specifically within the conflictual modernization paradigm or relying on the relative deprivation argument. Stein Rokkan and Derek Urwin suggest that the centre-periphery polarity be understood in terms

75 Anthony Mughan, "Modernization and Regional Relative Deprivation: Towards a Theory of Ethnic Conflict", in L.J. Sharpe (ed), *Decentralist Trends in Western Democracies*, (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 1979), pp.279-304.

76 Ibid., p.284.

of spatial, cultural, political and economic dimensions.⁷⁷ They argue that the territorial structuring of Western Europe is the result of historical processes operating along these dimensions and that these processes did not always coincide. In other words, there were sometimes several different centres on a territory. Rokkan and Urwin find in the incongruities between culture, politics and economics the cause for regional politics. They state that "there is no simple centre-periphery polarity across culture, economics and politics" and that "[P]eripheral predicaments and politicization emerge out of the incongruity between cultural, economic and political roles, an incongruity that has existed on the continent as long as there have been states."⁷⁸ While Rokkan and Urwin's centre-periphery model suggests that ethnonationalism follows incongruities between cultural, economic and political processes, the fact that these processes have rarely been completely harmonious seriously undermines the capacity of the theory to explain the emergence of nationalist movements. Indeed, the degree of incongruity necessary to produce ethnonationalism is unclear.

Structuralist theories suggest that processes of identity formation and transformation, interest definition, and identity politicization and mobilization are the result of socio-economic conditions and transformations. They are unable, however, to clearly demonstrate and explain the connection between these processes and conditions. Indeed, while structuralist theories provide insight into the larger context that gives rise to ethnonationalism, their explanatory power is limited by their high level of abstraction.

77 Stein Rokkan and Derek W. Urwin (eds), *The Politics of Territorial Identity. Studies in European Regionalism*, (London: Sage Publications, 1982); Stein Rokkan and Derek W. Urwin, *Economy, Territory, Identity. Politics of West European Peripheries*, (London: Sage Publications, 1983). See also Yves Mény and Vincent Wright, *Centre-Periphery Relations in Western Europe*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1985).

78 Stein Rokkan and Derek W. Urwin, *Economy, Territory, Identity. Politics of West European Peripheries*, p.192.

These theories' reliance on long-range macro-level conditions and their tendency to conceptualize regions and groups as monolithic actors does not allow them to explain the specifics of ethnonationalism. They clearly point towards the necessity to establish a linkage between macro-level structures and micro-level outcomes.⁷⁹

Rokkan and Urwin's conclusion is representative of the limitations of most structuralist theories and their inability to deal with specific outcomes. Indeed, these authors's final claim is that as long the incongruities between cultural, political and economic processes "remain unresolved, the potential for territorial problems remains, irrespective of the waxing and waning of individual parties and movements."⁸⁰ This statement simply suggests that ethnonationalism may emerge almost anywhere. Structuralist theories relying on uneven economic development have failed to establish a clear causality. They have only established coexistence. This is hardly surprising considering that economic development proceeds unevenly and that ethnonationalism is a territorially-based phenomenon. As Walker Connor has argued, "defining ethnonational conflicts in terms of economic inequality is a bit like defining them in terms of oxygen: where you find the one, you can be reasonably certain of finding the other."⁸¹ Even if causality is established, economic explanations can not account for the vicissitudes of ethnonationalism. In sum, structuralist theories of ethnonationalism "specify important environmental conditions, long-term characteristics important to the analyst, without being

79 Robert J. Thompson and Joseph R. Rudolph, Jr. "The Ebb and Flow of Ethnoterritorial Politics in the Western World", p.7.

80 Stein Rokkan and Derek W. Urwin. *Economy, Territory, Identity. Politics of West European Peripheries*. p.192.

81 Walker Connor, "The Seductive Lure of Economic Explanations", p.147.

able to demonstrate their linkage to the contemporary political behaviour that is the supposed empirical manifestation of those conditions.”⁸²

1.2.3 Instrumentalism and the Politics of Ethnonationalism.

Instrumentalist theories of ethnonationalism focus on the mechanisms that render ethnic identities politically relevant and trigger nationalist mobilization. They sometimes investigate how these identities are constructed and transformed. These theories hold that political elites are at the centre of the processes forming ethnonationalism. They examine the patterns of elite interactions that generate these processes and pay particular attention to the motives and strategies of political elites in shaping, manipulating and politicizing cultural markers.

Joseph Rothschild has built a conceptual framework for the study of ethnonationalism that focuses on the politicization of cultural markers by ‘political entrepreneurs.’ This politicization process consists of making an ethnic category self-conscious by forming and stimulating an awareness of the importance of politics for their culture and then directing “their behaviour toward activity in the political arena on the basis of this awareness, concern, and group consciousness.”⁸³ Rothschild argues that the politicization of culture is an elite-driven process. “It occurs in times of social strain, competition and confrontation, when the ethnic leaders persuade the bearers and sharers of the ethnic culture-markers to perceive their fate in ethnic, rather than individual or class terms.”⁸⁴ Therefore, political leadership is a necessary condition for ethnonationalism and

82 Joseph R. Rudolph Jr. and Robert J. Thompson, “The Ebb and Flow of Ethnoterritorial Politics in the Western World”, p.4.

83 Joseph Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics. A Conceptual Framework*, p.6.

84 Ibid., p.27.

an ethnic category “whose incipient elite is consistently coopted away, will not be mobilized into an ethnic group unless and until this pattern changes.”⁸⁵

Instrumentalist frameworks such as Rothschild’s have been used mainly to explain ethnonationalism in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. In *Politics in Plural Societies*, Rabushka and Shepsle argue that the reason for the political salience of cultural markers is to be found in “[P]oliticians, their motives, and hence their behaviour.”⁸⁶ These authors stress that “politicians are office-seekers”, “in the business of winning elections” and driven by power, prestige and material benefits.⁸⁷ They argue that the political manifestations of cultural markers is the direct result of elite behaviour. They claim that political elites have a strong incentive in manipulating certain cleavages and that “the natural cleavages that divide men in the community provide the obvious and perhaps strongest nuclei around which coalitions are built.”⁸⁸ While Rabushka and Shepsle’s theory provides insight into the politicization and mobilization of ethnic identities, and the definition of interest, it does not really address the issue of identity formation. It takes these identities largely as ‘givens’ and ready to be activated by elites.

Crawford Young also develops the argument that “[C]ultural identity is a political factor.”⁸⁹ This political approach to ethnic identity enables him to appreciate and deal with the contingencies and irregularities of ethnonationalism. Young states that an ethnic

85 Ibid., p.29.

86 Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth A. Shepsle, *Politics in Plural Societies. A Theory of Democratic Instability*, p.59.

87 Ibid., p.59.

88 Idem.

89 Crawford Young, *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism*, pp.114-115.

identity's "actual mobilization at any point in time is a function of political variables from the overall field of politics within which the cultural community operates."⁹⁰ Moreover, whereas Rabushka and Shepsle view cultural cleavages and identities as 'givens', and therefore readily available for politicization and mobilization. Young argues that "the basic units of contemporary cultural conflict, themselves fluid and shifting, are often entirely novel entities, in other instances substantially altered and transformed, in most cases redefined versions of cultural groups."⁹¹ Young's approach constitutes an improvement on Rabushka and Shepsle's, for it not only examines how and why elites politicize cultural markers but also investigates the processes of identity formation and change.

Paul Brass' approach to ethnonationalism focuses on the role of elites in constructing, transforming, politicizing and mobilizing ethnic identity. It also examines how these elites define the interests of the group associated with this identity. Brass argues that the source of these processes are patterns of elite competition and influence. He holds that elite competition is "the basic dynamic which precipitates ethnic conflict under specific conditions." ⁹² Brass describes the processes of identity formation, change and politicization as involving the selection and use of cultural markers in order to create or sharpen the boundaries between ethnic groups. He argues that in this differentiation exercise, "ethnic and nationalist elites increasingly stress the variety of ways in which the members of the group are similar to each other and collectively different from others."⁹³ These elites also need to define the interests of the group they claim to represent and to

90 Idem.

91 Ibid., p.34.

92 Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison*, p.13.

93 Ibid., p.21.

engage in the active mobilization of its members in order to articulate claims for special status, autonomy or independence, and to give these claims legitimacy and force.

Brass uses his theory of elite competition to explain the rise of the Muslim movement in 19th and 20th century India.⁹⁴ He takes exception with scholars who focus on primordial factors (language and religion) in explaining Muslim nationalism and the Pakistan movement, and argues instead that these events were triggered by elites competing for power. He stresses the role of these elites in providing special social and political significance to three different issues: cow protection-cow slaughter, the Muslim personal law and language. Brass shows that the issue of cow protection (for the Hindus) or cow slaughter (for the Muslims) was used by Hindu religious leaders to build internal unity on their terms, and later by Muslim elites who could make it a symbol of Hindu domination. He also shows how Muslim religious elites emphasized the significance of the Muslim personal law (Sharia) and used it against Muslim political elites who, in turn, found it a useful symbol in their struggle against Hindu elites. In the case of the Urdu language, Brass argues that it was given a subjective meaning and then used by Muslim elites in their struggle against Hindu elites.

Brass also applies his elite competition theory to contemporary ethnic politics in India. He shows how the heightened intensity of inter-ethnic conflict this country experienced in the mid-1970s was a direct result of Indira Ghandi's rise to power and of the changes it triggered in the relations between the two levels of government.⁹⁵ In the case of the rise of Sikh separatism, Brass demonstrates how both the internal politics of the Sikh

94 Paul Brass, "Elite Groups, Symbol Manipulation and Ethnic Identity among the Muslims of South Asia", in *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison*, pp.69-108.

95 Paul Brass, "Pluralism, regionalism, and decentralizing tendencies in contemporary Indian politics", in *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison*, pp.114-166.

community and the interactions between this community's elites and the Pundjab government sparked the Pundjab crisis of the 1980s.⁹⁶

Brass' theoretical contribution is important, for it places patterns of elite competition and influence at the centre of ethnonationalism. This 'top-down' conceptualization of ethnonationalism places the observer in a unique position to illuminate the processes of ethnonationalism. It represents a most useful approach to explain not only *how* cultural markers are transformed into identities and made politically relevant, but also *why* these processes exist. It is also able to address the contingencies, irregularities and fluctuations of ethnic identities and their political manifestations.

Instrumentalist theories of ethnonationalism have proven very popular among specialists of Eastern Europe. V.P. Gagnon uses such a theory to explain ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.⁹⁷ Gagnon argues that violence in this region was not the result of some deep and intense dislike between groups and that these groups did not want war. He argues instead that violence was produced by Serbian elites using conflictual strategies presented in terms of the interests of the Serbian people. He considers particularly crucial the definition of collective interests by elites who, by selectively choosing myths and images, attempt to project their own interests their group. This simultaneous construction of identity and interest puts political elites in a privileged position to mobilize a population behind claims and issues whose legitimacy they no longer have to demonstrate. Gagnon concludes his analysis by arguing that the causes for the wars of the former Yugoslavia are similar to those of other ethnic conflicts around the world. These causes are "not ancient

96 Paul Brass, "The Pundjab Crisis and the Unity of India", in *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison*, pp.169-219.

97 V.P. Gagnon, Jr. "Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict. The Case of Serbia", in Michael E. Brown et al. (eds), *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996), pp.132-168. First published in *International Security*, 19 (1994/95), pp.130-166.

hatreds, but rather the purposeful actions of political actors who actively create violent conflict, selectively drawing on history in order to portray it as historically inevitable."⁹⁸

Taras Kuzio and Andrew Wilson have used a similar approach to explain contemporary nationalism in Ukraine. These authors take exception with primordialist and structuralist approaches to the Ukrainian nationalist movement. Their discussion of the latter leads them to argue that "[C]oncrete political actions create history not abstract forces, and therefore any explanation of events must always concentrate on describing the available channels of political activity and genuinely active agents."⁹⁹ This critique directs them to political elites as the central cause for the resurgence of Ukrainian nationalism. They argue that this resurgence was the result of the behaviour of former communist leaders who grasped nationalism "both as the best means of legitimating their challenge to the centre, and as a reintegrative strategy for the territories they hoped to control."¹⁰⁰

Instrumentalist theories of ethnonationalism have several comparative advantages over primordialist and structuralist theories. First, they focus on the processes that lie at the heart of ethnonationalism. They provide great insight into how identities are created, transformed and crystallized, how interests are defined, and how groups are mobilized following the politicization of their identity. Primordialist theories are particularly inefficient in providing such insight, for they take ethnic identities and their political manifestations as 'givens'. Second, instrumentalist theories are able to address the specifics of ethnonationalism such as its timing, claims and institutionalization in the political system,

98 V.P. Gagnon, Jr. " Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict. The Case of Serbia", p.166.

99 Taras Kuzio and Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), p.9.

100 Ibid., p.17.

and to account for its contingencies, fluctuations, irregularities and variations through time and space. Structuralist theories are especially weak at gaining knowledge into these issues, for their reliance on macro structures leads to very abstract explanations. Instrumentalist theories have been widely used to explain ethnonationalism in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe but very rarely to deal with the same phenomenon in Western societies. There seems to be a reluctance on the part of specialists of ethnonationalism in the West to recognize the central role of elites in creating, shaping and guiding nationalist movements while this role has been widely recognize by scholars of developing countries. The exact causes for this discrepancy are unclear, but they are likely related to assumptions concerning the implications of development and the different nature of politics, and identities, in the developing and developed world. The idea that the level of development and liberal-democratic traditions and institutions of Western societies leads to elite behaviour that is fundamentally different from non-Western societies is likely one such assumption. The notion that the 'tribes' and 'ethnic groups' of the latter are also fundamentally different from the 'nations' of the former is probably another.

The use of instrumentalist approaches needs to include a caveat. Some scholars have argued that there is nothing specific about nationalist movements and that they are no more than a form of interest group that can deliver goods to their members. This argument is especially visible in the writings of many rational choice theorists. In his later work, Michael Hechter has used a rational choice approach to explain why people belong to, and vote for, nationalist parties.¹⁰¹ He argues that nationalist parties exist and attract votes because their members and voters think they can provide them with benefits. This argument suggests that ethnonationalism is the product of cost-benefit calculations and "[T]he party is

¹⁰¹ Margaret Levi and Michael Hechter, "A Rational Choice Approach to the Rise and Decline of Ethnoregional Political Parties", in Edward A. Tiryakian and Ronald Rogowski (eds), *New Nationalisms of the Developed West*, pp.128-146.

seen, in other words, as a credible pressure group.”¹⁰² This view also suggests that theorists should not see in ethnonationalism an independent object of study. Indeed, in the conclusion of *New Nationalisms of the Developed West*, Ronald Rogowski argues that theories of ethnonationalism could and should be dissolved “into a general, parsimonious, elegant and well supported *theory of political cleavage*” and adds that he is “rejecting the perspective that inspired and informed this book: that there was something self-evidently distinctive (...) about nationalism as a species of political cleavage.”¹⁰³

There are several reasons why viewing ethnonationalism as a form of interest group politics limits our understanding of the phenomenon. First, nationalist movements and interest groups have fundamentally different relationships with the state. The former looks to take control of state institutions and maximize their autonomy whereas the latter only expects to shape policies. Nationalist movements and interest groups produce different power dynamics and do not affect political outcomes in similar ways. Second, nationalist movements are not only the result of strategic calculations but also the product of complex patterns of competition, conflict, cooperation and influence that produce consequences not always planned or expected by actors. Third, the emphasis on material rewards marginalizes the symbolic dimensions of ethnonationalism. Finally, defining nationalist movements as interest groups leaves analysts unprepared for their emergence since ethnic categories or ethnic communities that do not express any claims are considered unimportant. Indeed, scholars who equate ethnonationalism with interest group politics

102 Jack A. Brand, “Nationalism and the Noncolonial Periphery. A Discussion of Scotland and Catalonia” in *New Nationalisms of the Developed West*, pp.277-293.

103 Ronald Regowski, “Conclusion”, in *New Nationalisms of the Developed West*, p.384. The author’s emphasis.

"are nearly always taken by surprise when (...) ethnic movements suddenly burst forth in a political arena previously dominated by conventional interests associations."¹⁰⁴

While instrumentalism has the potential to provide insight into ethnonationalism in Western societies, it suffers from one serious flaw: the lack of consideration given to political institutions. Patterns of elite competition and influence are not created in a vacuum. They are shaped by such political institutions as state structures, party systems, and systems of territorial distribution of power. Moreover, political institutions do more than simply structure elite behaviour. Their sheer weight produces long and short-term effects on social and political outcomes that can not be reduced to, or understood simply in terms of, the behaviour of individual actors. In short, political institutions play a key role in the construction, transformation, politicization and mobilization of ethnic identities. The tendency of instrumentalist theorists to ignore political institutions leads them to overestimate the fluidity and reversibility of ethnic identities in several situations. Ethnic identities are not static or irreversible but their institutional context may increase or decrease their potential for fluidity and reversibility. The marginalization of political institutions as a factors shaping ethnonationalism is a problem that also affects primordialist and structuralist approaches. Primordialists have tended to view institutions only as dependent variables, that is, as instruments available to manage identities, claims and conflictual situations they consider 'givens.' Structuralists have emphasized macro socio-economic structures at the expense of political institutions. In short, most scholars of ethnonationalism do not give political institutions their proper theoretical importance.

There are some exceptions. Joane Nagel has stressed the role of political institutions and public policies in the construction or reconstruction of ethnic identities, and in their

104 Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison*, p.257.

mobilization.¹⁰⁵ She holds that political institutions shape the boundaries of ethnic groups and the level of ethnic mobilization. She identifies two types of institutions that affect ethnic identities and their political manifestations: the rules of political participation and regionalization. Discussing the impact of regionalization, she argues that the 1960 division of Nigeria into three regions created three ethnic groups and ethnically-based political parties where there were several different, sometimes competing, communities. Nagel argues that regionalization, as was the case in Nigeria, tends to construct or reinforce ethnic identities and promote ethnic politics. In fact, Nagel's central argument is that "[T]he recognition of ethnicity as a basis for political organization and claimsmaking legitimates ethnic mobilization."¹⁰⁶ She also argues that policies providing particular statuses to groups contribute to the institutionalization of ethnic identities and their political claims. Nagel alerts the theorist of ethnonationalism and the political practitioner that institutional and policy changes designed to avoid or manage ethnic conflict often increase the sense of ethnic identity, the strength of claims and the acuteness of conflict.

Donald Horowitz is another scholar who has given substantial importance to political institutions in his analysis of ethnic conflict. He argues that parties and party systems 'affect' as well as 'reflect' and are therefore instrumental in structuring ethnic conflict. He remarks, for example, that "societies that are deeply riven along a preponderant ethnic cleavage (...) tend to throw up party systems that exacerbate ethnic conflict."¹⁰⁷ Horowitz argues that schemes of territorial division of power create patterns of power struggle which drive politics in multiethnic societies. He suggests that "[F]ederalism and

105 Joane Nagel, "The Political Construction of Ethnicity", in Susan Olzak and Joane Nagel (eds), *Competitive Ethnic Relations*, pp.93-112.

106 Ibid., p.98.

107 Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups In Conflict*, p.291.

regional autonomy are devices that can channel conflicts in an intraethnic or interethnic direction.”¹⁰⁸ He also considers that policies adopted for purposes unrelated to ethnic conflict management, such as economic restructuring, often affect relations between ethnic groups.¹⁰⁹

Michael Keating’s work on territorial politics in the West is sensitive to both political institutions and elites. He suggests that systems and strategies of territorial management and representation have profound consequences on politics in peripheral or culturally-distinct regions. His focus on these schemes of territorial governance and the complex structures linking regions with the central state enables him to consider the effect of institutions, policies and patterns of elite influence on ethnonationalism and related manifestations of territorial politics. His concern with the weight of institutions translates into a particular focus on state regionalization as an enduring structural determinant of territorial politics.¹¹⁰ The impact of elites on territorial solidarities is explored through their role as a link between regions and the state, and as agents of bargaining and mobilization over public policies.¹¹¹ Keating’s framework is particularly attractive because it centres on

108 Donald Horowitz, “How to Begin Thinking Comparatively About Soviet Ethnic Problems”, in Alexander J. Motyl (ed), *Thinking Theoretically About Soviet Nationalities. History and Comparison in the Study of the USSR*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p.18.

109 Horowitz gives the example of the creation of regional economic councils in the Soviet Union. Ibid., p.19.

110 Michael Keating, “The Political Economy of Regionalism”, in Michael Keating and John Loughlin (eds), *The Political Economy of Regionalism*, (London: Frank Cass, 1997), pp.17-40.

111 Michael Keating, *State and Regional Nationalism. Territorial Politics and the European State*, p.22.

intermediate-level variables, and is able to produce historically-grounded explanations and generalizations that address the specifics of territorial politics.

1.3-Building a Theoretical Framework for Ethnonationalism: Historical Institutionalism and Elite Analysis.

The most useful theoretical framework for the study of ethnonationalism is one that enables the scholar to illuminate the processes of identity creation and transformation, interest definition, and nationalist mobilization. The preceding literature review has revealed that instrumentalist approaches have been generally more successful than primordialist or structuralist approaches in shedding light on these processes. This result points to the necessity of placing elites at the centre of a framework for ethnonationalism. At the same time, the marginalization of the impact of political institutions on ethnonationalism has more than likely hampered the capacities of theories to reflect on its central processes. Therefore, both political elites and institutions have to occupy a prominent position in any framework that seeks to produce theories able to explain how ethnonationalism actually operates.

1.3.1 Political Opportunity Structure and Frames of Collective Action: Insight from Social Movement Theory.

Recent scholarship on social movements has addressed issues of identity construction, interest definition and political mobilization. Social movement theorists do not assume that individuals are born environmentalists, feminists or peace activists. They generally consider that interests and identities are politically and socially constructed. They also recognize that the political importance of issues is variable through time and space, and that the causes for political mobilization are mostly found outside the grievances themselves. Scholars of ethnonationalism can find inspiration in the major questions that

are on the agenda of social movements theorists.¹¹² These questions include: How are identities constructed and transformed ? How are interests defined? How are people mobilized ? The parallel between ethnonationalism and social movement scholarships is useful and sensible. After all, ethnonationalism is a movement, comprising leaders and followers, and a form of identity politics.

Social movements theorists who have addressed issues of identity creation, interest definition and political mobilization have put institutions and elites at the centre of their own framework. Their preoccupation with the impact of institutions and elites on the emergence and development of social movements has produced the concepts of political opportunity structure and collective action frames. These concepts capture the idea that the construction of meaning is a prerequisite for political mobilization. Scholars of ethnonationalism could find in these two contributions substantial insight for the construction of their own theoretical framework.¹¹³

The concept of political opportunity structure emphasizes variables outside social movements themselves. It has been elaborated to explain why grievances associated with specific socio-economic conditions produce contentious political action only at the certain times and in certain places. Sidney Tarrow states "that contention is more closely related to opportunities for-and limited by constraints upon- collective action than by the persistent social or economic factors that people experience."¹¹⁴ He argues that the timing and

112 Milton J. Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp.29-32.

113 The usefulness of the political opportunity structure for the study of ethnonationalism has been suggested by Milton Esman. See *Ethnic Politics*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp.31-32.

114 Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement. Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.71.

intensity of social movements are heavily dependent on their institutional environment. Tarrow distinguishes between stable and changing aspects of opportunity. The former refers primarily to state structures. Tarrow notes that the territorial distribution of power is a key dimension of the stable aspect of opportunity and a crucial determinant for the action of social movements. He argues that federal systems present a wider range of opportunity than unitary states, and uses this structural difference to explain the different manifestations of the student movement in the 1960s in France and the United States.¹¹⁵

Kitschelt has argued that the degree of openness of political systems shapes to a large extent the behaviour of social movements.¹¹⁶ He argues that an open political system characterized by a strong legislature, a multi-party system, and the use of a proportional representation facilitates the integration of movements and reduces the level of confrontation. If the stable aspects of political opportunity are associated with the structure and strength of the state, and the openness of the political system, changing aspects refer to political alignment, coalition and competition. Tarrow argues that "conflicts within and among elites encourage outbreaks of contention", and that "they encourage portions of the elite that are out of power to seize the role of 'tribunes of the people.'"¹¹⁷ Theorists of social movements have welcomed the concept of political opportunity structure as an insightful approach to contentious politics. They have highlighted the ability of this concept

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.81.

¹¹⁶ Herbert P. Kitschelt, "Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest. Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies", *British Journal of Political Science*, 16 (1986), pp.57-85.

¹¹⁷ Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement. Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, p.79.

to provide more specific explanations than structuralist theories and to go beyond the cultural and identity focus of New Social Movement theorizing.¹¹⁸

The concept of collective action frames has been developed by specialists of social movements to explain why mobilization does not consistently occur even when structural opportunities are present. These theorists define frames as cognitive schemas that simplify and interpret 'reality' through the selective encoding of specific events, behaviour and situations.¹¹⁹ They hold that collective feelings of injustice and the belief in the possible correction of a situation are necessary conditions for mobilization. They argue that these perceptions are conditioned by a process of social and political construction they call 'framing'. This process represents the "conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action."¹²⁰ Therefore, framing is a strategic activity,¹²¹ and frames are created, transformed and used by 'movement entrepreneurs' to convert passivity into political

118 Paul Byrne, *Social Movements in Britain*, (London: Routledge, 1997), p.58.

119 David E. Snow and Robert Benford, "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest," in Aldon Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (eds), *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p.137.

120 This is David Snow's definition taken from Doug McAdam, John McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald. See "Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes-toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements", in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements. Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.6.

121 Mayer N. Zald, "Culture, ideology, and strategic framing", in Doug McAdam, John McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald (eds), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements. Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, p.261.

action.¹²² Competition is the motor of strategic framing. Indeed, the definition of situations and claims emerges from inter- and intra-movement competition.¹²³

Social movement leaders construct meaning and engage in political mobilization in three ways. First, they manufacture and adapt identities, selecting and using appropriate symbols, in the context and for the purpose of their own struggles. Second, they define situations and events. This description, which also comes in the context of social and political interactions, almost always involves claims of injustice which in turn triggers righteous anger.¹²⁴ Third, they connect the constructed identity with situations and events they have defined as unjust. The concept of collective action frames, and its focus on movement entrepreneurs, has enabled theorists of social movements to capture the subjective, symbolic, and emotional aspects of contentious politics, and to use it to deal with questions of construction, definition and mobilization.

The recent focus of social movement theorists on elites and institutions through the concepts of political opportunity structure and frames of collective action has enabled them to build a framework that provides answers to questions relative to the construction and transformation of identities, the definition of interests, and political mobilization. In turn, these answers have provided insight into the specifics of social movements and accounted for their contingencies and irregularities. Theorists of ethnonationalism need to answer very similar questions in order to better understand the phenomenon. They also need a similar

122 Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement. Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, p.110 and p.112.

123 Mayer N. Zald, "Culture, ideology, and strategic framing", in Doug McAdam, John McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald (eds), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements. Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, p.269.

124 William Gamson, *Talking Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.32.

framework, but one that is able to address the particular relationship that nationalist movements have with political power and institutions. Furthermore, this framework should be able to deal with the macro-historical dimension specific to nationalist movements. The theoretical framework for this study builds upon two general and complementary approaches to politics: historical institutionalism and elite analysis.

1.3.2 Historical Institutionalism: Structuring Ethnonationalism.

Political science has experienced a renewed interest for institutions in the last decade or so.¹²⁵ This development is reflected in the growing importance of the new institutionalist literature.¹²⁶ Of course, the focus of political scientists on institutions is not a new phenomenon. The field of comparative politics was dedicated, until the mid-1950s, to the study of formal-legal structures. This 'old' institutionalism was accused of being descriptive, a-theoretical, parochial and non-comparative.¹²⁷ These criticisms triggered a major change in the discipline as society-centred approaches, whether they spoke of

125 R. Kent Weaver and Bert A. Rockman (eds), *Do Institutions Matter ? Government Capabilities in the United States and Abroad*, (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1993); James March and Johan Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions*, (New York: Free Press, 1989).

126 Peter Hall, *Governing the Economy: The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France*; (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Ellen M. Immergut, *Health Politics: Interests and Institutions in Western Europe*, (New York: Reagan, Thatcher, and the Politics of Retrenchment, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Sven Steinmo et al. (eds), *Structuring Politics. Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Paul Pierson and Miriam Smith, "Bourgeois Revolutions? The Policy Consequences of Resurgent Conservatism," *Comparative Political Studies*, 25 (1993), pp.487-520.

127 Roy Macridis, *The Study of Comparative Government*, (New York: Random, 1955).

groups, classes or simply civil society,¹²⁸ became favoured over institutions-centred ones. The behavioural revolution was particularly influential in switching the focus of the discipline away from institutions to observable individual behaviour. While institutions never completely 'disappeared from the agenda', few theorists seriously considered their role in shaping political outcomes.¹²⁹ Indeed, most studies that dealt with institutions conceptualized them as being ultimately dependent upon societal factors.¹³⁰ The early new institutionalist work was a reaction to this societal bias of comparative politics as it sought, not only to make more room for institutions in the study of politics, but also, and more importantly, to give them theoretical importance.¹³¹ These studies were instrumental in defining the general objective of the movement which is to conceptualize institutions as a variable affecting political outcomes.

128 The neo-marxist focus on class, the pluralist and neo-pluralist use of groups and the emphasis of the political economy literature on civil society are all examples of society-centred approaches to politics. See Edward P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, (London: Gollancz, 1963); Robert Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961); Charles Lindblom, *Politics and Markets. The World's Political Economic Systems*, (New York: Basic Books, 1977); John Keane (ed), *Civil Society and the State. New European Perspectives*, (London: Verso, 1988).

129 Steinmo and Thelen mention Samuel Huntington and Reinhart Bendix as exceptions. See Sven Steinmo and Kathleen Thelen, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics," in *Structuring Politics. Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*, p.4.

130 Structural-functionalism produced these types of studies. See Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*, (Boston: Little Brown, 1966).

131 Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions. A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Eric Nordlinger, *On the Autonomy of the Democratic State*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

While new institutionalism has a definite 'theoretical core' embodied by the idea that institutions play a crucial and autonomous role in shaping political behaviour, it is not a unified school of thought.¹³² In fact, three streams of new institutionalism developed in relative isolation from one another: rational choice, sociological and historical.¹³³

Rational choice institutionalism emerged when scholars turned to the rules of the American Congress to explain the voting behaviour of legislators.¹³⁴ This scholarship builds on a set of assumptions concerning the nature of political actors and institutions. It views political actors as self-interested maximizers who engage in highly sophisticated strategic calculus, and institutions as the product of this rational thinking. Since rational choice institutionalists deal with actors' goals and preferences at the level of assumptions,¹³⁵ they consider them 'givens.' They argue, however, that institutions shape

132 Ellen M. Immergut, "The Theoretical Core of the New Institutionalism," *Politics and Society*, 26 (1998), pp.5-34.

133 Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C.R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," *Political Studies*, 44 (1996), pp.936-57. Ellen Immergut calls the sociological branch 'organization theory'. See "The Theoretical Core of the New Institutionalism," p.14. Steinmo and Thelen distinguish only two approaches, rational choice and historical institutionalism. See "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics," p.7. Some authors identify a fourth branch, the new institutionalism in economics which is akin to rational choice but "puts more stress on property rights, rents, and competitive selection mechanisms." Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C.R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," p.936, note 1.

134 Ibid., pp.943-44. Rational choice institutionalism has spawned contributions such as Mathew D. McCubbins and Terry Sullivan, eds., *Congress: Structure and Policy*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); John Ferejohn, "Law, Legislation and Positive Political Theory" in Jeffrey Banks and Eric Hanushek (eds), *Modern Political Economy. Old Topics, New Directions*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.191-215; Kenneth A. Shepsle and Barry R. Weingast, "Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions", *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 19 (1994), pp.149-179.

135 Sven Steinmo and Kathleen Thelen, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Perspective", p.8.

strategies and choices. for the expectations that rational actors have regarding the behaviour of other actors is conditioned by the institutional environment. For rational choice institutionalists, institutions shape political behaviour as they impose constraints on political actors or offer them opportunities for action. It is in this strategic context that institutions affect political outcomes.¹³⁶

Sociological institutionalism developed primarily within the field of organization theory.¹³⁷ This branch of new institutionalism extends the definition of institutions beyond formal-legal structures to include cultural and symbolic systems.¹³⁸ Sociological institutionalists do not view the emergence of organizations as the result of the search for efficiency of rational self-maximizers but argue that they are the product of a specific cultural environment. This formation process has important consequences for the nature of formal institutions, as they embody the cultural practices and symbolic content of a particular context. The symbolic codes, cognitive scripts, models and categories produced by these formal institutions have a great influence on political behaviour, for they socialize individuals in a way that renders their actions socially and culturally acceptable.¹³⁹ Hence,

136 Ibid., p.7.

137 Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C.R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," p.946.

138 Recent sociological institutionalist studies include, Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio, *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Frank Dobbin, *Forging Industrial Policy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Neil Fligstein, *The Transformation of Corporate Control*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

139 Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C.R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," pp.948-49.

identities and preference are not 'givens.' They are constituted by "the institutional forms, images and signs provided by social life."¹⁴⁰

Historical institutionalism is the branch of new institutionalism that developed most specifically as a reaction to the debates within political science between pluralists, neo-marxists and structural-functionalists. Historical institutionalists opposed the conceptualization of the state as a neutral arena where groups struggled, an instrument in the hands of a dominant class or the natural product of social needs. They argued that the state was a set of potentially autonomous institutions that could affect the structure and outcome of competition between groups.¹⁴¹ The fact that the contested role and importance of state structures was the initial focal point of historical institutionalism explains in large part why, contrary to sociological institutionalism, it defines institutions primarily as formal organizations, rules and procedures. Indeed, historical institutionalism is mostly interested in political institutions. There is a general agreement among historical institutionalists that what is meant by institutions are such features as "the rules of electoral competition, the structure of party systems, the relations among various branches of government, and the structure and organization of economic actors like trade-unions."¹⁴²

Power and interests are central themes of historical institutionalism.¹⁴³ This approach does not constitute an outright rejection of the pluralist assumption of competing interest groups. Indeed, it embraces the idea that power is at the centre of politics. It holds,

140 Ibid., p.948.

141 Peter Evans et al. (eds), *Bringing the State Back In*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

142 Sven Steinmo and Kathleen Thelen, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics," p.2.

143 Ellen M. Immergut, "The Theoretical Core of the New Institutionalism," p.16.

however, that power relationships are structured by institutions. A central preoccupation of historical institutionalists has been to show how institutional designs favour some groups at the expense of others while paying particular attention to cross-national and historical variations.¹⁴⁴ This preoccupation with the institutional patterns of power distribution and structuring has translated into a focus on the policy process. Indeed, scholars wishing to highlight the biases inherent to political institutions have found particularly attractive case studies by conducting historical comparisons of social, economic and fiscal policies.¹⁴⁵

The historical institutionalist view of interests and preferences differs substantially from that of rational choice institutionalism. While historical institutionalists readily accept the idea that institutions shape actors' strategies, they insist that preferences and goals are also affected by institutional frameworks. For historical institutionalists, preferences, goals, interests, and even identities are politically constructed. They are not 'givens' but represent something to be explained.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, institutions not only play a crucial role in the organization and mobilization of interests and identities, they are also prominent in their definition. Historical institutionalism does not suggest that institutions consistently operate a radical re-socialization of citizens but simply holds that they "act as filters that

144 Bo Rothstein, "Labor-market institutions and working-class strength" in Sven Steinmo et al. (eds), *Structuring Politics. Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*, pp.33-53; Victoria C. Hattam, *Labour Visions and State Power: the Origins of Business Unionism in the United States*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

145 Ellen M. Immergut, *Health Politics: Interests and Institutions in Western Europe*; Peter Hall, *Governing the Economy. The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France*; Sven Steinmo, *Taxation and Democracy: Swedish, British and American Approaches to Financing the Modern State*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

146 Theda Skocpol, "Why I am an Historical Institutional", *Polity*, 28 (1995), p.105.

selectively favor particular interpretations either of the goals toward which political actors strive or of the best means to achieve these ends.”¹⁴⁷

The emphasis on the contingencies and irregularities of history is another important feature of historical institutionalism.¹⁴⁸ This approach opposes the idea of an inherent logic to history. It does not view history as a coherent sequence of events resulting from the behaviour of rational self-interested maximizers but rather as the contingent product of the interactions of a diversity of actors and institutions. The process of institutional development is integrated into this vision of history, for historical institutionalism situates the emergence of institutions in a complex world marked by various patterns of relationships between a multitude of actors and already existing institutions. Historical institutionalism chooses to emphasize unexpected developments and incongruities as opposed to continuity and regularities. It is therefore philosophically able to deal with change. This conception of history has prompted one observer to argue that historical institutionalism turns to history as a philosophy or a theory.¹⁴⁹ It also uses history as a method. Historical institutionalism advocates the use of a comparative-historical method to illuminate the causes for cross-national differences and similarities.¹⁵⁰ This method consists in analyzing ‘slices of history’ from different social systems focusing on the effect of political institutions on a phenomenon. This historical method does not preclude attempts at generalizations. Historical institutionalism is a theoretical enterprise. It does not,

147 Ellen M. Immergut, “The Theoretical Core of the New Institutionalism,” p.20.

148 Ibid., p.19.

149 Idem.

150 Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions. A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*, pp.33-40.

however, consider possible nor desirable the grand-theorizing associated with the behavioural revolution but rather seeks to establish historically-grounded generalizations leading to middle-range theorizing.

Most scholars working with a historical institutionalist approach have been particularly active in the field of public policy where they have sought to explain the particular features of state policies in areas such as health, welfare and industrial development.¹⁵¹ A few others have extended the theoretical insight of historical institutionalism to different areas of study. In fact, the pioneer work on historical institutionalism tackled the issue of revolution.¹⁵² More recently, historical institutionalism has been brought into the debate over the nature of the European Union where it has suggested different interpretations of the integration and governance processes.¹⁵³ The potential of this approach remains largely unexploited. An historical institutionalist approach to ethnonationalism brings to the field theoretical, conceptual and methodological tools that may be used to shed light on the processes of identity formation, transformation, crystallization, interest definition, and identity politicization and politicization. Three aspects of the historical institutionalist approach are especially worthy of consideration as it applies to ethnonationalism.

151 See particularly the contributions in Sven Steinmo et al. (eds), *Structuring Politics. Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*.

152 Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions. A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*.

153 See Paul Pierson, "The Path to European Integration. A Historical Institutional Analysis," *Comparative Political Studies*, 29 (1996), pp.123-163; Mark A. Pollack, "The New Institutionalism and EC Governance: The Promise and Limits of Institutional Analysis," *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration*, 9, (1996), pp.429-458.

First, historical institutionalism brings to the study of ethnonationalism a distinctively historical perspective and a framework that incorporates a diversity of causal factors. The historical institutionalist 'philosophy of history' represents a particularly attractive response to the a-historical tendencies of primordialism. Its openness towards different causal factors allows the theorist to avoid determinism. Historical institutionalists do not claim that institutions are the sole determinant of political outcomes. Indeed, despite its emphasis on political institutions as a key determinant of political outcomes, the historical institutionalist framework includes much more than institutions. Two aspects of this framework are especially important. First, it makes room for agency. Historical institutionalism stresses the interactions between actors and institutions. It does not only focus on the many ways in which institutions shape the behaviour of political actors but also on how institutions are shaped and re-shaped by these actors. Historical institutionalism "allows us to examine the relationship between political actors as objects and as agents of history."¹⁵⁴ Second, historical institutionalism does not ignore macro-level structures. It acknowledges, for example, that the socio-economic structures left by the development of a capitalist economy represent important environmental conditions that affect social and political action. It argues, however, that institutions provide a crucial and non-neutral linkage between circumstances and agency.

Second, the historical institutionalist emphasis on the contingencies of history, and the complex patterns of causality they posit, leads them to argue that political outcomes are 'path dependent.' They argue that these outcomes are shaped by contextual factors many of which are institutional.¹⁵⁵ Path dependency is the idea that institutions, once created, take

¹⁵⁴ Sven Steinmo and Kathleen Thelen, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics", p.10.

¹⁵⁵ Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C.R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," p.941.

'a life of their own' and may generate processes not intended or foreseen by their creators. It stresses the weight of institutions on social and political life. The concept of path dependency is particularly useful to understand the role of institutions in the formation, transformation, politicization and mobilization of identities, for it highlights the discrete yet long-lasting and critical importance of institutional factors in producing social and political change. Path dependency draws the attention of the theorist of ethnonationalism to schemes of territorial distributions of power (federalism, status of autonomy, etc.), party systems and structures, electoral rules and procedures, constitutional provisions, and political practices as independent or critical intervening variables. This theoretical and methodological position allows the theorist to gain insight into the specifics and contingencies of ethnonationalism.

Third, historical institutionalism provides a framework for the role of institutions in structuring relations of cooperation and conflict between actors. At the centre of this framework is the idea that political agents do not operate in a vacuum but within an institutional setting. This setting may impose constraints on individuals or offer them opportunities for action. Historical institutionalism conceives of the impact of institutions on individual behaviour in two different ways. First, it holds that institutions structure political situations as they produce contextual conditions, some fluid and others rigid, that dictate different patterns of cooperation or conflict. The institutional impact on the definition of preferences, goals, interests and identities is a key feature of this structural force. Second, historical institutionalism accepts the idea of its rational choice cousin that institutions affect the strategic calculations of actors, shaping the agenda and rendering some alternatives more attractive than others. It also agrees with the argument that political actors use institutions for strategic purposes. These patterns of interactions between actors and institutions described by the historical institutionalist approach contains valuable insight for theories of ethnonationalism. They suggest that political institutions such as party

systems and territorial distribution of power arrangements create conditions that may or may not favour the construction and politicization of ethnic identities. They also suggest that ethnic identities are activated and stimulated when it makes political sense. In short, the historical institutionalist perspective on the relationship between actors and institutions holds that the development and politicization of ethnic identities are the result of conflictual situations produced by specific institutional contexts.

The strength of historical institutionalism as an approach to politics rests in its ability to explain variations and irregularities in political outcomes. This makes it a particularly promising approach to ethnonationalism, for one of the noticeable features of ethnic identities is their contingency. They appear only within some groups whose members share cultural markers. Their intensity varies in time and in space. They lead to political claims only in some occasions. The nature and intensity of these claims fluctuate through time, and vary from group to group. The contextual character of ethnic identities and their political consequences suggests that theorizing ethnonationalism necessitates an approach that stresses the weight of institutions on social and political life. Indeed, institutions contribute greatly to the production of the processes of ethnonationalism.

1.3.3 Elite Analysis: Power, Competition and Symbols.

Theorizing ethnonationalism involves explaining the causal mechanisms of its processes. Historical institutionalism, as an approach that gives political institutions theoretical importance, is able to address the impact of institutions on the processes that create and shape ethnonationalism. While this institutionalist perspective is crucial to the formulation of theories with increased explanatory power, it needs to be complemented by a theory of agency that is capable of illuminating the role of elites in triggering and guiding the processes of ethnonationalism. The elite analysis tradition lays the foundations for such a theory.

Classical elite theorists Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto, Roberto Michels, and their contemporary followers, offer strong and controversial theoretical, ontological and epistemological statements that have had a lasting impact on the study of politics and society.¹⁵⁶ At the heart of this tradition is the idea that all societies are characterized by a system of stratification between elites and non-elites. Not only is this cleavage universal, it is also the most fundamental. Elite theorists hold that "[G]overnment is always government by the few, whether in the name of the few, the one, or the many."¹⁵⁷

For Gaetano Mosca, there exists in every society a ruling class, or political class, that 'monopolizes power' and 'performs all political functions.'¹⁵⁸ The basis for this elite's power varies from society to society. Mosca argues that military strength, religious legitimacy, wealth, and knowledge have each been key determinants of the exercise of power at different periods in history. While the power basis of the political elite may change over time, the very existence of this elite is assured through mechanisms of legitimation and coercion and, most importantly, through the circulation of elites. This theme was emphasized by Vilfredo Pareto.¹⁵⁹ Pareto defines elites more broadly than

156 Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class (Elementi di Scienza Politica)*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1939); Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society (Trattato di Sociologia Generale)*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1935); Robert Michels, *Political Parties. A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, (New York: The Free Press, 1962). Contemporary elite theorists include Harold Lasswell and Daniel Lerner, *The Comparative Study of Elites*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1952); C.Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959); John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic. An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965); G. Lowell Field and John Highley, *Elitism*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980).

157 Harold Lasswell and Daniel Lerner, *The Comparative Study of Elites*, p.7.

158 Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class (Elementi di Scienza Politica)*, p.50.

159 Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society (Trattato di Sociologia Generale)*.

Mosca to encompass all individuals demonstrating superiority in their respective field. He distinguishes, however, between a governing elite and a non-governing elite. Pareto argued that the ability of a 'governing elite' to maintain its position of power and influence is a function of its willingness to allow for circulation through cooptation of prominent mass members. The failure to accommodate the most recalcitrant mass members necessarily leads to a violent change in this elite.

While Mosca and Pareto came to the conclusion that oligarchy was inevitable through broad historical comparisons (and, in the case of Pareto, socio-psychological analysis), Roberto Michels attempted an empirical-statistical test of this proposition.¹⁶⁰ Michels focused on the concept of organization. He directed his attention to political parties and used the German Social Democratic Party as a crucial case study. His conclusions reinforced Mosca and Pareto's arguments, for Michels found that oligarchy could be found even in a party claiming to represent the masses. This finding led Michels to state that oligarchy was a necessary consequence of any organization, a proposition commonly dubbed 'the iron law of oligarchy' by political scientists. He argued that oligarchy in organizations was explained mostly by the inherent need for representatives but also by the disinterest and incompetence of the masses in public affairs.

The legacy of elite theorists on the social sciences has been mixed. On the one hand, elite theory was at the forefront of the post-World War II debates in political science. It opposed the liberal pluralist view of the non-hierarchical organization of society¹⁶¹ while also taking exception to two Marxist positions: the definition of the 'ruling class' strictly in

¹⁶⁰ Robert Michels, *Political Parties. A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*.

¹⁶¹ Of particular importance in this debate was C.Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*.

economic terms and the possibility of a 'classless' society.¹⁶² Furthermore, the concept of elite has been used to explore politics in various countries and regions¹⁶³, and to tackle issues such as development¹⁶⁴ or immigrant communities.¹⁶⁵ On the other hand, elite theory's perceived anti-democratic bias, its conceptual vagueness and some shaky theoretical assumptions have greatly diminished its popularity among social scientists. These problems are not insurmountable, however, and they should not deter political scientists, and particularly scholars of ethnonationalism, from benefitting from the insight of elite analysis.

The theoretical statements of classical elite theorists have often been taken to be fundamentally at odds with democracy. This position is probably more the result of opinions voiced by Mosca, Pareto and Michels than it is related to the theory itself. Pareto and Mosca were conservatives and, therefore, suspicious of the masses. They were extremely critical of socialism, expressed reservations about democracy and representative government, and had an ambiguous relationship with fascism.¹⁶⁶ While classical elite

162 See Marvin Olsen, ed., *Power in Societies*, (New York: Macmillan, 1970), p.106.

163 Mark Wasserman, *Persistent Oligarchies. Elites and Politics in Chihuahua, Mexico 1910-1940*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); François-Charles Mougel, *Élites et système de pouvoir en Grande-Bretagne 1945-1987*, (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 1990); John Highley et al., *Elites in Australia*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979).

164 E. Bradford Burns and Thomas E. Skidmore, *Elites, Masses, and Modernization in Latin America, 1850-1930*, (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1979).

165 Marco Martiniello, *Leadership et pouvoir dans les communautés d'origine immigrée. L'exemple d'une communauté ethnique en Belgique*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992).

166 Mosca, for example, regretted the downfall of the parliamentary regime in Italy after having criticized it sharply. See Ettore A. Albertoni, *Mosca and the Theory of Elitism*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), p.82. Michels started his political life as a

theorists were critical of parliamentary government and tolerant of fascist regimes. elite analysis does not necessarily reflect an opposition to democracy. The degree of compatibility between elite analysis and democracy depends in large part on how the latter is defined. A substantive definition of democracy (government *by* the people) runs counter to elite theorists' basic argument that government is always the rule of the few. However, the circulation of elites described by the classical theorists suggests an equality of opportunity that allows for a certain compatibility between elite theory and the idea of substantive democracy. The procedural definition of democracy which emphasizes the electoral process, and more specifically the competition between political elites, is perfectly compatible with elite theory.¹⁶⁷ In fact, the idea that political competition is the key component of any democratic regime draws from this tradition.¹⁶⁸ Theorists of democracy have dubbed this idea the 'democratic elitist model.'¹⁶⁹ In short, elite analysis is not tied to one particular ideology nor does it need be elitist in the sense of advocating the submission and indifference of the masses. It is simply a realist theoretical approach to the study of politics and society.

socialist syndicalist but is said to have finished it close to the fascist regime. See Patrick Dunleavy and Brendan O'Leary, *Theories of the State*, (London: Macmillan, 1987), p.140.

- 167 On the relationship between elite theory and democracy, see T. B. Bottomore, *Elites and Society*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), pp.16-17 and pp.112-128.
- 168 The introduction of the concept of elite into democratic theory may be traced to Joseph Schumpeter. *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, (London: George Allen & Urwin, 1947). For comments on Schumpeter's use of elite theory, see T. B. Bottomore, *Elites and Society*, pp.18-19; Ettore A. Albertoni, *Mosca and the Theory of Elitism*, p.121.
- 169 Michael Margolis, *Viable Democracy*, (London: The MacMillan Press, 1979), pp.70-94.

The question of definition represents a more serious problem for elite theory. The difficulty in defining 'elite' is clearly noticeable in the writings of the early theorists. "For example, Mosca alternately refers to the same phenomenon as "political class," "ruling class," and "aristocracy," while Michels attaches several meanings to "oligarchy.""¹⁷⁰ The conceptual sloppiness of these writers prompted contemporary elite theorists to search for an acceptable definition.¹⁷¹ While the definitions proposed by these scholars varied greatly, they did share the ideas of power, leadership and influence ¹⁷². The source of an elite's influence (to choose one of these terms) is a source of controversy that further obfuscates the concept. Some theorists have favoured a sociological definition, insisting on the common 'social position' of those who hold power.¹⁷³ Others have opted for an occupational definition where elites are those who control various institutions.¹⁷⁴ The occupational definition brings more precision to the concept of elite than does the sociological one. It makes this concept easier to operationalize. Political elites are leaders of political parties, ministers, key advisers and high level civil servants. Military elites are

170 James A. Bill and Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr., *Comparative Politics. The Quest for Theory*, (Colombus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1973), p.158.

171 These theorists include C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*; William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society*, (New York: Free Press, 1959); Geraint Parry, *Political Elites*, (New York: Praeger, 1969); Suzanne Keller, *Beyond the Ruling Class: Strategic Elites in Modern Society*, (New York: Random House, 1963); G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America?*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967).

172 James A. Bill and Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr., *Comparative Politics. The Quest for Theory*, p.163.

173 William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society*, p.51.

174 G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America?* Domhoff's definition also has a sociological component as he emphasizes the links between those who occupy command position within institutions and "members of the American upper class." *Ibid.*, p.8.

army generals. Religious elites are high level clerics. Economic and financial elites are bankers, executives of large companies, and leaders of business associations. Labour elites are trade-union leaders. These categories are not objective or mutually exclusive but rather situational and often overlapping. They are used for their heuristic value.

The use of the elite analysis tradition in theories of ethnonationalism calls for an additional dimension to the concept of elite. In multiethnic societies, elites may be differentiated through the influence they exercise on specific ethnic groups. Therefore, a definition of elite for theories of ethnonationalism needs to reflect the idea of a subgroup exercising leadership within a larger ethnic group.¹⁷⁵ The basis for this subgroup's leadership is the position of its members within various institutions. This definition allows the analyst to focus particularly on political elites, but also to pay attention to elites in other realms. Indeed, these realms are overlapping and the struggle of different types of elites in the political arena is at the heart of ethnonationalism.

The work of classical elite theorists suffers from two other serious conceptual flaws. First, these theorists supposed a very high degree of consensus among elites. They viewed elites as "well organized and highly cohesive,"¹⁷⁶ conceptualizing them as a monolithic group. They argued that organization and cohesiveness were necessary to the very existence of elites and that this internal coherence explained their power. In fact, they held that these features ultimately separated the elite from the non-elite. They also emphasized elite cooperation at the expense of elite conflict. Second, classical elite theorists posited that the power of elites was almost unlimited and their actions virtually

175 Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison*, p. 14.

176 Marvin Olsen, ed., *Power and Societies*, p. 107.

unchecked.¹⁷⁷ They failed to recognize that elites do not operate in a vacuum. They paid very little attention to the institutional setting that provides the immediate context for elite behaviour or to the socio-economic structures that specify the long-term conditions in which this behaviour takes place.

These flaws have been corrected by contemporary elite theorists. First, these theorists have questioned the assumption that elites form an highly cohesive group. Instead, they have conceptualized elites as multiple, heterogeneous, and divided by rivalries.¹⁷⁸ John Porter has argued that "[E]lites both compete and cooperate with one another: they compete to share in the making of decisions of major importance for the society, and they cooperate because together they keep the society working as a going concern."¹⁷⁹ He has also stated that "[I]t is elites who have the capacity to introduce change, but changes bring about shifts in the relations between elites."¹⁸⁰ Porter's study was instrumental in re-conceptualizing the elite as a fluid group characterized by patterns of conflict as well as cooperation. His emphasis on the consequences of social and political change for elites also begins to address the second weakness of classical elite theory. Indeed, contemporary elite theorists have sought to reduce the determinacy assigned to elites by their predecessors.

177 G. Lowell Field and John Highley, *Elitism*, p. 18.

178 Giovanni Busino, *Elites et élitisme*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, Collection Que sais-je ?, no.2692, 1992), p.65.

179 John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic. An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*, p.27.

180 Idem.

This concern is at the centre of G. Lowell Field and John Higley's re-statement of the 'elitist paradigm.'¹⁸¹ These theorists make two key points. First, they hold that elites are kept in check by non-elites. Second, they argue that socio-economic conditions affect non-elite orientations and, consequently, elite behaviour. While the role of political institutions in shaping this behaviour is still notably absent from the new elite framework, it is better able than the old one to deal with the complex patterns of interactions within elites and between elites and non-elites, including the need for elites to gain support from the non-elites. It also stresses the larger socio-economic environment that specifies the long-term conditions shaping elite behaviour.

Elite analysis contains valuable insight for theories of ethnonationalism. First, it provides ontological and epistemological positions that allow the theorist to investigate the processes inherent to the development of ethnonationalism. Elite theorists present a view of society where the fundamental cleavage is between elites and non-elites. They hold that an understanding of politics and society requires a focus on elites. They argue that elites play a key role, not only in mobilizing non-elites who support their actions, but also in creating the conditions necessary for the development of such a support base. This argument suggests that the relationship between elites and ethnonationalism is not limited to the role of the former in mobilizing ethnic groups. Indeed, it implies that elites play an active role in laying the foundations and establishing the framework for nationalist mobilization. Therefore, it connects elites to the construction, transformation and politicization of collective identities, and to the definition of a group's interests.

Elite theorists also suggest an explanation for the causal connection between elite behaviour and these different processes. They hold that power and competition are the essence of politics and find in inter-elite relationships, particularly their struggle for power,

¹⁸¹ G. Lowell Field and John Higley, *Elitism*, pp.19-20. See the section entitled "The elitist paradigm restated", pp.18-47.

the ultimate source of social and political outcomes. This conclusion suggests to theorists of ethnonationalism that inter-elite competition and conflict are the motor behind the politicization, mobilization, and even the existence of ethnic identities.

The importance that elite analysis gives to the use of symbols by elites is another feature of this tradition that should make it attractive to scholars of ethnonationalism. Classical theorists stressed how elites create and manipulate symbols, myths and ideas to build legitimacy for their power. Mosca spoke of a 'political formula' which represented "a type of myth or universal moral principle upon which the actual exercise of power is justified and rationalized."¹⁸² Pareto called 'derivations' this process of legitimation through symbolic manipulation. Michels argued that the oligarchy used a 'general ethical principle' to frame their particular objectives in terms of 'general interests' and get the masses to support their actions.¹⁸³ This focus on the symbolic dimension of politics finds particular relevance in theories of ethnonationalism. Ethnonationalism is the realm of symbols, myths and emotions. The construction, transformation and politicization of ethnic identities involves providing subjective and symbolic meaning to objective markers. Elite theory suggests that cultural markers are given meaning by elites through symbolic manipulation, myth making and selective readings of history. It also suggests that these actions are part of an effort to create conditions conducive to the articulation of their claims. In other words, the politics of symbols and images are a way for elites to gain legitimacy for their interests, goals and aspirations, and constitute a weapon in their struggle with other elites. In short, an approach to ethnonationalism that borrows from elite analysis

¹⁸² James Bill and Robert Hardgrave, *Comparative Politics. The Quest for Theory*, pp.148-49.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.155.

allows the theorist to fully take into account the symbolic dimension of the phenomenon, and indeed give it superior theoretical importance .

Finally, elite analysis is methodologically attractive to scholars of ethnonationalism, for it favours broad historical comparisons. Mosca and Pareto sought to understand the nature of political elites and their relationship with non-elites using macro comparisons that involved both spatial and temporal dimensions. In fact, their enquiries into political elites are guided by an historical-comparative method similar to the one advocated by historical institutionalists. Elite analysis is especially conducive to comparative studies, for elites exist in all societies and political systems independently of time and place.¹⁸⁴ Its strong historical component makes it a good approach for long-term fluid phenomena such as ethnonationalism.

The choice of historical institutionalism and elite analysis as the central theoretical forces behind the approach to ethnonationalism developed in this study follows some claims and assessments that are worth reiterating. Ethnonationalism is a form of politics and a 'top-down' process. It is composed of three processes: the creation and transformation of ethnic identities, the definition of an ethnic group's interest, and nationalist mobilization. Theories of ethnonationalism need to be able to illuminate these processes to explain the emergence, evolution, transformation, claims, and institutionalization of nationalist movements. The failure of primordialist and structuralist theories to convincingly address these issues suggests that theories of ethnonationalism should centre around political institutions and elites. The relative success of instrumentalist theories in explaining ethnonationalism in Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe, and the widespread marginalization of the theoretical importance of political institutions provide a further impetus for theorists of ethnonationalism in Western societies to focus on elites and

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p.162.

institutions. Historical institutionalism and elite analysis' respective stress on the role of political institutions and elites in shaping social and political outcomes, and their potential to work in symbiosis, makes these two theoretical schools ideal for an approach to ethnonationalism in the West.

The idea that ethnonationalism is a political phenomenon created and shaped by political institutions and elites does not entail that all other factors are irrelevant. Political institutions and elites need to be placed in a socio-economic environment. Social and economic structures provide the larger context for the behaviour of political actors and the weight of political institutions. They specify long-term general conditions for the emergence and development of nationalist movements. Culture is an important element of nationalist movements. The cultural make-up of a society present specific options, and limitations, to political elites. The conceptualization of ethnonationalism as a 'top-down' process does not ignore the masses. Ethnonationalism is a movement, with leaders and followers. It can not exist unless the claims of political elites are supported by a substantial number of non-elites. In some cases the nationalist fervour of the masses may exceed that of the elites. When the processes of ethnonationalism have been set in motion by specific patterns of elite interaction and political institutions, they may be difficult to control and, indeed, to reverse. These caveats do not diminish the potential of an approach to ethnonationalism centred on political elites and institutions, and inspired by historical institutionalism and elite analysis. Political elites and institutions remain the motor of ethnonationalism. The integration of the latter two theoretical schools into one approach constitutes an attractive solution to the structure-agency dilemma that offers the tools necessary to explore the processes of ethnonationalism

1.4-Methodology.

This study takes political institutions and elites as its independent variables. From a theoretical standpoint, such a methodological choice decreases the level of abstraction of explanations usually provided by theories of ethnonationalism in the West. This problem has been pointed out by Thompson and Rudolph who insist on the necessity to provide a theoretical linkage between macro-level conditions and 'ethnoterritorial conflicts.'¹⁸⁵ This study directly connects elite behaviour and political institutions to ethnonationalism. More specifically, it focuses on patterns of elite interaction (competition, conflict, cooperation and influence), the weight and structural consequences of political institutions, and the relationship between the former and the latter. The patterns of elite interaction that produce and sustain ethnonationalism are of the intra- and inter-ethnic group variety. Political institutions such as state structures, party systems and arrangements of territorial distribution of power shape, and are shaped by, elite relationships. This study looks at inter-group and intra-group interactions within central institutions, within regional institutions and between elites in central and regional institutions

A clear methodological advantage resulting from the use of elite analysis and historical institutionalism for an approach to ethnonationalism is that it allows the researcher to use subgroups within ethnic groups as units of analysis rather than ethnic groups themselves. This strategy makes it possible to avoid three great mistakes in the study of ethnonationalism: reification, objectification and the conceptualization of ethnic groups as monolithic. Reification is "the tendency to attribute to mere categories a reality that they may not have or that may be merely temporary" and objectification is "the assumption that one or another category (...) represents a primal reality or has greater significance or is

185 Joseph R. Rudolph Jr. and Robert J. Thompson. "The Ebb and Flow of Ethnoterritorial Politics in the Western World", p.7.

more 'fundamental' than others."¹⁸⁶ Conceptualizing ethnic groups as monolithic supposes that they speak with one voice and obscures intra-group competition and conflict. The demands attributed to an ethnic group are in reality those of political parties and elites, and these demands are almost always multiple, different and, indeed, most often contradictory. Ethnic communities for which elites seek autonomy or independence are divided societies.¹⁸⁷

This study chooses to compare three cases: Belgium, Spain and Canada. The number of cases chosen allows for more powerful generalizations and theoretical claims than would a single case study. At the same time, it avoids the abstract theories of studies that work with a large number of cases. The comparative method chosen for this study is to compare 'most similar systems'¹⁸⁸, or in Arendt Lijphart's words, to compare 'comparable' cases.¹⁸⁹ The idea behind this method is that choosing social systems that share many characteristics enhances the possibility of establishing clear causal relationships, for many variables are automatically controlled. As Western industrialized liberal-democracies, Belgium, Spain and Canada share some key features that make them comparable cases.

186 Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison*, p.257.

187 Juan Díez Medrano, *Divided Nations. Class, Politics and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

188 Adam Przeworski and Henri Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*, (New York: Wiley-Inter-Science, 1970), pp.32-34.

189 Arendt Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method" in Roy Macridis and Bernard Brown (eds), *Comparative Politics. Notes and Readings*, (Homewood: The Dorsey Press, 1977), p.57. First published in *American Political Science Review*, 65 (1971), pp.682-93.

The first important feature is that they are not 'new states.' Political integration and ethnonationalism have been competing forces for much of their history. The result of more than a century of competing projects of nation-building is the existence of dual identities and loyalties. More specifically, the larger national identity is more prevalent in these states than they are, for example, in African states.¹⁹⁰ Second, the citizens of Belgium, Spain and Canada are presented with a greater number of non-ethnic identities than citizens of non-Western states. In the West, the Industrial Revolution and the Reformation produced cleavages that provided the background for distinct identities and opportunities for mobilization. Indeed, "[T]he moving forces of European history can be described broadly in terms of religion, nationalism and class. No such description would be apt for Asia and Africa."¹⁹¹ Movements emphasizing environmental or gender issues have also been more influential in the West than anywhere else, and have served to further complicate the locus of politics. Third, these countries have evolved, albeit quite differently, to be established liberal-democracies. They have also adopted, although at different times in their history and in different forms, schemes of territorial distribution of power. In short, the three cases chosen for this study have distinct but comparable historical, socio-economic, cultural and political experiences.

Ethnonationalism is at the heart of these countries' experiences and will shape heavily their future. So will other forms of territorial politics not permeated by references to the 'nation' which stimulate, and are stimulated by, nationalist movements. This thesis is primarily about ethnonationalism but as its dynamic is deeply embedded in the larger politics of territory, it also deals with regionalist movements. In Belgium, it is not only the formation, politicization and mobilization of a Flemish but also of Walloon, Brussels and

190 Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, pp.18-19.

191 Ibid., p.20.

even German-speaking identities which have come at the expense of the larger Belgian identity and brought claims that present a threat to the very survival of the state. In Spain, the creation of 'new' political identities in Andalucía, Valencia and the Canary Islands as well as the transformation of 'old' ones in Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia have been accompanied by nationalist mobilization and demands for a re-structuring of Spanish politics. In Canada, the claims associated with the emergence, politicization and mobilization of the Québécois identity, as well as Aboriginal and Western identities, have challenged the structures of the federation. The different identities, claims, strategies and consequences associated with the processes of ethnonationalism in these three societies are specific socio-political outcomes that need to be explained. The explanation for both the similarities and the differences between these cases lies in the impact of, and the interaction between, political institutions and elites.

The three cases of Belgium, Spain and Canada have been chosen because, while they share many general characteristics which make them 'comparable cases', they also have distinct historical institutional trajectories that can highlight the many development forms of ethnonationalism. Belgium was created as a unitary state, which it remained for 150 years. In this context, it developed conflict management strategies at the centre (featuring political elites) that have been regarded very positively by some theorists.¹⁹² In the last 30 years, it has undergone a unique process of federalization that has coincided with the manifestation of various territorial movements.

Spain's historical institutional history has more to do with regional autonomy than with centralization, a feature that makes it very different from the Belgian case. It has also experienced two events absent in the Belgian and Canadian cases: a repressively

192 See Arendt Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

centralizing dictatorship and a transition towards democracy which paved the way for the multiplication of nationalist and regionalist claims.

Contrary to Belgium and Spain, Canada's history is as a settler society where institutional development shaped, and was shaped by, the mixture of French, English and Aboriginal populations. Federal structures conditioning territorial politics have been in place for the last 130 years, much longer than in the two other cases. The two referendums on sovereignty held in Québec as well as the many rounds of constitutional negotiations represent the type of decisive moments for nationalist movements that are absent, or at least, less salient in Belgium or Spain.

This study seeks to put forward some generalizations and theoretical claims without having the pretension of developing a grand theory of ethnonationalism. Indeed, giving political institutions theoretical importance is antithetical to grand theorizing, for it emphasizes the contingencies, irregularities and distinct outcomes they produce. Furthermore the comparative method consisting of comparing 'comparable' cases provides explanations for a phenomena that occur in certain types of social systems at certain times. This is more a blessing than a limitation, for theories that are historically-grounded and limited in scope have more explanatory power than more general theories. Nevertheless, this study identifies processes that are at the centre of every nationalist movement. Its theoretical foundations may be used to explain ethnonationalism in different regions of the world.

Scholars of ethnonationalism have favoured different methods of analysis. Many of those who focus on economic variables choose to conduct quantitative analysis. The method best suited for an approach to ethnonationalism informed by historical institutionalism and elite analysis is qualitative analysis. Historical contingencies and the meaning of the processes of ethnonationalism can not be translated adequately into numbers.

This study uses primary sources such as election and survey results, and official political party and government documents, as well as secondary sources in English, French and Spanish. The object of this study is not to uncover new data but to give it new meaning. Its originality resides in its approach. Daniele Conversi expresses this well when he compares the role of a sociologist to that of a photographer (the analogy also works with a political scientist !).

By changing the perspective and the colour of the light filter, the same scene may assume a different appearance, revealing new and unexpected aspects. Eventually, the whole picture may change. The aim is indeed to explain the same phenomenon in a new light, rather than a new phenomenon in the same light.¹⁹³

Indeed, this study intends to provide new theoretical insight on a much discussed phenomenon by using a different approach. Its comparative dimension gives it an edge over most empirically grounded research in the field of ethnonationalism which have been case studies. This comparative dimension favours theoretical output.

The research design chosen for this study centres on the three processes of ethnonationalism rather than on the particular cases. This strategy makes this study truly comparative, and emphasizes analysis and theory-building. Therefore, the second chapter examines the process of ethnic identity formation and transformation. The third explores interest definition. The fourth addresses nationalist mobilization. The last chapter uses the insight drawn from the preceding theoretical discussion and the forthcoming comparison to discuss consociationalism.

¹⁹³ Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain. Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, p.8.

Chapter 2. Identity Formation and Transformation

Ethnonationalism is a form of identity politics. The claims and action of nationalist movements necessarily involve allusions to identity. They find legitimacy in references to the existence of a special community whose members are said to be united by a common culture and anchored to a well-delineated historical territory. However, cultural unity does not always pre-exist ethnonationalism. Even when it does, this unity is not perfect and usually lacks subjective meaning. In addition, the territory proclaimed to be sacred by nationalist leaders often lacks historical integrity, and its relationship with a specific ethnic group may be ambiguous. Consequently, the identities that are at the centre of ethnonationalism and other forms of territorial politics need to be explained. For this reason, and considering the special importance of the symbols and images associated with identities for nationalist, and also regionalist, politics, taking identity formation as a distinct process of ethnonationalism and territorial politics makes sense. This focus enables the analyst to explain, and account for, the emergence, transformation and timing of ethnic and territorial identities. Such is the objective of this chapter.

Cultural and structural theories bring little insight into identity formation and transformation in Belgium, Spain and Canada. Cultural theories suggest that identities are the natural and almost spontaneous product of cultural markers and the common experience they are said to produce. Our comparative analysis of the three aforementioned countries refutes this argument. Two seemingly straightforward cases, Flanders and the Basque Country, are particularly instructive with respect to the explanatory power of cultural theories. The Flemish identity may appear to be the simple expression of a group of Netherlandic speakers but the

reality is more complex. Present-day Flanders did not exist as a cultural, territorial or political unit before the late 19th century and consequently could not yield an identity. In the Basque case, identities derived from the historical provinces of Alava, Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa were dominant until the second half of the twentieth century despite a larger commonality of culture, language and even biological features related to blood types. Other cases show the weakness of cultural explanations to identity even more acutely. The Walloon identity emerged in the late 19th century despite an almost total lack of cultural, political and territorial unity. The same goes for Brussels, the Canadian 'West' and the Spanish autonomous communities that are not 'historical nationalities'. Moreover, most of these regions do not even have clearly distinctive cultural features that set them apart from the rest of the country. In the case of the Catalan, *Canadien* and (Canadian) Native identities, construction took place much earlier. This does not mean, however, that these identities should be understood in primordial terms. The re-conquest of the Iberian peninsula by the Catholics and the subsequent political-territorial structuring of the Spanish kingdom laid the foundations for the development of the Catalan identity. In Canada, colonial politics in New France was at the centre of the emergence of the *Canadien* identity and the idea of an 'Aboriginal people'.

Cultural theories also provide little insight into the transformation of identities. The transition from a French-Canadian to a *Québécois* identity was not the product of a cultural change but rather the consequence of a purposive switch from one cultural marker (religion) to another (language) and the adoption of a new territorial basis. The partial mutation of historical Aboriginal identities into new categories such as status Indians, non-status Indians,

Inuit and Metis was also unrelated to intrinsic cultural attributes. In Belgium, the development of the Walloon identity by elites who previously defined themselves and other Francophones as French-speaking Belgians (or simply Belgians) was the product of a voluntarist change in territorial anchoring similar to the one that brought the *Québécois* identity in Canada.

Structural theories, with their stress on macro economic variables, shed little more light than cultural ones on the development of regional/territorial identities in Belgium, Spain and Canada. The relationship between development, as embodied by variables such as industrialization, urbanization and economic growth, and the emergence of identities in these countries is inconclusive. At the broadest level, distinct identities have emerged in historically overdeveloped regions such as Catalonia and underdeveloped ones such as Galicia. More important is the fact that changes in macro economic conditions had no specific effect on identities. Development in Flanders and Québec did not undermine the identities that had developed when the two regions had rural-traditional economies. The Walloon identity developed when the region was relatively overdeveloped but survived, and even thrived, in the context of a long-term economic decline. The specific timing of identities, in terms of both their emergence and transformation, is another issue that structural theories are as unable to tackle as cultural ones. The evolution of regional identities in Belgium, Spain and Canada does not consistently follow macro structural changes. It is true that the modernization processes experienced by these countries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries coincided with the rise to prominence of many of these identities. However, if there is coincidence in some cases, there is no clear causation. References to macro socio-economic changes were notably absent from the discourse of the movements that were at the centre of the emergence

of the Walloon and Flemish identities. Even in the cases of Catalonia and the Basque Country where a stronger correlation may be drawn, it is still necessary to consider previous historical developments and to establish a linkage between macro variables and outcomes. Finally, the many identity formations and shifts that occurred either before or after the modernization boom of the turn of the century cast further doubts on the theoretical importance of macro economic factors. Aboriginal identities in Canada pre-exist modernization as do the Spanish 'historical nationalities'. The Brussels and *Québécois* identities are from the 1960s whereas regional identities in Spanish areas such as Andalusia, the Balearic Islands, Valencia, the Canary Islands and others have only really developed in the last 25 years.

This chapter suggests a political explanation for the process of identity formation. By focusing on political elites and institutions in a historical perspective, it uncovers the specific mechanism behind the creation, re-production and transformation of regional identities. A few modest generalizations, or perhaps simply general observations, will be formulated on the relationship between political elites/institutions and regional identities from the empirical material.

The presence of a clear relationship between, on the one hand, the struggle of elites to gain and protect a position of power and, on the other, the creation, sustaining and transformation of regional identities is a key claim of this study. Elite competition is central to the process of identity creation. Regional identities in Belgium, Spain and Canada have been to a large extent the contingent by-product of elite power struggles. In other words, they have partly been the result of socio-political struggles not necessarily or immediately related to the larger set of relations between ethnic groups and which had very little to do with

'ethnic antagonisms'. In the context of these struggles, elites shaped or re-drew boundaries between groups and sanctified or modified their territorial anchoring. Identities have also been constructed, re-produced and transformed through the purposive strategic action of elites. This behaviour has involved primarily the 're-discovery' of an historical/cultural heritage and the creation of new symbols.

There is a variety of relationship patterns that may produce regional identities. Competition between elites of different ethnic groups tends to trigger mechanisms leading to the construction of a political community that can serve as a source of, and grounding for, power. Competition between elites of different governmental levels has great identity-generating potential since political-institutional frameworks for communities/identities are already in place. In some instances, cooperation may also allow an elite to exert the influence to create and shape identities. Another key pattern of relationship in the creation and transformation of identities is competition between elites of the same ethnic group.

The key point concerning the relationship between political institutions and identities is that the former is not simply a reflection of the latter. Rather, institutions shape or even construct identities. More specifically, there are two different types of causal mechanisms: direct and indirect. Political institutions have a direct effect on a society's territorial identity landscape as a result of their weight. Simply stated, institutions are boundary-setting forces. They include some people in a political community and exclude others. Of primary importance with respect to the direct impact of institutions on identities is the fact that the former have long-lasting effects on social and political life, and that institutional development itself occurs within an institutional context. Regional identity construction tends to be a macro-historical

process partly as a consequence of long-term institutional development. It is an incremental process also in a part because institutions emergence in the context of an already established framework. The tremendous weight of institutions on politics and society is a crucial variable in explaining why regional identities, while not being without fluidity, are not easily reversible. After all, if identities were constructed and re-produced by elites alone, they would be much more volatile. Institutions tend to 'freeze' identities. However, they do not completely prevent change. Indeed, identity transformation may often be related to institutional change.

Political institutions also have an indirect effect on regional identities because they structure elite relationships in ways that are more or less conducive to the type of politics that lead to identity construction or transformation. Limiting an exploration of regional identities to elite power struggles begs the questions of what forces external to the elite relationships themselves condition their likelihood of producing identities. These forces are essentially institutional in nature. States with discriminatory structures and legal regimes, particularly those using strategies of cultural repression, favour the type of ethnic-driven elite activism and opposition politics that is conducive to the shaping of political communities. So does the existence of linguistically or culturally specific political parties. Also, schemes of territorial distribution of power such as federalism or autonomy tend to insert the territorial/ethnic dimension into patterns of elite competition.

2.1-Belgium.

2.1.1 The Creation of the Belgian Nation.

Most of the territories forming modern Belgium came under one single political rule for the first time in the 15th century. The Burgundian dynasty gradually gained control over these territories in an attempt to build an empire that could rival the Kingdom of France and the Holy German Empire.¹ Philippe the Good, the most powerful of the Burgundians, ruled over Flanders, Hainault, Brabant, and Namur. He also controlled Luxembourg and some of the regions of present-day Netherlands but failed to establish his authority over Liège. The successor dynasty, the Habsburgs, added the remaining territories of the present-day Netherlands to these possessions to form the 'Seventeen Provinces'. Charles V, also King of Spain and Emperor of Germany, reigned over these Provinces and declared them to be an indivisible whole.² These dynastic policies of expansion through marriage, alliances and wars introduced a new dimension to the way intellectual elites of the Low Countries identified with territory. The dominant local identities (Brabant, Frise, Hainault, etc...) started to coexist, in the minds of these elites, with larger ones associated with the Seventeen Provinces and the dynasty. In the absence of any distinction between the territories of modern-day Belgium and the Netherlands, there was no sign of anything resembling a Belgian identity. Nor were there Francophone or Flemish identities within the territories of modern-day Belgium. Indeed, the

¹ Lode Wils, *Histoire des nations belges*, (Ottignies LLN: Quorum, 1996), p.48.

² Kas Deprez and Louis Vos, "Introduction", in Kas Deprez and Louis Vos (eds), *Nationalism in Belgium. Shifting Identities, 1780-1995*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p.2.

linguistic frontier between Germanic and Romance languages that divides these territories did not have any significant meaning.

The Seventeen Provinces were split in two as a result of a successful revolt in the North during the reign of the Spanish kings, rulers since Charles V's abdication in 1536. The religious divisions created in Europe following the Reformation were particularly significant in the Low Countries where the intransigent religious policies of Philippe II, a Catholic, met with resistance from Protestants. There was no clear religious cleavage in the Seventeen provinces. Protestantism had as many followers in the South as in the North. In fact, East-West religious differences were more important than North-South. The success of Philippe II's troops in crushing the insurrection in the South and their failure to control the one in the North initiated the North-South religious divide more than it reflected it. The successful revolt in the North eventually resulted in the creation of the independent state of the Netherlands. The South remained a possession of the Spanish Habsburgs, and was later transferred to the Austrian branch of the dynasty as a result of the Spanish War of Succession. The warfare of the second half of the 17th century laid the foundations for the creation of a Northern and a Southern Netherlandic identity on the basis of religion. The independence of the Northern Provinces provided the institutional basis for the crystallization of a distinct identity in the Southern Netherlands. This identity was closely associated with the Habsburg dynasty, and it coexisted with the older provincial and local identities sustained and reproduced by traditional rulers and institutions. In fact, the system of local autonomy and privileges was part of the developing Southern Netherlandic identity.

This identity was bolstered considerably by the events following the reaction of traditional rulers to Joseph II' reform proposals of 1787. The new king attempted to impose secular and centralized structures at the expense of clerical influence and provincial autonomy. The reaction was virulent, particularly in the province of Brabant. The opposition to the reform had both a conservative and a liberal-democratic overtone. On the one hand, traditional rulers and privileged classes, including a petty bourgeoisie of craftsmen who enjoyed a privileged status in the Southern Netherlands,³ rose against the elimination of local powers. On the other hand, an urban bourgeoisie led by lawyers denounced the reforms, not for their attack on particularisms, but because they were enforced from above without consultation with the people.⁴ Indeed, in the aftermath of the American revolution and in the context of opposition to absolute monarchy in France, liberal ideas were used to criticize the behaviour of Joseph II in the Southern Netherlands. The struggle of provincial rulers, privileged classes and liberal-minded bourgeois against the monarch strengthened the sense of unity in the Southern Netherlands. The creation in 1790 of a republic, *Etats Belgiques Unis*, following the deposition of Joseph II in 1789 further contributed to the development of this identity.

The *Etats Belgiques Unis* had a short life. The tensions between conservatives and liberals, and the military pressures of the Habsburgs led to its collapse after less than one year. The next few years witnessed the continuation of the revolt against the Habsburgs, and the

³ Lode Wils, "The Two Belgian Revolutions", in *Nationalism in Belgium*, p.33.

⁴ Xavier Mabille, *Histoire politique de la Belgique. Facteurs et acteurs de changement*, (Bruxelles: CRISP, 1997), pp.38-39.

decisive military intervention of the French armies who annexed the territory in 1795 and occupied it until 1815. The period of French rule had two important consequences on the construction of a Belgian identity. First, it incorporated the Prince Bishopric of Liège within the Southern Netherlands. Second, it destroyed all provincial powers and institutions in favour of a centralized administration. Indeed, the French revolutionaries imposed the apparatus of the modern state upon the Southern Netherlands⁵ and united its provinces.⁶

Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo signalled the end of French rule in the Southern Netherlands and triggered a re-arrangement of the European political landscape that saw the re-unification of the Seventeen Provinces under King William I of Orange. While the Southern Netherlands prospered under the new regime, the linguistic and religious policies of William met with considerable opposition. His decision to make Dutch the sole official language of the Kingdom angered a bourgeoisie which was overwhelmingly French-speaking, even in the territories of present-day Flanders. Lawyers, teachers and public officials showed a particularly strong opposition to this policy which frustrated their career interests, as French was the dominant, if not exclusive, language in public life.⁷ The King's policies of linguistic homogenization were opposed in present-day Flanders not only by the French-speaking bourgeoisie but also by local representatives and the Catholic clergy. The former feared the

⁵ Lode Wils, "The Two Belgian Revolutions", pp.34-35.

⁶ Jean Beaufays, "Petite histoire d'un jeune État binational", in Marco Martiniello and Marc Swynghedouw (eds), *Où va la Belgique? Les soubresauts d'une petite démocratie européenne*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), p.15.

⁷ Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986), p.20; Xavier Mabille, *Histoire politique de la Belgique*, pp.83-84.

imposition of a relatively standardized language on local dialects.⁸ The latter saw the Dutch language as the vehicle of Calvinism.⁹ The linguistic initiatives of the King were accompanied by policies, especially in the field of education, that were considered threatening to Catholicism by a powerful religious establishment. The unlikely alliance of Liberals and religious Conservatives was at the centre of the Belgian revolution of 1830. This revolution may hardly be described as the product of a popular movement.¹⁰ It was only marginally a consequence of a developing, almost embryonic, Belgian identity, and owed much more to the initiative of a small group of people.

The creation of an independent Belgian state was primarily the work of a French-speaking bourgeoisie that received the support of the Flemish traditional lower bourgeoisie and clerics.¹¹ The language ties between Flanders and the Dutch kingdom were inconsequential for the immediate future of the Southern Netherlands. Elites in Flanders were religious and conservative. They were first and foremost Catholics. They emphasized the Catholic-Protestant divide at the expense of any linguistic kinship. In fact, language was not part of the political landscape of the new state. The Liberal and Catholic forces remained the fundamental pillars of politics and society. The centralized, unitary and *de facto* unilingual structures of the Belgian state reflected the influence of its French-speaking bourgeois progenitors. These structures also institutionalized the distinct Belgian identity that profited

⁸ Xavier Mabille, *Histoire politique de la Belgique*, p.84.

⁹ Idem.

¹⁰ Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, p.21.

¹¹ Jean Beaufays, "Belgium: A Dualist Political System?", *Publius*, 18 (1988), p.64.

from the policies of William I and the events of the Revolution. Indeed, according to one scholar, "Belgium-through its second Revolution of 1830- became one of the first few modern nations of the European continent."¹²

The history of pre-revolutionary and revolutionary Belgium reveals two important things about territorial identities in this state and on processes of identity formation in general. First, the linguistic frontier that corresponds, in present-day Belgium, to distinct identities, was not always there. Language in Belgium has not always been at the centre of collective identities. Religion and ideological cleavages were much more fundamental in the first half of the 19th century. Linguistic heterogeneity did not prevent the construction of a Belgian identity. The relative insignificance of linguistic differences in this case strongly suggests that cultural markers do not naturally, or indeed necessarily translate into identities. It casts doubts on primordialist explanation which would assume that the Flemish and Walloon identities exist since time immemorial. The fact is that the Belgian identity appeared before the regional identities. (This is a peculiarity of the Belgian case since in Spain and Canada regional identities pre-date political-national integration which does not mean, as we will shortly see, that primordial theories are anymore appropriate.) Second, the emergence of this Belgian identity was in no way natural or spontaneous. This identity was created over a long period of time through warfare, dynastic politics, occupation, the external imposition of centralized state structures, and the political activism of a small group of people whose interests rested with a transformation of the political order. The creation of Belgium is, in this respect, very similar to the construction of states and nations elsewhere in Western Europe.

¹²

Lode Wils, "The Two Belgian Revolutions", p.40.

2.1.2 The Flemish Movement and the Construction of the Flemish Identity

The emergence of a Flemish identity can not be understood outside the context of the newly created Belgian state. Flanders, in its present-day form, had never existed politically, administratively, economically or even culturally prior to the Revolution.¹³ It was divided into provinces, some of which cut across the linguistic border, that enjoyed great political and administrative autonomy, had different trading and developmental patterns, and where different, sometimes mutually unintelligible, dialects were spoken.¹⁴ The linguistic frontier acquired a subjective significance only after the creation of Belgium. It was given this significance by the same Flemish traditional lower bourgeoisie and clergy that had, some decades earlier, supported a revolution that was essentially French. The new Belgian institutional context, namely the predominance of French in the public sphere, triggered a new type of political activism from these elites who no longer had to struggle against Protestantism. Their challenge to the supremacy of the French language spawned the Flemish Movement which became the motor of the Flemish identity. The independence of Belgium gave birth to the Flemish Movement which created Flanders.¹⁵

The Belgium of 1830 was essentially a Francophone state although the constitution did not specify any official language. In fact, the only article pertaining to language did not

¹³ Lode Wils, "Mouvements linguistiques, nouvelles nations?", in Alain Dieckhoff (ed.), *Belgique: la force de la désunion*, (Bruxelles: Éditions Complexe, 1996), p.51.

¹⁴ On the historical dialects of Northern Belgium see Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, p.54.

¹⁵ Lode Wils, "Mouvements linguistiques, nouvelles nations?", p.52.

regulate its use; it simply made it a matter of free choice.¹⁶ For the French-speaking bourgeoisie that created the Belgian state, there was no need to do otherwise. French was the language of social and political elites, even in Flanders. It had enjoyed a privileged position in the Southern Netherlands as a result of its international prestige. This status had been reinforced further by the French occupation. French was seen at the time of Belgian independence as the language of modernity and progress. The Belgian leaders of 1830 calculated that a *laissez-faire* attitude towards language would ensure the dominance of the French language and the gradual assimilation of Flemish and Romance dialects spoken by a majority of the population.

The early history of the Belgian state confirmed this dominance of French. French was used exclusively in parliament, the higher courts, the central administration and the army.¹⁷ In Flanders, it was also the main language of the courts, the provincial governments and some municipal councils.¹⁸ This prominence of French at the expense of Flemish (and Walloon) languages as the defining feature of the Belgian identity gained great legitimacy, including in Netherlandic territories where it was supported by a powerful elite *francisée*. As one Flemish observer remarked: "D'aucuns considèrent l'étude de la langue flamande comme absolument inutile, la langue diplomatique étant le français; d'autres, et parmi eux beaucoup de Flamands qui, connaissent tous le bon français mais ignorent totalement leur langue maternelle littéraire

¹⁶ Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, p.22. The Belgian constitution states that "[T]he use of the language spoken in Belgium is optional." McRae's translation.

¹⁷ Louis Vos, "The Flemish National Question", in *Nationalism in Belgium*. p.83.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp.83-84.

demandent carrément qu'elle disparaisse du domaine des langues européennes."¹⁹ This situation of French dominance was opposed by the Flemish lower bourgeoisie (composed of priests, intellectuals, small landowners and students)²⁰. Their struggle for linguistic equality, first in Flanders and then at the national level, served as the motor for a Flemish identity.

The first efforts of Flemish intellectuals to oppose the predominance of French immediately after independence represented an attempt to transform the Belgian identity more than to articulate a distinct Flemish one. These writers, historians, philologists and priests saw in the vitality of the Flemish language a key component of the Belgian identity.²¹ They saw in linguistic activism a way to pursue the Belgian revolution, and to strengthen the unity of the kingdom by shedding it of France's influence and providing it with a distinct personality. They viewed Belgium as a bilingual and bi-cultural nation, and "considered the Flemish cultural heritage and the Flemish/Nederduits language to be essential components of a Belgian identity."²² The founding fathers of the Flemish Movement sought to make Belgium more

¹⁹ Jan Moruanx, *Lettres sur le mouvement flamand. Adressées aux populations wallonnes en vue de prévenir la division ethnique de notre nationalité*, (Bruxelles: J. Lebègue et Cie., 1894), p.18.

²⁰ Louis Vos, "Nationalism, Democracy, and the Belgian State" in Richard Caplan and John Fetter (eds), *Europe's New Nationalism. State and Minorities in Conflict*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.90

²¹ Two notable figures of the early Flemish Movement are poet Jan Frans Willems (1793-1846) and historical novelist Hendrik Conscience (1812-1883). The first revived old Flemish literature and is generally considered the father of the Movement. The second published a famous novel, *The Lion of Flanders*, whose tale of the French defeat at the 1302 battle of the Golden Spurs at the hands of Flemish armies became a symbol of Flemish identity. See Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, p.23.

²² Louis Vos, "The Flemish National Question", p.84.

Belgian.²³ They situated their struggle for the official and social recognition of the Flemish language exclusively within a Belgian framework. In the words of one Flemish activist: “Notre Belgique est trop petite pour se diviser et nous combattrions de toutes nos forces, en Wallonie comme en Flandres, ceux qui seraient assez aveugles pour croire qu’on pourrait impunément détruire le caractère historique du royaume actuel.”²⁴ They did not project a Flemish identity distinct from the Belgian identity but simply sought to include a Flemish dimension in the latter.

The early Flemish Movement was a Belgian movement working to transform and improve the Belgian identity. This Belgian character of early Flemish identity politics strongly undermines the primordial vision of cultural identities as organic, fundamental and naturally antagonistic. Instead, the early history of the Flemish Movement tends to show that cultural distinctiveness does not spontaneously give rise to distinct entities.

The gradual construction of a genuine Flemish identity was largely the result of the refusal of Belgian (Francophone) political elites to make the state bilingual. This opposition led the Flemish traditional lower bourgeoisie to proceed with political initiatives that forced them to define and articulate Flanders as a distinct entity within Belgium. In 1840, leaders of the Flemish Movement submitted a petition to the Belgian parliament requesting, most importantly, “the use of Dutch in the conduct of official affairs in the Flemish provinces and in correspondence between the central government and the Flemish provinces.”²⁵ Although

²³ Lode Wils, *Histoire des nations belges*, p.178.

²⁴ Jan Moruanx, *Lettres sur le mouvement flamand*, p.11.

²⁵ Alexander B. Murphy, *The Regional Dynamics of Language Differentiation in Belgium. A Study in Cultural-Political Geography*, (Chicago: University of Chicago

this petition clearly made its argument for a bilingual state in the context of an indivisible Belgian identity,²⁶ its reference to 'Flemish provinces' constitutes the beginning of a connection between culture and territory. The struggle between the Flemish lower bourgeoisie and French-speaking political elites hit a new high when the report of a commission appointed by the government in 1856 recommending different implementations of formal linguistic equality was ignored.²⁷ The increasing linguistic activism that followed led to the progressive articulation by Flemish Movement leaders of a Flemish identity that could serve as a justification for their claims. Therefore, somewhere in the 1860s, this identity slowly emerges from the larger Belgian identity.²⁸ It was shaped by a small group of people, and gained acceptance only among Flemish intellectuals, petty bourgeois, and clerics. Even among the vast majority of these people, the Belgian identity remained dominant. Belgian and Flemish identities were not clearly separate and certainly not incompatible. Their embedded nature defies primordialist characterizations.

The struggle of the Flemish traditional lower bourgeoisie against the dominant French-speaking bourgeoisie which had been the motor of identity creation in Flanders acquired two new dimensions in the latter half of the 19th century that further shaped Flemish identity. The first is the increasing identification of Flemish Movement leaders with the Catholic world. By

Press, 1988), p.64

²⁶ Reginald de Schryver, "The Belgian Revolution and Emergence of Biculturalism", in Arendt Lijphart (ed.), *Conflict and Coexistence in Belgium. The Dynamics of a Culturally Divided Society*, (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1981), p.27.

²⁷ Alexander B. Murphy, *The Regional Dynamics of Language Differentiation in Belgium*, p. 68.

²⁸ Lode Wils, *Histoire des nations belges*, p.183.

the end of the century, Belgian society was polarized between three ideological families: Catholic, Liberal and Socialist. Socialists were stronger in industrialized Wallonia. Their influence in rural Flanders was minimal. Liberals were, like Socialists, strongly anti-clerical. Traditional Flanders quickly became the stronghold of Catholics. The ties between traditional-clerical elites and the Flemish Movement grew stronger. Conservatives and clerics presented the Flemish language "as the deposit and the protector of the Christian Flemish soul, as God had created it".²⁹ They described this language as a form of resistance against the amorality of French culture, and the 'godlessness' of free-thinking Liberals and anti-clerical socialists. This clerical activism gave the developing Flemish identity a distinct Catholic character.

The second is the gradual development of a popular following resulting from the introduction of manhood suffrage, although in a plural form, in 1893. The osmosis of the Flemish Movement with the Christian Democratic Party allowed for a wider diffusion of the Flemish identity. Until then, this identity was strictly the business of a small group of traditional elites in Flanders. The Flemish identity did not emerge spontaneously within the masses. It was constructed by the Flemish lower bourgeoisie in the context of its struggle with the dominant French-speaking bourgeoisie over the official status of Dutch in Flanders. These petty bourgeois gradually developed the idea of a Flemish identity parallel to the Belgian one, and the clerical elements within the Flemish Movement gave it a definite Catholic slant.

²⁶ Lieve Gevers, "The Catholic Church and the Flemish Movement", in *Nationalism in Belgium*, p.111. The leading proponent of this vision was poet and priest Guido Gezelle. See Piet Couttenier, "National Imagery in 19th Century Flemish Literature", *Nationalism in Belgium*, pp.57-58.

The late 19th century saw in Belgium the formulation of a first series of language laws that culminated with the 1898 De Vriendt-Coremans law giving Dutch formal equality with French as an official language.³⁰ The legal language structure of the Belgian state that had given rise to the Flemish Movement and to a Flemish identity had been modified. However, the new structure gave the struggle between Flemish and French-speaking elites a new dynamic. The language laws did not stop the political activism of Flemish leaders who sought to continue improving the language situation in Belgium. After all, the most that was achieved through the first series of language laws was the right for Dutch to coexist with French in Flanders.³¹ The staunch opposition of French-speaking elites, who already had to abandon their ideal scenario of a monolingual French state under mounting Flemish activism, to any type of bilingual status for Wallonia forced Flemish Movement leaders to focus almost strictly on Flanders. They built a programme advocating a monolingual status for Flanders. This transition from a preoccupation with the language regime of Belgium as a whole to the linguistic situation in Flanders brought to the forefront of the Flemish Movement the idea of two separate communities in Belgium and reinforced the sense of Flemish identity.³² A minority of Flemish activists even espoused anti-Belgian positions during World War I and collaborated with the Germans in the hope of quickly achieving their linguistic aspirations.

This strategy of only a few Flemish activists brought strong criticism from the government to the Movement as a whole which in turn triggered a resentment producing

³⁰ Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, p.25.

³¹ Idem.

³² Louis Vos, "The Flemish National Question", p.87.

stronger anti-Belgium sentiments. Therefore, there was, from 1914 onward, a small group of people articulating a Flemish identity incompatible with the Belgian one. However, most Flemish Movement leaders presented the Flemish identity as distinct from, but not contradictory to, the Belgian identity. The realization of the new programme of this group represented a major step in the building of the Flemish identity. The language laws of the 1930s, most importantly the 1932 law on the use of language in administrative matters, established the principle of territorial unilingualism.³³ Although the practical enforcement of this principle was uneven, it laid the foundations for a crystallization of Flemish identity through linguistic homogenization. The consecration of a Flemish territory represents the first stage of an institutionalization of the Flemish identity that gradually leads to its consolidation.

The construction of the Flemish identity may only be understood in the context of Belgian independence. The institutional context that emerged from the revolution, most importantly the language regime, raised issues of power that favoured ethnic elite competition and, consequently, the articulation of regional identities. The new Francophone-dominated political institutions led Flemish intellectuals to develop an alternate conception of Belgian identity to the one associated with a Francophone state that was articulated by the French-speaking bourgeoisie. They sought to transform that identity by making the concepts of bilingualism and bi-culturalism central to the Belgian nation.. However, the struggle of the Flemish lower bourgeoisie against the dominant Francophone bourgeoisie for the formal equality of French and Dutch gradually created a Flemish territory, community and identity

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Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, p.2; Alexander B. Murphy, *The Regional Dynamics of Language Differentiation in Belgium*, pp.116-118.

within Belgium. The emergence of this identity did not correspond to any spontaneous mass *prise de conscience*. The Flemish identity was spawned and shaped by a small group of people and did not enjoy much of a popular acceptance until the turn of the century. Nor was it the result of specific economic conditions. Not only was the relative underdevelopment of Flanders in relation to Wallonia not an issue for the early Flemish Movement but there were great economic disparities within Flanders itself. For these reasons, structural theories prove rather unhelpful. Moreover, the specific nature of the Flemish identity can only be understood by focusing on elite relationships since its Catholic character is the product of the clerical element of the Flemish lower bourgeoisie.

The new political-legal context of the early 20th century modified the pattern of relationship between Flemish and French-speaking elites and, with it, the evolution of regional identities. Manhood suffrage presented Flemish Movement leaders with the opportunity to put the demographic strength of Flemings (more than 50% of the population) to good use and to keep pressing with demands of formal linguistic equality. The staunch opposition of French-speaking elites to a bilingual status for Wallonia forced Flemish elites to articulate their demands focusing on Flanders as a linguistic/cultural/territorial unit rather than on Belgium as a whole. The articulation of this new programme for a monolingual Flanders was instrumental in building a Flemish identity parallel to the Belgian one. Its implementation through the linguistic legislation of the 1930s was a crucial step in its consolidation since it put in place a first set of boundaries for the emerging political community.

2.1.3 The Walloon Movement: Transforming the Identity of French-Speaking Belgians.

The identity transformation of French-speaking Belgians was much more partial, hesitant, and ambiguous than what happened in the North. The Walloon Movement that slowly constructed a form of alternate identity to the Belgian one among French-speakers was strictly a reaction to the Flemish Movement. Both movements emerged out of the struggle between the Flemish lower bourgeoisie and the dominant French-speaking bourgeoisie. The Walloon Movement was created in the late 19th century by the latter to defend the threatened structures of the state it dominated, and the identity that supported it. The purely defensive origins of the early Walloon Movement largely explains the ambiguity of the identities it produced. First preoccupied with the defence of French in Flanders and actually originating in Brussels, the Walloon Movement remained for more than forty years strictly the expression of a Belgian identity. The language law of 1932 on territorial unilingualism which destroyed any hope for the French-speaking bourgeois to maintain their domination over the entire country was a crucial step in the construction of a Walloon identity. Their reaction to 'the loss of Flanders' was to retreat to predominantly non-Flemish territories where they could better anchor their power. Their challenge in building an identity coherent with these new foundations was enormous. The Walloon provinces had no common history. Most of the population spoke different Walloon dialects, not standard French which was mostly the language of the elite. Most importantly, the territorial basis of the new identity was uncertain. Wallonia was home to the French-speaking bourgeoisie and to Romance languages but Brussels, which is physically in Flanders, had a substantial Francophone population which was particularly resentful of the language laws that frustrated their career aspirations.

The Walloon Movement emerged as a reaction to the success of the Flemish Movement in having some of its linguistic grievances addressed during the 1870s and 1880s. In his famous letter to the King, prominent Walloon activist Jules Destrée vehemently denounced the Flemish Movement for having “taken Flanders from us...our past from us...our money...our security...our liberty...our language.”³⁴ These language laws signalled to the French-speaking bourgeoisie that its stranglehold on the Belgian state was in peril. The most vulnerable and most vocal elements of this group were the Francophone bourgeois in Flanders and the Walloons (most of whom were unilingual) that had come to Brussels to pursue a career in the state administration.³⁵ Their reaction was to invoke the Belgium of 1830 and to call for the union of the different language groups within the Belgian nation.³⁶ Indeed, the early Walloon Movement was a Belgian movement defending the legal, political and social *status quo* favourable to French-speakers. Its liberalism and staunch anti-clericalism was the reflection of its bourgeois leaders’ struggle against a strongly Catholic Flemish movement. The Walloon Movement of the late 19th century was essentially Belgian and Liberal. It was also, of course, a Francophone movement but the distinction between Belgians, Liberals and French-speakers group did not really exist in the minds of its leaders. The activism of Flemish

³⁴ Jules Destrée, “Open letter to the King, Concerning the Separation of Flanders and Wallonia” (1912), in Theo Hermans, Louis Vos and Lode Wils (eds), *The Flemish Movement. A Documentary History, 1780-1990*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1992), p.206-215. Translated by Lesley Gilbert.

³⁵ Lode Wils, *Histoire des nations belges*, p.205; Chantal Kesteloot, *Mouvement wallon et identité nationale*, (Bruxelles: Courrier hebdomadaire du Crisp, no.1392, 1993), p.19.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.21.

Movement leaders and their increasing success on the linguistic front would slowly lead French-speaking bourgeois to distinguish between Belgians and Francophones or Walloons.

The process of identity formation in Francophone Belgium was heavily conditioned by the initiatives of the Walloon Movement during the early 20th century. At their 1905 Congress, Walloon leaders (politicians, professors, industrialists) tried to respond to the Flemish Movement by 're-discovering' Walloon art, literature and history. It was at this Congress that "[F]or the first time, speakers distanced themselves from the idea of a monolingual Francophone Belgium and expressed adherence to a Walloon perspective only."³⁷ However, there remained ambiguities as Congress president Julien Delaite called for a return to the pre-1890 language regime. The final report of the Congress stated that the Movement's foremost objective should be to "*supprimer l'égalité des langues du programme politique et donner à la langue française la suprématie dans tous les domaines, tout en tenant compte des droits sacrés des langues flamandes et wallonnes.*"³⁸ The purely Walloon perspective was also seriously challenged at the birth of the *Assemblée wallonne* in 1912 by Belgian nationalists. Indeed, Jules Destrée's position advocating some form of autonomy for Wallonia and Flanders on the grounds that 'there are no Belgians' was marginal within the

³⁷ Chantal Kesteloot, "Growth of the Walloon Movement", in *Nationalism in Belgium*, p.144.

³⁸ Julien Delaite, *Le droit des races en Belgique*, (Rapport présenté au Congrès wallon de 1905, Liège: Imprimerie industrielle et commerciale, 1905), p.20.

Movement before WWI.³⁹ In fact, the whole movement and the identity it attempted to articulate remained quite insignificant until the post-WWI era.⁴⁰

The creation of the *Ligue d'Action wallonne* in 1923, and most importantly of *Concentration Wallonne* in 1930, represented an important step in the formation of a Walloon identity. It was with these two organizations that Walloon leaders gave the Movement a decisive autonomous twist that changed the way they presented this identity. The force behind this transition from a weakly articulated Walloon identity still dominated by the idea of the indivisible Belgian nation to one that could potentially stand on its own while coexisting with the larger Belgian identity came from the Flemish Movement. It is in the face of mounting Flemish activism spurred by the introduction of simple manhood suffrage in 1919, and in particular demands for the University of Ghent turning Flemish, that Walloon Movement leaders gradually abandoned the idea of a bilingual Flanders that could still support their conception of the Belgian nation. Instead, they chose to focus primarily, if not exclusively, on Wallonia, and to promote a Walloon identity that still had very little popular appeal. Indeed, this identity which had come out of the struggle of French-speaking elites with their Flemish counterparts remained largely the realm of these elites (and only a minority of them) during the inter-war period. The introduction of the principle of territorial unilingualism in 1932 and its long-term effect of linguistic homogenization laid the basis, as it did in the case of the Flemish identity, for the wider diffusion, strengthening and crystallization of the Walloon identity.

³⁹ Lode Wils, *Histoire des nations belges*, p.212.

⁴⁰ Chantal Kesteloot, *Mouvement wallon et identité nationale*, p.24.

The construction by some French-speaking elites of an alternate identity to their favoured Francophone-dominated Belgian model did not unfold without tensions. The place of Brussels in the new identity scheme proved a particularly difficult issue. In the early days of the Walloon Movement during the late 19th century, the notion of Wallonia was extremely ambiguous and lacked a clear territorial basis. In the context of an opposition to Flemish linguistic demands that took the form of a renewed call for Belgian unionism, there were Walloons everywhere in Belgium: in present-day Wallonia but also in Flanders and Brussels.⁴¹

The first attempts of the Walloon Movement to 're-discover' Walloon culture and peculiarities led to a gradual association of Wallonia with the territories of Southern Belgium where Romance languages were spoken. This territorial anchoring of the new identity produced among Walloon leaders a dichotomous view of Belgium and triggered mechanisms of exclusion. Francophones in Flanders could no longer be considered Walloons. In the case of Brussels, the situation was more complicated. Brussels was located in the Northern part of the country and had historically been a Dutch-speaking city but as the capital of a predominantly French-speaking state, it had attracted a considerable number of Francophones. Indeed, in the early 20th century, there were more French-speakers in Brussels than Dutch-speakers.⁴²

This heterogeneous sociolinguistic picture represented a handicap to the building of a coherent Walloon identity. Consequently, Walloon Movement leaders began in the early 20th

⁴¹ Vincent Vagman, *Le mouvement wallon et la question bruxelloise*, (Bruxelles: courrier hebdomadaire du Crisp, no. 1434-1435, 1994), pp.5-6.

⁴² Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, p.295

century to dissociate, although not without tension and opposition, Wallonia from Brussels. The 1905 *Congrès wallon* presented Wallonia as different from Flanders but also distinct from Brussels.⁴³ This position became dominant within the Walloon Movement with the creation of the autonomist *Concentration wallonne* in 1930 whose bi-communitarian conception of Belgium excluded Brussels, or rather relegated it to a marginal 'mixte' category. While it is too early to speak of a Brussels identity prior to the post-WWII era, the construction of a territorially-defined Walloon identity starting in the early 1900s plants the seed for the future emergence of a distinct, although ambiguous, 'Brussels consciousness'. The language laws of the 1930s which made special arrangements for bilingual Brussels further set the stage for the construction of a distinct identity in the Capital area.

The Walloon identity was constructed by the Walloon Movement whose existence was the result of the development of the Flemish Movement. Its early development was unrelated to macro economic determinants and can not be described as spontaneous or natural. The Walloon identity was slowly constructed by some French-speaking elites who initially attempted to protect language structures that were crucial to their social and political position, and then sought to anchor the monolingual institutions on a new territorial basis in the face of growing Flemish activism. The Walloon Movement was essentially a defensive reaction to the challenge of the Flemish Movement. It did not reflect or embody a pre-existing Walloon identity, for there was no such thing. The territories of present-day Wallonia lacked a common history. They were never unified in their present form. Liège, for example, was an independent *Principauté* until the French occupation. These territories were historically

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Vincent Vagman, *Le mouvement wallon et la question bruxelloise*, p.6.

fragmented in smaller largely autonomous entities while always being part of a larger whole.

The Walloon identity was built, almost reluctantly, by the Walloon Movement whose liberal leadership and opposition to a Catholic Flemish Movement rendered it a strongly anti-clerical force. In fact, the Liberal-Catholic struggle was central to the rise of two movements and their articulation of regional identities. The hesitant and defensive character of the early Walloon Movement explains in large part its relative lack of success in getting French-speaking Belgians to view themselves as Walloons before WWII. The ambiguous relationship between the Walloon Movement and French-speakers in Brussels further complicated the processes of identity construction in Francophone Belgium. The political activism of Walloon Movement leaders gradually constructed a Walloon identity in isolation from Brussels. It set the stage for the future emergence of a Brussels consciousness that would add to the political-territorial identity landscape of post-WWII Belgium.

2.1.4 Belgians, Flemings, Francophones, Walloons, Brusselers and German-Speakers: The Complicated Universe of Identities in Contemporary Belgium.

The rise of the Flemish and Walloon Movements in the late 19th and early 20th century introduced new regional identities on the Belgian political scene. The lack of representation of regional identities within political institutions was a serious impediment to their popularity. They were elite constructions and had barely managed to touch the masses, especially in the Walloon case. Major transformations in Belgian political institutions following WWII gave these identities the framework necessary to develop, expand and crystallize. These institutional changes also created new identities. Political institutions had not been irrelevant

to the creation of Flemish and Walloon identities. As we have discussed, the Belgian state of 1830 and its language structures had provided the context for the emergence of the Flemish Movement while the Walloon Movement was a reaction to changes in these structures. In the post-WWII period, however, political institutions become the crucial determinant of identity construction and crystallization by creating new formal boundaries that specified who was included, and excluded from, a particular political community. The institutionalization of the Flemish and Walloon Movements (as well as the grievances of Brusselers) into political parties triggered a series of institutional transformations conducive to the growth and freezing of regional identities. The most important of these transformations was the split of all the major political parties upon linguistic lines. This development forced Belgian citizens to vote for, and identify with, Flemish or Francophone parties rather than Belgian ones. The federalization of the state on the basis of the cultural-territorial units created by the Flemish and Walloon Movements gave an even more definite character to the identities they articulated while also creating entirely new ones.

The Belgian party system was, until the mid-1960s, a prototypical three-party system.⁴⁴ It embodied the ideological and socio-economic cleavages that had divided Belgium since its creation. In fact, the Belgian party system was at the heart (or rather at the top) of a consociational arrangement of society where each pillar (Liberal, Catholic and Socialist) provided a complex network of organizations that structured the life of individuals from 'their

⁴⁴ Marc Swyngedouw, "Les rapports de force politiques en Belgique", in *Où va la Belgique?*, p.46.

cradle to their grave'.⁴⁵ This 'pillarization' of Belgian society did not simply reflect existing ideological and socio-economic identities; it also sustained and strengthened them. The consociational system in Belgium built an identity landscape that left, until the 1960s, very little room to the regional identities articulated by the Flemish and Walloon Movements. In the 1961 elections, the three main parties (Christian Democratic, Liberal and Socialist) accounted for 90% of the vote.⁴⁶ In the 1965 and 1968 elections, three smaller parties had some electoral success. The first is the Flemish nationalist party *Volksunie* (VU), founded in 1954, which grew out of the Flemish Catholic pillar and represented the institutionalization of the Flemish Movement with its demands for bipartite federalism in the name of the existence of two identities in Belgium.⁴⁷ The second is the Walloon regionalist party *Rassemblement Wallon* (RW), created in 1968, which constituted the formal embodiment of the Walloon Movement and whose campaign for tripartite federalism (Flanders, Wallonia, Brussels) projected both a Walloon and Brussels identity. The third is the Brussels-based *Front Démocratique des Francophones* (FDF), whose creation in 1964 was more a protest against the 1962-1963 language laws than the expression a Brussels consciousness.

The electoral success of these parties in the late 1960s and the 1970s was neither marginal nor considerable. They attracted, together, between 15% and 22% of the total votes

⁴⁵ Paul-H. Clays, "Le système des piliers", in Pascal Delwit and Jean-Michel De Waele, *Les partis politiques en Belgique*, (Bruxelles: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1996), p.257.

⁴⁶ Pascal Delwit, "Elections et gouvernements en Belgique depuis 1945" in Pascal Delwit and Jean-Michel De Waele, *Les partis politiques en Belgique*, p.236.

⁴⁷ Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, p.139.

during this period.⁴⁸ These parties, however, had an influence on Belgian politics that was quite disproportional from their popular appeal, and they took the country down a path of fragmentation that was probably not the preferred scenario of the totality of their supporters. They brought to parliament a vision of Belgium as a community of communities, and consistently emphasized the community angle of issues. They put pressure on the traditional parties to do the same. The pressure to think and act with linguistic groups as a primary frame of reference produced tensions within these parties. They first developed linguistic wings, and then split into distinct parties. The schism of the Christian family led to the creation of the *Christelijke volkspartij* (CVP) and the *parti social chrétien* (PSC) in 1969. The split of the Liberals in 1972 produced the *Partij voor vrijheid en vooruitgang* (PVV) and the *parti réformateur libéral* (PRL). The dissolution of the Belgian Socialist Party in 1978 after several years of dissensions led to the formation of the *Socialistische partij* (SP) and the *parti socialiste* (PS).⁴⁹

The disappearance of national parties and bilingual electoral lists meant that Belgian citizens had no choice but to support parties with a specific linguistic basis. Their political universe was shrunk to the level of linguistic communities. The Belgian national institutions were mediated by political parties, Flemish or Francophone, who increasingly articulated the identities constructed by the Flemish and Walloon Movements at the expense of the Belgian identity. As the complex network of organizations developed by the traditional families was also re-arranged around language, the social framework of Belgians was itself reduced to

⁴⁸ Pascal Delwit, "Elections et gouvernements en Belgique depuis 1945", p.236-240.

⁴⁹ Belgium also has linguistically-based ecologist parties: the Francophone Ecolo and the Flemish Agalev.

language-specific trade-unions and voluntary associations. This objective 'communitarization' of social and political life gradually led to important subjective changes in favour of language-oriented definition of group membership. The transformation of the party system in favour of linguistic parties is probably the most crucial factor in the processes of identity construction and crystallization in contemporary Belgium. Not only did it strengthen and spread identities that were still hesitant or shared only by a minority, but it also limited their potential for fluidity and gave them a measure of irreversibility.

The changes in the Belgian party system also triggered new institutional change that further shaped the territorial identity landscape of the country. Indeed, the creation of nationalist/regionalist parties and the subsequent schisms in the traditional parties led to major transformations in the structures of the state which themselves greatly shaped identities in Belgium. The precursor to the constitutional revision of 1970 were the language laws of 1962-63. The main purpose of these laws was to freeze the linguistic frontier set in the 1930s in the hope of defusing the forces set in motion by the Flemish and Walloon Movements.⁵⁰ The idea was to isolate and homogenize the linguistic communities by moving communes to their 'proper' language area and by eliminating the use of the census as tool to adjust the barrier. Brussels and some linguistically heterogeneous communes were given special status. In building on the legislation of the 1930s, this third set of linguistic laws gave further subjective meaning to the language border and stimulated the crystallization of cultural-territorial identities. It constituted a positive response to the claims of Flemish and Walloon

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Maureen Covell, "Belgium. The variability of ethnic relations" in John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary (eds), *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation*, (London: Routledge, 1993), P.284.

activists and virtually consecrated the existence of communities and regions increasingly viewed as objective, natural and coherent. As the pressures of the nationalist/regionalist parties grew stronger for a state reform that would respond to their claims and as the dissensions within the traditional parties became more important, the Christian-Socialist coalition presented, in 1970, a blueprint for a new institutional design.

The reform of the Belgian state was presented as a necessity emanating from the presence in Belgium of communities and regions. In a most famous statement, Prime Minister Gaston Eyskens declared that Belgium's unitary model was outdated by the facts, and that communities and regions had to find their place within new political structures.⁵¹ The identities produced by the long-time struggle between Flemish and Walloon activists were declared realities. Both the stronger Flemish and the weaker Walloon identities were to be given an institutional basis upon which they could further develop. In addition, Brussels and the German-speaking area (situated in the Eastern part of Wallonia near the German border) were also to have their own institutions. The plan for institutional reform rested on three sets of units: language areas, Communities and Regions. It distinguished between four language areas: monolingual Flanders, monolingual Wallonia, bilingual Brussels, and the German-speaking territories. It created three Communities (Flemish, French and German-speaking) and three Regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels).

This complicated scheme for the restructuring of the Belgian state may be understood partly in light of the consequences of the historical struggle between Flemish and Walloon

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See the quote in Évelyne Lentzen, "Le processus de fédéralisation", in *Où va la Belgique?*, p.36.

Movement leaders. It was also a case of institutions being created in the context and as extensions of already existing institutions such as language laws. The proclamation of Flanders and Wallonia as monolingual language areas was simply the constitutionalization of the language laws of 1932 and 1962-63 which were themselves the product of the battle of the Flemish lower-bourgeoisie against the French-dominated state and the subsequent defensive reaction of the French-speaking bourgeoisie. The designation of Brussels as a bilingual area was consistent with the status it was given in the context of the language legislation of the 1930s and 1960s as its language structure (mainly French-speaking with an important Flemish minority) and physical location (in historical Flemish territories) defied any monolingual status. The recognition of a German-speaking area was more the result of the process of linguistic territorialization itself than the response to any particular claims. The creation of Regions was largely the result of the mechanisms of identity formation triggered by the Walloon Movement in reaction to the Flemish Movement, as the Walloon identity was constructed almost in exclusion to the Brussels area. In addition to giving this Walloon identity an institutional and territorial nest, the establishment of Regions created the conditions necessary for the emergence of a distinct Brussels identity.

The formation of Communities was a response to the Flemish Movement's long-time articulation of a Flemish identity that included Flemings living in Brussels. The Communities also allowed for the institutionalization of a link between Walloons and French-speaking Brusselers, two groups who were one in the early days of the Belgian state but who became partially dissociated with the rise of the Walloon Movement. Finally, the creation of a German-speaking community was, here again, more the consequence of the Belgian political

elite's focus on culture as a central determinant of the new structures than the product of the affirmation of a German-speaking identity. The transformation of the unitary Belgian into a federation on the basis of Communities and Regions took place gradually over almost 25 years. While the 1970 constitutional revision created both Communities and Regions, only the former were immediately endowed with powers. The 1980 reform provided the Regions of Flanders and Wallonia with powers but left Brussels without its own institutions. Only following the 1988 reform would the Capital Region become operational. Finally, Belgium was officially declared a federation in 1993.

The reform of the Belgian state finds its historical origins and underlying force in the processes of identity construction that surrounded the rise of the Flemish and Walloon Movements. However, the creation of new political institutions also greatly transformed the territorial identity landscape in Belgium. It gave the Flemish and Walloon identities a framework where they could grow and crystallize, and literally created the Brussels and German-speaking identities. In Flanders, the Flemish Government and Parliament have become the main reference for the Flemish identity.⁵² The shaping and strengthening of this identity will now come from the Flemish institutions rather than the Flemish Movement.⁵³ The merger of the Flemish Region and Community immediately after the reform of 1980 left little ambiguity on the exact contour of the Flemish identity. It is important to note that this identity has kept progressing despite socio-economic changes that have made Flanders relatively

⁵² Jos Bouveroux, "Nationalism in Present-Day Flanders", in *Nationalism in Belgium*, p.217.

⁵³ Idem. See the quote of the Volksunie's Hugo Schiltz.

overdeveloped to the rest of Belgium. However, for many of the 150 000 or so Flemings living in Brussels, the Flemish identity coexists with the emergent Brussels one.⁵⁴

In the case of Wallonia, the process of federalization has signalled an effort to develop an identity that is still quite weak. Politicians and intellectuals are actively involved in the construction of a distinct Walloon identity through the 're-discovery' of Walloon culture and history.⁵⁵ The enterprise of identity construction in a "region without a past and with an uncertain future" is not an easy one.⁵⁶ It is further complicated by the existence of the French Community which sustains a sense of commonness between Walloons and French-speaking Brusselers. Walloon activists fully recognize this problem. The crucial contemporary document for the project of the construction of a Walloon identity, *Le Manifeste pour la culture wallonne* signed by a plethora of prominent Walloons in 1983, takes directly aim at the Brussels intelligentsia. In an affirmation of Walloon distinctiveness, *Le Manifeste* accuses Brussels' elites of cultural imperialism, and of diluting the Walloon culture in a Francophone culture. The fear of Walloon activists of a dissolution of Wallonia within the French Community was somewhat alleviated with the revision of 1993 which tended to favour the Regions.⁵⁷ More recently, Francophone parties have started to use the term *Communauté*

⁵⁴ Serge Govaert, "A Brussels Identity? A Speculative Interpretation", in *Nationalism in Belgium*, pp.230-231.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Luc Courtois and Jean Pirotte (eds), *L'imaginaire Wallon. Jalons pour une identité qui se construit*, (Louvain-la-Neuve: Oleeffe, 1994).

⁵⁶ See Th.Evens quoted in Philippe Destatte, "Present-Day Wallonia. The Search for an Identity without Nationalist Mania", in *Nationalism in Belgium*, p.221.

⁵⁷ Jean Pirotte, "Une image aux contours incertains: l'identité wallonne du XIXe au Xxe siècle", in *L'imaginaire Wallon*, p.36.

Wallonie-Bruxelles which tends to suggest that regional identities are getting the upper hand in French-speaking Belgium.⁵⁸

For Brussels, the reform of the Belgian state has triggered the emergence of a distinct identity. The emergence of this identity is less the result of intense activism on the part of Brusselers than the indirect consequence of identity construction elsewhere. Indeed, the Brussels identity is being built by 'subtraction'.⁵⁹ Finally, the erection of Communities and the designation of language areas has prompted German-speaking Belgians to attach importance to their language and culture.⁶⁰ It considerably upgraded their feeling of Germanness, and opened the door for the creation of a German-speaking identity.⁶¹

The existence of a complicated Belgian territorial identity landscape is confirmed by recent empirical surveys on identities. One survey asked people to say to which group they felt they belonged first and foremost.⁶² To this question, 39% of Flemings said they first

⁵⁸ Pierre Bouillon, "PS, PRL et Ecolo au chevet de la Communauté", *Le Soir*, 18 juin 1999.

⁵⁹ Serge Govaert, "A Brussels Identity? A Speculative Interpretation", in *Nationalism in Belgium*, pp.231-234.

⁶⁰ There are two groups of German-speakers in Belgium. The first has been part of the country since its creation in 1830. It is formally incorporated within Wallonia and the French Community. The second became part of Belgium following WWI, was incorporated to Germany during WWII, and returned to Belgium after that war. This second group is the one that forms the German-speaking Community of Belgium. It counts about 70,000 people. See Hubert Jenniges, "Germans, German Belgians, German-Speaking Belgians", in *Nationalism in Belgium. Shifting Identities, 1780-1995*.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.246-247.

⁶² Lieven de Winter, André-Paul Frogner and Jaak Billiet, "Y a-t-il encore des Belges? Vingt ans d'enquêtes sur les identités politiques territoriales", in *Où va la Belgique?*, p.123-125.

identified with the Flemish Community and Region; 17% of Walloons mentioned Wallonia and 13% the French Community; and 17% of Brusselers said their first loyalty went to the French Community and 15% to the Brussels region. The data of another survey on identification that was arranged on a spectrum where 'unitarists' and 'autonomists' were the categories at each end reveals that a majority of both Flemish and Walloons identify with their Region/Community as well as Belgium.⁶³ Three important conclusions may be drawn from these survey results, all of which have major consequences for the understanding of identity construction and ethnonationalism.

First, there definitely exists Flemish, Francophone, Walloon and Brussels' identities. This is significant because none of these identities existed before the creation of the Belgian state. They are in no way natural and organic. Indeed, the emergence of the Walloon and Brussels identities is particularly recent. Second, these identities are still relatively weak (aside from the Flemish one). This is important because it clearly shows that nationalist politics and institutional reform in Belgium were not the result of pre-existing identities but that they rather created them. Third, these identities coexist with others.⁶⁴ Of particular significance is the resilience of the Belgian identity. Even in Flanders, between 30% and 36% of the

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Bart Maddens, Roeland Beerten and Jaak Billiet, "The National Consciousness of the Flemings and the Walloons. An Empirical Investigation.", in *Nationalism in Belgium*, pp. 199-202.

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It is interesting to note that the city and the *commune* are important sources of territorial identities in Belgium, especially in Flanders. See Lieven de Winter, André-Paul Frogner and Jaak Billiet, "Y a-t-il encore des Belges? Vingt ans d'enquêtes sur les identités politiques territoriales", pp.125-126.

population identify firstly or exclusively with Belgium as a whole.⁶⁵ This suggests that the idea that there are no more Belgians is false,⁶⁶ and that the picture of a deeply fragmented society presented in the recent literature applies more to political institutions and elites than it does to the population. The fact that fragmented and decentralized institutions (party systems and territorial distribution of power arrangements) have only existed for some thirty years while the unitary structures of the Belgian state were in place for 140 years explains in large part the continued importance of the Belgian identity.

One key variable for the future of Belgium's territorial identity landscape is the EU. The presence of supra-national institutions in Europe will most likely stimulate regional identities for at least two reasons. The first reason is the institutional dynamic triggered by EU structures. Although it is often said that the EU deals only with states, programs such as structural adjustments are in fact centred on regions. By making regions European actors, these programs, along with EU bodies such as the Committee of Regions, bolster the idea of sub-national political communities and, indeed, sometimes initiates regionalism. For example, several strongly centralized states (Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands) have created regional units for the sole purpose of satisfying these structural adjustment programs.⁶⁷ Belgian Communities and Regions, as they are increasingly solicited by EU structures and programs,

⁶⁵ See Lieven de Winter, André-Paul Frogner and Jaak Billiet, "Y a-t-il encore des Belges? Vingt ans d'enquêtes sur les identités politiques territoriales" p. 124 and Bart Maddens, Roeland Beerten and Jaak Billiet, "The National Consciousness of the Flemings and the Walloons. An Empirical Investigation.", p.200.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Anne Morelli and Jean-Philippe Schreiber, "Are the Immigrants the Last Belgians, in *Nationalism in Belgium*.

⁶⁷ John Loughlin and Daniel-L. Seiler, "Le Comité des Régions et la supranationalité en Europe", *Etudes internationales* 30 (1999), p.769.

will likely gain in legitimacy and project stronger identities. The second reason is the political tool that the EU represents for regional elites. In Belgium, both Flemish and Walloon/Francophone leaders conceptualize and articulate the future of Europe as linked to regions rather than states, thereby justifying their efforts at identity-building and/or strengthening. In the Flemish case, the regions of Europe are actually 'nations' in that their key feature is their cultural distinctiveness. This discourse is adapted to the particularities of the Flemish project, and indeed meant to stimulate it. Flanders also illustrates how the EU may also present obstacle to processes of regional identity construction. The shaping of a coherent Flemish identity is viewed by Flemish elites as necessitating the assimilation of the Francophone population but this policy is threatened by the European Vienna project for the protection of national minorities.⁶⁸

2.2-Spain

2.2.1 The Historical Roots of Contemporary Regional Identities in Spain: Reconquest and Political Unification.

The roots of most contemporary regional identities in Spain are much older than in Belgium. Their emergence may be traced back to the efforts of Christian principalities to regain the territories taken by the Moors in the 8th century.⁶⁹ This event, known as the

⁶⁸ Belgium has not signed the convention because Flanders opposed it. The Flemish Community has suggested it would sign the document only if it were specified that there were no national minorities in Belgium. See Françoise Massart-Piérard, "Politique des relations extérieures et identité politique: la stratégie des entités fédérées de Belgique", *Études internationales* 30 (1999), p.710

⁶⁹ Stanley Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1975), pp.1-2.

Reconquest, lasted almost eight centuries. It was a holy war whose objective was not only to destroy Arabo-Muslim power in the Iberian peninsula but also to unify its territories in a great Christian kingdom. The wars of the Reconquest were not coherent and integrated military actions, nor did they occur simultaneously. They were launched from different regions that had escaped the invasion, mostly in the North, by populations unaware that similar efforts were deployed elsewhere. These offensives followed different patterns in different areas, and experienced various degrees of success. They did, however, generate a territorial restructuring of the peninsula by establishing a new territorial configuration of power.⁷⁰ Iberian populations were, before the Arabo-Muslim conquest, successively submerged in Romanism and Visigoth influence.⁷¹ The Reconquest created new socio-political communities which, even in the context of movement for Christian unification, remained independent from one another.⁷² It marked the beginning of Spain's plurality of identity. The early stages of identity formation in this country were, therefore, heavily conditioned by the contingencies of the Reconquest and the territorial re-organization it triggered.

In the North-East of the Iberian peninsula, the Reconquest was actually the work of the Franks. Coming from the East, they chased the Moors from the area in the early 800s and divided the conquered territories into counties. Their influence isolated these territories from the peninsula and exposed them to European-Mediterranean influences. It is in this context that a Catalan identity first developed. At the periphery of a Moors-dominated peninsula and

⁷⁰ Luis Moreno, *La federalización de España. Poder político y territorio*, (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno de España Editores, S.A., 1997), pp.45-46.

⁷¹ Jaume Rossinyol, *Le problème national catalan*, (Paris: Mouton, 1974), p.121.

⁷² Idem.

largely autonomous, although formally ruled by the Carolingian kings, the territories of present-day Catalonia gradually came under the influence of Barcelona and its powerful counts. Ramón Berenguer I was the central figure in the 11th century unification of the previously divided territories. The idea of Catalonia and Catalans emerged as this integration coincided with the creation of a codified set of legal and social rules, and the development of a spoken language close to today's Catalan.⁷³ In 1137, Ramón Berenguer III secured a dynastic union with the Kingdom of Aragón. This alliance was meant to protect Catalonia from France, Aragón from Castile, and both Kingdoms from the Moors. The two units remained largely independent but as Catalonia was the greatest power of the two, the counts dominated the 'confederation'.

The union strengthened Catalonia which experienced great economic prosperity in the 13th and 14th century and became the major commercial power of the Western Mediterranean. Catalonia also developed a sophisticated fiscal system and a 'well-articulated representative system' during this period.⁷⁴ The union, and the developments it fostered, contributed to the forming of a Catalan identity.⁷⁵ Jaime I added the Moors-controlled lands of Valencia, which was introduced as a new unit to the 'confederal' structure, and the Balearic Islands to the new Kingdom between 1229 and 1245.⁷⁶ The conquest of the Balearic Islands was exclusively a

⁷³ Ibid., pp.125-126. The *Codi dels Usatges* developed by Ramón Berenguer I is generally recognized as the first codified set of rules surrounding the exercise of political power, pre-dating the *Magna Carta* by more than 125 years.

⁷⁴ Stanley Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, p.7.

⁷⁵ Albert Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism. Past and Present*, (New York: St-Martin's Press, 1996), p.5

⁷⁶ Ibid, p.6.

Catalan achievement and set the stage for the diffusion of the Catalan language. The Valencia venture was more of a joint Catalan-Aragonese enterprise but Catalonia was to have the most influence on local culture.⁷⁷ The Catalan settlement of these territories left a linguistic and cultural heritage embodied by the contemporary idea of a 'Catalan country' that includes Catalonia proper, the Balearic Islands and Valencia.

The Arabo-Muslim invasion of Spain had few direct consequences for the Basque population living in the mountainous North. The Moors made no serious effort to establish their authority in this area and only a small fraction of the Basque population fell under their control. However, many Kingdoms established in the context of the Reconquest sought to extend their influence to the Basque provinces of Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa and Alava. Asturias, León and Castile (established respectively in 739, 866 and 1037) all ruled over some parts of these province at some point between the 8th and the 14th centuries. Another major player was Navarre, a Kingdom created in 905, whose expansion plans targeting the three Basque provinces were rather unsuccessful. Only for a few years in the 11th century were the four provinces politically united.⁷⁸ This was an historical first that was going to be duplicated only in the 20th century. Guipuzcoa (1200), Alava (1332) and Vizcaya (1379) were eventually incorporated into the Kingdom of Castile. This development ended the three provinces' back and forth movement between autonomy and control by a major Kingdom. Despite the lack of common historical experience among the three Basque provinces, two political practices dating back to this era planted the seed for the future emergence of a Basque identity. The

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Idem.

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Stanley Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, p.14.

first is the *fueros*, which were agreements between the Crown and local authorities that gave the latter the right to retain their system of laws. This practice was common in medieval Western Europe but special rights were usually granted to towns or villages. In the Basque case, they were awarded to larger territorial entities: provinces.⁷⁹ This specificity favoured the preservation of the Basque *fueros* through history, and introduced a dimension of collective distinctiveness to the Basque political landscape. The *fueros* became a crucial element in the historical construction of the Basque identity.

The second practice is associated with the idea of collective nobility. This practice, which consisted in granting to anyone able to prove Basque descent the status of noble, had few parallels in Western Europe.⁸⁰ It represented a way for the Spanish kings, who enjoyed little coercive power in the 15th century, to ensure that the border with France would be well protected. In exchange for grants of nobility that could be used to back up claims for legal and fiscal autonomy, the Basque provinces served as guardians of the Kingdom's northeastern territories. This military strategy strengthened the idea of the Basque purity of blood (blood that had not been 'contaminated' by the Moors), and instituted a concept that became "the moral core of the Basque sense of ethnic uniqueness".⁸¹

The process of unification triggered by the Reconquest took a giant step in 1469 with the marriage of the heirs to the Kingdoms of Castile and Aragón, Isabel and Fernando. This

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.17.

⁸⁰ On collective nobility and the Basques see Davydd J. Greenwood, "Continuity in Change: Spanish Basque Ethnicity as a Historical Process", in Milton Esman (ed), *Ethnic Conflict in the Western World*, pp.81-102.

⁸¹ Ibid., p.86 and p.91.

dynastic union put most of the territories of present-day Spain under one single political rule. From the Northwest, the Kingdom of Castile had already taken control of neighbouring Kingdoms, including Galicia in 1071. (The Kingdom of Portugal became independent in the 12th century.) Its decisive military victories against the Moors in the Southern region of Andalucía in the 13th century all but chased them from the Iberian peninsula. (The taking of Granada in 1492 is generally considered the final episode of the Reconquest). The Conquest of the Canary Islands in 1477⁸² and the absorption of the Kingdom of Navarre in 1512 gave the Kings control of the entirety of the territories forming present-day Spain. However, the formal unification of the Christian Kingdoms did not lead to effective state centralization. In fact, the union of Castile and Aragón had little immediate consequences for the political and legal status of most regions. Spain remained, well into the 17th century, a loose arrangement of multiple semi-autonomous areas.

This institutional context favoured the preservation and development of multiple territorial identities. In Castile, the *Cortes* (Parliament) represented most territories, except for the Basque provinces and Galicia, while the Crown of Aragón was more decentralized with Aragón proper, Catalonia, Valencia, the Balearic Islands as well as Sicily and Sardinia having their own parliaments.⁸³ These identities were, of course, weakly diffused and strictly the realm of elites. In the Basque Country, the existence of *fueros* compensated for the lack of political and even cultural unity to form the core of a common consciousness. In Catalonia, a highly developed institutional framework was at the centre of a “regional ethnic identity

⁸² On the history of the archipelago, see John Mercer, *The Canary Islanders, their prehistory conquest and survival*, (London: Rex Collings Ltd, 1980).

⁸³ Juan Díez Medrano, *Divided Nations*, p.23.

among its elites”.⁸⁴ The coexistence of these territorial identities with the subjective and symbolic dimensions of the new Spanish arrangement as produced by religious unity, a powerful monarchy and colonial endeavours was not problematic. In the Basque Country, for example, being Basque and being Spanish was not at all incompatible. In fact, “the best way to be truly Spanish was to be Basque.”⁸⁵ As was the case in Belgium for the Flemish identity, the Basque identity was not articulated initially in opposition to the national identity, a strong suggestion that identities need not be mutually exclusive or naturally antagonistic.

Many of Spain's contemporary territorial identities are very old but that does not mean they are the natural product of ‘primordial attachments’. Their emergence may be explained by the political and institutional processes triggered by the Reconquest. The patterns of the Reconquest established new borders and created new political entities in the form of Kingdoms. One of these Kingdoms correspond to today's constitutionally-recognized ‘historical nationality’ of Catalonia. The autonomy, institutional development, and early orientation of Catalonia away from the Iberian peninsula and towards the Mediterranean were particularly conducive to the development of a distinct identity among its elites. Political practices and territorial organization before and immediately after the formal unification of 1469 were instrumental in shaping territorial identities in Spain. The ‘Basque Country’ is not an idea that has historical roots as deep as the concept of a Catalan community. In the ‘Basque area’, provincial loyalties were the most prominent territorial identities of this era. However, political practices that developed in the centuries surrounding formal unification

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.28.

⁸⁵ Davydd J. Greenwood, “Continuity in Change: Spanish Basque Ethnicity as a Historical Process”, p.93.

which conferred a distinct status to the Basques of all provinces, the *fueros* and collective nobility, represented crucial symbolic parameters for the construction of a Basque identity and community. In Castile and Aragón, the territorial organization of power created institutional structures favouring the development of distinct identities, especially in Catalonia but also in Galicia.

2.2.2 State Centralization, Carlist Wars and Economic Policies: Central-Regional Struggles and the Formal Expression of Territorial Identities.

The formal and explicit articulation of identities in Catalonia, the Basque Country and, to a lesser extent Navarre, Galicia and Valencia, is a phenomenon of the late 19th century. This articulation was the product of an institutional change (state centralization) which threatened the power and influence of regional elites and shaped competition in the form of a central/regional struggle that resulted in the abandonment of the Spanish framework in favour of regional ones. In the 17th century, a fiscal crisis prompted the Spanish Crown to seek centralization. The Crown's efforts to eradicate regional autonomy and privileges intensified through the 18th and 19th century, and culminated with the launching of a nation-building project that sought the creation of a liberal, modern and integrated state designed to rescue a struggling power. These attempts at centralization and homogenization triggered vigorous responses from regional elites who had much to lose with the emergence of a strongly centralized state. Political and institutional reform was opposed in the Basque provinces (particularly in Vizcaya) by a traditional elite who framed struggle between Conservatives and Liberal-Centralists throughout Spain as one between the people of these

provinces and Spaniards. It is in this context that the idea of a Basque community was formally articulated. Sabino Arana, a Carlist politician, was the central figure in the articulation of the Basque identity. His argument for the preservation of Vizcaya's social structures projected the idea of larger community put under siege by the Spanish state. In Catalonia, the local bourgeoisie felt that the economic policies of a state that had to deal with a primarily agrarian society would be detrimental to their industrial and commercial interests. These bourgeois made the conscious decision to articulate a Catalan identity as an instrument of empowerment and political legitimacy.

Spain's loose political and institutional structure made it difficult to levy the taxes necessary to sustain colonial policies.⁸⁶ In the Kingdom of Aragón, the existence of autonomous institutions was a major obstacle to increase fiscal revenue. In Castile, the Basque *fueros* represented a similar problem. In 1624, the monarchy made a first serious attempt at coercing all Spanish territories to contribute to the national coffer. Felipe IV's *Unión of Armas* plan forced every territory to finance the national army. This initiative was badly received in many regions but especially in Catalonia where an insurgence known as the 'Revolt of the Catalans' acquired momentous proportions. The Revolt broke out in 1640 when the Spanish army invaded France via Catalonia and sought to involve the Catalans.⁸⁷ The result was a Spanish war against both France *and* Catalonia which resulted in weakening of the Catalan institutions.⁸⁸ More importantly, the Crown's military struggle with Catalonia

⁸⁶ Juan Diez Medrano, *Divided Nations*, pp.30-31.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.31.

⁸⁸ Albert Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism. Past and Present*, p.14.

re-enforced the feeling of distinctiveness among the latter's elites. Opposition to the central state's new fiscal policy was strongest in, but not limited to, Catalonia. Rebellions occurred in other regions, most importantly in the Basque province of Vizcaya. However, the conflicts in these regions were less intense than in Catalonia and did not have the same impact on regional distinctiveness.

The 1640 rebellion was a product of Catalan elites' refusal to accept the centralizing policies of the Spanish state; it was a first sign that several centuries of regional autonomy would make centralizing processes very difficult as the loose structures of the early Spanish state allowed for regional elites to become quite powerful. The 1702-1713 War of Succession generated a context that led to another confrontation between Catalonia and the Spanish state. Catalan leaders, resentful of France for its many invasion attempts and fearing that the French pretender would bring to the Spanish Crown an even stronger centralism, supported Philip of Anjou's rival in the succession conflict.⁸⁹ Following his victory, Philip (who became Felipe V) imposed Spanish laws and the Castilian language on Catalonia. Regional parliaments were also suppressed in the other principalities of Aragón. Only in the Basque provinces and Navarre did the *fueros* remain.

Two reasons account for this exception to centralized rule. First, the Basque provinces were an isolated, resourceless, and, until the late 19th century, poor regions. Second, and most importantly, the Basque elite (merchants and nobility) had historically enjoyed good relations with the Spanish Crown.⁹⁰ The Basque merchants and nobles depended heavily on

⁸⁹ Stanley Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, p.24.

⁹⁰ Juan Díez Medrano, *Divided Nations*, pp.35-36.

the Crown for trading opportunities, especially for access to the American colonies. They came to participate actively in Spain's economic, financial and political affairs, and developed privileged networks and relationships with Madrid that strengthened their commitment to Spain and the empire. The situation was very different in the Mediterranean power of Catalonia where economic prosperity, and trading patterns, which barely included the Iberian peninsula, led to the consolidation of a strong and largely self-sufficient bourgeoisie. The positions of the two elites in the context of the Crown's attempt to levy taxes in 17th century is strongly indicative of their relationship with the Spanish state. The Catalan bourgeoisie staunchly opposed the fiscal claims of the Crown and led the 1640 Revolt whereas the Basque elite largely supported them. These different patterns of elite relationships between, on the one hand, the Basque and Catalan elite, and, on the other hand, the Spanish (mainly Castilian) elite represent crucial elements in explaining the greater sense of distinctiveness in Catalonia before the late 19th century. As a consequence of the Catalan elite's fierce opposition to the Crown's 17th and 18th century attempt at centralization, the articulation of a Catalan identity was more forceful than any other regional identity in Spain.

The centralizing tendencies of the Spanish state grew stronger in the 19th century. The 1808-1814 war of independence against France was a watershed moment in the territorial policies of the Spanish Crown.⁹¹ It coincided with the emergence in Madrid of a liberal elite who sought to transform Spain into a unitary and strongly centralized state, and to impose the model of a unified and coherent Spanish nation that went along with it.⁹² These Liberals

⁹¹ Luis Moreno, *La federalización de España*, p.57.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp.57-60.

viewed regional autonomy and privileges as the backward, even reactionary, residues of the Old Regime. They saw particularism and diversity as synonymous with disorganization and weakness. They equated centralization and homogeneity with integration, modernity and power. In the context of a collapsing empire, it was especially important to adjust the internal structures of the state in a way that would favour its international power and prestige. The chosen recipe met with vigorous opposition in several regions, most importantly Catalonia and the Basque Country. It led to an intensification of the central/regional elites struggle whose ultimate consequences were the formal and explicit articulation of a Basque and a Catalan identity.

The movement towards centralization was accompanied by the desire to transform Spain into a liberal, secular and industrialized society. It was opposed by traditionalists who favoured absolutism and local-regional autonomy. The struggle between these two forces took the form of the Carlist wars. Carlism was a movement that bore the name of Don Carlos, a conservative claimant to the Spanish throne. It fought for the conservation of the traditional structures and values associated with the Old Regime by fighting against industrialization, secularization, constitutionalism and centralization. There were two major wars that opposed Carlists and Liberal-Centralists in the 19th century. The first one began in 1833 and ended in 1839 with the defeat of the Basque Carlist army. Carlism had many supporters throughout Spain during this period but the movement was most popular in the northern part of the country where anti-centralist sentiments were strong and religiosity was high. The second Carlist war (1873-1876) evolved into a conflict between Spain and the three Basque provinces, as the latter were the only regions (with Navarre) where support for Carlism was

still substantial.⁹³ It ended with a Carlist defeat at the abolition of the Basque *fueros*. The Basque traditional elite who had been at the forefront of the Carlist movement began equating Carlism with a community comprising the three Basque provinces and Navarre.

This elite, for whom industrialization and centralization was synonymous with social decline, denounced Spain's 'negative' influence on Basque society and the abolition of historical rights. It proclaimed the existence of a Basque community whose fundamental attribute was its traditional social structure. One individual was at the centre of this transition from a Spanish traditional movement to a Basque nationalist one. Sabino Arana, a Carlist politician, 'converted' to nationalism following a disastrous performance by the traditionalists in the 1882 elections.⁹⁴ Arana was committed to the foral tradition of non-interference in the business of other provinces and, consequently, spoke mostly about Vizcaya.⁹⁵ For the first time, however, the defence of a province's autonomy was couched in racial terms, and legitimated by invoking the existence of a wider community ethnically, culturally and socially distinct from the rest of Spain. Arana thought that Spain was too contaminated by the evils of modernization to be saved, and suggested that the battle for the preservation of traditional social structures in the Basque provinces had to be fought using a purely Basque perspective. He took the old tenets of Carlism (religion, autonomy, traditionalism) and added the ideas of the specificity and the purity of the Basque race and language. Arana's definition of the Basque community was strongly rooted in the idea of race and, therefore, deeply exclusive.

⁹³ Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain. Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), p.12.

⁹⁴ Arana used this religious vocabulary. See Juan Díez Medrano, *Divided Nations*, p.75.

⁹⁵ Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, p.53, note17.

It was meant to be that way in order to efficiently play its role as a defensive shield against social contaminant.⁹⁶ The concept of race was particularly useful in protecting Basques against foreigners who Arana saw as immoral, non-Catholic and socialist.⁹⁷ It also made the Basque and Spanish identities incompatible. Arana's racialism led him to conceptualize the Basque community as the four Spanish provinces and three French *départements*. Most of the modern Basque symbols can be traced to Arana⁹⁸: he invented the name (*Euzkadi*), designed the flag, wrote the anthem, and created the first Basque party, the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV). The Basque national holiday is on the day of its 'conversion' to nationalism.

The formal and explicit articulation of a Catalan identity also emerged from a specific dynamic involving Catalan elites and the Spanish state. In the case of Catalonia, the force behind the rise of a strong identity was a powerful bourgeoisie. The relationship between the Catalan bourgeoisie and the Spanish state was rather conflictual throughout the 19th century. The most contentious issue was tariff policy. As most of Spain was an agrarian society, Castilian elites controlling the central state favoured high tariffs on grain and low tariffs on textile products, the core of the Catalan economy. The Catalan bourgeoisie demanded the opposite.⁹⁹ Demands for protectionism united the Catalan bourgeoisie and became the central

⁹⁶ Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, p.60.

⁹⁷ John Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism. The Fight for Euzkadi, 1890-1986*, (London: Routledge, 1988), p.5.

⁹⁸ Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, pp.53-54.

⁹⁹ Juan Díez Medrano, *Divided Nations*, p.91.

force of the Catalan movement.¹⁰⁰ The first strategy of this bourgeoisie was to try to influence the policies of the Spanish state or to simply take control of it. The dethronement of Isabel II in 1868 and the proclamation of the short-lived first republic in 1873 coincided with a period of hegemony for the Catalan bourgeoisie within state institutions. This situation was strongly denounced in Madrid newspapers. Several different articles in various papers decried the number of Catalans in the government and urged Spain not to tolerate being treated like a 'conquered state'.¹⁰¹ Catalan bourgeois were unable to maintain this position of power. The absence of a significant bourgeoisie elsewhere in Spain prevented them from establishing significant political alliances. The historical predominance of an agrarian-landowning elite in Madrid made successful cooperation difficult.¹⁰²

The Catalan bourgeoisie's frustration with the Spanish state climaxed in 1898 with the loss of Spain's last important colonies. The independence of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines was a traumatic event for Spaniards because it marked the final demise of a once great empire. For Catalan merchants and industrialists, the loss of Cuba meant the loss of a crucial market. They also saw in this event a confirmation that Spain was a corrupt, inefficient and backward state, and that their attempts to make it business-friendly were hopeless. It is in this context that they abandoned the Spanish framework and started stressing the distinctiveness (both cultural and socio-economic) of Catalonia. They formed in 1901 the first significant Catalan regionalist/nationalist party: the *Lliga Regionalista*. The *Lliga* was

¹⁰⁰ Jaume Vicens Vives, *Los Catalanes en el siglo XIX*, (Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, S.A., 1986), p.90

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp.246-247.

¹⁰² Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, p.20.

instrumental in articulating and developing Catalonia's specificity. It demanded and obtained the creation in 1914 of an administrative unit joining the provinces of the Catalan region. This *Mancomunitat*, although not enjoying any political autonomy, symbolized the recovery of an historical unity lost two centuries ago. With the structures of the *Mancomunitat*, the *Lliga* gave new momentum to a movement of cultural affirmation. The central focus of this movement was language. The *Lliga* created several programs designed to produce a unified Catalan language. In addition to the great symbolic value of language in the bourgeoisie's quest for autonomy, these programs were necessary to produce in Catalonia an elite with the expertise necessary to further the development of the region. Contrary to the Basque identity, the Catalan identity articulated at the turn of the century was not racially defined or presented as fundamentally incompatible with Spain. The objective of the elite at the centre of the Catalan movement did not warrant this type of expression, and its sociological profile made it less probable.

The construction of a sense of distinctiveness in Catalonia and the Basque Country is a process that predates the 19th century. It is in the late 1800s, however, that the Basque and Catalan identities find a formal, elaborate and coherent expression. The general dynamic for this development in the two regions was the same. It was a struggle between elites in Madrid seeking to maximize the power of the Spanish state and regional elites who had much to lose in a process of centralization. The specific patterns of elite competition that gave rise to a formally articulated identity in the Basque Country and Catalonia were very different although the two regions were, at that time, overdeveloped relative to the rest of Spain. In the Basque Country, the creation of a Basque nation was the product of a traditional

landowning elite who saw language and the concept of race as perfect instruments to isolate society from change and avoid its own social marginalization. The absence of the Basque bourgeoisie in the process of identity construction was the consequence of its privileged relations with, and dependency on, the Spanish Crown. In Catalonia, it was merchants and industrialists who triggered the adoption of a regional framework as they judged that the Spanish state was a major obstacle to their business ventures.

Regional identities were also articulated in other Spanish regions as a result of the centralizing tendencies of the Spanish state. Basque nationalism penetrated the old Kingdom of Navarre where the loss of the *fueros* triggered similar reactions to those in the 'other' three Basque provinces.¹⁰³ In the very rural Galicia, traditionalists opposed state centralization and stressed the specificity of their region to back up their claims for autonomy.¹⁰⁴ In the more developed Valencia, the stress on distinctiveness was the product of a progressive-radical elite.¹⁰⁵ The expression of identities in these areas in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was very much the product of identity politics in Catalonia and the Basque Country. However, the Valencian and Galician regional identities were weakly articulated in comparison to the two

¹⁰³ On Basque nationalism in Navarre in the late 19th and early 20th centuries see Araceli Martínez-Peñuela Virseda, *Antecedentes y primeros pasos del nacionalismo vasco en Navarra, 1878-1911*, (Burlada: Gobierno de Navarra, Departamento de Educación y Cultura, 1989).

¹⁰⁴ On Galicia, see F. Fernández del Riego, "El nacionalismo gallego en sus orígenes: Villar Ponte y Vicente Risco" in *Nation et nationalités en Espagne, XIXe-XXe*, (Paris: Fondation Singer-Polignac, 1985), pp.181-189.

¹⁰⁵ On Valencia, see Alfons Cucó, *El valencianismo político, 1874-1939*, (Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 1977).

most prominent ones, and remained more closely associated to a larger Spanish framework

2.2.3 Dictatorial Rule: Equating Regional Identity and Democracy.

The development of strong regional identities in Spain owes much to a factor rarely encountered in other multiethnic Western societies during the 20th century: dictatorship. The policies of two authoritarian regimes, Miguel Primo de Rivera's (1923-1930) and Francisco Franco's (1939-1979), greatly stimulated identities, especially in the Basque Country and Catalonia. Both dictatorships sought to eradicate regional politics and identities, and to establish, by force, a strongly centralized state and an homogeneous, indivisible Spanish nation. The suppression of regionalist/nationalist movements had the unintended consequence of strengthening the identities it meant to destroy. The end of the Primo de Rivera rule opened the way for a short period of autonomy in Catalonia, and, to a lesser extent, the Basque Country and Galicia. The unpleasant experience of Spain's regional elites under the dictatorship led to an invigoration of their identity politics. This repression-resurgence dynamic that characterized the 1923-1936 period manifested itself even more strongly in the context of the Franco dictatorship and the beginning of Spain's transition towards democracy. The violence used by Franco's regime against all its political adversaries, but especially those suspected of socialism or 'separatism', generated a pattern of opposition politics where claims for autonomy and democracy were often inseparable. This pattern boosted regional identities which became synonymous with liberal-democratic ideals.

The Primo de Rivera dictatorship was declared in 1923 primarily in response to the acute social conflicts that had characterized politics in Spain since WWI. The restoration of

order was accompanied by specific provisions on 'nationalist activity'. Catalonia was perceived as the most dangerous threat since it boasted the strongest nationalist movement in the country, and was the stronghold of anarchist and left-wing politics. It was, therefore, the subject of much of the dictatorship's attention.¹⁰⁶ The dictatorship dissolved Catalanist organizations and prohibited their members from meeting. It prohibited the Catalan flag and language, and imposed a national education curriculum. It also suspended the *Mancomunitat* in 1925. These decisions were opposed by many Spanish intellectuals who thought they would encourage Catalanism. They were right. The dictatorship's policies for Catalonia boosted the symbolic value of such elements as the flag and the language.¹⁰⁷

In the Basque provinces, leading political elites showed more willingness to work with the dictatorship. Their claims for autonomy represented much less of a threat for the regime because they were mostly 'provincial' rather than 'regional'. Representatives of Guipuzcoa prepared a proposal suggesting that the three provinces (Navarre was left out) be granted autonomy, and that a system of regional government be put in place. The latter suggestion was opposed by representatives of Vizcaya who remarked that "'never in history have the Basque provinces formed a single region ' and refused to participate in a separate entity intermediate between provincial and national government."¹⁰⁸ While the old provincial identities manifested themselves very strikingly during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, authoritarian rule also had for consequence to stimulate cultural activity in the Basque

¹⁰⁶ Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, pp.36-37.

¹⁰⁷ Albert Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism. Past and Present*, p.86.

¹⁰⁸ Stanley Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, p.102.

territories. The politics of authoritarianism between 1923 and 1930 were an important step in giving life to Arana's idea of a Basque Country.

The end of Primo de Rivera's regime led to the invigoration of regional identities and the creation of the Second Republic. These two developments had their immediate sources in authoritarian rule and were closely related. That was especially true in the case of Catalonia where republicanism and the expression of regional identity had become almost synonymous with democratic reform. The link established between Catalanism and democracy in the context of the dictatorship provided the former with great legitimacy. In 1930, Republican forces met in San Sebastián. Three Catalan parties were invited: *Estat Català*, *Acció Catalana* and *Acció Catalana Republicana*. These parties negotiated their support for a Republic in exchange for the promise of a Statute of Autonomy. This Statute was granted with the proclamation of the Republic in 1931, and an autonomous Catalan government, the *Generalitat*, was established the next year. These institutions embodied the conflation between democracy and autonomy triggered by authoritarian rule, and quickly became a strong symbol for the Catalan identity. The early days of the Republic also witnessed the creation of a new Catalan nationalist party, the *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC), which gave this progressive-democratic/autonomy nexus another form of institutionalization. The ERC combined stands on autonomy with claims for the recognition of human rights, the right to unionize and the development of social assistance.¹⁰⁹ It quickly took over the *Lliga*, whose credibility was undermined by a soft stance against the dictatorship, as the most popular party in Catalonia.

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Juan Díez Medrano, *Divided Nations. Class*, p.101.

In the Basque provinces, the end of the dictatorship also coincided with an association between a regional (Basque) identity and resistance to Spanish authoritarianism.¹¹⁰ The divisions among provinces were still important but the idea of a larger Basque community articulated by Arana had made great steps in the context of the dictatorship. The PNV was not invited to San Sebastián, nor were any Basque nationalist leaders. Their conservatism did not make them natural allies of the Republican forces. Nevertheless, representatives of the three provinces engaged in negotiations on a Statute of Autonomy for the provinces *as a whole*, including Navarre. They suggested the creation of a Basque state within the Spanish state. However, the new identity and community imagined by Basque nationalist leaders had uneven resonance. The proposal was rejected by representatives of Navarre. Another draft excluding Navarre from the 'Basque Country' gained only 46% popular support in Alava as referenda were held in the three provinces.¹¹¹ After more drafts and negotiations, an agreement was reached on a Statute of Autonomy for a 'Basque Country' composed of Vizcaya, Alava and Guipuzcoa.

The Statute was never implemented since the Civil War broke out 3 months after it had been agreed upon in 1936. It nevertheless brought a significant symbolic dimension to the contested idea of a coherent Basque community. Although the three Basque provinces had never been united in an autonomous political community before, Basque nationalist leaders presented the common institutions as the new embodiment of the historical *fueros*. In Galicia, the Second Republic also involved discussions on autonomy as a defense against dictatorship.

¹¹⁰ Stanley Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, p.107.

¹¹¹ In Guipuzcoa and Vizcaya, the results were almost 90% in favour of the proposal. *Ibid.*, p.134.

These discussions stimulated a process of identity building in this region that could not be fueled by the idea of *fueros* or a tradition of self-government as was respectively the case for the Basque provinces and Catalonia.¹¹² The end of the dictatorship coincided with the creation of a nationalist party, the *Partido Galeguista* (PG), which spearheaded the campaign for a Statute of Autonomy. The PG's success in gaining autonomy in 1936 was undermined by the beginning of the Civil War, but the Statute was to find all its significance for the Galician identity in the post-Franco era.

The victory of the Francoist forces in the 1936-39 Civil War paved the way for a thirty-five year dictatorship. The *raison d'être* of Franco's regime was the eradication of the twin 'evils' of communism and separatism. Franco saw in the existence of multiple territorial identities in Spain a threat to national unity and the integrity of a great power. He attempted to impose the model of a homogeneous, indivisible, almost eternal nation united by a single Castilian language, culture, and spirit.¹¹³ His immediate goal was the suppression of all regional identities and the elimination of their deepest roots. The practical implementation of this project relied on strategies of violent cultural and linguistic assimilation. Repression was strongest in Catalonia and the Basque provinces. The Statutes of Autonomy were immediately abolished. No expressions of cultural distinctiveness were tolerated in these areas: regional languages were eliminated from school systems and broadcasting, books in these languages were destroyed, cultural associations and practices (such as dance and music)

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Justo G. Beramendi and Xosé M. Núñez, "The Historical Background of Galician Nationalism", *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, 22 (1995), pp.34.

¹¹³

Luis Moreno, *La federalización de España*, p.75.

were outlawed, all the Basque and Catalan names in the civil registries were translated into Spanish.¹¹⁴ In the Basque provinces, inscriptions in Basque on tombstones were removed. These assimilationist policies had the unintended consequence of strengthening the identities they sought to eradicate. The violence deployed by Franco against cultural distinctiveness was widely felt, especially in Catalonia and the Basque provinces. It triggered the broader diffusion of regional identities by giving them new credibility. The length and brutality of Franco's dictatorship produced in many regions of Spain confluences between the ideas of Spanish identity and authoritarianism, and between regionalism and liberal-democratic politics, that far surpassed those generated during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship.

In Catalonia, an impressive underground network of civic and cultural associations developed in the 1950s and thrived in the 1960s and early 1970s as the dictatorship was weakening.¹¹⁵ Their common focus was language. The Catalan language became a refuge against authoritarianism and acquired new political importance. These cultural organizations and their most prominent members, such as *Assemblea de Catalunya* and *Crist Catalunya/Comunitat Catalana* leader Jordi Pujol, became powerful symbols of both the Catalan identity and democracy. Opposition politics in Galicia was weaker but followed a similar pattern. Organizations struggling against the dictatorship underwent a 'galicianization'

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On the Franco repression in Catalonia and the Basque Country see respectively, Jaume Rossinyol, *Le problème national catalan*, pp.576-602 and Marianne Heiberg, *The Making of the Basque Nation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp.90-92.

¹¹⁵

Albert Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism. Past and Present*, pp.143-168.

as cultural and linguistic claims were integrated with political ones.¹¹⁶ In the Basque provinces, repression triggered the emergence of the guerilla organization ETA (*Euzkadi Ta Azkatasuna*). Created in 1959 by a group of PNV members (known as *Ekin*) who felt that the party's resistance to Franco was too passive, ETA followed a pattern of violent activism that projected both a Basque identity and a fierce opposition to dictatorship.¹¹⁷ ETA was instrumental in equating the Basque identity with political action, and in stressing the importance, meaning and usefulness of the specificity of the Basque language and culture in the context of a struggle against authoritarianism.

Dictatorship was a crucial element in the strengthening and wider diffusion of regional identities in Spain. The attempt to forcefully impose the idea of a pure and eternal Spanish (Castilian) nation only legitimated regional identities, a process reminiscent to the one triggered by 19th century attempts at centralization. This similarity highlights the theoretical significance of state structures and policies for regional identities. In Spain, the central state has been a crucial variable to the process of identity formation, much more than in Belgium where the key struggle was between regional elites. The exact mechanisms of the unintended legitimization of regional identities under Franco are located in democratic struggle. Regional identities became, in the context of authoritarian rule, synonymous with change and freedom. The repression of cultural distinctiveness transformed culture, and more particularly language, into vehicles of resistance. The powerful meaning acquired by language in many Spanish regions became a central determinant of territorial identity. The Catalan personality as

¹¹⁶ Xosé M. Núñez, "National Reawakening within a Changing Society: The Galician Movement in Spain (1960-97)", *Nationalism & Ethnic Politics*, 3 (1997), pp.31-32.

¹¹⁷ John Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism*, pp.27-33.

articulated by underground leaders increasingly revolved around language. In the Basque provinces, the idea that language, more than race, was the crucial marker of the Basque identity and struggle was expressed in a very influential book on the Basques and their politics of resistance, Federico Krutwig's *Vasconia*.¹¹⁸ The importance given to language in the articulation of regional identities as a result of Franco's cultural-political repression, and the association of these identities with progressive politics, gave Spain's transition towards democracy a peculiar dynamic which greatly shaped its contemporary territorial identity landscape.

2.2.4 Spain's Transition towards Democracy: Autonomy, Mimesis and the Multiplication of Regional Identities.

The end of the dictatorship in Spain brought regional identities to the forefront of the transition process and put them at the centre of the new constitutional and institutional framework. Democracy in Spain meant decentralization and the recognition of regional identities. Nationalist organizations in Catalonia and the Basque provinces that spearheaded opposition to Franco were particularly instrumental in shaping the transition process and the country's new territorial institutions. They were the central force behind the constitutional recognition of 'historical nationalities' and regions, and the creation of a system of autonomous communities. These institutions fostered the development of regional identities by creating or re-producing political communities. In Catalonia and the now integrated 'Basque Country', the dominance in regional party systems of nationalist parties benefitting

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Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, p.108.

from their historical opposition to Franco compounded the effects of institutional autonomy. However, the most striking consequence of Spain's new institutional arrangement was the proliferation of regional identities. In regions such as Galicia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands, weakly articulated territorial identities gained considerable strength in the context of the autonomy system. Regional identities also developed in other regions, such as Andalucía and the Canary Islands, that had virtually no history of distinct identities. The consequence of Spain's autonomous community system is a complex territorial identity landscape that still bears the print of the Franco dictatorship.

Francisco Franco died in November of 1975, and within one year executive power was assumed by a political coalition of cautious reformists and Francoists, the *Unión del Centro Democrático* (UCD) headed by Adolfo Suárez. In June 1977, the UCD won the first democratic elections in Spain in forty years. Its bad performance in Catalonia and the Basque provinces where nationalist and left-wing parties were much more successful constituted a formal notice that any attempt at preserving a centralist model of territorial organization associated with the idea of a uniform Spain, homogenous in cultural and unified in spirit, would lead to a political blockage.¹¹⁹ The necessity of engaging Basque and Catalan nationalists in the process of democratic construction was recognized by the new Spanish government. In late 1977, Basque and Catalan provisional governments led by left-wing and moderate nationalist politicians were set up in preparation of negotiations on the future constitution. The agreement reached on the new democratic constitutional framework

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Albert Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism. Past and Present*, pp.170-171; Marianne Heiberg, *The Making of the Basque Nation*, pp.122-123.

reflected the power wielded by Basque and Catalan representatives. The document recognized the 'nationalities' and "regions' of Spain and guaranteed their right to autonomy. (It also situated the existence of these nationalities and regions within an indivisible Spanish nation.) The concept of nationalities referred to the so-called historical nationalities of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia that had enjoyed a Statute of Autonomy during the Second Republic and where regional identities were presumably strongest. The distinction between nationalities and regions was important since the former were allowed quicker access to autonomy and could potentially acquire more power.¹²⁰

In Catalonia, the new constitution and the Statute of Autonomy did not meet with significant opposition. They satisfied both the ERC and Jordi Pujols' new political coalition *Convergència i Unió* (CiU). The Statute was ratified following a referendum that produced a 88% vote in favour of the proposed autonomy.¹²¹ An important factor in explaining this lack of controversy was the existence of a general agreement among Catalan political elites on the contour of the Catalan community. The concept of pan-Catalanism, that is the idea of a 'Catalan Country' that would include Valencia and the Balearic Island, was never a serious obstacle to the creation of an autonomous community in Catalonia proper. The new institutional framework meant for Catalonia the return of the *Generalitat* abolished at the beginning of the civil war. The re-establishment of this symbol of the Catalan personality and autonomy combined with the formal recognition of Catalonia as a 'nationality' within Spain

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Josep M. Colomer, "The Spanish 'State of Autonomies': Non-Institutional Federalism", in Paul Heywood (ed), *Politics and Policy in Democratic Spain: No Longer Different?*, (London: Frank Cass, 1999), p.42.

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Michael Keating, *Nations against the State. The New Politics of Nationalism in Québec, Catalonia and Scotland*, (New York: St-Martin's Press, 1996), p.121.

to provide additional legitimacy to the Catalan identity. This legitimacy is reflected in the results of contemporary surveys asking people to describe their territorial identity by referring to one of five categories: only regional (Catalan, Basque, Galician, Valencian, etc...), more regional than Spanish, as regional as Spanish, more Spanish than regional and only Spanish.¹²² In Catalonia, more respondents felt only or primarily Catalan (32%) than only or primarily Spanish (24%). Moreover, a majority of respondents felt at least partly Catalan (85%) while only 14% identified themselves strictly as Spaniards.¹²³

In the Basque case, the constitution established a framework for the development of a Basque identity above and beyond historical provincial boundaries. This institutionalization of a 'Basque Country', which owed much to Franco's brutal repression of Basque culture and the solidarity it created, was particularly significant considering the distinct history of the Basque provinces. The uncertain contour of the Basque community and identity were highlighted in the mixed reaction to the Constitution. For the radical *Herri Batasuna* (HB), the non-inclusion of Navarre (not to mention the French Basque Country) within the Basque Country represented a schism of the Basque community, and it "advocated a "no" vote in the constitutional referendum and active abstention in the autonomy statute referendum".¹²⁴ The

¹²² See the data on all regions in Luis Moreno, *La federalización de España*, pp.129-135. The numbers presented for Catalonia, the Basque Country and Andalucía are averages from three surveys conducted in 1986, 1991 and 1994. In the cases of Galicia and Valencia, the surveys are from 1985, 1991 and 1994.

¹²³ The category 'does not know' accounts for the remaining one percent.

¹²⁴ Richard Gunther *et al.*, *Spain after Franco. The Making of a Competitive Party System*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p.342.

other two nationalist parties, the PNV and *Euzkadi Ezkerra* (EE), had a similar conception of the Basque community but were less insistent.

The three Basque parties also considered the constitution and proposed Statute flawed because they did not recognize the historical legitimacy of the Basque community and their right to autonomy. There was an effort on the part of these parties to legitimize the 'Basque Country' by situating the exercise of the *fueros* outside the Spanish political framework and connecting it to the 'inherent specificity' of the Basques. Their rigid stand on the constitution was also the product of the continuing violence of ETA which put considerable strain on the transition negotiations. The PNV advocated abstention or the casting of blank ballots in the constitution referendum while EE urged a 'no' vote. As a result of these different interpretations of the Basque identity, the percentage of 'yes' votes (in favour of the constitution) in the Basque provinces was lower than the national average. It ranged from 63.9 to 71.4% in the former while the latter was 87.8%.¹²⁵ The specific circumstances surrounding the negotiations on the constitution and the Statute of Autonomy in the Basque Country led to greater agitation than in Catalonia, and may partly explain the slightly greater attachment to the regional identity in the Basque Country. In this region, 48% of the population feel only or primarily Basque while 17% feel only or primarily Spanish.

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Howard R. Penniman and Eusebio M. Mujal-León (eds), *Spain and the Polls, 1977, 1979, 1982. A Study of the National Elections*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985), p.241.

In the case of Galicia, recognition as an 'historical nationality' had more to do with Basque and Catalan activism than with spontaneous expressions of distinctiveness.¹²⁶ There was little nationalist/regionalist activity in this region during the transition, but constant reference by Basque and Catalan leaders to the Second Republic's Statutes of Autonomy elevated Galicia to the 'historical nationality' status. While not the product of overwhelming claims, this status "fuelled the reinforcement of Galician identity among the population".¹²⁷ This identity is surprisingly strong considering the relative historical weakness of nationalism/regionalism in this region and its low profile during the transition period. 36% of Galicians identify only or primarily with Galicia while 12% view themselves mostly or only as Spanish.

The creation of a system of autonomous communities coincided with the emergence of regional party systems. In both Catalonia and the Basque Country, the prominence of nationalist parties has been a major factor in the consolidation of regional identities. The Catalan party system is dominated by the nationalist CiU which has won every election held since the re-establishment of the *Generalitat*.¹²⁸ The CiU won a majority of seats in three of these five elections: in 1984, 1988 and 1992. The combined seats of the two nationalist parties, CiU and EE, have always accounted for approximately 55% except for the first election in 1980. CiU leader Jordi Pujols has been the president of Catalonia since that time.

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Xosé M. Núñez, "National Reawakening within a Changing Society: The Galician Movement in Spain (1960-97)", p.36.

¹²⁷

Ibid.

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The data on elections in autonomous communities is drawn from *The Europa World Yearbook*, (London: Europa Publications Limited, 1984-1998).

The CiU's stranglehold on power has translated into the implementation of vigorous policies of 'Catalanization'. In turn, this promotion of the use of the Catalan language in schools, television, radio, newspapers, music and the legal system has reinforced the Catalan identity by giving greater visibility to its symbols.¹²⁹ The stress on culture/language in identity definition is as apparent in the CiU's position as it is in Québec's parties. "La cultura", states the programme, "[E]s (...) un sistema de referencia y de valores que permite situar a cada pueblo en el mundo. Para nosotros, la cultura constituye un componente básico de entidad nacional."¹³⁰ The CiU also paints a larger territorial identity picture similar to that of Québec parties as it states that its programme "va indisolublemente unido a la concepción de España como un estado plurinacional, basado en una realidad pluricultural y plurilingüística incuestionable."¹³¹

Nationalist parties are more numerous in the Basque party system where they collectively win even more seats than their Catalan counterparts. The PNV has been the dominant party in the Basque Country. This party is a strong promoter of Basque unity above and beyond provincial border. As its programme states, "The Basque Nationalist Party believe (sic)... in the territorial and cultural cohesion of the Basque Country without imposition and respecting the plurality of languages, cultures and ways of life. And also defends a society that

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Albert Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism. Past and Present*, pp.190-191.

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See the CiU's programme, www.convergencia-i-unio.org/fit/programa/programacast.pdf, p.60. "Culture is a system of reference and values that allows each people of the world to situate itself. For us, culture is a basic element of national identity." My translation.

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Idem. "Is necessary tied to a conception of Spain as a multinational state, grounded in an undeniable cultural and linguistic diversity." My translation.

practices solidarity amongst all its members.”¹³² Since the implementation of the Statute of Autonomy, the PNV has failed to win only the election of 1986. That year, the Basque Socialist Party (PSE-PSOE) won a plurality of seats as a result of a schism within the PNV that led to the creation of *Eusko Alkartasuna* (EA). In addition to the PNV and EA, the Basque party system also includes the radical HB, and EE which merged with the Socialists in 1993. Nationalist parties have always accounted for more than 65% of the seats in the Basque Country. As a result of this omnipresence of nationalist organizations in the party system, “[A]ll important public political bodies and all institutions with public functions—chambers of commerce, health organization, cultural bodies, educational institutions, economic planning commissions, etc.—are under direct nationalist control.”¹³³ In turn, the penetration of Basque society by nationalist forces has accentuated feelings of distinctiveness in the general population. In Galicia, nationalist parties were a non-factor until the *Bloque Nacionalista Galego* (BNG) made some inroads in the 1993 elections by winning 13 seats. The lack of power of nationalists within the Galician party system may explain in part why the movement of cultural and linguistic revival in the region has remained relatively weak.¹³⁴

The prominence of regional identity in the new Catalan and Basque institutions was not a surprising development. The Catalan identity had deep historical roots. Its flourishing within an autonomous community where nationalist leaders, benefitting from the legitimacy associated with their struggle against Franco, could engage in vigorous social ‘Catalanization’

¹³² www.eaj-pnv.com. See the PNV’s historical statement titled, *historye*.

¹³³ Marianne Heiberg, *The Making of the Basque Nation*, p. 129.

¹³⁴ Xosé M. Núñez, “National Reawakening within a Changing Society: The Galician Movement in Spain (1960-97)”, p.51.

was largely expected. The idea of a the Basque community did not have the same historical continuity as in Catalonia since the Basque provinces had a long tradition of autonomy. Nevertheless, active resistance in the Basque provinces against a particularly brutal repression had stimulated a shared consciousness and put supporters of the idea of one 'Basque Country' in a favourable position to stress, invoking such historical traditions as the *fueros*, the unity of a Basque community.

A much more unexpected development was the manifestation of regional identities in areas that had little or virtually no history of territorial identification distinct from Spain as a whole. The creation of autonomous communities in addition to the three 'historical nationalities' as a safeguard against authoritarianism had the unintended consequence of launching a process of ethnoterritorial mimesis.¹³⁵ The recognition and autonomy of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia stimulated regional identities in these areas but also triggered a domino effect that led to the emergence of many others. The case of Andalucía is particularly representative of the new political-territorial dynamic created by Spain's new constitutional and institutional framework and its consequence on the country's territorial identity landscape. Prior to Spain's democratic transition, Andalucía "had never laid claim to separate regional identity or articulated mass demands for autonomy".¹³⁶

In the context of a transition period where issues of regional identity and autonomy were stressed by Catalan and Basque leaders, regionalist parties emerged in many regions including Andalucía. The *Partido Socialista Andaluz* (PSA)-later the *Partido Andaluz* (PA)- created

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Luis Moreno, "Federalization and Ethnoterritorial Concurrence in Spain", *Publius*, 27 (1997), p.81.

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Richard Gunther *et al.*, *Spain after Franco*, p.246.

after Franco's death, and its charismatic leader Rojas Marcos, claimed for the region the right to the 'fast-track' autonomy reserved for the 'historical nationalities'. Marcos sought to give legitimacy to this claim by stressing the 'distinctive life and music of the South' and insisting on Andalucía's rural poverty.¹³⁷ After the Spanish government agreed in 1980 to a compromise on a procedure for Andalucía's accession to autonomy, the PSA-PA, which had sent five representatives to Parliament in 1979, saw its support plummet to 2.2% in the 1982 general election and has remained a marginal force ever since.¹³⁸ However, feelings of distinctiveness spurred by the autonomy issue still exist in Andalucía's. 23% of its population identifies more strongly with the region than with Spain as a whole. These feelings were recuperated, if not diverted, by the Socialists (PSOE).¹³⁹

The mimesis effect triggered by the new institutions has given rise to identities in other regions where expressions of distinctiveness had remained historically embryonic or had never existed. In many of these regions, prominent political parties initiated the quest for Statutes of Autonomy.¹⁴⁰ The drive for autonomy coincided with, and led to, the emergence of nationalist/regionalist parties which became crucial actors in the dynamic process at the centre of territorial identity formation and transformation in contemporary Spain. In the Canary Islands, regional identity was stimulated by the nationalist coalition *Coalición Canaria*

¹³⁷ Jack Brand, "Andalusia: Nationalism as a Strategy for Autonomy", *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, 15 (1988), p.8.

¹³⁸ Howard R. Penniman and Eusebio M. Mujal-León, (eds), *Spain and the Polls, 1977, 1979, 1982*, p.328; Jack Brand, "Andalusia: Nationalism as a Strategy for Autonomy", p.7.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, p.8.

¹⁴⁰ Luis Moreno, "Federalization and Ethnoterritorial Concurrence in Spain", p.71.

(CC) created in 1993 from five smaller parties. The CC quickly gained control of the archipelago with its victory in the autonomous elections of 1995. This win has put it in a commanding position to stress the insularity and historical specificity of the region as it articulates claims for increased autonomy. The CC's spectacular rise has occurred in the context of a strong identification of Canarians with the archipelago. Survey data on territorial identities from 1990 to 1995 reveals that the Canarian identity is one of the strongest regional identity in Spain. The proportion of Canarians feeling only Canarian surpasses the exclusive attachment to the region in every autonomous community except the Basque Country.¹⁴¹

In Navarre, the territorial identity picture is very complex. Not only is there a very strong attachment to the region (between 35% and 50% identify only or primarily with Navarre), there is also the idea that Navarre is part of a larger cultural and spiritual Basque community. This picture is embodied and shaped by the party system. This system includes, in addition to the 'Spanish' parties, Navarrese regionalist and Basque nationalist parties. The *Unión del Pueblo Navarro* (UPN), which articulates a Navarrese identity, has proven more successful than parties representing Basque irredentism. For HB and EA, competing in Navarre's regional elections is a way to promote their definition of the Basque community. (The PNV and EE also took part in some Navarrese elections). These parties consistently win between 10% and 20% of the seats, and their activism produces a dynamic that greatly shapes territorial identities in this region.

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For self-identification data on the Canary Islands, Navarre and other regions see survey results (1990-1995) in Luis Moreno, *La federalización de España*, pp.129-135.

The Statutes of Autonomy have also led to the emergence of nationalist/regionalist parties, in Valencia (*Unión Valenciana* (UV)) and Aragón (*Partido Aragonés* (PAR)), that have greatly contributed to the development of identities in these regions.¹⁴² The PAR has achieved some electoral success, winning consistently between 20% and 30% of the seats in the regional parliament. Partly as a result of the PAR's visibility, 18% in Aragón identify only or primarily with the region. In Valencia, the success of the nationalists/regionalists has not been as great, with the UV only between 6% to 8% of the seats when not part of a coalition led by non nationalist/regionalist parties. The development in Valencia of a regional identity has not been as strong as in Aragón, with approximately 10% identifying only or primarily with the region. Finally, a strong reminder of the importance of constitutional and institutional frameworks on the process of identity formation is the existence of territorial identities in regions that were 'invented' in the transition period such as Cantabria and Madrid. In Cantabria, between 5% and 10% of the population identifies only or primarily with the region. In Madrid, the percentage is in the same range.

The constitutional and institutional framework of democratic Spain has been instrumental in shaping the contemporary process of identity formation and transformation in this country. It did so directly by establishing boundaries which formalized political communities and created others altogether, and indirectly by creating an environment conducive to nationalist/regionalist politics and identity mimesis. As one author has remarked, the Spanish experience highlights the importance of 'political leadership' and political context' in the

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See, again, Luis Moreno, *La federalización de España*, pp. 129-135.

development of regional identities.¹⁴³ In fact, the mechanisms of identity formation since the transition have involved most prominently political institutions and elites. The current situation of multiple regional identities is the product of a system of autonomy established to satisfy the claims of Basque and Catalans nationalists, and to provide protection against authoritarianism. The constitutional provisions laying the foundations for potential regional autonomy prompted some political actors to spearhead campaigns for the creation of a Statute for their own region. The constitutional negotiations launched a process of identity-building by mimesis that was sustained and accentuated by the system of autonomy itself and the internal dynamic of regional party systems. The diversity of regional identities in Spain is the product of this political dynamic generated by the new institutions. There is no strong correlation between identity and levels of development since regional identities have emerged in a variety of economic conditions. The diversity of identities still includes the larger Spanish identity which is present in every region despite the violence and repression that has accompanied it in the past. Surveys reveal that in every region (with the possible exception of the Basque Country), the self-identification category most referred to is consistently and clearly the one associated with an equal attachment to the region and to Spain as a whole.¹⁴⁴ This data suggests that while the policies of the central state have been instrumental in the development of regional identities, the weight of the Spanish institutions and their historical legacy also sustain an attachment to a Spanish identity.

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Jack Brand, "Andalusia: Nationalism as a Strategy for Autonomy", p.8.

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Luis Moreno, *La federalización de España*, pp.129-135.

However, as is the case for Belgium, regional identities, particularly in the historical nationalities, will likely become more important as a result of European integration.¹⁴⁵ Catalan leaders are the most pro-Europe. As they do not seek independence but rather extended autonomy, the idea of a European confederation of regions is particularly attractive and serves to galvanize the articulation of a Catalan identity. So does the prestige emanating from Pujol's leading role in the Committee of Regions and Catalonia's presence into the 'Four Motors of Europe partnership'. The extent of Europe's identity-stimulating effect is not as great as the Basque Country because Basque leaders, in the context of their calls for independence and a historical legacy of isolation, do not use the European theme as much as their Catalan counterparts. Galicia occupies an intermediate position with respect to the relationship between the EU and regional identities. On the one hand, as a poor region it benefits from structural adjustment programs and is therefore in the direct scope of the EU. On the other hand, the regionalism articulated by its elites, one that is much less aggressive than in the two other historical nationalities and conceptualized much more within the Spanish identity, does not lead to the type of instrumental use of the EU featured, for example, in Catalonia. Finally, the EU is likely to complicate the identity landscape of all three nationalities (as well as that of other regions) simply because it embodies and projects a European identity. However, the relative strength of this identity will be strongly conditioned by the historical political-institutional determinants discussed in this chapter. Not surprisingly, Catalans, who have historically been close to Europe, feel much more European than do the Basques.¹⁴⁶

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The following discussion draws from Michael Keating, "Les nationalités minoritaires d'Espagne face à l'Europe", *Etudes internationales*, 30 (1999), pp.729-743.

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Ibid., p.734 and p.737.

2.3-Canada

2.3.1 Colonial Politics, Institutional Design and the Development of Political-Territorial Identities in Pre-Confederation Canada.

As was the case for Spain, the roots of many contemporary territorial identities in Canada predate the creation of a sovereign state. In the Canadian case, colonization was central to the process of identity construction. The colonial society known as New France that formed in the context of the early 17th century French settlement of North America developed an identity distinct from both France and the British North American colonies. The foundations for the emergence of this *Canadien* identity were laid by the political practices and patterns of elite influence that accompanied the French colonial enterprise. Two factors were especially relevant to the process of identity formation in New France. The first was the attitude of Metropolitan elites towards the North American colony. The French state made few efforts to populate New France and displayed little interest for the settlement. It viewed the colony primarily in terms of its strategic utility, both economic and military, for a broader imperial policy. French elites were led by the mercantilist idea that the power of states rested in their possession of precious metals and natural resources, and while they did not find much of the former in North America they came to consider fur a valuable commodity.¹⁴⁷ In addition to this economic value, New France occupied an important position in the Metropolis' military strategy as it was intended to tie down a much larger (British) enemy

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Denis Monière, *Le développement des idéologies au Québec des origines à nos jours*, (Montréal: Québec/Amérique 1977), pp.46-47

force and prevent it "from interfering with more important military operations elsewhere."¹⁴⁸ This double conception of New France as an economic reservoir and a military outpost coupled with a disinterest for the community aspects of the colony fostered a sense of isolation that proved conducive to the development of an identity distinct from the one projected by the French state. Moreover, the colony's middle-level clerical and administrative elites often resented the practice of nominating Frenchmen to the highest levels of the Church and colonial administration, and the rivalry that developed between Metropolitan and local elites further contributed to a subjective dissociation between France and its North American colony.

The second factor central to the process of identity formation in New France was the particular importance the clergy took in the colony. The extent of the clergy's influence on the society of New France is a matter of great debate: some have spoken of a theocracy while others have argued that the picture of 'a priest-ridden country' is inaccurate before the 19th century.¹⁴⁹ The power and influence of clerical elites did not go unchallenged in New France as secular colonial elites, inspired by the doctrine of Gallicanism, attempted to assert their own authority. Nevertheless, the clergy remained a crucial element in the colony's power structure.¹⁵⁰ The Church's involvement in education and care, and the existence of a parish

¹⁴⁸ W.J. Eccles, "The Social, Economic, and Political Significance of the Military Establishment in New France", *Canadian Historical Review*, 52 (1971), p.1.

¹⁴⁹ See respectively Mason Wade, *The French-Canadian Outlook*, (New York: Viking Press, 1946), p.23 and Jean-Pierre Wallot, *Un Québec qui bougeait. Trame socio-politique du Québec au tournant du XIXe siècle*, (Québec: Boréal Express, 1973), p.183.

¹⁵⁰ Guy Frégault, *Le XVIIIe siècle canadien*, (Montréal: HMH), p.132

system that represented the lone local-municipal structure,¹⁵¹ made priests prominent actors in the colony. The social and political importance of clerics put religion at the centre of the new *Canadien* identity. Despite the rivalry between New France's clerical and administrative elites, Catholicism and its values as the fundamental characteristic of the colonial society were never challenged. The idea of a Catholic society articulated most strongly by the religious authorities also served to shape the *Canadien* identity in opposition to the Protestant colonies of the South. Differences in faith were said to produce differences in lifestyles and, consequently, distinct collective personalities.

The presence in North America of Native communities pre-dating European settlement provided an additional dimension to the process of identity formation in New France.¹⁵² While contact between French settlers and Native communities involved proselytization efforts, the pattern of relationships between European and Native leaders initially followed the principle of dualism.¹⁵³ French rulers did proclaim their sovereignty on the newly 'discovered' territories. However, these claims excluded similar claims from other European powers, not from Native communities who were considered self-governing entities with specific forms of social, cultural, political and economic organization. The dualist framework that structured French-Native relations was acknowledged by French rulers and Native leaders, and noticed

¹⁵¹ Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec. Social Change and Political Crisis* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993), p.41.

¹⁵² The terms 'Natives' and 'Aboriginals' will be used interchangeably.

¹⁵³ Cornelius J. Jaenen, "French Sovereignty and Native Nationhood During the French Regime", in A. I. Silver (ed), *An Introduction to Canadian History*, (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1991), pp.37-55.

by foreign observers.¹⁵⁴ It manifested itself through the relatively equal and cooperative relationship that characterized fur trading and military alliances. Cooperation was especially important for the settlers who were facing a hostile environment,¹⁵⁵ and the recognition of Natives as forming distinct and autonomous socio-political communities was largely the product of the specific circumstances of early colonization. This pattern of relationship between French rulers and Native leaders shaped the collective identities of both Natives and non-Natives. It contributed to the development of a *Canadien* identity that revolved around Catholicism but also involved social practices and cultural markers (the fur trade, the relationship to the land, etc...) that borrowed from indigenous life.¹⁵⁶ From the Native perspective, contact with the French settlers introduced a European/non-European dimension to an already diverse political/cultural identity landscape that featured several different communities and identities. However, European influence on Native communities/identities remained marginal in the 17th century. Settlers introduced Natives to firearms, iron tools and other 'modern' devices but the relatively small number of Europeans in New France did not lead to major changes in the way Native societies defined themselves.¹⁵⁷

The 1759 British military victory over the French armies in North America led to a change of colonial authority in New France that gave a new twist to the pattern of identity

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p.47

¹⁵⁵ James Frideres, *Native Peoples in Canada. Contemporary Conflicts*, (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1988), p.18

¹⁵⁶ J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens. A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p.46.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. p.57.

formation. Of particular importance were the constitutional and institutional structures adopted by British elites to govern their new North American colony. Their initial strategy consisted in assimilating the French-speaking Catholic *Canadiens* and their Old Regime society by eradicating the power and privileges of the Catholic Church, eliminating the seigneurial system and replacing the civil law by the common law. These provisions, which were contained in the 1763 Royal Proclamation, were never enforced. The first British governors of the colony recognized the difficulties inherent to these assimilationist methods. They chose instead to seek the collaboration of *Canadiens* elites: clerics and the landowning nobility (seigneurs). This collaboration between British and *Canadiens* was the precursor to a series of political, constitutional and institutional arrangements that introduced a new form of dualism in the colony.¹⁵⁸ Facing revolt in their colony to the South and fearing similar developments in the North, British authorities decided to translate their accommodating practice into law. The Québec Act of 1774 allowed *Canadiens* elites to take part of the colony's administration without renouncing their Catholic faith. It also maintained the seigneurial regime and the civil law. The formal recognition of a Catholic and French-speaking society of Old Regime in British North America gave the *Canadiens* a status distinct from that of settlers from the British Isles and was a major factor in the consolidation of a sense of solidarity and socio-political consciousness. It was also an important precedent for future constitutional-institutional change that would accentuate the *Canadien* identity.¹⁵⁹

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Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada. The Struggle for National Unity*, (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.4.

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Jean-C. Bonenfant and Jean-C. Falardeau, *Cultural and Political Implications of French-Canadian Nationalism*, (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1946), p.58.

The most important of these changes was the 1791 Constitutional Act. The American Revolution triggered an influx of British Loyalists into the colony. These Loyalists were accustomed to liberal-capitalist social structures and parliamentary institutions, and they immediately articulated claims for major social, political and institutional changes. Their demands for the destruction of the Old Regime and the creation of representative assemblies were supported by British merchants, who sought to complement their economic domination of the colony by political and social influence, but opposed by Catholic clerics and seigneurs who feared that changes to the social and political order would undermine their own power in the *société canadienne*. The compromise of 1791 was to divide the colony into two provinces each with its own representative assembly: Upper Canada, corresponding to the territories around Lake Ontario where most Loyalists had settled, and Lower Canada on the shores of the St-Lawrence River where the Catholic French-speaking *Canadiens* were a majority. The Constitutional Act shaped the *Canadien* identity in two way.

First, it provided a structural framework for the legal dualism of the Quebec Act. The institutional separation of the colony into two units gave greater subjective significance to religion, language and social structures while associating these markers with a specific territory. It gave “renewed vigour to the idea of French Canadian separateness” and “provided the French fact with a geographical as well as a political buttress”.¹⁶⁰ The weight of the new institutions gradually led to the construction of two distinct communities and identities. In Upper Canada, the politics of prominent Loyalists such as John Simcoe promoted a strong British identity founded on Protestantism and liberal-capitalist principles.

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George F.C. Stanley quoted in Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada*. p.5.

and even sought to build a community that would attract Americans who had second thoughts about the Revolution.¹⁶¹ In Lower Canada, clerics and seigneurs still promoted the idea of the *Canadiens* as a Catholic French-speaking people who lived off the land, respected authority and followed a highly moral lifestyle that excluded business and industrial ventures.

The second way in which the Constitutional Act affected identity formation in the colony was through the political dynamic it created in Lower Canada. The representative assembly of this unit became the theater for a confrontation between two political forces. On the one hand, the Protestant/English-speaking minority, mainly merchants and industrialists, sought to transform the society's traditional structures to make them better suited for trade and commerce. On the other hand, an emerging petty bourgeoisie *canadienne* composed of lawyers, doctors, notaries and small merchants fought for a change in executive-assembly relations (namely responsible government) that would give them the power they needed to protect the prevailing social order. This struggle was the motor of a renewed emphasis on the distinctive characteristics of the *société canadienne*.

The *parti Canadien* created in the early 18th century (and renamed *parti Patriote* in 1826) became the main vehicle of an identity increasingly shaped by dichotomous political institutions and the internal political dynamic of Lower Canada. These dichotomous institutional and political forces led to the gradual transformation of the *Canadien* identity into a French-Canadian identity. The movements for responsible government which culminated in the armed uprising of 1837-38 were shaped by, and reflected, the dualist

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Desmond Morton, *A Short History of Canada*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1994), pp.40-41.

political-institutional context. They exploded simultaneously in Upper and Lower Canada but remained organizationally separate and were led by different people (William Lyon Mackenzie for the former and Louis-Joseph Papineau for the latter). In Lower Canada, the correlation established by the emerging petty bourgeois elite between the *Canadien*/French Canadian identity and the struggle for democracy translated into a spurt of revolutionary activity against British rule that heightened the community consciousness of the Catholic French-speaking population. The rebellion in Upper Canada was not as intense as in Lower Canada nor did it involve to the same degree the articulation of a specific identity. Nevertheless, since the battle for democratic institutions had come to involve autonomy, if not independence, in Upper as in Lower Canada, the call to arms in the former region was made to 'Canadians', not Britons.¹⁶² The revolt coincided with the first manifestations of a Canadian or English-Canadian identity in Upper Canada.

The 19th century also featured major transformations in the relationship between Europeans and Natives that would have important consequences for the state of Aboriginal communities and identities. Although these transformations took place under British rule, they were less the product of a specific political authority than the result of changing economic and military circumstances. The decline of mercantilist theory led to a loss of interest for fur trading. The normalization of British-American relations following the war of 1812 diminished, for the British colonial government, the importance of military alliances with Aboriginal tribes. These changes, which undermined the strategic value of Aboriginals for

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Ibid., p.48.

British authorities and condemned them to 'irrelevance',¹⁶³ altered the cooperative and equal relationship between European and Natives that had allowed the latter to preserve their communities and identities. The most important policy changes were the creation of reserves and residential schools. The anchoring of Aboriginal communities on a well-delineated and controlled territory and the elaboration of a special school system were designed as instruments of cultural, social and political assimilation. This effort at assimilating Natives to a European culture translated into systematic proselytization, the imposition of English (or French) at the expense of maternal tongues, the forced learning of farming and other technical skills, and the proscription of traditional practices.¹⁶⁴ The early and mid 19th century implementation of these assimilationist strategies marked the beginning of a process of acculturation that would profoundly alter the socio-cultural fabric of Aboriginal communities and blur their various historical identities.

The development of territorial identities among European settlers in pre-Confederation Canada was the product of colonial institutions and practices, and the patterns of elite relationships they fostered. The disinterest of French authorities for the population of its North American colony, rivalries between Metropolitan and local elites and the prominence of the clergy led to the emergence of *Canadien* identity that revolved around both European markers such as Catholicism and elements specific to the North American colonial context such as the fur trade. Theoretically significant is the fact that a distinct colonial identity developed despite a commonality of language. The institutional structure put in place by

¹⁶³ J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, pp.83-98.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.99-108.

British authorities to insure the peaceful coexistence of a Catholic, French-speaking society of Old Regime with a Protestant, English-speaking population imbued by liberal-capitalist principles gave new meaning to objective markers and social structures. It favoured the crystallization of the *Canadien* identity and its mutation into the French-Canadian identity. In addition to establishing formal and subjective group boundaries, the British colonial structure alternately favoured two types of elite relationships conducive to the strengthening of the *Canadien* identity. The first was the cooption of the Catholic clergy and seigneurial elite who were given all the room necessary to shape the *société canadienne*.

The second, which coincided with the creation of two distinct administrative units each with their own representative assembly, was the struggle of a French-speaking petty bourgeois that invoked, and stimulated, the *Canadien* identity by seeking, in the name of a cultural markers and specific social structures, a form of responsible government that would allow them to maximize their power. The dichotomous institutional structure and internal struggle for responsible government also contributed to the emergence in Upper Canada of a Canadian or English-Canadian identity distinct from the British one. As for Aboriginal communities, their story highlights the causal relationships between power, elite relationships and identities. The initial need of French settlers for cooperation temporarily ensured the integrity of historical identities while adding a European/non-European dimension, but when Native cooperation was no longer needed in the 19th century, the dualist political approach was abandoned and replaced by assimilationist policies that marked the beginning of a process of identity blurring and change.

2.3.2 From Dualism to Federalism: Consequences for Territorial Identities.

The creation of the Canadian federation in 1867 was a key event in the shaping of the country's contemporary territorial identity landscape. While the dualist framework was suppressed in its institutional form following the revolt of 1837-38, its survival at the level of political elites supported the *Canadien*/French-Canadian identity. Moreover, the failure of the armed uprising allowed clerical and conservative political elites in Canada East (the former Lower Canada) to acquire unprecedented influence on French-Canadian society, and to pursue and accentuate the definition of its identity in terms of religion and traditional social structures. Clerical and conservative political elites received favourably the project of a federation elaborated by Canada West leaders since it meant that French-Canadians could be a majority in a politically significant unit, and that these institutions could be used to protect and preserve the traditional social structures upon which the power of the Church and conservative politicians was based. While federalism corresponded to a transition from dualism to autonomy as a principle of ethnoterritorial management, the creation of a province of Québec that would be controlled by French-speaking Catholics provided a new institutional framework for the French-speaking identity. The creation of the Canadian federation also expanded the territorial basis of this identity as French-speaking Catholics settled the Western territories. Moreover, it coincided with the beginning of a nation-building project that entailed the diffusion of a Canadian identity. This identity would rival pre-existing provincial (in the Canadas, New-Brunswick and Nova Scotia) and colonial (British) identities, and the new ones that emerged (in the West) as a result of the federation's enlargement. The construction of the Canadian identity in the late 19th and early 20th century targeted most particularly historical

Aboriginal identities described by Canadian elites as incompatible with a 'civilized' political community.

The failure of the 1837-38 rebellion had two important consequences for the process of identity formation in Lower Canada. The first involved a new power distribution among French-Canadian elites. The petty bourgeoisie that struggled for responsible government and led the rebellion against British colonial power was the biggest loser of the movement's failure. It was discredited and disorganized; the clear winner was the Church. From the 1840s and throughout the late 19th and early 20th century, clerics acquired an unprecedented and never duplicated influence on French-Canadian society. It secured control over the education system which was used to diffuse the Church's definition of the French-Canadian community and identity. The particularly conservative character of the late 19th century French-Canadian clergy, which included an important ultramontane stream,¹⁶⁵ insured that the French-Canadian identity would be associated with the most traditional lifestyle and social structures.

The second consequence of the failed rebellion was the institutional reorganization of the colony. Given the mandate to formulate recommendations with respect to political and institutional management strategies of the colony, Lord Durham suggested that the fundamental cause of the 1830s socio-political unrest was a conflict between 'races' rather than a confrontation between government and the people. He argued that long-term social peace in the colony could be promoted by fostering the development of a single identity, the British identity, and that altering the identity of French-Canadians necessitated the

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Jacques Monet, "French-Canadian Nationalism and the Challenge of Ultramontanism", Canadian Historical Association, *Historical Papers*, 1966, pp.41-55.

institutional fusion of the Canadas.¹⁶⁶ This recommendation was followed by British authorities who enacted the Union Act in 1840. Although implemented with assimilationist goals, the union of the Canadas through the creation of a single representative assembly had the unintended consequence of developing schemes of political dualism that strengthened the idea of a distinct French-Canadian community.¹⁶⁷ The United Canadas functioned with a dual executive (two prime ministers), veto practices for important matters in the assembly and shifting capitals between Canada East and Canada West. It also maintained separate high level administrators. These political practices perpetuated by different means the dualism of the Quebec and Constitutional Act and the projection of a distinct French-Canadian identity.

The frequent deadlocks resulting from the practice of double majorities were, along with the threat of American expansion and economic imperatives, at the centre of a political project that replaced dualist arrangements with a federal system. This project originated in Canada West where only 8 representatives out of 65 opposed it. French-Canadian representatives in Canada East were much less unanimous as 26 supported the idea of a federation while 22 rejected it. The French-Canadian political forces that pushed the project through were George-Étienne Cartier's Conservative (*bleu*) party and the Catholic clergy.¹⁶⁸ For French-Canadian clerical and conservative political elites, a federation would "create a distinct province of Quebec, with a French-Canadian majority, Catholic institutions, a distinctive civil

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On Durham's observations, see Denis Monière, *Le développement des idéologies au Québec des origines à nos jours*, pp.149-154.

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Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada*, pp.6-8.

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Jean-Charles Bonenfant, *The French Canadians and the Birth of Confederation*, (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, Historical Booklet no.21, 1966), pp.14-16.

law, and a parliament and government of its own."¹⁶⁹ The new institutions that would be controlled by French-Canadians were seen by these elites as creating a homeland for the French-Canadian community. It would reflect the French-Canadian identity and, more importantly, provide the necessary tools for its safeguard as the expression of a Catholic, French-speaking and traditional community. In the context of clerical influence, the creation of the Canadian federation fostered the promotion of a French-Canadian identity centred primarily on religion. Catholicism and the Church were described by leading clerics such as Lionel Groulx as being, and always having been, at the heart of French-Canadian solidarity and homogeneity:

Dans les premiers temps, quand le temple n'était pas encore bâti, n'ont-ils [nos pères] pas vu l'Eglise s'installer un peu partout (...) dans la chaumière canadienne? N'était-ce pas l'Eglise, du reste, qui, à elle seule, constituait alors la communauté paroissiale? Qui donc faisait le lien et le gouvernement entre toutes ces familles apparentées par larges groupes, c'est vrai, mais indépendantes les unes des autres et dispersées le long des côtes? (...) L'Eglise est le seul centre, le curé est le seul chef qui ramène à l'unité les petites communautés familiales?¹⁷⁰

Religion represented the key marker and protector of a race left uncontaminated by modernization. As was the case in the Basque Country, the definition by clerics of French-Canadians as a race or community of blood allowed for a more effective isolation of the community from socio-economic change. The exclusive character of that definition was the result of this preoccupation of clerical elites with preserving the social *status quo* upon which their power rested. Moreover, language was viewed as an additional shield against external

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A.I. Silver, *The French-Canadian Idea of Confederation 1864-1900*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p.x.

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Lionel Groulx, *Chez nos ancêtres*, (Montréal: Bibliothèque de l'Action française, 1920), pp.84-85.

influences that could potentially corrupt the French-Canadian race and disturb its way of life.

Discussing the mission of the journal *Action française*, Groulx argued that:

Si les décrets sont impuissants à tuer une race, elle peut mourir et elle meurt (...) par une série de petits abandons et de petites lâchetés. Et c'est pourquoi, à l'*Action française*, nous essayons de porter la défense de la langue sur tous les terrains. Nous voulons qu'elle règne en ce pays partout où elle a le droit de régner.¹⁷¹

The French-Canadian identity sustained by this definition of the nation was stimulated in the first half of the 20th century by certain decisions taken by the primarily Protestant/English-speaking federal Conservative party, most importantly with respect to conscription. The opposition of French-Canadian elites to participation in wars described as British clashed with the enthusiasm of English-Canadian leaders. This contrast led French-Canadian leaders to argue that basic differences over social and political loyalties existed between Canada's two linguistic/religious groups. It enabled clerical elites such as Groulx to explain the discrepancy in terms of the presence in Canada of two fundamentally different communities, to stress the distinctiveness of French-Canadians, and to channel the conscription controversy towards the crystallization of the French-Canadian identity.¹⁷²

In addition to fostering the development of the French-Canadian identity through the erection of an autonomous political system and institutional framework in the province of Québec, the creation of the Canadian federation also had two other consequences for identity formation in the Catholic/French-speaking community. The first was the emergence of a

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Lionel Groulx, *Pour l'Action Française*, (Montréal: Bibliothèque de l'Action française, 1918), p. 4

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Denis Monière, *Le développement des idéologies au Québec des origines à nos jours*, p.247.

Canadian identity promoted at the central level by political elites operating in a centralized federation. The construction of the Canadian state was accompanied by nation-building efforts that transformed achievements such as the trans-Canadian railway as symbols of the new national community and presented Canada's gradual emergence as an independent actor on the international scene as a sign of the maturation of an evolving political community. However, this emerging Canadian identity, which was superimposed on, or at least juxtaposed to, the French-Canadian identity, was heavily penetrated by loyalties to the British empire.

For some French-Canadian leaders such as Henri Bourassa, this Britishness was a problem since it prevented the full integration of French-Canadians. Bourassa thought that only the construction of a Canadian identity separate from the British would allow the French-Canadian community to thrive. In sum, just as the Flemish Movement criticized the favourable bias of French-speaking elites for the greater French culture, Bourassa deplored the identification of English-speaking elites with the British Empire and sought to affirm the individuality of the Canadian nation complete with its linguistic/religious duality. He suggested that the nation French-Canadians wished to see developed was "the Canadian nation, composed of French Canadians and English Canadians, that is to say a nation of two elements separated by language and religion and by the legal arrangements necessary for the preservation of their respective traditions, but united by a sentiment of brotherhood in a common attachment to a common country."¹⁷³ The formal and symbolic distancing of Canada from Britain wished by Bourassa gradually occurred in the second third of the 20th century: the 1931 Statute of Westminster provided the country with formal independence in the

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Henri Bourassa quoted in Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada*, p.22.

international arena, the 1949 replacement of London's Judicial Committee of the Privy Council by the Supreme Court of Canada as the country's last court of appeal eliminated the Britain's influence in the legal system, and the creation in the early 1960s of a distinct Canadian flag replacing the Union Jack marked a crucial subjective rupture that would reach its apogee with the 1982 patriation.

The second consequence of Confederation for the French-speaking community of Canada East was the introduction of an ambiguity in the territorial basis of the French-Canadian identity. On the one hand, the creation of a province of Québec that included the territories of Canada East re-affirmed the coincidence between the historical area of New France/Lower Canada and the French Canadian community. On the other hand, the migration westward of French-Canadians settling in territories that would become provinces, and the presence in the New-Brunswick and Nova Scotia of French-speaking Catholics from the Acadian settlement, added a new dimension to the French-speaking identity. The definition of the French-Canadian identity and community in religious and linguistic terms was theoretically inclusive of French-speaking Catholics outside the province of Québec. However, very little attention was paid by French-speaking elites in Québec to Francophones/Catholics living in other provinces for the first few years of the federation. This attitude changed in the 1880s when Métis leader Louis Riel led a revolt in the West and was executed on the orders of the federal government. This move was denounced by French-Canadian leaders in Québec, most importantly Henri Bourassa and Lionel Groulx, who framed the conflict between Riel and the Canadian government as one between French-

speaking Catholics and Anglophone/Protestant power. Commenting on the decision to execute Riel despite an apparent accommodating spirit in the West, Groulx states:

“Seulement, il y en a qui parle plus haut que le sentiment du Manitoba, le sentiment de l’Ontario (...) Riel fut livré à ses ennemis contre toute justice humaine (...) Il fut sacrifié à un mouvement d’opinion exalté et à ce (...) qui n’était que l’immorale ambition du pouvoir et l’intérêt encore plus immoral des partis politiques.”¹⁷⁴

The Riel episode, along with other confessional/linguistic conflicts in the provinces of Manitoba and New-Brunswick, became attractive issues for Québec’s Francophone elites looking to gain popular support. In this context, these elites expressed a solidarity with fellow Catholic/Francophones in other parts of the country, and to articulate the idea of a French-Canadian community not limited to the province of Québec. Consequently, the creation of the Canadian federation modified the contours of the French-Canadian identity by creating solidarities that extended beyond the historical territories of New France/Lower Canada.

In addition to the French-Canadian identity initially confined to Canada East, two other original federate units, New-Brunswick and Nova Scotia, brought with them established political-territorial identities that remained prominent in the early years of the federation. The eastward enlargement of Canada brought in two provinces, Prince-Edward Island (1873) and Newfoundland (1949), that were also established political communities. Westward enlargement quickly followed population movements from the four initial provinces to the prairies and the Pacific. The creation of the provinces of Manitoba (1870), British-Columbia (1871), Alberta and Saskatchewan (1905) was not the reflection of pre-existing identities.

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Lionel Groulx, *Louis Riel et les événements de la Rivière-Rouge en 1869-1870*, (Montréal: Philippe Perrier, 1944), pp.17-18.

However, the incorporation of these territories into the Canadian federation led to the development of a pattern of relationship between the new provinces' political elites and federal authorities, most of whom were from central Canada, characterized by the prominence of the latter. This pattern, which led political elites from the Western provinces to suggest that 'Westerners' occupied a peculiar and second-rate position in Canada, proceeded from two structural characteristics of the early Canadian federation.

The first characteristic relates to the national representatives institutions and the workings of Canada's parliamentary system.¹⁷⁵ Representatives from the Western provinces were outnumbered by those of central Canada. The demographic weight of Ontario and Québec assured these two provinces a greater number of seats in Parliament (collectively more than half). Moreover, party discipline did not allow for Western representatives to exert significant influence within political parties that were dominated, especially in the case of the Liberals, by political elites from Québec and Ontario. The doctrine of collective responsibility forced them to endorse decisions taken by leading members of the cabinet. This behaviour was often decried as submissive by the elite of their home provinces. This elite suggested that there existed a lack of response by central institutions to the concerns of the Western provinces, a feeling probably accentuated by the communication problems posed by the size of the new country.¹⁷⁶ The second characteristic was the high degree of centralization of the late 19th and early 20th century federal system which left most important decisions in the hands of the central government. The combined effect of these two institutional biases led political

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Roger Gibbins and Sonia Arrison, *Western Visions. Perspectives on the West in Canada*, (Toronto: Broadview Press, 1995), pp.30-31

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Ibid., p.28.

elites from the Western provinces to argue that there was one 'region' that was consistently under-represented in, and ignored by, the central government. In their struggle for increased political power and influence, they fostered feelings of alienation, provided political and subjective significance to the geographical concept of 'the West', and laid the foundations for the creation of a regional identity transcending provincial borders.

The nation-building project that coincided with the creation of the Canadian federation had particularly significant consequences for Aboriginal communities. In fact, federal elites took specific aim at eradicating Aboriginal identities and substituting them with the new Canadian identity. They were willing to allow for, and in the context of a federal arrangement could expect, the coexistence of the Canadian identity with pre-existing provincial identities (including the French-Canadian identity) but considered Native identities to be backward and incompatible with the idea of a modern Canadian nation. The chief instrument of Aboriginal assimilation was the 1876 Indian Act which put Natives in an inferior formal position. The Indian Act imposed a series of restriction on Canada's Aboriginals intended to forcefully obliterate their historical identities, and also to entice Natives to willingly abandon these identities for the 'privileges' of full Canadian citizenship and to adopt an unmitigated Canadian identity inspired by European values, ideologies and principles.¹⁷⁷ This process was known as 'enfranchisement'. It had for most notable implication that "[A]ny Indian who may be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Medicine, or to any other degree by any University

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Donald Purich, *Our Land. Native Rights in Canada*, (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1986), p. 142.

of Learning (...) shall *ipso facto* become and be enfranchised.”¹⁷⁸ In other words, higher education was, along with the right to vote, incompatible with Indian status.

The Act also outlawed some traditional dances and ceremonies. It reinforced the residential school system which removed Aboriginal children from their home environment (in order to render the process of acculturation more effective) and where the use of maternal languages was forbidden. It also institutionalized a reserve system, which entailed that “no Indian shall be deemed to be lawfully in possession of one or more (...) lots”¹⁷⁹, and instituted a pass system that controlled the movement of Aboriginals. Natives were also forbidden to drink and gamble and at the same time hold on to their status. The status institution established by the Indian Act gave the Canadian government tremendous power to affect the identities of Aboriginal communities. It decided who was Native and which criteria were used to determine membership in an Aboriginal community. These criteria reflected European rather than Native values. Wife status, for example, was determined by the husband which meant that “marriage only conferred status on non-Indian women, and not vice-versa.”¹⁸⁰ The assimilationist policies of the Indian Act undermined historical Aboriginal identities by removing their cultural basis. They shaped Native communities by setting rules for membership and enticing members to abandon their status. With the Indian Act, Canadian political elites presented the Canadian identity and Native identities as fundamentally

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Sharon Helen Venne, *Indian Acts and Amendments 1868-1975. An Indexed Collection*, (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Native Law Centre, 1981), p.47.

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Ibid., p.26.

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Donald Purich, *Our Land. Native Rights in Canada*, p.136.

incompatible and used coercive methods to push Aboriginals into choosing the former at the expense of the latter.

The pattern of elite relationships that led to the creation of the Canadian federation, and the new political arrangement itself, had different consequences for the various territorial identities that had previously developed. The preservation of dualist elite practices in the Canadas under the Union perpetuated the subjective distinction between French-Canadians and Britons (or English-Canadians). The fall of the petty bourgeoisie and the strengthening of clerical power following the failure of the 1837-38 rebellion reinforced the Catholic-traditional definition of the French-Canadian identity and community. The new federal structures brought both continuity and change to territorial identities. On the one hand, they gave the dominant political-conservative and clerical elites additional means to further promote this identity. On the other hand, the federation led French-Canadian elites in Québec to foster, in the context of political competition, solidarities with fellow Catholics/Francophones in other parts of the country, and consequently altered the territorial basis of the French-Canadian identity. The new parliamentary and federal structures, and the patterns of elite relationships they produced, also led political elites from the Western provinces to speak of these provinces as a region occupying a peculiar peripheral position within Canada. Moreover, the existence of a state which, like Belgium but unlike Spain, was 'strong' and politically integrated from the very beginning also entailed the projection of a Canadian identity which became intermingled with pre-existing provincial identities, including Lower Canada/Canada East's French-Canadian identity. This new Canadian identity was promoted by federal elites who took particular aim at Aboriginal identities they considered

at odds with the nation they were trying to construct. Their assimilationist policies weakened the linguistic and cultural markers at the heart of these identities.

2.3.3 The Quiet Revolution and Constitutional Politics: Change and Crystallization of Regional Identities in Canada.

The Canadian territorial identity landscape has undergone important transformations since the 1960s. Three processes were at the centre of these changes. The first process was Québec's Quiet Revolution. The rise to power in this province of a new liberal political elite looking to modernize both state and society with a particular focus on improving the socio-economic conditions of Francophones triggered new patterns of relationships involving this elite, the province's primarily English-speaking business leaders and federal authorities. These patterns of social and political competition, and the accompanying process of state-driven modernization, translated into the articulation by Québec's political elite of a *Québécois* identity conceptually different from the French-Canadian identity. Not only did they have different territorial anchorings but, as considerable efforts were made to undermine the influence of the Catholic Church in Québec society, the *Québécois* identity was defined by language rather than religion. The unintended consequence of the modernization efforts of the new elite was the development of a nationalist movement, and nationalist parties, that would promote this identity.

The second process was the acceleration of, and qualitative change in, the nation-building project under Pierre Trudeau's Liberal party. Trudeau's definition of the Canadian nation as a unified and indivisible political community composed of equal individuals and

provinces met with enthusiasm in many parts of the country but with resistance among Québec's political elite who was at the same time engaged in a process of socio-political change that strengthened the subjective importance of the province as a political community. The third process was the translation by Trudeau's Liberals of this conception of the Canadian identity into an Aboriginal policy. The suggestion by the Canadian government that the socio-economic problems and cultural dislocations experienced by Native communities resulted from their imperfect integration into Canadian society triggered a strong political resistance on the part of Aboriginal leaders who put their communities' historical identities at the centre of their claims. This new activism led to the political association of many status Indian bands into a single organization and the emergence of a different form of Native identity embodied by the concept of First Nations. In turn, this political organization prompted other Native leaders to assert the existence of other Aboriginal identities/communities such as Metis, Inuits and non-status Indians. The regional identities created, transformed and stimulated by these three processes were further strengthened and diffused by the politics of recent constitutional negotiations. The claims of Québec political elites for a formal constitutional recognition of the identity spawned by the Quiet Revolution bolstered the loyalty of French-speaking Quebecers to the political community bounded by provincial limits and triggered a mimesis or spillover effect in Aboriginal communities Western provinces.

At the most general level, Québec's Quiet Revolution corresponds to processes of social, political and economic modernization. At a more specific level, it is the rise to power of a new political elite.¹⁸¹ The modernization processes of the 1960s were triggered by the activism of

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Léon Dion, *La prochaine révolution*, (Ottawa: Leméac, 1973, p.19).

a new French-speaking bourgeoisie of salaried professionals who became prominent within the *Parti libéral de Québec* (PLQ) in the early 1960s.¹⁸² Through the PLQ, this new elite took control of, and further developed, governmental and bureaucratic institutions. These institutions then became the central instruments and driving force of modernization. The key role played by provincial governmental authorities in the fundamental changes of the Quiet Revolution is at the heart of the transition from the French-Canadian to a *Québécois* identity.¹⁸³ In so far as the range of action of the Québec government was limited by provincial boundaries, the identity it came to articulate by the way of the new liberal elite was necessarily circumscribed by these very same boundaries. Consequently, the formal articulation of this territorially-bounded political community entailed the exclusion of Francophones outside the province. Moreover, the increased weight of provincial state structures combined with the new purpose of its elite led to a linguistic homogenization, that is, with a decrease in the proportion of English-speakers, which benefitted the construction of a national community. This state and nation-building process accelerated, outside Québec, an inverse linguistic homogenization involving Francophones which already flowed from their minority position in these provinces.

A second major difference between the *Québécois* identity that developed in the context of the Quiet Revolution and the previous French-Canadian identity was their defining criterion. The French-Canadian identity was defined primarily by religion and associated with the Catholic Church. However, the liberal reformers of the PLQ were intent on severely

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Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec. Social Change and Political Crisis*.

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Reginald Whitaker, "From the Québec Cauldron to the Canadian Cauldron", in Alain-G. Gagnon (ed), *Québec. State and Society*, (Scarborough: Nelson, 1993), p.24

undermining the influence of clerical elites on Québec society. Health, education and social affairs, all matters that were administered chiefly by the Church became government-controlled. The struggle of the new Francophone petty bourgeoisie against clerical elites left no place for religion in the definition of the new identity which was defined by language. In his 1968 essay/manifesto *Option Québec*, René Lévesque stated: "Nous sommes des Québécois. (...) Au coeur de cette personnalité se trouve le fait que nous parlons français. Tout le reste est accroché à cet élément essentiel, en découle ou nous y ramène infailliblement."¹⁸⁴ Because of that very same dynamic, references to a traditional way of life with its focus on the moral superiority of rural living were also abandoned. Moreover, the rejection of traditionalism led to the renunciation of the concept of race and the downplaying of the idea of ancestry that were associated with the French-Canadian identity. It rendered the new identity and political community less exclusive.

The development and projection of a *Québécois* identity centred on the French language was the immediate product of two patterns of elite relationships featuring the new Francophone petty bourgeoisie that took control of provincial governmental institutions. The first pattern involved these elites and a powerful group of English-speaking businessmen and industrialists. One of the specific objectives of the reformers of the PLQ was to improve the socio-economic conditions of French-speakers made difficult by centuries of social and political conservatism. This goal, and the measures taken to reach it such as financial help to small companies owned by Francophones and the creation of public enterprises that could provide French-speakers with job opportunities, led to a confrontation with the province's

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René Lévesque, *Option Québec*, (Montréal: Les Éditions de l'Homme, 1968), p. 19.

primarily English-speaking business elite. This struggle contributed to the prominence of language in the Québécois identity. It also explains the existence of some ambiguities concerning this identity and membership in the new political community since their territorial definitions were accompanied by an emphasis on language. The second pattern, which is at the centre of the territorial dimension of the new *Québécois* identity, featured Québec's new political elite and federal authorities. PLQ reformers suggested that the successful modernization of Québec entailed massive transfers of powers from the federal to the provincial government.¹⁸⁵ This approach gave birth to a new dynamic in provincial-federal relations, characterized chiefly by competition, that would sustain and promote the new identity as Québec's political elite based its claims for increase decentralization on the distinct personality of the province.

The new Québécois identity was projected, diffused and bolstered by the discourse and policies of Québec's political elite. These processes find their underlying source in the party system structure that developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the context of its modernization efforts, the PLQ evolved into a nationalist party looking to increase Québec's autonomy within Canada. This new dynamic served as a motor for the new identity. That same context undermined the significance of the *Union Nationale* (UN), a conservative-traditional party that had dominated the provincial political scene for the last thirty years. This decline of the UN and its traditionalist ideology profited a group of liberal reformers dissatisfied with the progress of the Quiet Revolution who claimed that further significant change necessitated the political independence of the province and formed, under the

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Ibid., pp.139-142.

leadership of René Lévesque, the *Parti Québécois* in 1968. The replacement of the UN by the PQ in the Québec party system was crucial for the new Québécois identity since it led to the prominence of two parties that fully endorsed and promoted it, albeit with different political-constitutional implications. The competition between these parties made it difficult for the PLQ to exclude identity from its politics. In fact, the presence of the PQ in Québec's bipartite system led the PLQ to attempt rivaling the PQ in its self-ascribed position as the expression and protector of the *Québécois* nation. The use of a single-member-plurality electoral system makes the emergence of a strong third party improbable and provides a measure of permanence to a pattern of political competition featuring identity issues.

Despite their programmatic differences and partly as a result of this competition dynamic, the PLQ and PQ both articulated the idea of Québec as the primary political community of (French-speaking) Quebecers. They spoke of the Québec state rather than simply the Québec government in an effort to establish the importance and the primacy of the Québec identity and political community.¹⁸⁶ They sought further decentralization of the Canadian federation (the PLQ) or independence (the PQ) in the name and on the basis of this identity, reinforcing popular allegiance in the process. They enacted linguistic policies, the PLQ's Bill 22 making French the official language of the province and the PQ's Bill 101 setting linguistic standards for education, public advertising and the workplace, that stimulated Quebecers' feelings of distinctiveness.

Despite this dual contribution to the development of the Québécois identity, the PQ did play a special role in that respect since the strength of this identity is a crucial component to

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Léon Dion, *La prochaine révolution*, p.21 and pp.47-50.

its secessionist agenda. The 1980 and 1995 referendums on independence organized by the PQ galvanized the *Québécois* identity. With respect to the second referendum, data shows that 1995 corresponded with a sharp, albeit it temporary increase in Quebecers' sense of belonging to the province.¹⁸⁷ In August of that year, 87% said they identified strongly with Québec as opposed to 73% in February 1994 and 74% in October 1996. During these events, the PQ insisted that the *Québécois* and Canadian identity were fundamentally incompatible, and presented a vote for independence as the normal expression of Quebecers' natural identity. The PLQ competed with the PQ by mimicking its emphasis on the *Québécois* identity, placing it at the centred of their defense of Canadian federalism. They campaigned using slogans (in 1980, *mon 'non' est québécois*) that suggested that a vote against independence was no less loyal to the collective personality produced during the Quiet Revolution than was a vote in favour.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, the PQ has made a particular effort to stress the connection between the *Québécois* and the French language. The party's current programme includes statements reminiscent of *Option Québec*:

"Le français est le fondement même de l'identité québécoise en Amérique du Nord.(...) Par son caractère francophone, le Québec représente un chaînon essentiel dans la grande communauté des nations. (...) La langue française appartient à l'ensemble du peuple québécois. Elle marque notre spécificité en Amérique du Nord."¹⁸⁹

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The following data is taken from Matthew Mendelsohn, "Measuring National Identity and Patterns of Attachment: The Case of Québec", unpublished paper presented at the 'Ethnicity and Culture: The Reciprocal Influences' conference, Savannah, February 1999.

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Louis Balthazar, "Les nombreux visages du nationalisme au Québec", in Alain-G. Gagnon (ed), *Québec. État et société*, (Montréal: Québec/Amérique, 1994), p.33.

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See www.pq.org/prog02B.html.

As a result of these political dynamics, the Québécois identity has gradually overtaken the French-Canadian identity in terms of primary attachment.¹⁹⁰ In 1970, 44% of Francophone Quebecers defined themselves primarily as French-Canadians as opposed to 21% who saw themselves mainly as *Québécois*. By 1977, with the PQ in power and bill 101 on the way, the gap had narrowed to 12% (48% to 36%). By 1988, the *Québécois* identity had clearly overtaken the French-Canadian one (49% to 39%), and rose as high as 59% (versus 28% for the other one) in the context of the failure of the Meech Lake accord in 1990. In 1998, 52% of French-speaking Quebecers defined themselves primarily as Quebecers while 26% (an all time low) did so as French-Canadians.

The decades following WWII brought important changes to federal politics that greatly impacted on Canada's regional identity landscape. The war effort combined with the subsequent development of the welfare-state led to a period of great centralization for the Canadian federation that represented a further stage in the Canadian nation-building project. Federal elites developed a political-legislative agenda designed to increase the social role of the federal government and its visibility in the daily lives of Canadian partly through the fostering of a primary loyalty to the central government and the reinforcement of the Canadian identity. In Québec, PLQ reformers were using provincial institutions to improve the socio-economic of French-speakers, strengthening the latter's association with the Québec government in the process. The struggle between federal and Québec provincial political elites for powers that resulted from this political dynamic coincided with the articulation of

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For the following data, see Robert Bernier, Vincent Lemieux and Maurice Pinard, *Un combat inachevé*, (Ste-Foy: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1997), p.90.

identities that could legitimate each level of government's interventionist approach and secure the power basis of their elites. At the federal level, a strong Canadian identity was paramount to, and favoured by, social, economic and cultural national policies. In Québec, the government-driven reforms of the 1960s were made in name of the province's French-speaking population and found all their meaning in the suggestion that the province of Québec was the homeland of Francophones and its government their primary representative.

In this context, Québec's political elite began articulating claims for the constitutional recognition of a Québécois identity characterized primarily by the presence in the province of a French-speaking majority. These claims were first received with surprise but not rejected by the Liberal government of Lester Pearson who was willing, as were leaders of other federal parties, to integrate the emerging *Québécois* identity as part of a larger Canadian identity.¹⁹¹ Pierre Trudeau's rise at the top of the federal Liberals in the late 1960s drastically changed the way the Canadian identity was articulated. Trudeau rejected the conception of the Canadian nation as a 'community of communities' in favour of a strongly individually-based one. His definition of the Canadian identity did not exclude references to linguistic duality but, in the manner of Henri Bourassa's, did not associate language groups with a specific territorial basis. Trudeau sought to fashion, using mainly two political-institutional transformations, a Canadian identity that was undifferentiated by territorially-based linguistic/cultural distinctiveness. The first was the 1969 policy of official bilingualism which transcended provincial borders with its institutional/individual rather than territorial anchoring. The second was the 1982 patriation of the Canadian constitution from the British

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Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada*, pp.38-53.

parliament which was designed to shed the Canadian identity of its British remnants and to give it, through the constitutional addition of a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a new symbol based on the principle of liberal individualism.

In a particularly revealing demonstration of the impact of political elites on socio-political outcomes, Trudeau almost singlehandedly shaped a Canadian identity whose definition came to be widely accepted among federal politicians and in civil society, particularly outside Québec. For English-speaking Canadians as well as Francophones living outside Québec, the Trudeau policies achieved their goals. The model of bilingualism was presented, and largely accepted, as a feature peculiar to the Canadian political community and notably absent from the American one. The patriated constitution and the Charter were even more widely accepted as symbols of a liberal and modern nation independent from the British Empire. In Québec, the struggle for power and legitimacy between federal and provincial political elites led to a challenge of Trudeau's definition of the Canadian identity by a political elite promoting a *Québécois* identity and, by extension and in the case of the PLQ, a Canadian identity centred around the idea of a 'community of communities'. While Trudeau presented his vision of the Canadian political community as antithetical to territorially-based linguistic/cultural particularism, PLQ leaders suggested that the *Québécois* identity was difficult to reconcile with the former's vision of the Canadian nation. The PQ simply argued that the two identities were fundamentally incompatible whichever form the Canadian identity took. In the context of this tripartite struggle, Trudeau's attempt at presenting a Canadian identity attractive to French-speaking Quebecers was not very successful. In 1970, 34% of them identified first and foremost as Canadians (as opposed to French-Canadian or

Québécois).¹⁹² This figure dropped to 16% in 1977 and has hovered around this mark since then.¹⁹³

The policies designed to strengthen allegiance to the Canadian political community through the bolstering and re-fashioning of the Canadian identity also triggered responses in the Western provinces and the Native population. While Trudeau's definition of the Canadian nation was widely accepted in the West, the strategy consisting in increasing the federal government's scope of action in order to strengthen citizen's identification with the Canadian community led to profound resentment among the region's political elite. Federal initiatives, such as the 1980 National Energy Program which introduced regulation on the price of oil in a period a price increase, were denounced by the political elite of the oil-rich Western provinces.¹⁹⁴ These elites argued that the lack of representation from these provinces in the historically dominant Liberal Party had led to a permanent situation of political weakness and a peculiar position for the Western provinces in the Canadian federation. Their struggle against some federal policies led to denunciations of the federal treatment of 'the West', fostered feelings of alienation and contributed to the development of a Western regional identity.

The Trudeau nation-building agenda included a specific Aboriginal dimension. In 1969, the liberal government proposed to eliminate the legal distinction between (status) Indians and other Canadians as a means to facilitate and accelerate the integration of Native populations

¹⁹² Robert Bernier, Vincent Lemieux and Maurice Pinard, *Un combat inachevé*, p.90.

¹⁹³ Idem.

¹⁹⁴ Roger Gibbins and Sonia Arrison, *Western Visions*, p.22.

into the Canadian political community and, presumably, to improve their socio-economic situation. The elimination of the Indian status, however, was likely to entail the marginalization of ancestral and treaty rights, and consequently to undermine land claims processes. The threat presented by this policy proposal, known as the White Paper, to the only tools available for Native leaders to exert any influence in Canadian politics led the newly formed Aboriginal association, National Indian Brotherhood (NIB), to denounce the initiative as a cultural genocide.¹⁹⁵ This resistance translated into a surge of political activism that put the issue of Aboriginal identity at the forefront of a struggle with federal authorities. The increased political organization and mobilization triggered by the White Paper forced the federal government to back down and led to claims for autonomy and access to the land that were couched in, and legitimated by, references to both the distinct experience of each Aboriginal community and a larger Indian identity. The NIB produced a document proposing revisions to the Indian Act whose introduction stated:

The philosophy behind the Indian Act the Indian people will be creating over the next few years will be one of increasing the power of bands in order to allow Indian people to make more meaningful decisions. We feel this is necessary because each band faces different conditions and has different resources so that each band must be allowed to develop in their own direction. This is the only way bands will be able to be successful governments in serving their people.¹⁹⁶

As it attempted to combat assimilationist policies and re-build communities, the new activism stimulated and shaped Natives identities. The organizational structures whose emergence

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See the NIB statement quoted in James Frideres, *Native Peoples in Canada*, p.125.

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National Indian Brotherhood, *Proposed Revisions of the Indian Act*, p.1.

corresponded with the post-White Paper mobilization laid the foundations for the crystallization of four large-scale Aboriginal identities.

The first is the 'status Indian' identity which derives from the legal concept of status and is projected by the successor organization to the NIB, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). The activism of the AFN strengthened the idea of a Canadian wide Aboriginal community over and above the numerous historically and culturally distinctive bands. However, its preoccupation with, and representation of, status Indians reinforced the subjective meaning of the categories created by the Indian Act a century earlier, and defined the contours of a specific Native identity that did not include non-status Aboriginals. These mechanisms of identity/community differentiation, which have their ultimate source in the separate legal category created by the federal government in the late 19th century, prompted leading non-status Indians to engineer their own political mobilization effort through a distinct organization, the Native Council of Canada (NCC). The NCC's articulation of claims specific to Aboriginals not legally administered by the federal government gave new subjective meaning and coherence to a largely subsidiary category, projecting a non-status Indian identity in the process.

The third Aboriginal identity that was stimulated by the political activism of the 1970s was the Métis identity. The Métis population is the product of relationships between Aboriginals and European fur traders. Although formally non-status Indians and represented until 1983 by the NCC, the Métis developed over the centuries an identity of their own. This identity received an important boost when the NIB's challenge of the White Paper triggered waves of Aboriginal activism, for it prompted Métis leaders to engage on their own in the political

process and promote a distinct identity. The creation in 1983 of the Métis National Council (MNC) gave the Métis community a distinct formal voice. Finally, the mimesis effect triggered by the identity-oriented claims of the NIB-AFN prompted Inuit leaders, and the Inuit organization Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC), to promote their community's own historical-cultural distinctiveness. This fourfold activism forced the federal government to abandon its assimilationist policies and turn towards a strategy of accommodation. It included in the Constitutional Act of 1982 an acknowledgment of Aboriginal treaty and historical rights as well as the formalization of three Aboriginal communities and identities: Inuit, Métis and Indian. (The legal distinction between status and non-status Indians remains but is not constitutionalized.) The constitutional anchoring of these identities gave them new credibility. It conferred additional legitimacy to the corresponding communities and organizations, and provided Native leaders with a foundational reference for future claims that would further promote distinct identities.

The *Québécois*, Aboriginals, and Western identities were greatly stimulated in the 1980s and 1990s by constitutional negotiations intended to strengthen the Canadian political community. Three different rounds of negotiations produced a spiraling of claims for identity recognition that fed these very identities. The first is the 1982 patriation of the Canadian constitution. This move was designed to provide a new and powerful symbol to the Canadian identity but had the unintended consequence of reinforcing the *Québécois* identity. The enactment by the federal Liberals of the Constitutional Law of 1982 without the support of Québec's PQ government was denounced by both the PQ and the PLQ. The PQ was quick to give to this event meaning that would further its political objective. It pointed to the support

of the nine mainly English-speaking provinces to the constitutional change as evidence of fundamental cultural/value differences between Québec and the rest of the country. This discourse transformed both the process leading to the patriation and the constitutional amendment itself as symbols of Québec's distinctiveness. The failure of the federal Liberals to gain the support of all ten provinces for the constitutional amendment generated a political context that further dichotomized the *Québécois* and Canadian identity. Political elites, primarily in Québec, increasingly referred to Québec as one community and the 'rest of Canada' as another.

The political discourse triggered in Québec by the patriation led the federal Conservative party that came to power in 1984 to engage in discussions with Québec's liberal government and other provincial governments with the objective of reaching a general constitutional agreement that could foster Quebecers' attachment for Canada. One of the *sine qua non* conditions put forward by the PLQ for Québec's support of any constitutional package was a provision proclaiming Québec's distinctiveness.¹⁹⁷ Québec's political elite first articulated claims for a formal distinct status at the time of the Quiet Revolution but their dealings with federal authorities in the 1970s focused primarily on issues of power distribution between the two levels of government. As a consequence of the 1980 referendum and the 1982 patriation, the symbolic/identity dimension acquired a much greater importance. The end result of the post-1982 constitutional negotiations was the Meech Lake accord which recognized Québec as a 'distinct society'. This accord, however, was never ratified since provincial elections

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On the centrality of the distinct society recognition, see the memoirs of then PLQ leader Robert Bourassa, *Gouverner le Québec*, (Montréal: Fides, 1995), p.225.

brought to power in some provinces parties that had opposed the accord. In the end, it was the refusal of a Manitoban Native parliamentarian to approve an accelerated procedure, on the grounds that Meech did not address any of the concerns of Aboriginal communities, which prevented the ratification of the accord. This development was indicative of the mimesis and demonstration effect inherent to identity-centred negotiations.

The failure of Meech Lake played into the hands of the PQ who interpreted it as a rejection of Québec's identity and a proof of its fundamental incompatibility with the Canadian identity. The PQ's position forced the PLQ to solemnly re-affirm the distinct character of Québec society. This discourse heightened Quebecers' sense of distinctiveness. Quebecers' answer to the question "Do you feel that you are more a citizen of Canada or more a citizen of this province?" has fluctuated greatly in the last twenty years. Not surprisingly, the 'citizen of Québec' answer was at its highest immediately after the collapse of Meech.¹⁹⁸ It represented 59% and 58% in 1990 and 1991 respectively. To compare, it was at 42% in 1988, 48% in 1988. It went back down to 51% in 1994 and 46% in 1996 and 1997.

The Meech failure also fueled Aboriginal identities and Western alienation. Aboriginal leaders re-affirmed the necessity of including references to Native communities in any constitutional amendment. A new regional political party, Reform, claiming to speak on behalf of 'the West' denounced both the marginalization of the Western provinces in constitutional talks and the departure from the model of Canadian nation composed of equal citizens and equal provinces. The surge of political actors promoting various regional identities and

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The following data is taken from Matthew Mendelsohn, "Measuring National Identity and Patterns of Attachment: The Case of Québec".

different conceptions of the Canadian identity set three important pre-conditions for any constitutional amendment. The first was the PLQ's claim for a formal acknowledgment of Québec's distinctiveness. The second was the desire of Native leaders to see Aboriginal populations recognized as full-fledged political communities, preferably through the granting of self-government. The third was Reform's claims for a better integration of the West within the Canadian political community, through the creation of an elected Senate with equal representation of the provinces, and for a statement affirming the principle of the equality of provinces.

These three features were contained in the Charlottetown constitutional agreement reached by the Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and the ten premiers in 1992. Reform and the PQ led the campaign against the accord. The accord introduced asymmetrical structures that could increase the power of certain components of the Canadian federation such as Québec and Native communities. The accord threatened of relative marginalization other components such as the Western provinces and presented the Reform party with the risk of losing power and influence in Canadian politics. For this reason, Reform denounced the distinct society provision and the recognition of the right for Aboriginal self-government as antithetical to a strong and liberal Canadian nation based on the idea of equality. For the PQ, Meech Lake's constitutional renewal was tantamount, at least in the short term, to the demise of its political programme, and threatened its political power. For this reason, the PQ, supported by the Bloc québécois (BQ), argued that stating the equality of the provinces marginalized the expression of Québec's identity and distinctiveness. The activism of these two forces was central to the defeat of the Charlottetown accord in a national referendum (55%

vs 45%) and explains why the opposition was strongest in the Western provinces (68% in British Columbia, 60% in Alberta, 55% in Saskatchewan, 62% in Manitoba) and Québec (57%).¹⁹⁹ The rejection of the accord by a majority of the population gave additional credibility to parties such as Reform, the PQ and the BQ who had argued that it either misrepresented territorial identities or distorted the Canadian identity. The subsequent electoral success of these parties (the BQ and Reform both eventually formed the federal official opposition while the PQ rose to power in Québec) put them in a privileged position to promote their conception of the Canadian political community and bolster regional identities.

The political activism that surrounded the constitutional negotiations of the 1980s and 1990s was not simply the expression of various regional identities or the consequence of different interpretation of the Canadian identity; it shaped the Canadian identity landscape by strengthening regional identities while at the same time issuing alternate definitions of the Canadian nation. In the case of the Aboriginal population, political-constitutional activism contributed to the development of four distinct identities and communities, supported institutionally by corresponding organizations and legal-constitutional provisions, that now coexist with the various smaller cultural-historical identities and political entities. It also shaped the way Native leaders defined the Canadian community as they challenged the idea of a Canadian nation composed of equal and undifferentiated citizens and suggested the model of a 'community of communities'.

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Kenneth McRoberts and Patrick Monahan (eds), *The Charlottetown Accord, the Referendum, and the Future of Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), Appendix 3.

In the Western provinces, the potential consequences of this type of challenge for power distribution and relationships in Canadian politics led to a twofold response. On the one hand, political elites of Western provinces, particularly the Reform Party, re-affirmed their attachment to the principle of equality of individuals and provinces that would avoid their political marginalization at the expense of the more populous Ontario and Québec. On the other hand, Reform's claims for greater participation and influence of the Western provinces in federal politics led to it to articulate the idea of a Western identity. In turn, this identity provided legitimacy to the party's political claims and served as a foundation for its power. Canada remained, in the early 1990s, the primary reference for political-territorial identification in the Western provinces with 76% saying that the Canadian identity was the most important to them. However, 12% said that their primary attachment went to 'the West', a concept with little historical grounding and not legal basis.²⁰⁰

In Québec, the failure of constitutional negotiations stimulated the *Québécois* identity. Not only was this failure interpreted as a rejection of Québec by the PQ which sought to demonstrate its incompatibility with Canada to further its political agenda, but it also led the PLQ, under pressure from its provincial nemesis, to strongly re-affirm the province's distinctiveness. As a consequence, the dichotomization of the Canadian community in terms of Quebec and 'the rest of Canada' became a permanent feature of the discourse of the former's political elite which is only partially reflected in Quebecers' self-identification. While 51% identify only or primarily as *Québécois*, 79% feel Canadian in some way.²⁰¹ Consequently,

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Roger Gibbins and Sonia Arrison, *Western Visions*, pp.64-65.

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See the CROP survey realized in August of 1999 for the Privy Council Office. <http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/aia/docs/francais/perspective/issues/cropopinion.htm>.

if the *Québécois* identity was developed in the context of the Quiet Revolution and gained credence as a result of the subsequent political-constitutional activism, it still coexists with the larger Canadian identity projected by the central state and elites. Finally, there is little sign of any subjective meaning attached to the second end of the Quebec-rest of Canada dichotomy articulated by Québec's political elite. The idea of a Canadian identity that includes Québec and defined in part by the principle of bilingualism is strongly defended and promoted by the federal Liberals, Conservatives and New Democrats. Partly for this reason, a 'Canada without Québec' has not yet developed, although the prospects of secession has led to reflections on the make-up of such a political community.²⁰² An additional problem with the idea of 'English-Canadians' is that the term has largely become a misnomer. Indeed as a result of several different waves of immigration in the last 50 years, less than 50% of Canadians outside Québec have descendants from the British Isles. For them, the idea of English-Canada derived from a two-nations perspective has little meaning.

The broadest the common denominator in the emergence of regional identities in the three countries is elite struggle. In Belgium, the key pattern of elite relationships leading to the emergence of these identities was a struggle between a French-speaking bourgeoisie, the country's dominant group, and a Flemish lower bourgeoisie. The contentious issue was a linguistic regime that empowered French-speaking bourgeois at the expense of a Flemish petty

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See Kenneth McRoberts (ed), *Beyond Quebec. Taking Stock of Canada*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).

bourgeoisie and clergy. The struggle initially led Flemish elites to demand bilingualism in Belgium as whole, but as a result of Francophone opposition they centred their claims on territories where Netherlandic languages were predominantly spoken. In reaction to this activism of the Flemish Movement, some French-speaking leaders opted to focus on a territory where Romance languages were dominant. The result was the conceptualization of a Flemish, a Walloon and also a Brussels identity as the Capital's heterogenous linguistic make-up resulted in its partial exclusion from the two other emerging identities.

In Spain, the key relationship in explaining regional identities involved the 19th century attempt by Spanish political elites to create a centralized, liberal, modern state. This initiative met with opposition in the Basque provinces and Galicia where the dominant elites were traditional and had much to loose with modernization processes that could render them socially and politically irrelevant. In Catalonia where the elite was businessmen and industrialists, the extension of the scope of action of Castilian elites that were differently positioned with respect to industrialization threatened the socio-political power base of the bourgeoisie. This struggle, which was taken to an entirely new level by Franco, led, as was the case in Belgium, regional elites to disengage from the Spanish framework and bolster or build an alternate community where they could remain dominant.

The Canadian case highlights a similar correlation between elite relationships and regional identities but also shows peculiarities. The struggle in Québec of a rising French-speaking bourgeoisie of salaried professionals against the dominant English-speaking business elite was central to the construction in the 1960s of a *Québécois* identity based on language. The struggle of Native leaders with federal authorities over the political-legal status of Aboriginal

communities led them to promote Aboriginal identities. However, beyond this competition between elites of different ethnic groups, identity formation in Canada was driven by at least two other patterns of elite relationship. The first pattern is a competition between federal and provincial elites resulting from the fact that country was created as a federation. The dynamic created by the confrontation between Québec's new French-speaking elite articulating claims for increased provincial powers in the context of a modernization project and the federal government seeking to re-shape the Canadian identity to bolster its own power was the motor for the development of the new territorially-bounded identity. Also, it is the struggle of some elites from the Western provinces against federal authorities for increased power in the central institutions that led to the articulation of a Western identity. The second pattern features cooperation rather than competition. The *Canadien*/French-Canadian identity that prevailed before the 1960s was constructed, nurtured and promoted by clerical and conservative elites who profited from their cooperation with colonial authorities to conceptualize the *société canadienne*/French-Canadian society in a way that would sustain their influence.

The recent history of the three countries show the importance of inter-group competition in stimulating identities. In Québec, the PLQ has attempted to keep up with the more nationalist PQ by adjusting a political discourse that has made increased use of the *Québécois* identity. In both Wallonia and Flanders, the development of nationalist/regionalist parties pushed the traditional parties to adopt regionalist frameworks, projecting and legitimizing regional identities in the process. In the Basque Country, the 'outbidding' and 'keeping up' dynamic of intra-group elite competition was particularly acute as the radical organization

ETA pressured the PNV to frame its politics strictly in a Basque perspective while the PNV, in turn, was at the centre of a similar process with respect to the other parties.

In sum, inter-group, intra-group and inter-level elite competition as well as some forms of cooperation that yield great influence to an elite all have identity generating and altering potential. Generalizing in a more explicit manner on the patterns of elite relationship that produce regional identities would be a hazardous enterprise. Indeed, the particulars of the patterns having led to the emergence and transformation of regional identities in Belgium, Spain and Canada are historically-specific determinants. Just as identities are related to a variety of patterns of elite relationships, they are also associated with a variety of elites. At the centre of the historical process of identity formation in Flanders, the Basque Country, Galicia and French-Canada were conservative-traditional elites such as clerics and landholders. In fact, the prominence of this type of elite in constructing identities in our three countries is striking. It suggests that the conservative-traditional elites were reacting to larger modernization processes that threatened traditional social structures on which their power dependent. In Catalonia, identity formation was associated with a bourgeoisie of merchants and industrialists while in the case of the *Québécois* identity, it was related to a new petty bourgeois of salaried professionals. In Wallonia, both the dominant French-speaking Belgian bourgeoisie and labour/working-class leaders played key roles at different times. Also, the nature of regional identities is directly related to the elites that shape them. In Flanders, the Basque Country, Galicia and French-Canada, identities were historically centred on religion and rural life. In Catalonia, it embodied industrialization and other liberal principles. Moreover, changes in the nature of these identities corresponded with shifts in elite dominance. As the leadership of the

Walloon Movement switched over to union activists. the Walloon identity revolved increasingly around socialist ideas such as economic emancipation. In Québec, the substitution of the clergy and conservative politicians by a petty bourgeoisie as the province's leading elite led to the transformation of the deeply conservative French-Canadian identity into a liberal-modern form.

Therefore, elites that spearheaded identity formation and transformation in the three cases included categories usually understood as classes and others such as clerics. In the more recent era where ideological divisions are blurred, these elites may be better understood simply as party leaders, and elite relationships as elite party politics. The elasticity of the concept of elites allows for this type of analytical flexibility. It is, in part, what makes it a useful heuristic concept.

In addition to demonstrating that regional identities tend to be the contingent product of various forms of elite relationships, most often competition, the empirical material also shows that purposive strategic action on the part of elite is instrumental to identity construction and transformation. While the struggle for power of elites of different ethnic groups in Belgium, Spain and Canada has translated somewhat unintentionally into regional political focuses and identity building, elites have also made conscious decisions to construct identities. They have acted on these decisions by creating symbols, generating myths and re-discovering/inventing a common culture and history. The Basque case provides a particularly good illustration of the strategic and voluntarist dimension of identity construction. The Basque identity was formally articulated in the late 19th century by Sabino Arana, a Carlist politician who, in his own words, 'converted' to nationalism for electoral gains. Arana proceeded to give this identity a name

(Euzkadi), created various symbols (flags, anthem, etc...) and told the history of the Basques as that of a valorous and highly religious people. The Walloon case is also revealing. Pressed by Flemish activism to establish a solid political/electoral basis, French-speaking elites are actively (and openly) involved to this day in the 'invention' of Wallonia through cultural/historical re-discovery and re-interpretation.

The comparison also reveals the nature of the relationship between political institutions and regional identities. Three dimensions of political institutions have shaped, both directly and indirectly, regional identities in Belgium, Spain and Canada. The first is state structures which also includes laws and constitutional provisions as well as the historical process of state development itself. The presence in 19th century Belgium of a Francophone state and a linguistic regime that gave no rights to Dutch-speakers was the catalyst for a form of activism that led to the construction of the Flemish identity, and eventually the Walloon and Brussels identity. In Spain, the weight of the authoritarian state under Primo De Rivera and Franco was a crucial element in the strengthening and wider diffusion of regional identities. The repressive cultural policies of dictatorships that aimed at constructing a 'pure' and homogeneous Spain only had for consequence to give greater subjective meaning to culture and to provide nationalism/regionalism with a favourable normative bias by equating it with democracy. In Canada, the post-WWII state-building which entailed the development of a new-look Canadian identity was, and is still, a motor for the identity-building politics of Québec's elite. Moreover, Canada's discriminatory regime towards Aboriginal communities was the single most important factor in the construction of a First Nations/Indian identity.

Constitutional and ordinary laws also served to 'freeze' or crystallize identities. It was the case in Belgium with the language laws on territorial unilingualism of the 1930s and 1960s which provided the institutional support for the development of all three major regional identities. In Québec, linguistic legislation bolstered identity primarily because it stimulated nationalist politics. Laws and constitutional provisions of recognition legitimize developing or even established identities. The *Canadien* identity was helped along by the Québec Act while the Basque identity was built through the distinct political-legal status granted by the Crown through the *fueros* and the concept of collective nobility. More recently, constitutional recognition of three 'historical nationalities' in Spain benefitted the Galician, Basque and Catalan identities. Recognition in Canada's 1982 Constitutional Act of 'Indians', 'Metis' and 'Inuits' is also an identity-sustaining (and generating) force as is the legal distinction between status and non-status Indians. Finally, historical patterns of state-building have had important long term consequences for regional identities. The Spanish state has historically been weak in the sense that political integration or centralization did not follow political unification. Instead, it remained a loosely structured union of regions which were allowed to preserve their historical institutions. This arrangement favoured the fostering of identities. So did the autonomous structures granted to French-Canadians by British authorities for most of pre-Confederation Canada.

The second aspect of political institutions that affected regional identities in our three cases was party systems. This was particularly crucial in Belgium where the split of all political upon linguistic lines in the 1970s left the country with no national party. As a consequence, the political and subjective universe of Belgians was reduced to linguistic communities, a

dynamic compounded by the fact that politicians from one linguistic group no longer had to cater to members of the other group and could stress the value of one specific set of cultural markers. In Canada, the structure of Québec's party system provides a rock solid framework for the *Québécois* identity because it is essentially a bipartite system where both parties promote primary attachment to the Québec political community, people, or nation. This institutional support was strengthened by transformations in the federal party system during the 1990s that saw the insertion of a new nationalist party, the BQ. The presence in the new-look system of the Reform party also formalized a 'Western' identity. The prominence of nationalist parties in the Basque and Catalan party systems resulting from their historical opposition to Franco, and the presence of nationalist/regionalist parties from these regions and others in the central party system, results in a type of politics that revolve around, and stimulate, identity in many autonomous communities.

The third dimension of the three countries' institutional architecture that shaped regional identities is arrangements of territorial distribution of power. Federalism as it applied to Belgium and Canada, and autonomy as it pertained to Spain, acted as a powerful boundary-setting, community-building and identity-crystallizing and constructing force. In Belgium, the federalization of the state consecrated the existence of two political communities, Flanders and Wallonia, that had previously been constructed by two movements, one of which (the Walloon Movement) enjoyed little popular support. With federalism, the Flemish and Walloon identities were promoted by regional governments who were better positioned to insure their wider mass diffusion. The federalization of the Belgian state also created the Brussels and German-speaking identity simply by designing new Regions/Communities. The erection of the

autonomous community system in Spain not only gave the Basque, Catalan and Galician identities the institutional framework necessary to flourish, it also created others in areas such as Andalusia that had no such history and no strong distinctive cultural markers. Regional identities multiplied in post-Franco Spain partly because the autonomous community framework created political systems and communities by simply drawing new boundaries and partly because it fostered inter-territorial competition. The impact of federalism on regional identities in Canada has been more latent and gradual than in the two other countries simply because Canada was created as a federal state. Nevertheless, the creation of provincial entities was a structural pre-condition for the transformation of the French-Canadian identity into a *Québécois* identity. Moreover, the federal system, with its corollary set of intergovernmental relationships, made provincial, and more recently Native elites active participants in the shaping and re-shaping of the country's political-institutional framework, triggering in the process activism and claims conducive to identity construction.

In addition to highlighting the theoretical significance of elites and institutions in the process of identity formation and transformation, the comparative analysis of regional identity in Belgium, Spain and Canada also reveals other interesting, and probably important, trends. Firstly, it seems that regional identities in their early stages of formation are often articulated as an addition, or even an improvement, upon the larger national identity. This was the initial objective of the Flemish movement. It was the way Francophone leaders such as Henri Bourassa presented the French-Canadian identity in the early 20th century. It was also the way the Basque identity was first articulated, that is, as a superior form of Spanishness. This trend suggests that territorial identities do not have natural political consequences that would make

them naturally antagonistic or mutually exclusive. More recent data on this type of identity which shows that in all three countries regional identities still coexist with the larger national identity suggests a similar appraisal. In fact, the phenomenon of dual identities that can be observed even in regions such as Quebec, Flanders, Catalonia and the Basque Country where the regional identity is most developed contradicts the primordialist idea that culture always yields the only 'true' and most fundamental territorial identity.

Secondly, the Belgium/Spain/Canada comparison highlights the dynamic character of regional identity formation. It shows that the articulation of a regional identity tends to trigger a domino (or demonstration) effect as well as subtraction mechanisms that lead to the creation of other identities. This is why a crucial causal relationship exists between the identities produced by nationalist movements and other forms of territorial identities. The Flemish Movement has not only constructed a Flemish identity but also indirectly a Walloon and a Brussels identity. Indeed, although neither of these two political communities are referred to as nations by their leaders and members (or rather only marginally in the Walloon case), their existence is the product of the mechanisms of subtraction generated by Flemish nationalism. The emergence of identities in Spanish regions that had virtually no history of particularism and whose inhabitants generally relate to only one nation, Spain, can not be understood or explained without referring to Basque and Catalan nationalism. In Canada, both Western and Aboriginal identities have been stimulated by Québécois nationalism. In turn, these political communities self-described and usually recognized as nations have been bolstered by the identity claims of other regions. This is certainly the case in Canada and Spain where the articulation of a multiple territorial identities has led Québécois, Basque and Catalan leaders

to make their political community more distinct than the ones surrounding them. In short, theorizing the construction of political communities/identities understood as nations requires situating it within, and explaining, regional identities that may be qualitatively different.

Thirdly, our comparative analysis reveals suggests that regional identities have the quality of limited fluidity. They are fluid in the sense that they are not immune from change (the French-Canadian identity) or even disappearance (Andalucia would be the closest thing to such occurrence in our three cases). However, this fluidity is limited by the institutional environment. In theory, major institutional change could be conducive to the death of a regional identity. In practice, the institutional framework that sustains regional identities such as schemes of territorial division of power tend to have, once in place, a fairly long life span and are only changed incrementally. Consequently, while the contingent and situational nature of regional identities theoretically allow for their reversibility, the institutional environment in which they have developed usually do not. The apparent resilience of regional identities is primarily the product of institutional factors. For this reason, political elites seeking to obliterate these identities without making major changes in the institutional context are unlikely to be successful.

Chapter 3. Interest definition

Ethnonationalism, as any other type of politics, involves the defense and promotion of interests. Nationalist leaders refer to their group's fundamental or 'sacred' interests almost as much as they do to identity. They speak, among other things, of the imperatives of cultural preservation, economic development, political empowerment, or a combination of the above. They denounce policies and/or institutions which they consider detrimental to these objectives. In sum, interests feature prominently in the discourse and the activity of nationalist movements. These interests, however, are not 'givens'. They are not determined by cultural distinctiveness. Culturally-distinct groups have seen their interests articulated in many different ways, with cultural preservation generally coexisting with social, economic and political dimensions in different proportions. Interests are not the necessary consequences of specific socio-economic conditions. Situations of both relative under- and overdevelopment have witnessed the emergence of various types of nationalist movements: traditionalist, liberal-bourgeois and left-wing/Marxist. Moreover, socio-economic cleavages internal to regions and 'intermediate situations' (those which do not neatly correspond to either under- or overdevelopment) sometimes make the characterization necessary to a correlation with the ideology of nationalist movements difficult. In short, the interests attributed to groups are not organic but rather defined. This chapter focuses on this process of interest definition which is central to ethnonationalism. In doing so, it explains the claims, programmes and ideological outlooks of nationalist movements in Belgium, Spain and Canada.

As was the case for the process of identity formation and transformation, structural and cultural theories of ethnonationalism are not the most adequate to account for the

definition of group interests. Cultural explanations for group interests have the least potential. Theorists such as Kymlicka and Taylor argue that culture/language is a fundamental good which groups naturally look to preserve.¹ This suggestion seems to correspond to a certain reality since nationalist movements in our three cases present cultural/linguistic preservation and promotion as part of their group's interests. However, there are variations which need to be explained. The stress on culture is most important in Flanders, Catalonia, Québec and among Canada's Natives. It is less important in the Basque Country and Wallonia and even less so in other instances of territorial politics such as Brussels and Western Canada. Two other related issues become problematic in light of the cultural explanation. The first is that, as witnessed by all our cases, social, political and/or economic questions are also central to most group interest definitions. The second is that taking culture/language as a given 'interest' prevents the analyst from actually explaining the definition process. This is a theoretical problem with empirical consequences. After all, not only does the importance of culture vary between groups, but cultures and languages do disappear.

Structural explanations for group interests suggest that they naturally derive from macro socio-economic conditions. These explanations seem to expose straightforward causal relationships: traditional societies spawn conservative or reactionary nationalisms, wealthy and overdeveloped regions produce liberal ones, and those that are poor and underdeveloped lead to left-wing movements. While there is no doubt that the general social and economic context as embodied by the traditional indicators of development weigh heavily on the specific

¹ See, again, Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Charles Taylor, *Rapprocher les solitudes. Écrits sur le fédéralisme et le nationalisme au Canada*.

profiles of nationalist movements, limiting the analysis to these macro variables is problematic for three reasons. First, characterizing regions is not always easy. For example, the Basque provinces of the late 19th and early 20th centuries could be said to be both a traditional society and overdeveloped relative to the rest of Spain. Present-day Québec is neither the richest nor the poorest of Canadian provinces. Second, the linkage between, on the one hand, structural factors and, on the other hand, group interest definition and the ideological outlook of a movement is not always clear. In Spain, for example, strong left-wing/Marxist trends have permeated nationalism in both Galicia and the Basque Country although the former is an historically poor region while the latter has been relatively overdeveloped in the 20th century. In Canada, the interests of French-Canadians were defined in traditional terms throughout the first half of the 20th century although most of Québec's objective socio-economic characteristics no longer corresponded to those of a traditional society. The Flemish concern for the protection and status of the Dutch language has survived two centuries of socio-economic transformations. Third, relying on structural variables to explain group interest definitions gives the illusion that there is, at any moment in time, only one such definition. In reality, they tend to be multiple and contested. In each of Spain's three 'historical nationalities', different definitions of group interests have translated into distinct nationalist streams which have competed throughout the 20th century.

In light of these shortcomings, the concept of elites becomes an attractive tool to illuminate the process of interest definition because it links culture and macro-socio-economic conditions to nationalist claims and programmes while introducing agency as a new independent variable in the explanation. This chapter provides a political explanation for the

interests articulated in the context of nationalist activity. It sheds light on the process of interest definition by examining patterns of elite relationships in their institutional context, thereby accounting for the claims, programmes and ideologies of nationalist movements in Belgium, Spain and Canada. In turn, the empirical comparison is used to highlight significant theoretical points and formulate partial, historically-grounded generalizations.

As mentioned earlier, group interests are not 'givens' but need to be defined. Situations have to be interpreted in order to be decried as miserable. Alternative scenarios need to be elaborated and articulated. This interpretation of situations, construction of alternative scenarios and, more generally, the definition of group interests is the realm of political elites. The specific manifestation of the latter process in term of claims, objectives and ideology is conditioned by the relative influence of various categories of elites. Indeed, elite power struggles are crucial to group interest definitions since political elites tend to project their own interests upon the larger group. In this context, macro socio-economic variables and cultural factors become relevant environmental conditions. The nature of the interests articulated by elites generally corresponds to their sociological profile. In turn, the relative influence of the different sociological categories (traditional, liberal-bourgeois, labour, etc...) is itself shaped, although not determined, by larger processes linked to social, political and economic change. Indeed, changes in a nationalist movement's programme, claims and ideology do not strictly follow transformations in general socio-economic conditions. Rather, they correspond to alterations in the elite balance of power. Moreover, the struggles of these elites reflect the fact that group interest definitions are often multiple, although a particular one may prevail almost uncontested for a long period of time. Again, the relative importance

of different definitions is a function of elite relationships. Finally, it is important to note that culture does factor into the process of group interest definition as shaped by elites. Cultural change such as linguistic assimilation has important power implications and certain elites may be particularly sensitive to it because it affects their social, political and economic status. This concern with cultural preservation and language stability may transpire in their definition of group interests.

Political institutions occupy a central position in the process of interest definition for two reasons. First, they structure elite relationships. The agency of elites, including their patterns of competition, cooperation and influence, does not occur in a vacuum but is shaped by the institutional context. The definition of group interests is, just like the construction of identities and political mobilization, a process driven by elites operating within a specific institutional framework which provides direction to their actions. It is an historical and incremental process which means that the weight of time-specific institutional structures is felt not only in the relationships they mould directly but also in their later development. In other words, the structuring effects of institution on agency are cumulative and long-lasting. Second, political structures institutionalize interests. Indeed, not only are group interests defined and articulated by elites whose behaviour is shaped by institutions but these very definitions come to be reflected in the institutional environment produced and reproduced by elites. This institutionalization gives fluid definitions a semi-permanent character.

3.1-Belgium

3.1.1 Language and Interests in 19th Century Belgium: The Struggle for Social and Political Power.

The development of the Flemish Movement may only be understood in the context of the Belgian revolution and the creation of a French-dominated state. The Flemish lower bourgeoisie's struggle with the French-speaking bourgeoisie which was at the centre of the gradual construction of a Flemish identity was also at the heart of different and conflicting definitions of group interests. Indeed, the processes of identity creation of the 19th century were accompanied by processes of interest definition. There was considerable effort on the part of the dominant French-speaking elites to articulate the idea that it was in the interest of all Belgians to abandon 'backward' dialects and speak French, the language of modernity and progress. They used language and this interpretation of group interests to promote and sustain their project of a Belgian nation where they could solidly anchor their power. They framed the new Belgian identity in language terms. For the Flemish lower bourgeoisie, the prescription for linguistic homogenization associated with the construction of a French-speaking Belgian nation was a recipe for social and political marginalization. In response to these policies, Flemish elites proceeded to celebrate Netherlandic languages. The Catholic clergy in Flanders, a prominent segment of the Flemish elite, connected their survival and growth to the highest moral imperatives. It presented the struggle of the Flemish Movement for linguistic equality as the fight against a secular and amoral culture.² Through their influence within the Movement, clerics and other conservative leaders operated a conjunction

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Lieve Gevers, "The Catholic Church and the Flemish Movement", p.111.

between the developing Flemish identity and religion. Their definition of group interests as the preservation of religion and traditions was the byproduct of a socio-political struggle that centred around language. This definition greatly shaped the character of nationalist politics in Flanders, for it not only reflected the importance of the Catholic Church but also assured it of a special relationship with Flemish activists.

In the Belgium of 1830, French was the language of the bourgeois social and political elite. It was also the language of the state they created and dominated. In society as a whole, however, French was the mother tongue of only a small minority. Most Belgians spoke Flemish or Walloon dialects. For the French-speaking bourgeoisie, this situation was a potential source of division and instability that could only jeopardize their stranglehold on political institutions. The consolidation of their power necessitated the elimination of any linguistic challenge through homogenization. This policy was justified and rationalized in reference to two larger objectives presented as closely related: the public good and the conformity to a 'standard' political model. It was first argued that it was in the interests of all Belgians to speak French, the prestigious international language of modernity, reason, development, knowledge, and progress, rather than to hold on to marginal local dialects that embodied an old social order characterized by myths, ignorance and particularism. Indeed, still in the early 20th century, French-speakers could speak in these terms: "Il est heureux que malgré l'effort du flamingantisme, nos populations flamandes reconnaissent l'indéniable utilité de la connaissance pratique et réelle de la langue française."³

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Raoul Engel, *L'Université flamande. Les Conséquences. Le Point de vue Social. L'Avis des Professeurs*, (Bruxelles: Ligue nationale pour la défense du français, 1911), p.13.

It was also suggested that linguistic assimilation was the only strategy that could take Belgium towards the “normal” model of political organization represented by the homogeneous, coherent and indivisible nation-state. The argument for this ultimate goal of a strong unified state was presented in a very similar fashion as the one for the policy of *francisation* (‘frenchification’) itself with its stress on modernity, progress, development and, ultimately, the realization of the public good. For example, during the late 1840s and in the context of an economic crisis in the North, the study of French in Flanders was presented as a way “to facilitate the migration of Flemish workers to the more prosperous parts of the South.”⁴ This interest definition by French-speaking elites was inseparable from their project of constructing a strong Belgian identity, and also from their primary goal of preserving their hold on the Belgian state and maximizing their power in Belgian society. The strategic motivations behind the framing of linguistic homogenization in terms of the general interest explains in large part why French-speakers in Flanders were the strongest and most outspoken advocates of *francisation*. The fact that French was barely spoken in the North rendered their position particularly precarious. For French-speaking elites in Flanders, the failure to maintain the hegemony of the French language in Netherlandic territories would mean a quick and unforgiving downfall.

For the Flemish lower bourgeoisie, the definition of group interests articulated by French-speaking elites and carried out through strategies of linguistic homogenization represented a threat of further socio-political marginalization. It responded by celebrating the

⁴ Alexander B. Murphy, *The Regional Dynamics of Language Differentiation in Belgium. A Study in Cultural-Political Geography*, p.66.

Flemish language and equating its formal-legal status to the well-being of those who spoke it. It first articulated the idea that formal linguistic equality was in the interests of all Belgians because Flemish acted as a shield against foreign (French) influence and consolidated the Belgian nation. This definition of group interests, which corresponds to the early stages of the Flemish Movement's quest for linguistic equality, was transformed when French-speaking elites tolerated a bilingual Flanders but opposed any such status in Wallonia. For Flemish elites, this position meant that their future in Belgium as a whole was bleak. They gradually transformed their discourse on language to emphasize the potential gains resulting from the rehabilitation of Flemish *in Flanders*. After formal linguistic equality was achieved in the 1890s and in the context of the introduction of manhood suffrage, they particularly stressed the social, educational and economic benefits that would come from the prominence of Flemish in Flanders. Their linguistic claims were increasingly articulated within a new territorial framework and in terms of social progress for the Flemings.⁵ The Flemish Movement's struggle for territorial unilingualism was the expression of this amended definition of group interests, and the language laws of the 1930s constituted an important victory for its supporters.

The fact that language was at the centre of the definition of group interests articulated by Flemish elites from the very emergence of the Flemish Movement and throughout much of the 20th century may be explained by the political-institutional context of 19th century Belgium. In a state where "the French language was the key to social and political

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Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, pp.25-26.

advancement”⁶, the position of the Flemish lower bourgeoisie could only be improved through changes in the linguistic regime. The nature of the political struggle between the dominant French-speaking bourgeoisie and Flemish elites explains in large part the relative absence of references to the economic disparities between the North and the South, particularly in the early years of the Flemish Movement.

For Flemish elites, most of whom were conservative, the fact that Wallonia was industrialized and Flanders rural was more a benediction than a problem. The traditional-rural order in the North was the basis for their local power and claims for socio-economic change had to be formulated carefully. Indeed, they were usually expressed as a corollary to the more fundamental linguistic issues. The marginal importance of specifically economic questions in the platform of the late 19th and early 20th century Flemish Movement shows that situations of unequal economic development have no meaning in and unto themselves, and that nationalism can not be primarily understood in terms of structural economic conditions. They have to be interpreted and defined. In addition to the conservative character of Flemish elites and the nature of their political struggle, the territorial element acted as a further detriment to an economic definition of group interests. Flanders as a territorial reality and a political community was under construction in the 19th century. It did not embody a region that could be easily associated with poverty and underdevelopment in opposition to the industrialization and economic growth of the South. The loyalties and the different patterns of economic development associated with provincial boundaries were serious impediment to the

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Alexander B. Murphy, *The Regional Dynamics of Language Differentiation in Belgium. A Study in Cultural-Political Geography*, p.79.

articulation of 'one Flemish economic interest'.⁷ The emergence and growth of the Flemish movement in the 19th and early 20th century can not be explained by macro socio-economic variables. For this reason, structural theories provide little insight into the development of Flemish nationalism.

The specific ideological discourse of the Flemish Movement has to be understood in the context of the pillarization of Belgian society following independence. The Movement gathered the most support among Catholics. It enjoyed some popularity among Liberals but found virtually no followers within the Socialist family. These developments reflected the social profile of the conservative lower bourgeoisie which had formed the Flemish Movement. The clerical element of this lower bourgeoisie was of particular importance in shaping the character of the Movement and defining the interest of the community it claimed to represent. Priests stressed the connection between language, community and religion. They argued that the preservation of the Flemish language was vital to the survival of a profoundly Catholic people, and that it constituted a natural barrier from some undesirable forms of foreign influence. The influence the clergy exercised through its control of an important network of Catholic schools was instrumental in establishing the religion-language-community connection in the masses. It was especially important since the language of education issue was central in the Movement's struggle for linguistic equality. The rise of a fiercely anti-clerical Walloon Movement further accentuated the connection between the Catholic church and the Flemish Movement. A decisive moment for the ideological outlook of the Flemish Movement came at the very end of the 19th century when it became closely associated with the Christian

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Ibid., pp.80-89.

Democratic forces whose victory in the 1884 elections moulded a genuine political party. The alliance forged between Flemish Movement and Christian Democratic leaders was one of convenience as well as ideological proximity. On the one hand, the Movement could 'deliver' votes, many of them in areas that were traditionally liberal. On the other hand, Catholic governments would support measures aiming at the achievement of linguistic equality.⁸ This formal association not only reflected the religious and conservative profile of Flemish Movement leaders, it re-enforced this traditional dimension and accentuated its opposition to socialism.⁹ In fact, Liberals and Socialists saw in the Flemish Movement a clerical conspiracy.¹⁰

The definition of group interests in 19th century Belgium highlights the instrumental dimension of the process and its connection to power issues. Indeed, the centrality of language in the Flemish group interest definition has to be understood as the product of the struggle between the French-speaking bourgeoisie and the Flemish lower bourgeoisie in the context of a French-dominated state. On the one hand, Francophone bourgeois controlling the state argued that it was in the interest of all Belgians to adopt French as their primary language. This definition of group interests and the policies of linguistic homogenization that translated from it had their source in their desire to consolidate their power on the Belgian state and in Belgian society. On the other hand, the Flemish lower bourgeoisie first suggested that the strength of the Flemish language was crucial to Belgian nation-building since it

⁸ Lode Wils, "Mouvements linguistiques, nouvelles nations?", p.57.

⁹ Lode Wils, *Histoire des nations belges*, pp.195-196.

¹⁰ Lode Wils, "Mouvements linguistiques, nouvelles nations?", p.57.

represented a shield against foreign influence. Articulated by a group fearing further social and political marginalization, this alternate definition of the 'national interest' was gradually abandoned when it became clear that Francophone elites would not accept a bilingual status for Wallonia. Instead, Flemish elites switched the focus of their interest group definition from Belgium as whole to the Netherlandic territories where they could build a community that would provide a solid foundation for their power. The Flemish case also highlights the correlation between group interest definition and the social profile of elites. The interests of the Flemish community were defined by its religious and traditional elites, and later Christian Democracy, painting the picture of a Catholic-clerical community.

3.1.2 The Walloon Movement and the New Balance of Power in Belgium: Articulating Walloon Interests.

The political activism of the Flemish Movement triggered important changes in the identities French-speaking elites sought to foster. The creation by these elites of a Walloon identity in the early 20th century meant that they were increasingly aiming their discourse solely at Francophones. They were also articulating the interests of this group differently. They emphasized more overtly issues of power and influence. Confronted at the turn of the century with the first Flemish linguistic victories and the introduction of manhood suffrage, French-speaking elites recognized the precarious nature of their position of dominance. They proceeded to transpose this new elite dynamic to the masses. Walloon Movement leaders argued that Francophone Belgians, or Walloons, were increasingly falling under the domination of Flemings. They articulated the interests of French-speaking Belgians in relation

to their own position within Belgian politics. The depiction of the Fleming oppressor was heavily based on the conservative character of the Flemish Movement. For the Liberals leading the Walloon Movement, the potential rise to power of Flemish elites was particularly intolerable considering their traditional and religious roots. These Walloon Movement leaders framed their struggle with Flemish elites in terms of a fight against backward clerical forces. The picture of an endangered people drawn by Walloon leaders which accompanied the construction of a Walloon identity included an additional oppressor: Brusselers. The definition of 'Walloon interests' was articulated in opposition to 'Brussels' interests' as well as to 'Flemish interests'.

The Walloon Movement of the late 19th century held the same discourse that had characterized French-speaking elites since the creation in Belgium in 1830: it was in the interests of all Belgians to speak French since it was the international tongue of modernity and represented the cement of the Belgian nation. Two events of the turn of century triggered a transformation in the process of group interest definition. The first is the language laws of the late 19th century which gave Dutch formal equality with French as an official language. French-speaking elites saw in this Flemish victory a sign that their stranglehold on the Belgian state was eroding and that they could no longer impose their will on Flemings. In addition, the practical application of any bilingualism would greatly disadvantage Francophone elites, very few of whom had knowledge of Dutch, while proving advantageous for Flemish elites, many of whom knew French.¹¹ The second is suffrage reform. Walloon Movement leaders

¹¹ Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, p.39; Alexander B. Murphy, *The Regional Dynamics of Language Differentiation in Belgium. A Study in Cultural-Political Geography*, p.112.

realized that the introduction of manhood suffrage (especially in its non-plural form in 1919) gave “Flemings the potential to exercise greater control in politics as a consequence of their numerical superiority.”¹² The operative word of the Walloon Movement in the first half of the 20th century was *minorisation*.¹³ In the words of a Walloon militant: “Il y a trois millions de Wallons. Il y a quatre millions de Flamands. La représentation parlementaire majoritaire de ces derniers leur permet toutes les audaces et toutes les réussites. Fatalement, la Wallonie est battue dans le jeu.”¹⁴

The *minorisation* had two consequences for group interest definition. First, the community targeted by the Walloon Movement changed from Belgium as a whole to Wallonia. For its leaders, the fight for the prominence, or even the survival, of French in Flanders was a lost cause. They chose to anchor their power on a smaller, but more reliable, territorial basis, and became quite comfortable with that position. In fact, the Walloon Movement of the 1930s did not oppose territorial unilingualism as demonstrated by their support for the second series of language laws. Second, the ideas of power and influence became coincidental with ‘Walloon interests’ as articulated by the Walloon Movement. Power struggles were always *behind* the project of a Francophone Belgian nation but with the institutional changes of the early 20th century (official bilingualism and suffrage reform), issues

¹² Ibid., p.109.

¹³ Lode Wils, *Histoire des nations belges*, p.27.

¹⁴ Raymond Collège, *Les Nationalités en Belgique et révélations sur l'entente Franco-Belge*, (Paris: La patrie française, 1933), p.3.

of influence were placed at the centre of the formal-official definition of Walloon interests.

They translated into a statements such as:

La situation de Wallonie a été, depuis quarante ans, celle de la parente pauvre dans cette Belgique don't elle a pourtant fait la fortune. Les ministères ont été, depuis lors, mathématiquement l'apanage des Flamands et seuls les Wallons de tout repos ont pu occuper, au sein du Gouvernement, des sièges de premiers plans.¹⁵

Indeed, Walloon leaders presented their potential *minorisation* in Belgian politics as the *minorisation* of the Walloon people, and emphasized the disastrous effects of being governed by 'backward', clerical-oriented Flemings.

The early Walloon Movement was overwhelmingly liberal. After all, it was created by a bourgeoisie, and remained led by French-speaking bourgeois throughout the first half of the 20th century. Prominent socialist figures, most notably Jules Destrée, acquired some influence within the Movement during the first decades of the century. Destrée left the *Assemblée wallonne* in 1923 because he regretted the Movement's inclination to defend French-speaking elites in Flanders at the expense of the 'workers and youngsters of Wallonia' whom he thought were at the centre of the Walloon fight.¹⁶ Until the 1960s, however, the Walloon Movement displayed little interest for social issues and the socialist family had little time for a Movement preoccupied with 'the national question'¹⁷. The highly industrialized nature of Wallonia did not make the Walloon Movement a worker's movement. Its leadership decided otherwise. Here again, the Belgian case illustrates the limits of a structural/economic

¹⁵ Ibid., p.5.

¹⁶ Chantal Kesteloot, "Growth of the Walloon Movement", p.147.

¹⁷ Chantal Kesteloot, *Mouvement wallon et identité nationale*, p.43.

approach to nationalism. Walloon leaders also gave the Movement a strong anti-clerical position. They defined the interests of Walloons as those of a liberal society resisting clerical-religious influence. In the context of the struggle over the *flamandisation* of the University of Ghent, Walloon militants did not even attempt to camouflage the conflation of the ideas of Belgian and bourgeois interests. “Le peuple et la bourgeoisie belge”, stated Raoul Engel, “ne désirent pas une Université flamande.”¹⁸

Walloon leaders explicitly associated these conservative forces with Flanders and presented the region’s ‘backwardness’ as a threat to an enlightened Wallonia, particularly in the context of the Flemings’ demographic strength. The Liberal-Catholic dichotomy expressed by the Walloon leaders explains the virtual absence of the Catholic world in the Movement. It also gave, along with similar processes of interest definition in the North, an added substance to the identities under construction and represented an important element of nationalist mobilization.¹⁹ The definition of group interests by leaders of the Walloon and Flemish Movements reflected their own interests and ideological bias. It greatly contributed to the development of antagonisms between the communities under construction. For one prominent observer, the ethnic conflict between Walloons and Flemings was literally born out of the Liberal-Catholic ideological opposition.²⁰

¹⁸ Raoul Engel, *L'Université flamande. Les Conséquences. Le Point de vue Social. L'Avis des Professeurs*, p.13.

¹⁹ The Socialist-Catholic distinction replaced the Liberal-Catholic one in the discourse of the Walloon Movement during the second half of the 20th century but this new dichotomy was also at the centre of identity construction and nationalist mobilization.

²⁰ Lode Wils, *Histoire des nations belges*, p.207.

The transition from a Walloon Movement preoccupied with preserving the position of French-speaking elites in Belgium as a whole to one focusing exclusively on the South of the country created more than one 'oppressor'. While Flanders was seen as the most important threat to Wallonia, the Movement's switch to a new territorial basis produced an ambiguous relationship between Walloon leaders and French-speaking elites in Brussels. On the one hand, the connection between power and the status of the French language united all French-speaking elites in Belgium. On the other hand, the effort of the Walloon Movement to create a territorially-specific Walloon identity which could serve as the backbone of a new power structure meant the exclusion of Brussels. In the 1910s, Walloon leaders began defining the interests of Wallonia in opposition to those of Brussels. Jules Destrée suggested that there developed in Brussels a new third 'race' which combined the worst attributes of the two others. Brusselers, he argued, were caught in their selfish bureaucratic interests and could not care less about Wallonia.²¹ This theme was to become increasingly popular within the Walloon Movement. Walloon leaders depicted Brussels as the realm of high finance and bureaucratic-economic manipulations. They denounced the 'financial hegemony' of the Capital and articulated the idea of a Flanders-Brussels alliance against Wallonia. They suggested that Brussels' bureaucrats and political establishment consistently favoured both the capital and Flanders at the expense of Wallonia in the distribution of resources.²² This dimension of the definition of Walloon interests gradually delivered the Movement of some

²¹ Lode Wils, *Histoire des nations belges*, p.23, note 57.

²² Vincent Vagman, *Le mouvement wallon et la question bruxelloise*, p.9. See the declaration adopted unanimously at the 1921 meeting of the *Assemblée wallonne*.

of its ambiguity. By the 1930s with the creation of *Concentration wallonne*, it concerned itself almost exclusively with Wallonia and “[T]hose Walloons in Brussels who continued to look upon the Walloon Movement as an ally were involved in a policy which in the long run was to prove a suicidal one.”²³

The changes in the Walloon Movement’s group interest definition at the turn of the century highlight the politically-contingent nature of the process. Indeed, these changes were the result of a new political-institutional context produced by Flemish activism. Threatened of *minorisation*, the French-speaking elites at the helm of the Walloon Movement suggested that their further loss of power and influence would represent a great danger for Walloons considering the ‘backwardness’ of clerical Flanders and the selfishness of Brussels’ financial moguls and bureaucrats. Of particular significance for our understanding of ethnonationalism is the fact that the ‘new Walloon interests’ corresponded to the specific social profile of elites rather than larger socio-economic conditions. Indeed, they were coherent with the Movement’s ideological position as shaped by its leaders but did not reflect the fact that Wallonia was highly industrialized and riven by social conflicts. With Liberals leading the Movement during the first half of the 20th century, there was very little interest in social issues in the larger sense. Nor was there much attention given to the economic issues that would drive the Movement beginning in the 1960s.

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Chantal Kesteloot, “Growth of the Walloon Movement”, p.146.

3.1.3 Defining and Re-Defining Group Interests in Post-WWII Belgium: Change, Continuity and Institutional Consequences.

The articulation of group interests in Belgium after the Second World War was marked by both change and continuity in relation to the first part of the century. The Walloon Movement underwent profound transformations resulting from changes in its leadership. In the general context of the economic decline of Wallonia and in the particular situation of the general strike of 1961, the Movement was taken over by the Socialist family. Socialists equated the interests of workers with those of Wallonia as a whole, and gave a new meaning to the *minorisation* theme by placing economic issues at the centre of the Movement's concerns. The creation of *Rassemblement wallon* (RW), and the development of a close relationship between the Walloon Movement and the *Parti socialiste* (PS) which came in existence as a result of the split of the traditional parties) gave strong institutional voices to this new definition of Walloon interests. Flemish leaders, either within the traditional parties (primarily the CVP) or the nationalist VU maintained their focus on language. They viewed linguistic stability as the key to their newly found power in Belgian politics, and associated their political prominence to the general welfare of all Flemings. Their preoccupation with the linguistic balance of the country led them to pay particular attention to the status of Brussels and its language regime. In Brussels, French-speaking leaders viewed the prominence of French in the region and its diffusion beyond the immediate area of the Capital as crucial to their socio-political future which they connected with that of all Francophone Brusselers. The creation of the *Front Démocratique des Francophones* (FDF) gave a formal voice to the language claims of Brussels' French-speakers.

The articulation of different group interests by leading Walloons, Flemings and Brusselers combined with the processes of identity formation to represent an important force behind the reform of the state that started in 1970. The split of the traditional parties upon linguistic lines favoured and sustained clear and divergent group interest definitions. Not only did these definitions lead to the gradual federalization of Belgium, they also shaped the character of the new institutional arrangements. They largely explain the creation of linguistic-cultural communities (for the Flemings), economic regions (for the Walloons), and an autonomous Brussels. The creation of these units and their endowment with increasingly important powers coherent with the underlying articulation of specific group interests further re-affirmed the different definitions and their identity connections.

In 1945, the Walloon Movement organized a *Congrès wallon* to examine the current Belgian situation and discuss future options. This event constituted a turning point in the history of the Movement as its leaders re-articulated Walloon interests in light of contemporary demographic and economic transformations. In its inaugural discourse, *Congrès* president Fernand Schreurs made three observations/arguments that profoundly shaped the Movement. First, he declared the death of the French-dominated Belgium of 1830. This remark laid to rest the last hesitations the Movement had concerning the community whose interests it defined. Second, he warned of the increasing *minorisation* of Walloons in the context of a dangerous demographic dynamic. Birth rates were significantly higher in Flanders than in Wallonia, and the fact that this tendency had existed at least since the 19th

century made possibilities of any sudden reversal highly unlikely.²⁴ The marginalization of Walloon elites within the Belgian political system thus appeared unavoidable and permanent. Third, Schreurs declared the *minorisation* particularly alarming in the context of Wallonia's relative economic decline. Walloon heavy industry (steel and coal) was showing signs of undergoing severe structural problems while Flanders, with its lower wages, was attracting considerable investment and developing glass, chemical and other promising industries.²⁵ By virtually all economic indicators, Flanders's economy caught up with Wallonia's in the 1960s.²⁶ Walloon leaders suggested that the 'Flemish-dominated state' was no stranger to the uneven economic performances of Flanders and Wallonia. They began articulating the interests of Walloons in specifically economic terms. They argued that the *minorisation* of Walloon elites within the Belgian political institutions meant further economic hardships for Wallonia. This new emphasis on economic issues and the conceptualization of Wallonia as an economic region paved the way for a marriage between the Walloon Movement and the Socialist family in Wallonia.

The crucial moment for the transformation of the Walloon Movement from a bourgeois-led liberal movement to a socialist-inspired one was the Great Strike of 1960-61. Faced with an economic crisis and growing budget deficits, the Catholic-Liberal coalition

²⁴ Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, pp.50-51.

²⁵ Pieter Saey, Christian Kesteloot and Christian Vandermotten, "Unequal Economic Development at the Origin of the Federalization Process", in *Nationalism in Belgium. Shifting Identities, 1780-1995*, p.171.

²⁶ Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, pp.77-87.

adopted several austere measures in a bill known as *Loi Unique*. Leading the opposition to this law was the socialist union *Fédération générale du travail de Belgique* (FGTB) and its charismatic leader André Renard. The close defeat of Renard's proposal for a general strike within the national committee revealed a severe polarization between Flemish and Walloon voices. The subsequent decision to leave the initiative of strike action to regional instances led to uneven activism: the strike was longer and more virulent in Wallonia than in Flanders. Renard and other union leaders wanted the strike to last longer in Wallonia so they could argue that it was a Walloon strike.²⁷ Indeed, this episode prompted Walloon union leaders to suggest that the Social Democratic party was an instrument used by Flemings to impose on Belgium a Flemish, clerical and conservative hegemony. These leaders gradually took over the Walloon Movement and made an explicit connection between Wallonia and the Socialist family. They defined the interests of Walloons as those of workers, and presented Flemish elites as a conservative and oppressive group that dominated the Belgian state. The Great Strike crisis set the stage for the creation in 1967 of RW, a Walloon regionalist party with a strong socialist flavour. The RW gave the new look Walloon Movement a formal voice. It applied considerable pressure on the Francophone elements of the traditional parties, particularly the Socialists, although its strength was undermined by tensions resulting from the regional and ideological focuses. RW plunged to its demise in the late 1970s, partly as a result of the resignation of several influential centre-right members.

Despite an advantageous demographic trend and the progress it had made on the linguistic front over the last century, the post-WWII Flemish Movement kept defining the

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Lode Wils, *Histoire des nations belges*, p.295.

interests of Flemings in language terms. They argued that maintaining linguistic stability in Belgium and their corresponding domination of the state was the key to the general welfare of all Flemings. Flemish leaders considered tenuous their newly found grip on the Belgian political institutions because they still saw the position of Dutch in Belgian society as precarious. French, they suggested, benefited from an international prestige that gave it a natural advantage, and was still favoured by historical processes peculiar to the Belgian experience. Topping the list of the latter, was the Brussels situation. Historically a Flemish town, Brussels had become increasingly French as the capital of a French-dominated state. Formal linguistic equality and the shift of power in favour of Dutch-speakers in Belgium as whole had had little impact on the *francisation* of Brussels²⁸. Of even greater concern for Flemish Movement leaders was the spread of French to Flemish territories in the periphery of Brussels, a phenomenon they sometimes compared to an oil stain.

It is the Brussels problem that triggered the re-affirmation of the centrality of language issues in the Flemish Movement's group interest definition after the Second World War. As the Social Christian-Socialist coalition created after the elections of 1961 announced its intention of tackling the language issue to 'settle the *problème communautaire*', the Flemish Movement organized a massive 'Flemish march' on Brussels²⁹. Spearheaded by the Flemish wing of the Social Christian party, the Volksunie and other Flemish organizations, this march

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Recent estimates put the percentage of Dutch-speakers in Brussels at 13%. See Serge Govaert, "A Brussels Identity? A Speculative Interpretation", p.235. More precise numbers are unavailable since no language questions have been asked in the census since 1947.

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Lode Wils, *Histoire des nations belges*, p.297.

set the stage for the adoption in 1962 and 1963 of new language laws whose major points are generally hailed as the greatest victories in the history of the Movement. Three major provisions of these laws reflect the preoccupation of Flemish elites with linguistic stability. The first is the freezing of the language frontier which eliminated the potential for detrimental adjustments to Flanders' boundaries inherent to the census method. The second is the strengthening of bilingualism in Brussels. Of particular importance here was the removal of parental choice in education and the establishment of a procedure to determine a child's 'real tongue' in those cases where the parents' declaration appeared suspect. The third, and probably the most important, was the maintenance of Brussels to the 19 existing communes in exchange for limited bilingual facilities in six others situated in Brussels' periphery (in Flanders) which Francophone leaders wanted attached to the capital. These last two provisions were as much a protection against Flemings 'converting' to French as they were against Walloons migrating to Brussels or its periphery. With these laws, Flemish elites made nearly impossible the emergence of claims challenging their political dominance on the basis of changes in Belgium's language situation. They created all the conditions necessary for the preservation of linguistic stability which ensured their permanent domination over state institutions. The strengthening of bilingualism in Brussels also gave a newer Flemish elite educated in Dutch greater opportunities for jobs in both the public and private sector.³⁰

If the language laws of 1962-63 were interpreted by Flemish elites as a great triumph for Flemings, they were considered a disaster by Francophone leaders in Brussels for whom

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Maureen Coveil, "Ethnic Conflict, Representation and the State in Belgium", in Paul Brass (ed), *Ethnic Groups and the State*, (London: Croom Helm), 1985, pp.247-248.

the hegemony of French in the capital was the optimum scenario. These leaders saw in the strong official bilingualism of the capital a limitation to their power in the region, and in the territorial containment of Brussels an obstacle to greater influence in Belgium as a whole. They presented the formal coexistence of Dutch in Brussels as a handicap for all French-speakers. They called for linguistic freedom in education in the hope of sustaining a process of linguistic homogenization. They also wanted to remove the legislative 'iron collar' which contained the 'natural' territorial expansion of Brussels (and French). The *Front Démocratique des Francophones* (FDF) was founded in 1964 to give a formal voice to these grievances. Its linguistic freedom position made it ideologically close to the Liberal family which was strongest in Brussels. The creation of this political party indicated that the group interest definition of Brussels' Francophone leaders no longer coincided with that of Walloon leaders. The former portrayed the language legislation of 1962-63 as a 'Walloon sellout'. They argued that Brusselers and Walloons had different interests (primarily linguistic for the former and mostly economic for the latter) which made necessary the existence of a Brussels-based political party. They did not, however, reject the possibility of forming strategic alliances with the Walloon Movement as a means of opposing the Flemish Movement. In fact the RW and FDF operated as an electoral and parliamentary federation from 1968 to 1983. Different group interest definitions were instrumental in the split as leaders of the two parties could not agree on the institutional importance of the French Community.³¹

The articulation of different group interests by leading Flemings, Walloons and (French-speaking) Brusselers was greatly facilitated by the split of the traditional parties. With

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Vincent Vagman, *Le mouvement wallon et la question bruxelloise*, p.43.

the development of linguistic wings within these parties and then the creation of distinct parties altogether. Flemish and Walloon elites could define interests without having to consider the consequences of their action for the popularity of their party in *Belgium as a whole*. The split of the three major parties upon linguistic lines also institutionalized the different group interest definitions within the Belgian party system. The first Flemish party, the CVP, spearheaded the movement for the creation and empowerment of a Flemish Community that could 'protect' the 'linguistic and cultural interests of Flemings'. The dominant party in Wallonia, the PS, was the driving force behind the establishment of a strong Walloon Region that would look after the economic interests of Walloons. The *parti réformateur libéral* (PRL), formerly known as the *Parti de la liberté et du progrès* (PLP), stressed the unity of French-speaking Belgians and was most popular in Brussels. (The PRL and the FDF created an electoral federation in 1993). These interest definitions and their institutionalization were instrumental in prompting the reform of the Belgian state. They also profoundly shaped the configuration of the new Belgian political institutions. In turn, the creation of Communities and Regions gradually endowed with considerable powers fostered the specific group interest definitions which had motivated their existence.

The creation of Communities by the 1970 constitutional reform was a response to the Flemish Movement's linguistic concerns. The establishment of these non-territorial units allowed Flemish-speakers, including those living in Brussels, to be formally incorporated into a single entity which had powers in linguistic and cultural matters. For Flemish elites, the Communities represented an instrument of language regulation. Their powers could be used to sustain and increase linguistic homogeneity in Flanders, and to maintain linguistic stability

in Belgium as a whole. Of particular significance is the fact that Francophones living in Brussels' periphery (including those living in 'language facility communes') fall under the Flemish Community's jurisdiction. In 1980, the Communities' powers were extended to *matières personnalisables* which refer to domains that entail a direct or 'personal' relationship between state and citizen (most importantly health).³² In 1988, education was added to the list of Community powers as a response to Flemish demands for further autonomy in language-related matters. The last constitutional reform enabled the Communities to sign international treaties in their sphere of jurisdiction. The French Community represented a dilemma for French-speaking leaders. Walloon Movement leaders questioned its very existence. They favoured the territorially-based Walloon region at the expense of a French Community which they considered too heavily influenced by Brusselers. The different group interest definitions articulated by Walloon and French-speaking Brusseleer leaders explain to a great extent these tensions about the relative importance of the community and regional institutions.

Regions were written in to the constitution in 1970 but Wallonia and Flanders were given institutions only with the 1980 reform. They corresponded to the Walloon Movement's articulation of Walloon interests in economic terms. In the context of the relative decline of Wallonia's economy, Walloon leaders, especially those within the *Parti socialiste* (PS), distrusted the 'Flemish-dominated' Belgian state. They saw in regional autonomy a way to make decisions that would affect the economic future of Wallonia free of 'Flemish

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Michel Leroy, *De la Belgique unitaire à l'État fédéral*, (Bruxelles: Emile Bruylant, S.A., 1996), p.49.

interference'. The regions were given power over, most notably, regional economic planning, urbanism and environment (1980) as well as public works and communications (1988). The 1993 reform also enabled them to sign international treaties concerning matters that fell within their jurisdiction. Regional autonomy further emphasized the connection between economic issues and 'Walloon interests'. For Flemish elites, the Region was a redundant unit and the institutions of the Flemish Region were immediately subsumed within those of the Flemish Community.

The third Region is Brussels, which was given its own institutions only in 1988 because no agreement existed prior among Flemish and Walloon leaders on its specific status within the new institutional arrangements, or its exact borders. The 1988 constitutional revision gave the Capital Region similar powers to those of the other Regions. Brussels institutions are more complex than those of other regions. There exists a Flemish and a French Community Commission whose members are taken from the Brussels parliament and which exercises Community powers in the Region. The creation of the Brussels Region was more the product of negotiations between Flemish and Walloon leaders than the result of autonomy demands by Brussels's leaders. Nevertheless, it widened the distance between leading Walloons and French-speaking Brusselers, and reinforced their respective claims of distinct interests.

This discussion has shown that processes of interest definition have been instrumental in shaping the new Belgian institutions. More importantly, it has also shown that the new institutions stimulated the articulation of each specific interest definition. The merger of the Flemish Region with the Flemish Community produced a single structure conducive to the

definition of a *linguistic* community. The existence of a Walloon Region enabled Walloon leaders to emphasize its prominence at the expense of the French Community, and to build the connection between the specific socio-economic situation of Wallonia and 'Walloon interests'. The creation of a Brussels-Capital Region bolstered the idea of specific Brussels' interests. These different group interest definitions were articulated in connection with undergoing processes of identity construction. The Flemish identity was constructed around language and culture. The Walloon identity was given a strong economic dimension. The establishment of these ties between identity and interest are at the centre of ethnonationalism and territorial politics in contemporary Belgium.

3.2-Spain

3.2.1 Spanish Centralists, Basque Carlists and Catalan Liberals: Defining Group Interests in Late 19th and early 20th Century Spain.

The processes of identity formation that triggered the formal and explicit articulation of Basque and Catalan identities at the end of the 19th century were accompanied, as in the Flemish and Walloon cases, by processes of interest definition. In Spain, these two sets of processes had their origins in the same dynamic of elite competition between central and regional elites. The specific group interest definitions articulated in the Basque provinces and Catalonia have to be understood in light of the different elites who opposed the idea articulated in Madrid that centralization and homogeneity were in the interests of all Spaniards since they were synonymous with progress and modernity, and necessary to the maximization of Spain's power. In the Basque provinces, this idea was opposed by Carlists for whom it

meant social and political irrelevance. They defined the 'Basque interests' by stressing religion, traditional social structures and values, and local autonomy. The consequence of this definition by the Basque Carlist elite was to make the Basque nationalism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries primarily a traditional-conservative movement. In Catalonia, the argument that centralization was in the interests of everyone was contested by the bourgeoisie who feared that greater power in the hands of a Spanish elite who had to cater to a largely agrarian society would undermine its business interests and marginalize its political influence. Catalan merchants and industrialists suggested that it was in Catalonia's interest not to be strongly integrated in the larger Spanish framework since Spain was a falling power and a backward society. For this reason, the early Catalan movement was predominantly bourgeois-liberal, although it also included a strong left wing stream which equated the plight of Catalan workers with the policies of the central state. In the very poor and rural Galicia, a Carlist-traditional elite articulated similar ideas to those put forward in the Basque provinces while a petty bourgeoisie suggested that the responsibility for the region's underdevelopment laid with the Spanish state and that further centralization would only aggravate Galicia's economic situation. The fairly equal strength of these two Galician elites led to the coexistence within the nationalist movement of traditional and liberal trends.

Spain's 19th century modernization project sought to strengthen a declining power. For the Spanish elites who took control of the Spanish state following the French occupation, centralization and 'national integration' were crucial elements in any attempt at re-capturing the country's grandeur. They suggested that Spain's power and future depended heavily upon the transition from a feudal order to modernity and, consequently, was tied to the eradication

of provincial and regional particularisms.³³ They also suggested that policies of political, administrative and cultural centralization and homogenization were instrumental in transforming Spain into a modern state that could guarantee the well-being of its citizens. These policies threatened the social and political influence of regional elites who articulated alternative definitions of group interests in the context of their identity building and mobilization efforts. In other words, these alternative definitions were constructed as a means to counter policies that threatened their influence. The elites who were at the forefront of the opposition to centralization were different in Catalonia than in the Basque provinces, and they defined the interests of their respective communities differently. The crucial element in explaining the specific sociological profile of the elites behind the alternative interest definitions in these two regions is the historical pattern of relationships involving their liberal bourgeoisie and the Spanish state. In Catalonia, merchants and industrialists were oriented towards the Mediterranean area where they had developed extensive commercial networks. Historically, they did not depend on the state for economic opportunities, and their involvement in Spanish politics was minimal. They were excluded from participating in the management of Spain's political and economic affairs, including colonial ventures. In the Basque provinces, this same elite was weaker and depended upon the Crown for trading opportunities, most specifically for full access to colonial markets. As a consequence, Basque merchants had penetrated the power networks in Madrid and enjoyed cordial relations with

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Luis Moreno, *La federalización de España. Poder político y territorio*, p.58.

Spanish elites. In fact, the Spanish Crown not only sustained the Basque bourgeoisie but to a large extent created it.³⁴

The definition of group interests articulated by the early Basque nationalist movement may be understood only in the context of the 19th century struggle between Carlists and Liberal-Centralists. Basque nationalism was created at the end of this century by a traditional elite who saw the Carlist movement as an increasingly weak and inadequate weapon against the forces of modernization. This elite blended the ideological core of Carlism with ideas of racial purity and distinctiveness. Sabino Arana, the father of Basque nationalism, defined the interests of the Basque community in the same way Carlists defined the interests of Spaniards several decades before. In fact, the PNV's slogan "God and the Old Laws" was only a slight modification of the Carlist slogan "God, Fatherland, and King". Arana argued that change would contaminate Basque society. He suggested that religion, customs and traditional laws were inherent characteristics of Basque society, and served as a natural defence against social and moral degradation. Arana saw the spread of capitalism as a particularly virulent assault on the Basque social and moral order. The political program Arana designed for the PNV insisted, in addition to the precept of racial particularism, on the ideas of tradition and religion.³⁵ This program stated that Vizcaya should be built upon its traditional laws (*fueros*), usages and customs. It also stated that life in Vizcaya would operate in the perfect harmony of the political and religious orders, and that the former would be completely and

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Juan Diez Medrano, *Divided Nations. Class, Politics and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia*, p.36.

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On Arana's program, see Stanley Rayne, *Basque Nationalism*, pp.72-73.

unconditionally subordinate to the latter. With Arana, race became inseparable from religion and tradition. Being Basque meant living in a society that respected ancient laws and customs. It also meant, first and foremost, to be completely and genuinely devoted to Catholicism (unlike 'Spaniards' whom Arana saw as hypocritical Catholics).

Arana died in 1902 but the ideological outlook of the PNV continued to reflect his ideas. The Arana doctrine was challenged by a secondary stream of Basque nationalism led by mining industrialist Ramón de la Sota. De la Sota was the only prominent industrialist supporting Basque nationalism. He represented a small section of the Basque bourgeoisie that had not been integrated within the political power networks in Madrid. His nationalism was pro-capitalist and largely secular. It did not define the interests of the Basques through the ideas of tradition and religion. De la Sota and his followers focused on the restoration of the *fueros*. One hypothesis for this group's position is that the activities of its members in mining led them to advocate free trade rather than the protectionist policies favoured by most Basque industrialists who were involved in the steel and shipbuilding sectors. Another hypothesis (Sabino Arana's) suggests that de la Sota's distinct stand among industrialists was more the result of a local power struggle than the product of different economic interests.³⁶ The PNV was torn by conflict between de la Sota and Arana supporters in its first decades of existence, especially following the latter's death in 1902. It split in 1921 as a result of the tension between the two factions but re-united after the Primo de Rivera dictatorship in 1930. The restatement of the PNV's program clearly reflected an Aranist victory: it stressed Catholicism

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For more on these theses, see Juan Díez Medrano, *Divided Nations. Class, Politics and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia*, p.73.

heavily, insisted on the need for the re-establishment of traditional practices, and spoke of the preservation of the Basque race. The PNV remained a traditional party until the civil war. Its definition of 'Basque interests' revolved around the themes of religion, tradition, morality and anti-capitalism which were all associated with the particularity of the Basque race and the need for independence. Consequently, the ideology of Basque nationalism in the first third of the 20th century focused on the defence of a community presented as traditional and highly religious.

The Catalan nationalist movement was the product of a very different elite than its Basque counterpart. It was created by a bourgeoisie who became disaffected with the policies of the Spanish state and increasingly skeptical of its ability to influence them. These merchants and industrialists suggested that Catalonia's interests were badly served in a centralized Spain.³⁷ They argued that, as the rest of Spain was a predominantly agrarian society, policies implemented by the Spanish state were detrimental to the more industrialized Catalonia. They suggested that regional autonomy was the political framework most conducive to the protection of Catalonia's interests defined essentially in terms of economic development. The *Lliga* and liberal leaders such as Prat de la Riba argued that Catalonia's interests lied in a political-institutional context that would foster opportunities for trade and commerce, and stimulate economic growth. They remained vague on the type of society that would best serve 'Catalan interests' in a situation of regional autonomy. They stressed the importance of a

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Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain. Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, p.26.

liberal, free-thinking and cosmopolitan environment.³⁸ They did not emphasize the religious element. The *Lliga* claimed to be Catholic but insisted on religious freedom. It was neither reactionary nor progressive as it equated the social *status quo* with conditions conducive to economic prosperity. The *Lliga* dominated Catalan politics from the beginning of the century to the Second Republic. It won, in coalition with smaller Catalan parties, 70% of the votes in Catalonia at the 1907 general elections.³⁹ The leading group interest definition in Catalonia during this period centred on economic-related themes and made Catalan nationalism predominantly liberal-conservative.

The *Lliga* and its group interest definition were eventually challenged by a stream of Catalan nationalism that equated the Catalan struggle with the struggle of workers. Catalonia was the most industrialized region in Spain in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and became the cradle of 'radical politics' such as socialism and anarchism. These political tendencies did not connect with Catalan nationalism immediately. The Catalan movement was a liberal-bourgeois creation, and the group interest definition articulated by the *Lliga* had given it strong pro social *status quo* overtone. After WWI, the explosion of social unrest in Catalonia strengthened socialist and anarchist organizations, and led their leaders to articulate the idea that the Spanish state had proven very inefficient at dealing with social issues in the region. They suggested, much like the *Lliga*, that the difference in the socio-economic development of Catalonia and the rest of Spain prevented the central state from looking after

³⁸ Jaume Rossinyol, *Le problème national catalan*, p.308.

³⁹ Juan Díez Medrano, *Divided Nations. Class, Politics and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia*, p.102.

the interests of Catalans. However, their group interest definition was very different from that of the *Lliga*. They suggested that Catalonia's interests would be better served by progressive social policies that could improve the condition of the working class.⁴⁰ The ties established between left-wing politics and nationalism in Catalonia also operated through support for republicanism. The rejection of Spain's royal institutions was not a novelty among Catalans leaders. The Catalan bourgeoisie had previously seen in republicanism an alternative to a model they associated with corruption and backwardness, and in which they could prove influential as the 'enlightened' segment of Spanish society.

The Catalan bourgeoisie was a key force behind the creation of the First Republic. However, it soon lost control of the situation, in large part because of working class mobilization in Catalonia, and rather welcomed the restoration. The *Lliga's* social *status quo*-oriented interest definition put it at odds with the republican model, and achievements such as the *Mancomunitat* convinced its leaders to work within the monarchy. Consequently, republicanism was taken over by left-wing organizations who associated it with the ideas of social progress and Catalan autonomy under the unifying principle of marginalizing or changing a backward and inefficient Spanish state. The creation of parties such as *Partit Republicà Català* and *Estat Català* in the midst of post-WWI social agitation gave this mix formal voices. The *Lliga's* lack of opposition to the 1923 coup reinforced the socialism/republicanism/nationalism nexus. At the end of the dictatorship, the *Lliga* and the interest definition it articulated had been somewhat discredited while the socialist-republican

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This became the position of the ERC. Jaume Rossinyol, *Le problème national catalan*, p.354.

orientation of the new ERC, created as result of a merger between the *Partit Republicà Català* and *Estat Català*, had gained legitimacy. The ERC easily defeated the *Lliga* in the 1931 general election. It won 56% of the votes in Catalonia compared to 14% for the *Lliga*.⁴¹ The group interest definition articulated by the ERC, and embodied by a program stressing workers' rights and social assistance, was dominant within the Catalan nationalist movement on the eve of the civil war.

In Galicia, two different group interest definitions emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They both centred on the rural character of the region and involved denunciations of the central state. The first was articulated by traditional elites and is reminiscent of the Basque experience. For these elites, led by Alfredo Brañas, the rural character of Galicia was a good that needed to be kept and defended. They defended the moral superiority of a society free of the corrupting and divisive influences of modernity. They articulated the idea that Galicia's interests resided in the preservation of a social harmony "under the direction of the Catholic Church and the rural nobility".⁴² They suggested that the Spanish state was threatening these interests and requested the re-establishment of old privileges of autonomy. Galician traditionalists equated Galicia with traditional social structures and values. They argued that cultural distinctiveness (most specifically the language) was both the embodiment and the protector of Galicia's social and moral order which could be safeguarded only in the context of isolation from Castilian influence. The

⁴¹ Juan Diez Medrano, *Divided Nations. Class, Politics and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia*, p.102.

⁴² Justo G. Beramendi and Xosé M. Núñez, "The Historical Background of Galician Nationalism", p.39.

second interest definition put forward in Galicia during this period also centred on the region's rural character. As was the case in the Basque provinces, most of Galicia's bourgeoisie had been incorporated within the Spanish power network but a few non-integrated elements remained.⁴³ These petty bourgeois did not suggest that Galicia's rural character was a blessing the way the traditional elites did. They described it as underdevelopment, and argued that Galicia needed capitalism and modernization to bring changes to its social and economic order. They accused the Spanish state of maintaining the region in a state of poverty, and described the Spanish elite as the enemy.

As was the case in Belgium, the process of interest definition that shaped the outlook of nationalist movements in late 19th and early 20th Spain involved the struggle of different elites attempting to project their interests on a larger whole, and establishing correlations between cultural features and socio-economic preferences. The connection between social struggles and regional autonomy was initiated by a process of state centralization that equated modernity, cultural homogeneity and political unity, and was presented by Spanish elites in Madrid as being in the interests of all Spaniards. This definition met with three different types of opposition. The first involved traditional elites for whom modernization was synonymous with social and political marginalization. These elites, strongest in the Basque provinces and Galicia as a result of the integration of the bourgeoisie within the Spanish state apparatus, suggested that regional interests corresponded to the preservation of a traditional society which was embodied in culture, language and race. The second definition featured a bourgeoisie who defined group interest as economic development and presented the central

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Ibid., p.36.

state either as backward (Catalonia) or exploitative (Galicia). The third definition, which was strongly articulated only in Catalonia where early industrialization had produced important class cleavages, equated regional interests with social progress. Worker movement leaders argued that the Spanish state was a conservative and repressive force whose influence would translate into increased oppression. The Spanish case shows that a group's interests are not coherent, monolithic 'givens' but rather contested discourses often shaped by internal struggles. It also strongly illustrates that the relative power of elites is a much stronger determinant of group interest definition than macro structural socio-economic conditions, although the latter does provide the general context for the former.

3.2.2 Dictatorship and New Definitions of Group Interests: Socialism in the Basque Country, Religion in Catalonia.

The Franco dictatorship had important, and unintended, consequences for the definition of group interests articulated by nationalist organizations. It triggered specific forms of opposition politics, particularly in Catalonia and the Basque Country, which considerably altered these definitions and the ideological outlook of nationalist movements. At the centre of the changes in these group interest definitions between 1936 and 1975 was the repressive nature of Franco's regime. Not only did right-wing authoritarian rule put issues such as human rights and political freedom at the top of the political/nationalist agenda, it also favoured the adoption of socialist positions by political opponents. This dynamic was most visible in the Basque Country where members of the PNV grew dissatisfied with its traditionalist program, and turned towards ideological forms they considered more

appropriate in their fight against the dictatorship. The creation of ETA corresponded to this programmatic change. It involved a transition from a group interest definition centred on traditional social structures, religion and a return to ancient practices and customs to another driven by Marxist, secular, anti-Western and revolutionary convictions. In Catalonia, the dictatorship also triggered leftist group interest definitions as the Communist party emerged as dominant opposition force in the region after 1960. More surprising was the fact that Catalan opposition acquired religious overtones. The pro-Catholicism position of the Franco regime gave religious authorities a measure of freedom of expression not enjoyed by others groups. The Catalan clergy took this opportunity to assume a leading role in the resistance movement, shaping its values in the process.

The creation of ETA in 1959 led to the emergence of a stream of Basque nationalism whose group interest definition departed radically from the one articulated by the PNV. The break from the PNV of the *Ekin* group that formed ETA was motivated by several reasons which included personal rivalries and the belief that the party's opposition to Franco was too passive. At the heart of this last concern was the feeling that the PNV's conservative program was antiquated.⁴⁴ The PNV had evolved since the Arana era and no longer subscribed to the strict Carlist position of returning to ancient structures, practices and customs, but it remained religious-oriented and defended the prevailing social order. ETA articulated a group interest definition different from that of the PNV in four respects. The first was a rejection of religion. ETA rejected the idea that religion represented the soul of the Basque nation and acted as its

⁴⁴ John Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism. The Fight for Euskadi, 1890-1986*, p.32.

safeguard. Pointing to Franco's use of Catholicism in the definition of a 'national interest' (the doctrine of *nacionalcatolicismo*), ETA argued that religion was an instrument of oppression used against the Basques. It decried what it saw as a lack of opposition to the dictatorship by the clergy, and suggested it had betrayed the Basque cause.⁴⁵ For ETA, Basque interests could not be served by religion and its institutions since these were backward and conservative forces.

A second difference rested in the nature of their attitude towards capitalism. ETA shared with the PNV a suspicion towards advanced capitalist development. It denounced, as did Arana, the historical relationship between the Basque bourgeoisie and the Spanish state, but did not oppose capitalism on the grounds that it destroys social and moral harmony. Rather, it suggested that the 'Spanish oppression' of the Basques was the product of a colonial relationship rooted in class struggle. ETA's articulation of Marxist, anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist precepts strongly associated Basque interests with class emancipation. In fact, the focus on the colonial/class issue nearly overshadowed the 'national question' at different periods in ETA's struggle and caused schisms in the organization.⁴⁶ A third difference was their positioning within the international geopolitical framework. PNV leaders had sided with the Allies during WWII in the hope that their victory would trigger important

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In fact, the Basque clergy did denounce Franco's policies against Basque culture. Ibid, pp.34-35.

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There have been multiple splinter groups from the original ETA both on ideological and strategic grounds. The split most reflective of the class struggle/ 'national question' dilemma created ETA pm (*politico-militar*), which emphasized the first dimension, and ETA m (*militar*) which defined the conflict mostly in ethnic terms. Robert Clark, *Negotiating with ETA. Obstacles to Peace in the Basque Country, 1975-1988*, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1990), pp.15-16.

pressures on Franco's regime. Their hopes were dashed when the United States and other Western powers chose, in the context of the Cold War, to maintain good relationships with Franco's fiercely anti-communist regime. The bitter disappointment caused by this 'American treason' triggered ETA's anti-Western stance. This theme was developed at length by theorist Frederico Krutwig who connected the struggle of the Basques to the struggle of the oppressed peoples of the Third World, particularly in Algeria, and suggested a commonality of interests resulting from anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles.⁴⁷ Krutwig's *Vasconia*, the document which came to serve as ETA's ideological and strategic guide, was the main source of inspiration for ETA's fourth distinctive dimension of group interest definition, the stress on violent political action. Krutwig suggested that passive resistance against a brutal dictatorship was an ineffective resistance method. He argued that violence would *increase* oppression which would in turn intensify violent opposition, and suggested that this dynamic would eventually lead to a 'Basque liberation'. ETA fully endorsed this perspective, and equated violence with the 'general interest' of the Basque Country.⁴⁸

The Franco dictatorship also considerably altered group interest definition in Catalonia. As we have just seen, two forces emerged in the context of opposition to authoritarian rule which greatly shaped the ideological outlook of the Catalan nationalist movement. The first is the Church. The emergence of Catalan nationalism in the late 19th and early 20th was the product of a liberal bourgeoisie deeply suspicious of clerical authorities.

⁴⁷ John Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism. The Fight for Euskadi, 1890-1986*, p.42.

⁴⁸ Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain. Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, p.96.

Moreover, Catalonia was a strongly secular society. The regime's doctrine of *nacionalcatolicismo* put the Catalan clergy in a peculiar position. On the one hand, it was bound by a hierarchy that saw the Church as an instrument of cultural homogenization and 'national unity'. On the other hand, the privileged status enjoyed by the Catholic Church under the dictatorship made it an attractive institution for opponents of the regime, including nationalists. In fact, "[C]hurches and monasteries all over Catalonia were turned into safe havens for Catalanist militancy. They were the only environment where Catalanist felt protected from police irruptions and censorship."⁴⁹ This context favoured the development of several religion-oriented nationalist/opposition organizations, and the emergence of a Catholic stream to the Catalan nationalist movement. Jordi Pujol's CC group was one of these resistance forces which incorporated Catalanism and a Christian ideology. The ambivalent position of the Catalan clergy in a regime that stressed religion but sought to eradicate cultural and linguistic difference tilted against Franco in the late 1950s and early 1960s with Pope John XXIII's Vatican II encyclical condemning political and cultural repression against minorities. This was a period of unique osmosis between the Church, civil society and Catalanism that gave the Catalan movement an entirely new dimension.

The second opposition force that shaped the ideology of Catalanism was the left wing political parties, particularly the Communist *Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya* (PSUC). Contrary to the Christian ideology which represented a new addition to Catalan nationalism, left wing politics had rivaled the liberal-bourgeois stream of the movement since the end of WWI. The Franco dictatorship gave even more credibility to the conceptual and ideological

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 127.

association between, on the one hand, Catalanism and, on the other hand, the working class, the poor and the oppressed. In fact, this association was at the centre of the regime's official discourse. Franco saw in 'separatism' and 'communism' the two greatest threats to Spain, and tended to assume they went together. The regime spoke of *rojos separatistas* in an effort to discredit both left wing activism and autonomist claims. The consequence of this strategy was to boost the legitimacy of both political tendencies, and to make their combination intelligible. It led the communist PSUC to look for a reconciliation of an 'historical antagonism', and to search for ways to integrate the 'national question' in its platform.⁵⁰ Through the ideas of liberation and struggle against repression, the PSUC achieved a synthesis of left wing and nationalist activism which enabled it to become the main opposition force in Catalonia in the latter half of the 1960s, and to disseminate an alternate group interest definition to the one articulated by the Catholic organizations.

In Galicia, the definition of group interests was also shaped by the dictatorship but in a way that re-enforced one of the previously existing ideological trends. Indeed, Marxism and anticolonialism became, under Franco, the central concepts of Galician nationalism and resistance to the fascist state in the region.⁵¹

The Spanish case highlights the importance of changes in state forms and policies on group interest definitions. Indeed, the Franco dictatorship fostered group interest definitions centred on opposition to authoritarian rule. The specific nature of these definitions and the

⁵⁰ Hank Johnston, *Tales of Nationalism. Catalonia, 1939-1979*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991), p.84

⁵¹ Xosé M. Núñez, "National Reawakening within a Changing Society: The Galician Movement in Spain (1960-97)", p.32.

development of different ideological tendencies within nationalist movements should be understood in light of the dictatorship and the internal struggles it conditioned in these two regions. The emergence of strong left wing streams equating the 'national question' in Spain with the struggle of the oppressed within both the Basque and Catalan Movements represented natural forms of opposition politics to a right-wing dictatorship fixated on the 'threat' of *rojo separatistas*. This dynamic was compounded in the Basque Country by the apparent passivity of the PNV which triggered the emergence of the radical organization ETA. In Catalonia, the involvement of Catholic organizations in the struggle against the dictatorship gave the movement a dimension it had never had.

3.2.3 Democracy, Decentralization and the Institutionalization of Interest Definitions in Democratic Spain.

The group interest definitions articulated by the Basque and Catalan nationalist movements during the Franco dictatorship did not become irrelevant in the context of the new democratic framework. On the contrary, they strongly conditioned the transition period, and still shape Spanish politics today. Two dimensions of these definitions are particularly noticeable in contemporary Spain. The first dimension is a general suspicion toward centralization. This attitude was expressed forcefully during the transition and in the early years of the new Spanish regime when decentralization was suggested to be a necessary condition for democracy. It survived the uncertainty of the early 1980s, and in many Autonomous Communities translated into the idea that an active and powerful central state would have counterproductive political, cultural and economic consequences. The second

dimension relates to the ideological outlook of the nationalist movements and their internal divisions over ideology. The group interest definitions that developed during the dictatorship are at the centre of politics in the Basque Country and Catalonia. They give different ideological streams to the Basque and Catalan nationalist movements, and shape patterns of nationalist activity in these regions.

The central group interest definition articulated by leaders of opposition groups in Catalonia and the Basque Country associated the ideas of freedom, democracy and human rights with regional autonomy.⁵² This correlation was at the heart of the transition period, and constituted the core philosophical position behind the Autonomous Community framework. Despite ideological differences, this position represented an overarching group interest definition in Catalonia where the slogan *Llibertat, Amnistia, Estatut D'Autonomia* (Freedom, Amnesty, Autonomy Status) met with unanimous approval. A similar consensus failed to emerge in the Basque Country only because ETA did not consider liberal-democracy to be conducive to 'true freedom'. The definition of democratic interests in terms of regional autonomy was articulated most strongly in Catalonia and the Basque Country but it succeeded in gaining considerable acceptance in the rest of the country. Nationalist parties were not the only political actors to promote this definition as left wing Spanish parties, most importantly the PSOE, also saw autonomy as the guarantor of democracy and, consequently, suggested it was in the interests of all Spaniards. The autonomy/democracy/freedom nexus was, outside Catalonia and the Basque Country, particularly popular in Galicia, Andalucía,

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Luis Moreno, *La federalización de España. Poder político y territorio*, p.78.

Valencia and the Canary Islands.⁵³ This diffusion effect was stimulated by Colonel Antonio Tejero's attempted coup. The military intervention of 1981 was a reaction against both 'excessive' democratization and regional autonomy. Its failure not only allowed these processes to unfold, but stressed their connectedness and gave them new vigour. Once again, centralism and right wing authoritarianism became interchangeable concepts.

The coup attempt, and the atmosphere of uncertainty it generated, prompted Spanish elites to slow down the autonomy process by 'harmonizing' the powers of the Autonomous Communities.⁵⁴ The idea of harmonization was in fact an attempt to curtail community powers, particularly those of Catalonia and the Basque Country. In 1982-83, the PSOE and the UCD agreed to push through a law, the *Ley Orgánica de Armonización del Proceso Autonómico* known as LOAPA, that would re-centralize the Spanish state. Reactions to the law, which was struck down in 1983 by the Constitutional Court, were especially virulent in Catalonia and the Basque Country where it was presented as a threat to the new regional-democratic framework. From this moment, the drive for autonomy in these two regions took a life of its own. Although described by their elites as a necessary tool of linguistic and cultural protection, autonomy developed into an end in itself as much as a means to achieve any particular social objective.⁵⁵ It has become synonymous with 'Catalan interests' or 'Basque interests' and is being presented as inherently and fundamentally good.

⁵³ Luis Moreno, "Federalization and Ethnoterritorial Concurrence in Spain", p.71.

⁵⁴ Robert Agranoff, "Inter-governmental Politics and Policy: Building Federal Arrangements in Spain", *Regional Politics & Policy*, 3 (1993), pp.5-6.

⁵⁵ Moreno speaks of the 'principle of democratic decentralization'. See "Federalization and Ethnoterritorial Concurrence in Spain", p.77.

The autonomy/regional interests nexus is articulated by other regional elites. In the Canary Islands, the CC presents itself as the defender of the archipelago's interests articulated as the need to achieve a level of self-government adapted to the community insularity. In Galicia, elites present autonomy as way to further regional interests defined not only as cultural/linguistic protection but also, if not primarily, in terms of economic conditions. The thesis articulated by the most prominent nationalist party in this region is internal colonialism. The BNG suggests that Galicia's historical poverty is the product of Madrid's exploitative and oppressive policies.⁵⁶ It argues that substantial self-government is necessary to foster Galicia's economic development and break the dependency pattern.⁵⁷ The argument of internal colonialism has also featured prominently in the group interest definition articulated by nationalist/regionalist movements in other poor Spanish regions. In Andalucia, the rise of the PSA-PA as a major political actor in the early years of the Spanish democracy was accompanied by a discourse that centred on the difficult socio-economic conditions of the region and which suggested that centralism was the main culprit for regional underdevelopment.⁵⁸

The legacy of years of dictatorship prompted regional elites in many Autonomous Communities to suggest that centralism is inherently antithetical to regional interests. They have stressed the historical connection between, on the one hand, state centralization and, on

⁵⁶ Xosé M. Núñez, "National Reawakening within a Changing Society: The Galician Movement in Spain (1960-97)", p.49.

⁵⁷ David White, "Galician nationalists ready to become a force in Spanish politics", *Financial Times*, March 1 2000, p.2.

⁵⁸ Jack Brand, "Andalusia: Nationalism as a Strategy for Autonomy", p.8.

the other hand, political, linguistic, cultural and/or economic repression. The consequence of this defiance towards the centre has led regional elites to establish a general relationship between regional interests with autonomy. However, the resistance to Franco also affected the ideological slant of nationalist movements in Spain, particularly in Catalonia and the Basque Country. The dynamic generated by the political activism aimed at opposing a right wing authoritarian regime was instrumental in shaping the streams of the contemporary Basque and Catalan nationalist movements. The specific and contrasting group interest definitions articulated by the two movements' different streams are often subsumed by the general principle of autonomy in the parties' relationships with Madrid but become more significant in the context of regional politics. The creation of the Autonomous Community system has led to the emergence of regional party systems which institutionalized, especially in Catalonia and the Basque Country, the group interest definitions developed at the beginning of the century and during the dictatorship. Moreover, the use of the proportional representation in these regional party systems allows for interest definitions articulated by weaker parties to survive, and favours the development of more nuanced positions.

The Basque nationalist movement is the most ideologically fragmented. The transition period put the PNV in a position of power. It enjoyed great legitimacy and credibility as a result of its historical association with Basque nationalism and its opposition to Franco, and represented for the Spanish parties an unavoidable interlocutor in the transition negotiations, especially since ETA refused to abandon violence. In turn, the definition of group interests articulated by the PNV was strengthened. This definition, however, is difficult to specify because of internal divisions. While there exists in the party the idea that autonomy is an

inherent good, there are some squabbles over specifics. The influence of the Arana tradition equating the Basque interest with religion and tradition is still well alive in the PNV. One strand of the party accepts capitalism only reluctantly and tends to be critical of mass production and 'big business'. Another strand supports industrialization more enthusiastically, and associates 'Basque interests' with the development of a strong market economy. This traditionalist-modernist division was highlighted in 1986 by a schism in the PNV which led to the creation of *Eusko Alkartasuna*. The causes for the split were many and included a dissatisfaction by some members towards what they saw as nationalist apathy within the party. However, a crucial factor in the split was the opposition of the traditionalists to a project of administrative modernization that featured a concentration of powers in the Basque capital of Vitoria. Frustrated by this resistance to his modernist approach, PNV leader Carlos Garaicoetxea resigned, and later founded EA which has won between 10% and 17% of the seats in regional elections since its creation..⁵⁹ Garaicoetxea's departure emptied the PNV of much of his historical traditionalism but the party remains largely non-committal ideologically describing itself simply as "vasco, democrático, participativo, plural, aconfesional y humanista" with the objective of "[A]cceder al político, especialmente a través de su presencia en las instituciones, como medio para hacer realidad su proyecto..⁶⁰ This strategy allows it to be the leading party in the Basque system (a position it owes more to its moderate

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As in the preceding chapter, the data on Spanish elections is taken from *The Europea World Yearbook*, (London: Europea Publications Limited, 1984-1998).

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www.eaj-pnv.com/pnv03e.htm. "Basque, democratic, plural, a-confessional and humanist" (...) "Gaining political power, particularly through its presence in institutions, as a means to make its project reality." My translation.

nationalist stance than to its ideological positioning), always winning at least one quarter of the seats in the regional parliament and sometimes close to half. However, the PNV, has not dominated Basque nationalist politics overwhelmingly since it has had to contend, in addition to EA, with the socialist/Marxist stream that developed under Franco and which has translated into two rival political parties.

The first embodiment of this branch is *Herri Batasuna*,⁶¹ created in 1977, which has close links with ETA. Its most distinctive feature is its goal of Basque independence and its defense of violence as a legitimate means. However, HB's articulation of 'Basque interests' is also different from the PNV. Although it has an extremely heterogeneous membership that includes Marxists, environmentalists, gay activists, feminists and even priests, HB's blanket group interest definition centres on the notion of liberation and the creation of an oppression-free society.⁶² It equates repression against the Basques with the West and capitalism. HB's steady electoral support, which earns it between 15% and 20% of the seats in the regional parliament, stems mostly from committed separatists but also from people seduced by its utopian vision of Basque society. The second institutional form of the socialist/Marxist stream of Basque nationalism is *Euskadiko Ezkerra*, created 1976 by some ETA and Communist party members. EE has often portrayed the Spanish state as an almost fascist force and suggests that persecution against the Basque has not stopped. It proposes, in addition to independence, the creation of an egalitarian and classless society to end oppression in the

⁶¹ Now *Euskal Herriarok* (EH). More details in the next chapter.

⁶² Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain. Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, p.150.

Basque Country, but does not advocate violent struggle. With this position, EE wins about 10% of the seats in regional elections. It did better in the 1994 elections when it was part of an electoral coalition with the Basque socialists, winning 16% of the seats.

There was not, in Catalonia, a political party that symbolized, at the time of the transition, the historical struggle of the Catalans against Franco. However, one individual did stand out: Jordi Pujol who had been a leading member of the Christian organization CC. Pujols founded the *Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya* (CDC) in 1974. He later integrated the CDC with another Catalan party, the *Unió Democràtica de Catalunya* (UDC) to form *Convergència i Unió*. Benefitting from Pujol's personal legitimacy, CiU was the main Catalan voice in the transition negotiations and has dominated Catalan politics ever since, often winning a majority of seats. CiU's popularity is partly the product of a moderate nationalism and partly the consequence of its broad and flexible ideological platform. The group interest definition articulated by CiU is not too far removed from the *Lliga*'s bourgeois nationalism. Pujol has always argued that "[T]he most lively, dynamic, and creative component of the Catalan social fabric is the petty and middle bourgeoisie"⁶³, and his definition of the 'Catalan interests' revolves around the ideas of modernization and economic growth. There is an alternate interest definition to the CiU's in Catalonia's nationalist community which is articulated by the ERC. The ERC somewhat disappeared during Franco's dictatorship and paid a political price for it, but its suggestion that autonomy, and perhaps independence, would be for Catalonia a way to improve the conditions of the poor and the

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Juan Diez Medrano, *Divided Nations. Class, Politics and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia*, p.161.

working class corresponds to a deeply rooted historical position within the Catalan nationalist movement. However, the ERC has been unable to compete with the CiU, winning between 4% and 10% of the seats in regional elections.

This discussion has shown how politics internal to Autonomous Communities has shaped, and how regional party structures have institutionalized, historical group interest definitions. Indeed, history is key in understanding the current ideological outlook of nationalist movements in Spain despite the sharp breaks of the dictatorship and the transition. The general contrast between the group interest definitions articulated by the Basque and Catalan nationalist movements is largely the consequence of distinct historical patterns of elite activism and relationships. The traditional/conservative and radical/Marxist streams of Basque nationalism reflects the forces that initiated, built and sustained the nationalist movement, and the political dynamic surrounding its development. Of particular importance in explaining these group interest definitions is the historical relationship between the Spanish state and the Basque bourgeoisie which led to the absence of the latter in processes of identity construction and nationalist mobilization. In Catalonia, the influence on these same processes of a bourgeoisie who had historically had little contact with the Spanish establishment greatly contributed to the absence in the nationalist movement of any strong traditional or Marxist-revolutionary streams.

3.3-Canada

3.3.1 Elite Influences and Competing Group Interests Definition in a Colonial Setting.

As was the case for the early Belgian and Spanish state, the process of identity formation that developed in the society of New France and later in Lower Canada was accompanied by corresponding processes of interest definition. The elites who shaped the *Canadien* identity (clerics, colonial administrators and, to a lesser extent, seigneurs) were also busy defining the most appropriate way of life for the developing political community. The 'good life' as defined by these elites had three central (and interrelated) dimensions. The first dimension was the acceptance of absolute power and the non-involvement in public affairs. For New France's elites, this position was the guarantor of their power. Colonial authorities were operating under the current French (and continental European) dogma of absolutism, and could present absolute political power in the colony as normal and usual practice. Seigneurs, although enjoying little power over their peasants, benefitted from a feudal order discouraging challenges to authority in so far as they could preserve their status and privileges. Political passivity was also crucial to the Church's influence on temporal matters. Clerics were instrumental in de-legitimizing involvement in public affairs. Their depiction of politics as a morally bankrupt activity provided the absolutist discourse with the necessary foundations, and protected both their own power base and that of colonial administrators. The second dimension was religion. Priests naturally defined interests in religious-conservative terms. They presented piety as well as family and rural life as the central characteristics of the model life. This definition was accepted, and indeed promoted, by colonial authorities and seigneurs who benefitted from it. The third dimension was an

extension of the second and featured the rural economy and social relations derived from the seigneurial system. New France's elites, most importantly clerics, glorified rural life and economic self-sufficiency at the expense of business and trade, activities portrayed as morally inferior. This discourse also served to put the seigneurial system at the centre of the *Canadiens'* social world. In fact, short of the family, the only significant social relationships for the *Canadiens* were the neighbourly interactions derived from this peculiar land division.⁶⁴

While the interest definition articulated by New France's elite along these three dimensions did not encounter significant opposition and was in fact generally accepted by the *Canadiens*, the way of life it sought to promote was only imperfectly translated into community life during the 17th and early 18th century. The Church and seigneurs' attempts to collect money often met with resistance if not disobedience, and religious practice lacked the regularity desired by priests.⁶⁵ However, as this definition of group interests was promoted by the colony's dominant elite, it quickly became a cornerstone of the *Canadiens'* sense of distinctiveness and solidarity and would later represent a crucial element of nationalist mobilization. It also proved enduring, and the society of New France would eventually closely approximate the ideal sketched by clerical/conservative elites.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Jean-Charles Falardeau, "The Seventeenth-Century Parish in French Canada", in Marcel Rioux and Yves Martin (eds), *French-Canadian Society*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964), p.22.

⁶⁵ Denis Monière, *Le développement des idéologies au Québec des origines à nos jours*, pp.61-67.

⁶⁶ Jean-Charles Falardeau, "The Seventeenth-Century Parish in French Canada", p.30.

The British takeover of the colony had little impact on the prevailing interest group definition primarily because the clerical power structure, along with its attitude towards political power, remained intact.⁶⁷ Indeed, while British rule entailed a change in political/colonial leadership, it did not weaken the coherence of the Church establishment.⁶⁸ The new rulers welcomed the fact that the *Canadien* community was un-penetrated by liberal values and did not challenge absolute political power. For this reason, they did not seek to alter the prevailing interpretation of Canadian interests or undermine its main proponents, clerics and seigneurs. The 1774 Quebec Act confirmed this policy. However, leading British subjects who came over after 1760, either from the mainland or from the United States following the revolution, articulated a different conception of the 'good life'. The new settlers were penetrated by liberal values. They expected to be involved in political decision-making and to live in a social environment favouring trade and business. Their idea of the ultimate socio-political context involved most importantly secularization and powerful representative assemblies. While this definition of interests was not directly aimed at the *Canadiens*, the major changes it presupposed questioned the socio-political structures favoured by the latter's clerical and conservative elite. The 1791 Constitutional Act was evidence of the potentially dramatic consequences involved with the new group interest definition. The new political institutions it created was at the heart of a transformation in the interpretation of *Canadiens*/French-Canadian interests..

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Arthur Silver, "La Conquête (1760)", in John Meisel, Guy Rocher and Arthur Silver, *Si je me souviens bien, as I recall. Regards sur l'histoire*, (Montreal: IRPP, 1999).

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Jean-Pierre Wallot, *Un Québec qui bougeait. Trame socio-politique du Québec au tournant du XIXe siècle*, p.184.

The emerging French-Canadian petty bourgeoisie composed of notaries, lawyers, doctors and small merchants saw in the empowerment of the Lower Canada assembly a means to protect the French-Canadian interests defined in terms of the preservation of traditional structures and the rejection of capitalism.⁶⁹ For this reason, political action rather than passivity was promoted by this rising elite. Because of its rural-traditional roots, however, this political liberalism coexisted with a social conservatism that retained the major components of the definition of group interests articulated by clerics and seigneurs.⁷⁰ In fact, the petty bourgeoisie's rise came largely at the expense of the seigneurs, and the former's newly found power rested on the same traditional social structures that had supported the latter's.⁷¹ The conflicting definitions of interests articulated by British merchants and French-Canadian petty bourgeois in Lower Canada, not natural ethnic antagonisms, were at the centre of the tensions that led to the rebellions of 1837-38.⁷²

The failure of these rebellions had two consequences for group interest definitions in the Canadas. The first consequence was a return to the clerical argument that political activity

⁶⁹ Fernand Ouellet, "Le nationalisme canadien-français: de ses origines à l'insurrection de 1837", *Canadian Historical Review*, 45 (1964), p.286.

⁷⁰ Ibid, pp.284-285.

⁷¹ Jean-Pierre Wallot, *Un Québec qui bougeait. Trame socio-politique du Québec au tournant du XIXe siècle*, p.184.

⁷² On the weakness of the 'national question' perspective for understanding politics in Lower Canada in the 1830s, see Gérald Bernier, "The Rebellions of 1837-1838 in Lower Canada: A Theoretical Framework", *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, 18 (1991), pp.131-143; Gérald Bernier and Daniel Salée, "Les insurrections de 1837-1838 au Québec: remarques critiques et théoriques en marge de l'historiographie", *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, 13 (1986), pp.13-29.

was a amoral and consequently detrimental to French-Canadian society. This change was the direct result of the petty bourgeoisie's decline following the failed revolt and the subsequent rise of the Catholic clergy to quasi-hegemonic authority in the colony. The second consequence was a transformation in the way British colonial authorities defined the interests of their North American colony, most importantly those of French-Canadians. From their position of 'benign neglect' which consisted in accepting the conservative view articulated by the Catholic clergy, they came to suggest that the best possible outcomes for French-Canadians was to fully integrate within the British Empire and to undergo socio-economic modernization conducive to capitalist exploitation. This new position was clearly stated by Lord Durham who was sent to North America to investigate the causes of the 1837-38 violence and formulate recommendations. In his report, Durham said that it had no doubt on the 'national character' that should be given to Lower Canada: "ce doit être celui de l'Empire britannique, celui de la majorité de la population de l'Amérique britannique, celui de la race qui doit, dans un laps de temps de courte durée, être prédominante sur tout le continent nord-américain."⁷³ He added that giving French Canadians the British character would lift them from their position of inferiority and, among other things, allow them to enjoy the pleasures of the arts.⁷⁴ For Durham, French-Canadians would gain by assimilating socially, culturally and economically to Britain as he saw in the British Empire the most progressive and powerful force in the world. Durham also specifically insisted that Lower Canada fully adopt the capitalist mode of production. This position was coherent with the broader assimilationist

⁷³ *Le rapport Durham*, (Montréal: Les Éditions Sainte-Marie, 1969), p.118.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.121.

policy while at the same time proceeding from the idea that the colony had to contribute economically to the Empire⁷⁵. It was also the product of pressures from Lower Canada's English-speaking bourgeoisie. Durham's core recommendation, the legislative-institutional union of the Canada, represented the end result of the re-definition of group interests.

The 19th century also witnessed a change in the way colonial authorities defined the interests of Native peoples. Here again, the transition was from a policy of 'benign neglect' to one of assimilation, and resulted from changes in the political context. Early British rule had continued the French Native policy of cooperation and non-interference. However, as the Native communities outlasted their military and economic usefulness with the pacification of British/Canadian-US relations and the decline of fur trading, colonial authorities, and later the federal government, began suggesting that Native interests would be best served by abandoning traditional-historical lifestyles. It was argued that traditional Aboriginal societies and cultures were antithetical to modernity and progress, and that 'civilizing' them following European norms was the best, if not the only, way to further their development.⁷⁶ The 1876 Indian Act, with its restrictions on traditional cultural practices, and the residential schools system, embodied this new interest definition. "'The great aim of our legislation,' Sir John Macdonald noted, 'has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the inhabitants of the Dominion, as speedily as they are fit for the

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.4.

⁷⁶ Donald Purich, *Our Land. Native Rights in Canada*, pp.121-122,

change.”⁷⁷ However, assimilation was not to be perfectly modeled on the existing social practices of European-born Canadians. Federal authorities suggested that while it was in the interests of Native communities to ‘Westernize’, the optimum scenario would involve the bypassing of the worst features of European civilization. For this reason, they sought to assimilate Natives but at the same time insulate them from ‘Western vices’ by forbidding status Indians to drink alcohol and gamble. The reserve system institutionalized by the Indian Act, along with control measures such as the pass system, represented the formal structures designed to implement the ‘second half’ of the ‘civilization’ strategy.

Aboriginal communities strongly opposed the suggestion that their interests laid in the abandonment of their traditional lifestyles and their conversion to European ways. Few Aboriginals (250 people between 1857 and 1920) chose to abandon their status for the privileges of enfranchisement and full citizenship which had been branded as the end result of the ‘civilization’ process.⁷⁸ Aboriginals opposed the federal government’s attempt at destroying the tradition of communal land-holding by largely refusing to take up the option of private ownership of land that came with a demonstrated change in lifestyle favouring Euro-Canadian values.⁷⁹ They also resisted the idea that a Western education was the best option for their youth by refusing to surrender children to residential schools.⁸⁰ In short,

⁷⁷ J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens. A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, p.189.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.190.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.190-191.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.198-199.

Native leaders encouraged a resistance against the interest definition articulated by federal authorities. However, the coercive power of the federal government led to important cultural changes in Aboriginal communities that reflected its own definition of Aboriginal interests: the adoption of Christian religious practices, migrations to the cities (Native urbanization), and the growing importance of European languages (English or French) as primary tongues.⁸¹

Politics in pre-Confederation Canada highlights the theoretical importance of shifting patterns of elite influence and competition for the group interests which feature prominently in the development of identities and nationalist/regionalist mobilization. It also shows how elites tend to project their own interests on the group they claim to represent. The prominence of clerical, seigneurial and French colonial elites in the *société canadienne* explains that the interests of the *Canadiens* were then defined in terms of religious practice and Catholic morality, rural economic exploitation, anti-capitalism, abstention from politics and acceptance of absolute power. The rise of a petty French-speaking bourgeoisie with rural-traditional roots led it to defend the conservative social order defended and shaped by clerics and seigneurs but to promote, in the context of new representative institutions, greater power for Lower Canada's assembly. The return to prominence of clerical elites as a result of the power vacuum created by the petty bourgeoisie's failure and the subsequent re-centring of their group interest definition. The conflicts of 1837-38 also triggered a transition in the position of British colonial authorities on the interests of French-Canadians from one of 'benign

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James Frideres, *Native Peoples in Canada. Contemporary Conflicts*, pp.156-160 and pp.207-229.

neglect' to one of assimilation which rested on the idea that full incorporation in British culture and society was the way to progress and modernity.

3.3.2 The Rise of Modernizing Elites in a Federal Context: Evolving Interpretations of Community Interests.

In a similar way, the evolution of group interest definitions in 20th century Canada closely followed, and was shaped by, transformations in patterns of elite influence and the emergence of new forms of elite competition. The traditional-conservative definition of 'French-Canadian interests' remained prominent throughout the first half of the 20th century because clerics and conservative politicians managed to retain their influence in Québec society in the midst of profound social and economic change. The emergence in the 1960s of a new modernization-seeking liberal elite, and its success in undermining the influence of clerical and conservative political elites, corresponded with a new definition of 'Québécois interests' that stressed elements of modernity such as economic development at the expense of the rural-traditional components of French-Canadian nationalism. The struggle of this elite with federal authorities, combined with its preoccupation with socio-economic 'catching-up' and its concern with linguistic-cultural protection, led it to introduce the ideas of decentralization and asymmetry in the definition of Québécois interests. At the same time, federal elites argued that individual liberal rights and the principle of equality of citizens was, along with a strong central state able to redistribute wealth, the key to a just society. Not only did this definition of Canadian interests clash with the Québécois interests as defined by the that province's new liberal elite, it also triggered a reaction from Aboriginal leaders who

opposed the suggestion that full integration into Canadian society through uniform treatment was the solution to the socio-economic problems of their communities. Instead, they argued that self-government and a distinct legal status, although freed of the discriminatory dimensions of the existing policy, best served their communities interests defined simultaneously in terms social and economic improvements and the protection of traditional cultures and ways of life.

The return to prominence of clerical and conservative political elites in Lower Canada/Québec after 1838 led to a re-articulation of French-Canadian interests that reached back to, and further developed, the pre-rebellion interpretation. Two people were central to the formulation and diffusion of the traditional-conservative position that prevailed until the Quiet Revolution. The first is Lionel Groulx who, as previously mentioned, was the most influential cleric of early 20th century Québec and one of the province's most prominent intellectual leaders. In shaping the French-Canadian identity around the tenets of religion and a rural-traditional economy and lifestyle, Groulx and the Catholic church establishment also promoted and sustained a specific definition of group interests. Religious morality was, of course, described as the supreme good while language played a more instrumental role as the protector of the Catholic fate. "Nous sommes restés catholiques parce que nous sommes restés français", was how Groulx explained this relationship."¹² Groulx expounded at least three dimensions from the core idea of religious morality. The first was the superiority of rural life over life in the city. For Groulx, French-Canadian society had always been and

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Quoted in Denis Monière, *Le développement des idéologies au Québec des origines à nos jours*, p.246.

should remain a rural society; it was the mission of French-Canadians to develop agriculture.⁸³ The second was resistance to change, a concept made synonymous with degeneracy. Groulx opposed large-scale capitalism, industrialisation and materialism as well as other forms of modern 'perversions' such as alcohol, dancing, movies and prostitution which he presented as evils from which the French-Canadian society should be safeguarded.⁸⁴ The third dimension of religious morality as described by Groulx featured the idea of the superiority of spiritual over political-temporal power. Clerical authorities argued that politics was a meaningless, if not reprehensible, activity, and that French-Canadians could lead a more productive life by focusing on family, land and faith than by getting involved in public affairs.

This definition of French-Canadian interests was accepted and promoted by the conservative politicians who dominated the province's political life until the 1960s. Of particular importance was the role of Maurice Duplessis and his *Union nationale* (UN) party which was in power for most of the second third of the 20th century. Duplessis readily stressed religion, tradition and rural life as fundamental French-Canadian interests but was particularly concerned with the idea of resistance to change which he framed in terms of order and stability. He argued that the interests of French-Canadian society would best be served by avoiding fundamental social changes, especially those embodied by the new ideologies of socialism and state interventionism.⁸⁵ Although the traditional-conservative conceptualization

⁸³ Denis Monière, *Le développement des idéologies au Québec des origines à nos jours*, p.248 and p.252.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.249.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.300-301.

of French-Canadian interests has deep historical roots and was re-formulated in the second half of the 19th century when Québec was a pre-industrial/rural society, it remained dominant in the first half of the 20th century when the province was undergoing profound socio-economic changes. By the middle of the century, Québec was no longer the traditional society depicted by clerics and conservative politicians. It was widely industrialized and urbanized as demonstrated by the decline of agriculture as an economic activity and a social setting. (By 1951, more than 60% of the population lived in the cities.)⁸⁶ This coexistence of a traditional-conservative definition of group interests with a modernizing society shows that macro economic variables do not determine the former. It suggests that patterns of elite influence are much more significant.

In fact, the transition from a conservative-traditional definition of group interests to one that favoured industrialization and capitalist development corresponded to the rise of a new liberal elite. This elite was composed of salaried professionals such as administrators, teachers, engineers and scientists who were educated in post-secondary institutions whose younger faculty had often studied abroad and adopted scientific-technical methods of reasoning.⁸⁷ It denounced the clerical and conservative definition of group interests as translating into the underdevelopment of French-Canadian society, and argued instead that French-Canadian/Québécois interests were to be found in capitalism, industrialization, change and political activism. This definition displaced the old one and became dominant as the new liberal elite destroyed clerical/conservative power and shaped the new *Québécois* identity. It

⁸⁶ Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec. Social Change and Political Crisis*, p.73.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.90-97.

quickly became strongly institutionalized through two developments. The first development was the expansion of state structures under the direction of the new liberal elite. The 'catching-up' deemed essential by this elite was to be engineered through state intervention and consequently necessitated the development of a bureaucracy which the new leaders staffed with like-minded people. The structures of the Québec state thus became the focal point not only for the *Québécois* identity but also for the corresponding definition of community interests. The second development was the transformation of the party system. While the new liberal elite taking control of the PLQ was a decisive moment for the rise to prominence of the modern definition of interests and its institutionalization, the creation and ascendance of the PQ from a PLQ splinter group was crucial to its hegemony in the party system. Indeed, the rise of the PQ came at the expense of the traditional-conservative UN, and the substitution of the latter by the former in Québec's two-party system insured that *Québécois* interests would, from then on and irreversibly, be synonymous with the social, economic and political structures of modernity.

In addition to equating the interests of the *Québécois* with social, economic and political modernization, the new liberal elite stressed two other elements. The first element was linguistic protection. The struggle against clerical/conservative power led not only to the disappearance of religion as the centre of the French-Canadian/*Québécois* identity but also to its declared irrelevance for the *Québécois*. The French language, not the Catholic faith, was now branded as the most fundamental social good. Moreover, the need for the protection of the French language in Québec as articulated by both the PLQ and PQ came with, and reinforced, the idea that political activism, and more specifically state interventionism, was

essential. Linguistic laws such as the PLQ's Bill 22 making French the official language of the province and the PQ's Bill 101 which regulated the use of language in commercial advertising, education and in the workplace was the direct consequence of the new definition of community. The second element was a decentralized and asymmetrical federal model. Québec's new political elite argued that important transfers of power from the federal to the provincial government, primarily in economic and cultural areas, were indispensable to the modernization of the province and the protection of the French language.⁸⁸ Consequently, decentralized federalism became a corollary to the need to 'catch-up' which was put at the centre of collective interests in Québec during the 1960s and 1970s. Québec's political elites also suggested that cultural-linguistic protection required that the province have a distinct status within the Canadian federation. They argued that symmetrical federalism, embodied by the principle of the equality of provinces, was detrimental to the interests of the *Québécois* as it threatened their most fundamental good, linguistic specificity.

At the same time as a liberal elite was re-articulating French-Canadian/*Québécois* interests, changes within the federal Liberal party was shaping the definition of Canadian interests in ways that sometimes ran counter to the discourse of Québec's political leaders. At the centre of the Liberal's expanded definition of the interests of the Canadian political community was the rise to power of Pierre Trudeau who became leader of the party and Prime Minister in 1968. Trudeau's vision was rooted in the rejection of the very same traditional-conservative order opposed by Québec's new political elite. He subscribed to the

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Alain-G. Gagnon, "Québec-Canada: circonvolutions constitutionnelles", in Alain-G. Gagnon, *Québec: État et société*, pp.86-87

idea that French-Canada needed change, and that this change should be guided by scientific-rational methods of reasoning and pushed through by political activism. "Ce qui manque le plus au Canada français", argued Trudeau "c'est une philosophie positive de l'action. (...) Tout problème important doit être examiné à nouveau, dans un esprit scientifique."⁸⁹

However, his definition of group interests, as it applied to both French Canada and the larger Canadian political community, differed in two fundamental ways from the one that was being articulated in Québec. The first difference rested in Trudeau's belief that a just, modern and progressive society had to be rooted in the principle of individualism which meant that citizens, not groups or communities, should be the fundamental units and right-bearers in Canadian society. Consequently, the interests of Canadians would be best served through political and constitutional arrangements that obeyed the tenets of the equality of citizens and provinces.⁹⁰ This group interest definition is reflected in Trudeau's major political-constitutional initiatives such as the Charter of Rights and Freedom and multiculturalism but also in the official bilingualism policy. Trudeau did address the issues of linguistic protection and the socio-economic position of Francophones through this policy. In fact, bilingualism was at the centre of his definition of the just Canadian society. It was, however, expressed through an individual/institutional rather than a group/territorial policy. The second difference relates to the role of the federal government. Trudeau opposed the claims that decentralization and autonomy were necessarily synonymous with 'good government. He

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Pierre Elliot Trudeau, "Politique fonctionnelle", *Cité Libre* 1 (1950), pp.22-23.

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Kenneth McRoberts, "Les perceptions canadiennes-anglaises du Québec", Alain-G. Gagnon, *Québec: État et société*, p.115

argued instead that centralization was the way of the future, that “des forcent naissent et se développent. une philosophie et une stratégie s’élaborent dans l’ombre, d’inéluctables nécessités historiques s’imposent, qui broieront comme verre les velléités autonomistes.”⁹¹

The interpretation of community interests articulated by Trudeau was extremely significant because it was adopted by other federal elites, not only in the Liberal Party but also in the Progressive-Conservative (PC) and New Democratic Party (NDP), two parties which had previously showed sympathy for, or not rejected, decentralized and asymmetrical federalism.⁹² Trudeau’s group interest definition became a ‘federal orthodoxy’. This orthodoxy was reflected in a striking fashion in the federal government’s 1969 White Paper on Aboriginals.⁹³ The new Aboriginal policy proposed in the White Paper proceeded from the assumption that the socio-economic problems of Native communities (most notably poverty, suicide and joblessness all of which are much more important among Aboriginal than non-Aboriginals) were the result of their distinct legal status. In other words, the Liberal government criticized the Indian Act, not for suggesting that Aboriginal interests laid in assimilation to Canadian society, but rather for implementing this transition imperfectly. The proposed policy suggested that formal-legal equality, achieved through the abolition of the Indian Act and Indian status, was the key to ‘integration’ which in turn represented the solution to the socio-economic difficulties and cultural dislocations experienced by Aboriginal

⁹¹ Pierre Elliot Trudeau , “Politique fonctionnelle”, p.23.

⁹² Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada. The Struggle for National Unity*, pp.68-76.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp.55-76.

communities. "This Government believes in equality", the White Paper stated. "Only a policy based on this belief can enable the Indian people to realize their needs and aspirations."⁹⁴

This re-articulation of Aboriginal interests by federal elites triggered a vigorous reaction on the part of Native leaders who not only stated more forcefully than ever their position against assimilation but also added new dimensions to the definition of community interests. The re-statement of Aboriginal interests as the preservation of historical-traditional values translated into a strong condemnation of the proposed policy by the main Aboriginal organization the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) which declared: "If we accept this policy (...) we become willing partners in cultural genocide. This we cannot do."⁹⁵ The White Paper announcement also led Native leaders to add, always in the perspective of resisting assimilation, three aspects to the definition of Aboriginal interests. The first is autonomy.⁹⁶ Aboriginals leaders developed the idea that self-government was essential to the survival of Native cultures, and that formal adjustments in the form of autonomous institutions were therefore needed. The second involves treaty and ancestral rights. Aboriginal interests as articulated after the White Paper centred heavily on the argument that socio-cultural survival and economic development was dependent on access to land (and its natural resources). Gaining this access, on the basis of historical-ancestral rights and rights from treaties, became a priority for Native leaders. The third is a distinct legal status. While Aboriginal leaders

⁹⁴ Quoted in J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens. A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, p.226.

⁹⁵ Quoted in James Frideres, *Native Peoples in Canada. Contemporary Conflicts*, p.125.

⁹⁶ Renée Dupuis, *La Question indienne au Canada*, (Montréal: Boréal 1991), pp.69-70.

wanted to rid the Indian status of its discriminatory measures, they argued that retaining a formal distinction between Natives and Euro-Canadians, providing the former with 'citizenship plus', was crucial to the preservation of traditional cultures and ways of life.⁹⁷

Two aspects of the transformation of group interest definitions from Confederation to the 1970s are particularly significant over and above the fact that they corresponded to changes in patterns of elite influence and relationships. The first is the imperfect correlation between socio-economic transformations and community interests. In the case of French-Canadian/*Québécois* interests, the transition from a definition stressing traditional structures and values to one emphasizing change and development corresponded with the rise of a new liberal elite and its successful struggle against clerical and conservative political elites. It was not the immediate consequence of socio-economic transformations such as industrialization and urbanization since these two forces were well underway in the early to mid 20th century. The second is the importance of federalism as a variable shaping group interest definitions. The focus of Québec's new elite on 'catching up' and linguistic protection translated into the suggestion that decentralized and asymmetrical federalism was best suited to the interests of the *Québécois*. The definition of Canadian interests in terms of individual rights and equality that corresponded with Pierre Trudeau's ascendancy in federal politics stimulated, in the Quiet Revolution's context of federal-provincial competition, the alternative definition put forward by Québec's political elite. In much the same way, it triggered a reaction from, and struggle with, Aboriginal leaders who suggested that their communities interests rested, not

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The concept of 'citizens plus' was used by Alberta chiefs in response to the White Paper. See J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens. A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, p.231.

with assimilation and equal treatment, but rather with socio-cultural preservation through self-government and a distinct legal status.

3.3.3 Constitutional Activism: The Crystallization and Multiplication of Community Interests.

The last twenty years have seen the wider diffusion and crystallization of the group interest definitions developed in the 1960s and the 1970s. In Québec, although socio-economic 'catching-up' has been achieved, political elites more than ever equate the interests of Quebecers with decentralized and asymmetrical federalism. This definition manifested itself in, and was stimulated by, a series of constitutional negotiations where it translated into claims for a distinct status and increased powers. While the political dynamic of the Quiet Revolution produced a degree of consensus amongst the province's two parties on autonomy, their specific definition of *Québécois* interests do differ. Most importantly, the PQ argues that protecting the interests of Quebecers, primarily articulated in terms of freedom to make political and social choices as well as cultural preservation, entails independence while the PLQ suggests that remaining part of the Canadian federation best serves these interests defined as economic growth and political continuity. Moreover, the PQ initially stressed redistribution and social equality in its definition of *Québécois* interests, less so in the 1990s, whereas the PLQ has adopted a more pro-business stance. In addition to Québec's political parties, two other actors took advantage of constitutional negotiations to develop, or better articulate, their own group interest definition. The first are Aboriginal leaders and organizations who pushed the idea that autonomy along with a distinct legal status best served the interests of their communities. The second is the Reform party which emerged in

the context of these negotiations. Reform argued that a restructuring and decentralization of the Canadian federation on the basis of equality of provinces was needed in order to off-set a perceived lack of power of the Western provinces in the federal institutions, and the central Canada focus of federal authorities that was said to come with it.

The definition of *Québécois* interests as articulated by the province's political elite since the late 1970s centres on constitutional and institutional issues. Despite the disappearance of the socio-economic conditions that had previously served as the central argument for decentralization and asymmetry, the correlation between *Québécois* interests and a decentralized federation granting a special status to the province has lived on and, indeed, gathered considerable momentum to the point of currently being unchallenged. At the heart of this development is the dynamic between the province's political parties. The emergence and rise to power of a PQ equating the interests of Quebecers with political independence has put pressure on the PLQ to retain the ideas of decentralization and distinct status for fear of political-electoral failures. In its programme, the PLQ states that "Le Québec doit être reconnue comme une société distincte à l'intérieur du Canada. (...) les Québécois, tout en désirant améliorer le lien canadien, souhaitent bénéficier de la plus grande autonomie possible dans la mise en oeuvre et l'élaboration de politiques."⁹⁸ The suggestion that the Liberals' bias towards keeping Québec in the Canadian federation makes them poor defenders of Québec's interests is a favourite of the PQ and one that pushes its political adversary to stress asymmetry and decentralization in its own definition of group interest. In other words, the political competition between the PQ and the PLQ sustains and stimulates a definition of

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See the PLQ's programme, www.plq.org/prog/program.pdf.

interests featuring the ideas of autonomy and asymmetry as the latter seeks to keep up, or outbid, the former. The province's party system has institutionalized and nurtures such a definition. For this reason, the stress of Québec's political elites on autonomy and asymmetry has outlasted, and been detached from, preoccupations with modernization and cultural preservation. These concepts are now presented as a good in itself rather than as having instrumental value, and their validity is largely unquestioned.

The dogmas of decentralization and asymmetry also have been constructed by patterns of elite relationships more directly conditioned by Canada's federal system. More specifically, constitutional negotiations and activism featuring, among others, federal and Québec provincial authorities strengthened the autonomy/distinct status nexus of the PLQ's discourse. Several rounds of negotiations built up this nexus in the PLQ's definition of *Québécois* interests. The first was the 1982 patriation of the constitution, together with a Charter of Rights and Freedom, which the Trudeau government intended to serve as a symbol and motor of a definition of Canadian interests resting on the protection of individual rights and a strong central government. Instead, the new constitutional document became in Québec a cornerstone of the decentralization/asymmetry argument. The PLQ's condemnation of the patriation, that was enacted despite the opposition of the PQ government which argued that the Charter was a centralizing instrument that threatened the province's language laws, was a politically necessary move that established a framework for the party's future definitions of group interests. This framework was reflected, and strengthened, by discussions leading to the Meech Lake accord. In an effort to get the Québec government to sign the new constitutional document, Brian Mulroney's Conservative party invited the PLQ to state the

provisions it wished to see included in the constitution. These provisions, most notably a formal recognition of Québec as a 'distinct society' and a limitation of the federal power to spend in provincial jurisdictions, embodied the definition of group interests centred on autonomy/distinct status.⁹⁹ Their characterization as 'Québec's minimal demands' built on the condemnation of the patriation and established a new precedent for the detailed articulation of *Québécois* interests. In other words, the Meech Lake negotiations, and the subsequent failure of the accord, left the PLQ with rigid parameters with respect to its definition of community interests. Not surprisingly, the very same demands were re-articulated in the context of the Charlottetown negotiations, an accord which also failed.

These two failures had two important consequences for group interest definitions in Canada. The first was the de-legitimization outside Québec of the idea, articulated at the federal level by the Conservatives, that Canadians would best be served by a decentralized and asymmetrical federalism. The return to power of the Liberals in 1993 following the two constitutional failures coincided with the reappearance of the orthodoxy constructed by Trudeau. The second was the bolstering of this same idea in Québec. The denunciation of the accord's collapse, especially virulent on the part of the PQ, led the PLQ to radicalize its stance on Quebecers' needs for autonomy and asymmetry. The party issued the Allaire report, a re-formulation of its constitutional platform which recommended the transfer of 22 powers from the federal to the Québec government.¹⁰⁰ It also engaged in a bipartisan commission on

⁹⁹ Louis Balthazar, "Les nombreux visages du nationalisme au Québec", p.35

¹⁰⁰ Alain-G. Gagnon, "Québec-Canada: circonvolutions constitutionnelles", p.95.

the political future of the province, known as Bélanger-Campeau,¹⁰¹ which suggested that independence or the profound renewal of the federation on the basis of autonomy and the formal recognition of the province's distinctiveness were the only two options that could satisfy the interests of Quebecers. These developments, which represented a peak in an incremental process of group interest definition, further strengthened the existing framework. The PLQ is bound to receive with skepticism any proposal of constitutional change it deems not sufficiently informed by the two principles of decentralization and asymmetry. The party's ambiguous position on the 1997 Calgary declaration which sees the principle of the equality of provinces coexist with Québec's recognition as a 'unique society' was partly the consequence and a reflection of the constraining effects of past positions.

Despite the presence of a consensus, resulting from both party competition and constitutional activism, on the idea that autonomy and asymmetry are central to Québec's interests, significant differences exist on the extent deemed optimal for Quebecers. The PQ suggests that full political independence is the institutional form that would best serve the interests of Quebecers. Initially, this position was framed in terms of the need for the Québec government to exercise all the powers deemed necessary to complete the process of socio-economic modernization. In the context of the 1980 referendum, the argument for independence was primarily connected to two issues. The first was linguistic-cultural protection. Although this issue was put at the centre of the post-1960 definition of *Québécois* interests by both the PLQ and the PQ, the latter gave it special importance as demonstrated by their aggressive language legislation. Its conceptualization of the French language as the

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Idem.

most fundamental good of Québec society was accompanied by the argument that its preservation could be best achieved by having Francophones make all important decisions, that is through independence. Still today, the PQ devotes a substantial portion of its programme to language as it argues for further linguistic activism in waiting for the breakthrough of independence. This programme states that:

[S]eule la souveraineté peut redonner au Québec la pleine maîtrise de son devenir. Par contre, il faut toutefois répondre à certaines urgences qui demandent des interventions immédiates dans la mesure de nos moyens actuels. Ainsi, nous devons, comme société francophone, voir à ce que, dans nos grands centres urbains où le français est fragilisé par la concurrence directe de l'anglais, les Québécois de langue française (...) puissent conserver et consolider leur masse critique d'intégration.¹⁰²

The second issue was social-democracy.¹⁰³ The PQ's self-description as the defender of French and French-speakers translated, in the context of a society characterized by a cultural division of labour, into a pro-working class stance. The party defined *Québécois* interests partly as those of a class that should be emancipated, and as a consequence developed close ties with the province's unions. It presented independence as a way to achieve a more egalitarian and benevolent society where French-speakers could dramatically improve their socio-economic condition.

By the 1995 referendum, the specifics of the PQ's definition of community interests had changed. In the context of a general tendency towards deficit reduction in the 1990s, the PQ gradually toned down explicit references to the creation of a new social order based on

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See the PQ's programme, www.pq.org/prog02B.html.

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A. Brian Tanguay, "Québec's Political System in the 1990s: From Polarization to Convergence", in Alain-G. Gagnon, *Québec. State and Society*, pp.176-179.

increased redistribution. Moreover, as a result of the socio-linguistic changes that took place following the linguistic laws of the 1970s, the predominance of French was an issue that had lost some of its salience. For these reasons, the PQ scarcely invoked the social democracy argument in its 1995 referendum campaign while references to language protection were less prominent than in 1980. Instead, it simply pushed through the argument of the intrinsic value of autonomy for Quebecers, and suggested that, as the ultimate form of autonomy, outright independence was the best possible political-institutional avenue. In its programme, the PQ asks who, in the context of increased interdependence, will speak for Québec's companies, farmers, etc... "La protection de ces intérêts", suggests the document, "exige qu'un gouvernement , et un seul gouvernement, parle en leur nom."¹⁰⁴ It also adds that the mere presence and activity of the federal government is detrimental to Québec's interests. "Les gouvernements fédéral et provincial se nuisent, leur concurrence nuit à l'épanouissement du peuple québécois."¹⁰⁵

The PQ's position is opposed by the PLQ which argues that while the province needs increased autonomy and a formal recognition of its cultural distinctiveness, the interests of Quebecers are best served if it remains within Canada. The PLQ's articulation of *Québécois* interests which supports and is expressed through this position revolves around the idea of continuity, primarily uninterrupted economic growth. As the PLQ programme states, "[T]out au long de son histoire, le Parti libéral du Québec a toujours fait valoir que le succès de chaque Québécois se construisait d'abord et avant tout dans un contexte de croissance

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See the party's programme, www.pq.org/prog01A.html.

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Ibid.

économique et de création d'emplois."¹⁰⁶ The PLQ generally adopts pro-market stances and enjoys close ties with Québec's business elite.¹⁰⁷ This stress on economic development permeated the party's discourse during the referendum campaigns.¹⁰⁸ Both in 1980 and 1995, the PLQ suggested that independence would disrupt financial and trading patterns and, consequently, slow the province's economic growth. This suggestion has shaped the way Quebecers relate independence and the economy. According to a recent survey, 61% of Quebecers think that economic conditions would deteriorate in the first few years following independence.¹⁰⁹ In fact, the PLQ's defense of the Canadian political framework revolves heavily around the idea that federalism is economically profitable for Quebecers and that threats of ruptures are damaging. In its programme, the PLQ suggests that "l'élection du Parti libéral du Québec permettra de lever immédiatement l'hypothèque référendaire que nous impose le gouvernement péquiste avec son projet d'indépendance. L'incertitude politique qui découle de ce projet freine le développement du Québec."¹¹⁰

The constitutional activism of Québec's political elite led leaders from other groups/regions to further define the interests of the communities they sought to represent.

¹⁰⁶ See the PLQ's programme, www.plq.org/prog/program.pdf.

¹⁰⁷ A. Brian Tanguay, "Québec's Political System in the 1990s: From Polarization to Convergence", in Alain-G. Gagnon, *Québec. State and Society*, p.186.

¹⁰⁸ Vincent Lemieux, *Le Parti libéral du Québec. Alliances, rivalités et neutralités*, (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1993), p.144.

¹⁰⁹ See the CROP survey realized in August of 1999 for the Privy Council Office. <http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/aia/docs/francais/perspective/issues/cropopinion.htm>.

¹¹⁰ See the PLQ's programme, www.plq.org/prog/program.pdf.

Moreover, as was the case for Québec, these leaders became involved in a sequence of events, each of which set new parameters for the articulation of their community's interests. In obtaining in the 1982 Constitutional Act legal recognition of their existence as communities, and acknowledgment of historical and treaty rights with the promise of further elaboration, Native leaders from the AFN formally established the ideas of access to land, autonomy and a distinct legal status as central to their communities' interests. The absence in Meech of any provision concerning Aboriginal populations led their leaders to adopt even firmer positions while the presence in the failed Charlottetown accord of a disposition creating a level of government for Natives consecrated the principle of self-government as the key to the future of Aboriginal communities. As a result of the precedent of Charlottetown, autonomous government is solidly anchored to a definition of Native interests which has recently been laid out in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report. This report, which represents the latest benchmark for the needs of Native communities, emphasizes socio-economic development and cultural preservation through changes in the federal government's Aboriginal policy and a re-structuring of Canadian federalism. In the end, self-government is said to be the greatest needs of Aboriginal communities. "We believe Aboriginal people must be recognized as partners in the complex arrangements that make up Canada", the report states. "Indeed, we hold that Aboriginal governments are one of three orders of government in Canada - federal, provincial/territorial, and Aboriginal."¹¹¹

The Meech Lake negotiations also served as a catalyst for the formal articulation, primarily through the Reform Party created in 1987, of regional Western interests. The

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See the report, www.inac.gc.ca/rcap/report/relat.html.

changes proposed in the accord were interpreted by Reformers as aggravating a political-institutional structure that was said to systematically marginalize Western provinces. It is in the context of the claims of Quebec's political elite that a new Western-based political elite emerged, and that the idea that the interests of the West were poorly served by the current federal structures was most forcefully articulated. This new elite which founded Reform argued that the interests of the Western provinces lied in their increased influence within federal institutions. Reformers suggested that the political weight of central provinces (Québec and Ontario) translated regularly into policies that favoured them at the expense of Western provinces. Not surprisingly, in the context of the Meech Lake accord and the rise of Reform, more than 72% of Westerners thought that the federal government poorly represented their interests.¹¹² As such, constitutional and institutional change suspected to empower central Canada (more specifically Québec), in particular the introduction of asymmetrical elements in Canadian federalism such as any type of formal distinct status, was interpreted by Reform as going against the interests of the West. "The Reform Party" stated its programme, "supports equality for all provinces, special status for none."¹¹³ The institutional *status quo* was also opposed for similar reasons. Consequently, Reform equated the interests of the West with three specific political-institutional transformations. The first

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Roger Gibbins and Sonia Arrison, *Western Visions. Perspectives on the West in Canada*, p.33.

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See www.reform.ca/bluebook/unity.html#Decentralization and the Equality of Provinces. The Reform party no longer exists. It has re-invented itself into the Canadian Alliance Party as a means to broaden its territorial electoral basis. The ideological outlook of the new party with respect to constitutional issues still remains to be seen although the position of Reform will likely be prominent since its members constitute the bulk of the Alliance.

was decentralization (on the basis of the equality of provinces), presented as a safeguard against a federal power deemed to be controlled by central Canada. The second was an elected and efficient Senate where provinces would have equal representation and which, as a result, could tilt the balance of power slightly more towards the West. The third was a relaxation of party discipline and the use of 'recalls' in order to make members of parliaments more accountable.

The crystallization in Canada of several different definitions of community interests over the last twenty years is theoretically important in at least two respects. First, it shows that political and constitutional negotiations not only reveal the interests of various groups as defined by their leaders but also shape these very definitions. Most importantly, political-constitutional activism leads political elites to articulate positions which represent formal statements of their communities' needs and constitute precedents that condition further interpretations. In other words, interest definition is, particularly in the context of constitutional negotiations, an incremental process that brings inherent constraints to the actors which are part of it. Second, it highlights the importance of territorial division of power in structuring this very process and its outcomes. Federal or autonomy structures involve continuous efforts of coordination and adjustments which favour the raising by regional elites of issues relating to the exact nature of institutional and representational forms. As such, these issues tend to become part and parcel of their interpretation of community interests, coexisting with, and often outliving and taking precedence over, social and economic questions.

The preceding analysis of the process of interest definition in Belgium, Spain and Canada has highlighted the different historical claims and ideological tendencies of nationalist movements in these three countries and the various patterns of elite relationships that led to their formation and expression. These movements correspond, for specific historical periods and despite multiple nuances, to three programmatic/ideological categories: traditional-conservative, liberal-bourgeois and left-wing/Marxist. Each profile is the result of relationships involving different types of elites.

Traditionalist-conservative movements are led by clerics and the small landowners characteristic of the Ancien Regime. These elites opposed centralization, capitalism and modernization partly as a consequence of basic philosophical principles but also because these processes threaten their socio-economic position and political power. Indeed, their definition of group interests proceeded from a struggle with modernizing, centralizing and secularizing elites. In accordance with their own values and interests, traditionalists stressed religion and a rural life/economy. They presented culture, language and/or race as both the embodiment and the guarantor of these fundamental social characteristics. They argued that preserving this traditional way of life necessarily involved regional autonomy. Indeed, the group interest definition of traditionalist nationalist movements revolved around a connection between religion/traditional values, culture and autonomy. For this reason, the programme of these movements typically featured a borderline utopian societal project based on a rejection of capitalism and industrialization, and an attempt to 'protect' their group from change through

isolation. These claims are expressed not only with direct references to the societal project but also in cultural/linguistic and racial terms.

This characterization of traditionalist nationalist movements, and the description of the pattern of elite relationships that produced them, corresponds to late 19th/early 20th century Basque nationalism and French-Canadian nationalism until the second half of the 20th century. The Basque nationalist movement was born from Sabino Arana's blending of the tenets of Carlism with notions of racial purity which was the consequence of a larger struggle between traditional and liberal/centralist elites. The traditional character of the definition of French-Canadian interests may be explained by the predominance of clerics and conservative political elites resulting from historical patterns of cooperation with colonial authorities and a successful mid-19th century struggle against a challenging petty bourgeoisie. The 19th and early 20th centuries Flemish Movement also closely approximates the traditionalist model with its clerical and lower bourgeoisie leadership, and its stress on religion and rural life. The Flemish Movement was less reactionary than the two other ones and, for the longest time, focused its claims on territorial unilingualism rather than autonomy. However, the pattern of elite relationships that led to the initial articulation of Flemish interests was similar: it involved a traditional elite fighting off centralization efforts made in the name of modernity. This pattern of elite relationships is also at the centre of the Aboriginal definition of group interests in Canada although the traditional character of Native nationalism must be understood differently from the previous cases: it involves a return to non-European practices rather than a focus on religion, opposition to capitalism, etc...

The picture of liberal-bourgeois nationalist movements provided by our three cases is not as clear as for the traditionalist category. After all, group interests were defined in the context of a central-regional struggle in Catalonia, in opposition to Flemish nationalism in the late 19th early 20th centuries by French-speaking Belgians, and against internal forces (primarily the Catholic Church) in 1960s Québec. However, two trends are noticeable. First, these three movements embraced modernization, capitalism, industrialization and trade, and they defined the interests of the larger group in these terms. Their leaders belonged to some form of liberal-bourgeoisie: an historically-dominant French-speaking aristocracy in Belgium, merchants and industrialists in Catalonia, and highly educated salaried professionals in Québec. Second, a key catalyst for the liberal-bourgeois definition of group interests was the traditionalists. In other words, these movements put an emphasis on socio-economic development in the context of a struggle against more conservative forces: the Catholic Church in Québec and the Flemish Movement in French-speaking Belgium. The Catalan case is somewhat different because late 19th century Spanish elites were liberal reformers. Still, from the perspective of the Catalan bourgeoisie, they represented the interests of backward society.

Left-wing/Marxist nationalist movements defined group interests in economic terms. This definition most often corresponded to the interpretation by regional elites of a situation of unequal development as deliberate exploitation and oppression. These elites generally came from left-wing political parties and/or trade-unions and transposed their class analysis to regional-central or inter-regional relationships. They argued that their region was the equivalent of a worker exploited by its boss, and that the interests of the former rested, as is

the case for the latter, in political empowerment and economic emancipation. They tended to make a connection between underdevelopment and cultural distinctiveness thereby blurring the line between the economic and cultural foundations of their claims. This articulation of group interests occurred in the context of a resistance by left-wing regional elites to central initiatives and policies suspected of aggravating discrepancies between rich and poor regions as well as traditional social classes.

Two of our cases fit this model: contemporary Wallonia and Galicia. The transition from a liberal-bourgeois to a left-wing definition of Walloon interests corresponded to a change in leadership which brought labour forces to the forefront and, more generally, to a struggle between Walloon Socialists and Flemish Christian-Democrats in the context of the relative decline of Wallonia's economy. In Galicia, the historical stream of the nationalist movement which suggested that Madrid deliberately maintained the region in poverty has picked up steam in the last years to the point of becoming hegemonic, and the contemporary definition of group interests proceeds from the depiction of Galicia as an 'internal colony'. The Basque Country¹¹⁴ under Franco is a third case which approximates, or actually goes beyond, the left-wing/Marxist category. Indeed, group interests in this region were defined, in the context of the dictatorship, not only in terms of economic but also social, political and cultural emancipation.

These three categories are not equally as useful to understand contemporary group interest definitions. Indeed, traditionalist movements have evolved, over the last 50 years or

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Catalonia during the dictatorship could also be placed in that category, although to a lesser extent.

so, in ways that make it difficult to recognize their original programmes. Their transformation is illustrative of the factors, both agency-related and institutional, that can alter definitions of group interests. As we have already mentioned, the traditional definition of French-Canadian interests disappeared when clerical and conservative political elites were overtaken by the new liberal elite of salaried professionals. In the Basque case, institutional change in the form of the emergence of the authoritarian state led regional elites to drop a traditionalist programme they considered badly suited to struggle against Franco. The Flemish Movement gradually abandoned its most conservative attributes in the 20th century as changes in the rules of participation and a more positive language regime favoured democratic politics. The Basque and Flemish nationalist movements have evolved towards the liberal-bourgeoisie model although they do retain, even in their dominant streams, elements of traditionalism: a certain suspicion of 'big business' for the former (primarily in its most radical stream), the continuing association with the Catholic family in the case of the latter.

As a result of the downfall of traditional elites, nationalist movements in our three countries correspond to either the liberal-bourgeois or left-wing Marxist model. There is, however, one aspect of their group interest definition which transcends the more specific ideological foundations: autonomy. Indeed, if there is one possible generalization from our examination of group interest definitions in Belgium, Spain and Canada, it is the central place occupied by the idea of regional autonomy. In everyone of our cases, autonomy is presented by regional elites as coinciding with regional interests. Institutions, more specifically, the nature and policies of the central state have been crucial to this development. The authoritarian and assimilationist state in Spain and, with respect to Aborigines, in Canada was

the key factor in autonomy being considered of paramount importance by Spain's regional leaders and Canada's aboriginal organizations. Despite these initial catalytic factors, a trend that emerges from this chapter's analysis is that the value of autonomy is no longer, or at least not as much, presented in instrumental terms. It is no longer associated with modernization in Québec. It is increasingly less relevant as a guarantor of democracy in Spain. In Flanders, it appears less crucial for linguistic preservation in the context of the contemporary Belgian language regime and the demographic-political weight of Flemings. In short, autonomy, has become a good in and unto itself and while its practical importance may have declined, its symbolic value has greatly increased.

The prominence of autonomy in the contemporary group interest definitions of nationalist movements in our three countries as well as their programmatic and ideological differences owes much to political institutions. The historical continuity noticeable in many movement's articulation of group interests, as well as more contemporary developments, is in large part the product of an institutionalization of interest definitions.

Three forms of institutional structures have served to give longevity to various interest definitions. The first is parties and party systems. These structures 'freeze' definitions of group interests. They preserve some that might otherwise disappear, bolster others and make yet others hegemonic. Historical nationalist parties in Spain have carried over, although not without significant change, definitions of group interests articulated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The continuing presence of the PNV explains the traditionalist elements within Basque nationalism. The ERC is central to the current left-wing/Marxist stream of Catalan nationalism. In Belgium, formal and/or strategic alliances between parties and movements

have shaped, strengthened and given resilience to specific definitions. The association between the Flemish Movement and Christian-Democracy is at the heart of the former's historical conservative ideological profile while the more recent close relationship between the PS and the Walloon Movement is central to the latter's enduring socialist outlook. In Québec, the rise of the PQ and the subsequent re-structuring of the party system was crucial in crystallizing two key elements of the new *Québécois* interests: socio-political modernization and autonomy.

The second form of political institutions which gives a measure of rigidity to group interest definitions are regional state structures. The political-bureaucratic apparatus of a region tends to embody, reflect and promote the group interest definition articulated by the elites who have established it. In other words, these structures have long-lasting effects because their very weight can mitigate changes-social, economic, cultural or other- which can potentially alter the way interests are defined. For example, the state-like political and administrative apparatus developed in Québec during the Quiet Revolution has been central in maintaining the themes of development, linguistic/cultural preservation, autonomy and asymmetry at the core of *Québécois* interests. Similar institutional development in contemporary Catalonia and the Basque Country has given formal support to almost identical claims for the protection and promotion of local culture/language, the recognition as distinct societies (boosted by the historical regional integration of the Second Republic), and greater autonomy.

The third aspect of institutional infrastructures that 'freeze' group interest definition is territorial distribution of power. Federal and autonomous structures are designed to answer

specific claims, and they tend to keep reflecting these claims despite changes in the larger socio-economic and cultural environment. In Belgium for example, the differentiated federate units of Communities and Regions represent institutionalized forms of the distinct Flemish and Walloon definitions of group interests. The centring of Walloon politics around the regional unit favours the perpetuation of the economic-oriented definition of interests while the Flemish focus on the Community stimulates the stress on language/culture. In Spain, the system of Autonomous Communities embodies and projects an overriding concern with regional autonomy. In fact, the analysis of our three cases tends to show that the very act of dividing political power territorially is very likely to generate group interest definitions centred around the theme of autonomy.

Chapter 4. Nationalist mobilization

This chapter suggests that ethnonationalism as a political outcome is the immediate consequence of a mobilization effort, and that popular mobilization is the ultimate process of ethnonationalism because it corresponds to, and indeed represents the force behind, nationalist activity. Nationalist mobilization serves to express, support and legitimize the claims usually associated with nationalist politics: recognition, autonomy, independence. As a process, it fully engages those of identity construction and interest definition which in themselves do not necessarily lead to ethnonationalism. Indeed, territorial identities present the potential to be activated but do not always translate into nationalist activity. For example, the identities associated with American states, French regions and German länder have not yet served as the basis for nationalist movements. Interest definition is inherent to all forms of politics (left-right ideology, gender, environmental and so on) but becomes a component of ethnonationalism when expressed in territorial terms and incorporated into a mobilization discourse. Consequently, nationalist mobilization is a process of ethnonationalism (and in fact the crucial one since it is conceptual closest to the outcome) which, although it builds on the two others, can and, for analytical clarity, should be distinguished from them. The focus on the mobilization process allows the analyst to account for the claims of nationalist movements as well as fluctuations in their strength and intensity. The present chapter deals with these questions.

As was the case for identity construction and interest definition, a focus on cultural or structural variables falls short of providing an adequate picture of the process of nationalist mobilization. The first angle suggests a correlation between cultural distinctiveness and

nationalist activity.¹ This proposition, which initially appears banal, is in fact problematic. Spain's recent history of nationalist/regionalist mobilization features territories such as Andalusia and the Canary Islands whose objective distinctiveness is negligible. Moreover, distinct mobilization patterns have developed in regions with similar distinctiveness (i.e. Catalan-speaking Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands as well as the Basque Country and Navarre, two Autonomous Communities with a historical legacy of 'Basque culture'.) A similar phenomenon has occurred in Belgium where Brussels and Wallonia, two predominantly French-speaking regions, also follow mobilization patterns THAT are not identical. A second problem with the focus on cultural variables is that it sheds little light on the issues of claims. Intuitively and from a cultural perspective, one could suggest that sharper cultural markers would lead to more radical claims such as independence. Empirical evidence casts doubts on this idea. Cultural unity is arguably greater in Catalonia than in the Basque Country as a consequence of the greater use of the distinct language but it is in the latter where independence, or at least more extended forms of autonomy, is sought. The cultural attributes of Canada's Aboriginal populations are also arguably more distinctive from the country's majority linguistico-cultural group than Québec's although claims for independence are only present in the latter. The relative aggressiveness of Flemish nationalism compared to its Walloon counterpart can hardly be explained with references to culture since Belgium's cultural bipolarity defies the very notion of differentiating between more and less distinct. Finally, there does not seem to be any relationship between timing of nationalist

¹ See, again, Walker Connor, "Ethnonationalism in the First World: The Present in Historical Perspective".

activity and culture. For example, the lows of nationalist mobilization in Flanders or Québec does not correspond to any loss of distinctiveness.

The emphasis on structural factors is equally problematic when attempting to draw connections with nationalist mobilizations. As we have already said in our introduction to the chapter on identities, situations of both over- and underdevelopment have witnessed the emergence of nationalist movements, and ethnonationalism has generally not disappeared with changes in the initial macro socio-economic conditions. Moreover, it is impossible to say with certainty that poverty leads to secessionist movements and prosperity to autonomist ones, or vice-versa. While it is true that Flemish and *Québécois* nationalism both have their roots in situations of relative underdevelopment, the former developed a secessionist strand when the gap was actually closing. In the Basque case where independence was the preferred option right from the start, the socio-economic environment was rather one of relative overdevelopment. Further clouding any relationship between claims and structural factors are the different socio-economic context in which autonomist movements have emerged and operate: atrocious poverty in the case of Canada's Aboriginals, economic decline in Wallonia, and relative prosperity in Catalonia. Finally, a stress on structural variables reveals little with respect to the highs and lows of nationalist mobilization. Macro socio-economic transformations seem to coincide with spurts of nationalist activity in some cases (Wallonia since the 1960s) but not in others (Québec's industrialization and urbanization began in the early 20th century, 50 years before the Quiet Revolution). The theoretical difficulty is that modernization, economic growth/decline and even globalization are long-range processes which can not be neatly connected to specific outcomes.

Despite these criticisms of cultural and structural explanations, culture and macro socio-economic factors do represent general environmental conditions that are reflected by the elite relationships and political institutions which are the more important and proximate determinant for the mobilization process. Indeed, explaining the general patterns of nationalist mobilization, together with the claims as well as the highs and lows of nationalist movements, necessitates focusing on politics.

Nationalist mobilization as a political process has its roots in power struggles. It involves political elites organizing politics on the basis of objective markers and the subjective meaning they are given in the context of their pursuit of political objectives. The issues that may trigger, sustain and stimulate processes of nationalist mobilization are many; it is impossible to point to a particular one and establish a necessary correlation with nationalist activity. However, whichever specific issue acts as a catalyst, the power of elites leading mobilization is always at stake. Cultural issues, such as those pertaining to the language or religious regime of a state, carry important consequences for the relative power of elites from different groups. Those challenging the existing regime tend to be threatened by it while others who defend it view it as a guarantor of their power. From both perspectives, giving greater legitimacy to their claims entails being able to demonstrate they have popular support. Socio-economic issues also have repercussions on the relative power of elites. For example, poverty and underdevelopment may not be conducive to the form of political power sought by most elites. In this context, power struggles may take the form of conflicts between ethnic/territorial groups where leaders on both sides seek popular support. In broader terms, the general ideological and social outlook of a state is a constant object of contention for

political elites because it empowers some and marginalizes others. Therefore, ideological-social issues also present potential for nationalist mobilization as elites may choose, or simply be led by the particular circumstances of the day, to engage in nationalist politics to gain support for their claims.

Elite relationships are central in explaining the highs and lows of nationalist mobilization. Periods of intense nationalist fervour tend to be the product of acute elite conflicts. Periods of low nationalist activity tend to correspond with patterns of elite cooperation. The intensity of elite conflict is a function of both conscious decisions (political-electoral calculations) as well as the contingencies of history (for example, the rise of an authoritarian state is likely to render elite relationships very conflictual.) Formulating a general explanation for the claims of nationalist movements is even more perilous than theorizing the fluctuations in their strength and intensity. However, elite relationships are, here again, a crucial variable. In cases where regional elites have had a close relationship with the central state, either they depend on it for exercising their own power or they look to take it over, the secessionist option is less likely than in cases where these elites have little relations with central authorities. The cooptation of regional elites is also likely to make a movement autonomist rather than secessionist. In fact, elite cooptation, if it represents a consistent political pattern, threatens the very existence of a nationalist movement. The patterns of elite relationships that favour claims for independence include most importantly those that favour outbidding. Although it is generally possible to characterize nationalist movements as secessionist or autonomist, they are rarely monolithic but rather comprise several streams. As we have already discussed in the introduction to the identity chapter, competition between

these streams sometimes amount to nationalist outbidding as parties attempt to show that are more passionate defenders of the nation than their electoral adversaries. The specific conditions that lead to outbidding are not clear. Most probably, a great number of nationalist political parties as well as ideological diversity favours such a dynamic. What is certain is that outbidding radicalizes nationalist politics and makes claims for independence more likely.

Political institutions are a crucial variable in the process of nationalist mobilization. The institutional context not only shapes mobilization patterns but also weighs heavily in determining if there will be nationalist mobilization at all. It structures elite relationships in ways that make them more or less conflictual and, consequently, more or less conducive to nationalist mobilization. The state, as the historical centre of national institutional environments, represents a key structuring force of elite relationships. States that persecute cultural minorities as well as those resting on a discriminatory linguistic-religious regime naturally favour a belligerent attitude on the part of regional elites; so do those which may not oppress minorities but exclude their elites from political power. Centralizing states, especially if they seek to integrate territories that have been autonomous for a considerable length of time, also generate tensions because they threaten the established powers of regional elites. In turn, the highly conflictual nature of the relationships produced favours nationalist activity.

The state's territorial structuring is another factor that shapes elite relationships and affects nationalist mobilization. Schemes of territorial distribution of power tend to be seen as fluid and open-ended by regional elites who generally seek to wrestle powers away from the central government. In this context, popular support becomes a crucial weapon in their struggles and ethnonationalism is a potent form of mobilization since it can potentially involve

most of the population of the regional unit. In sum, confrontation between regional and central elites may lead the former to not only bolster but give a specific significance to regional identities. Federal and autonomous systems also favour inter-regional competition as regional elites tend to compare grievances, claiming more powers and a more prestigious status to catch-up or stay ahead of other regions. This type of competition also favours nationalist mobilization. Finally, the regional units themselves may prove to be centrifugal forces, especially in cases where they coincide with ethnic-cultural boundaries as widely shared cultural markers become attractive references for mass mobilization.

Political parties are another element of the institutional context that affect nationalist mobilization. Of particular importance is the degree of polarization of the party system. On the one hand, party systems that are entirely divided along ethnic/cultural lines are particularly conducive to nationalist mobilization. In these systems, elites from one group need not bother attempting to court the vote of members of the other group. As a consequence, politics is very likely to be conducted in ethnic/cultural terms. On the other hand, the presence of parties that can garner votes from members of different groups, both at the national and regional levels, represents a moderating influence on politics. These parties have to adopt moderate positions on ethnic and cultural issues in order to please voters from different backgrounds. Moreover, by stressing other types of issues, they broaden the scope of politics. In so doing, they allow for alliances between elites from different groups while pitting against one another elites from the same group. These cross-cutting cleavages in elite relationships generate a political context which is less polarized and less conducive to intensive nationalist mobilization.

The rest of the chapter will look at these different variables in comparative perspective and discuss their importance in shaping nationalist mobilization in the three countries.

4.1-Belgium

4.1.1 Nationalist Mobilization in Late 19th and Early 20th Century Belgium: Seeking Change in the Name of Justice.

The construction of identities and the definition of group interests in 19th and early 20th century Belgium led the way to, and coincided with, processes of nationalist mobilization. Neither the Flemish nor the Walloon Movement immediately engaged in these processes with another community than Belgium as its reference. The Flemish Movement initially sought to re-define the Belgian nation. The Movement's lack of success in convincing French-speaking elites to accept its vision of Belgium prompted its leaders to attach a specific political meaning to the Flemish identity they were building. Flemish elites denounced the domination of French in Belgium. They made this 'unjust situation' the motor of their efforts to mobilize Flemings, and its correction their ultimate goal. Flemish nationalist mobilization remained relatively weak and sporadic in the 19th century but received a considerable boost with the instauration of manhood suffrage and the formal alliance between the Flemish Movement and the Christian Democratic family in Flanders. This mobilization never seriously challenged the unitary structures of the Belgian state in the 19th century. Only towards the end of century did a few Flemish elites suggest that if Francophones were unwilling to accept a bilingual status for Wallonia, Belgium should be made a federal state. As for separatism, it was not part of nationalist politics in Flanders until after WWI. The Walloon Movement did not instantly

engage in a nationalist mobilization effort that did not centre on Belgium either. It first sought to defend the French-dominated Belgian order, but in doing so, challenged the Flemish Movement in its very own backyard. The result was the emergence of a dynamic where the two Movements fed off each other. Walloon leaders argued that the claims of the Flemish Movement for bilingualism represented the beginning of the oppression of French-speakers. Walloon leaders equated the Walloon identity they were constructing with their struggle and, when faced with growing Flemish activism, gave it a new political meaning by detaching it from the larger Belgian identity. Despite the very weak following of the Movement, some notable Walloon leaders suggested that an autonomous Wallonia was the only way to resist the increasing 'domination' of Flemings.

The struggle of the early Flemish Movement for the formal-legal equality of Dutch and French had as an objective the transformation of Belgium into a nation that would reflect, and be defined by, linguistic diversity. For the Flemish traditional lower bourgeoisie, the underlying goal was to create a legal framework that would allow them to avoid the inevitable social and political marginalization awaiting them in a state where French was the language of advancement. The Flemish associations created between 1830 and 1840 reflected the interpenetration of the Flemish and Belgian identity, and the attempt by Flemish elites to re-shape the Belgian community rather than develop a new one. These associations celebrated Flemish culture but always within the Belgian context (waving Belgian flags in parties, situating Flemish claims within the spirit of the revolution, etc...).² The claims of the Flemish Movement for formal linguistic equality were met with strong opposition by the French-

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Lode Wils, *Histoire des nations belges*, p. 177.

speaking elites controlling the state. In the context of this resistance, Flemish Movement leaders began separating the Flemish identity they were building from the larger Belgian identity. They gave the former new political meaning by stressing the unjust character of the Flemings' situation in Belgium and the oppressive nature of the French-dominated state. This idea became the centre of the Flemish nationalist discourse of the late 19th and early 20th century. Its mobilization potential benefited from different events which highlighted the biases of the Belgian language regime. Of particular importance was the conviction and execution of two unilingual Flemings suspected of robbery and murder in a trial held exclusively in French. The confession of a third party after their death turned the fate of the two Flemings into a symbol of the oppression and injustices suffered by all Flemings.³

Despite the existence of flagrant biases in Belgian politics and the linguistic regime, the importance of the Flemish Movement remained marginal until the final decades of the 19th century.⁴ The alliance between the Movement and the Christian Democratic family in Flanders was instrumental in stimulating nationalist mobilization and transforming the Flemish Movement into a major political force, for it provided Flemish leaders with the formal structures necessary to give wider appeal to their claims. The complex network of organizations controlled by the Catholic 'pillar' (schools, cultural associations, trade unions, farmer's organizations, etc...) enabled the Movement to diffuse its position on the 'Flemish

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Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, pp.24-25.

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Lode Wils, 'Introduction: A Brief History of the Flemish Movement', in Theo Hermans, Louis Vos and Lode Wils (eds), *The Flemish Movement. A Documentary History, 1780-1990*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1992), p.15.

condition', present its case for the necessity of the linguistic struggle, and accentuate the connection between the emerging Flemish community and the fight against French dominance. The introduction of plural manhood suffrage in 1893 greatly intensified the mobilization efforts of Flemish elites as they found in the numerical strength of Flemings a powerful weapon in their power struggle against French-speaking elites. The Movement's alliance with the Christian Democracy allowed it to take full advantage of the new context of electoral politics. The espousal of the Flemish cause by the dominant ideological family in Flanders put great pressure on the Belgian political system and made the new linguistic legislation of the 1890s, giving Dutch formal equality with French, unavoidable. Following this first linguistic victory, the Flemish Movement broadened the scope of its claims to include the improvement of the position of Dutch, and Flemings themselves, outside the formal institutions as well as within them.⁵

The rise of a Walloon Movement opposing the 1890s language laws and virtually all Flemish claims for social and political advancement fuelled the process of nationalist mobilization in Flanders. Flemish Movement leaders were able to denounce the consistently confrontational attitudes of Francophones and present them as continued acts of oppression. The staunch opposition of French-speaking elites to any bilingualism in Wallonia led a few 'radical' Flemish activists to call, at the turn of the century, for territorial unilingualism and federalism.⁶ No claims were made at that time for outright independence, and there was no

⁵ Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, pp.25-26; Louis Vos, "The Flemish National Question", p.86.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.87; Lode Wils, 'Introduction: A Brief History of the Flemish Movement', p.17.

separatist wing to the pre-WWI Flemish Movement. The Flemish identity it articulated was meant to coexist with the Belgian one. The political significance it was given went only so far as autonomy, and this option was supported only by a very small minority within a Movement that was still in the process of gaining wider acceptance.

As we have already seen, the Walloon Movement which emerged in the 1880s was a defensive reaction against Flemish activism. For the French-speaking elites whose power in Belgian politics and society depended on the hegemony of the French language, the objective was to protect the *status quo*. Consequently, the Movement's first mobilization efforts were designed to alert French-speakers in Belgium of the danger posed by the Flemish Movement. The Walloon Movement's initial defence of the prominence of French all over Belgium, including in Flanders, meant that it did not immediately engage in mobilization that had a territorial basis distinct from Belgium as whole. It was forced by the Flemish Movement into adopting a smaller territorial anchoring, and in giving new political meaning to the novel idea of 'Walloons' by equating it with this territory. This transition did not occur without reluctance. At the first *Congrès wallon* of 1905, most participants re-affirmed the need for one single language in Belgium (French) while a few others voiced the idea of 'administrative separation'. These ambiguities and hesitations were still present at the *Assemblée wallonne* of 1912 although the idea of a dual institutional framework was gaining popularity. Whether they sought to defend the dominant position of French in Belgium or were leaning towards a model of administrative separation, the Walloon Movement's calls for political mobilization at the turn of the century were framed in the language of justice. Jules Destree's famous 1912 letter to the king embodies the Movement's discourse, claims and mobilization strategies of

the time.⁷ In this letter, Destrs tells the king that there are no Belgians, only Flemings and Walloons. He accuses Flemings of having stolen Flanders from them (French-speaking elites), and of having taken away their history, liberty, language, security and employment in the public sector. He portrays Flemings as calculating fanatics, and compares Walloons to a conquered people at the mercy of its oppressors. While Destre's grievances illustrate the rhetoric of the Walloon Movement of the beginning of the century, its popular appeal remained extremely marginal during this period. The Walloon Movement of the early 20th century was much more confined to the elites than the Flemish Movement. It lacked efficient formal structures and was generally unsuccessful in reaching the masses.⁸

Three features of nationalist mobilization in late 19th and early 20th century Belgium should be highlighted because of their general importance. The first is that both Flemish and Walloon elites denounced the political-legal situation of the time as unjust for their respective group. Flemish leaders spoke of Francophone oppression when referring to the language regime while Walloon leaders pointed to the growing activism of the Flemish Movement as proof of a relentless attack on French-speakers. This dynamic highlights, particularly with respect to the claims of the latter elite, the extent to which interpretation, much more than objective situations, is central to nationalist mobilization. The second is that the Walloon Movement had much less success than the Flemish Movement in reaching the masses before

⁷ See Jules Destre, "Open Letter to the King, Concerning the Separation of Flanders and Wallonia", in Theo Hermans, Louis Vos and Lode Wils (eds), *The Flemish Movement. A Documentary History, 1780-1990*, pp. 206-217.

⁸ The 500 participants of the 1905 *Congrs wallon* was considered a breakthrough. See Chantal Kesteloot, "Growth of the Walloon Movement", p. 144.

WWI, most likely because it lacked a formal association with an ideological families. The third is that neither Movement took any anti-Belgian stance during that period. The most radical positions they produced were those articulated by the very few who called for administrative separation, territorial unilingualism or federalism. This outcome questions the primordialist idea of the political incompatibility of different cultures.

4.1.2 The Wars and the Inter-War: Fluctuations in Nationalist Mobilization and Change in Nationalist Programmes.

The 1914-1945 period witnessed important variations in the mobilization power of the Flemish Movement and profound transformations in the programme of some Flemish leaders. The collaboration with the German occupier by a small minority of Flemish activists who saw in this strategy a fast way to have their linguistic demands met had two important consequences. First, it discredited the entire Flemish Movement and momentarily brought the process of mobilization to a halt. Second, it led to the articulation by Flemish collaborators, who were harshly treated after the War, of an anti-Belgian Flemish identity. The Movement gradually overcame its post-War weakness as its moderate leaders brought the focus back to the linguistic arena. Its campaign for the 'Flemishization' of the University of Ghent re-ignited nationalist fervour in Flanders, and this momentum led to the language laws of the 1930s. The Second World War put an end to this drive, as the collaboration of the anti-Belgian (and now fascist) wing of the Flemish Movement with the Germans brought a new wave of discredit upon the entire Movement. The dynamic of nationalist mobilization in Flanders dictated to a great extent the level of intensity of the Walloon Movement's own mobilization effort. The

discredit of the Flemish Movement following WWI prompted the Walloon Movement to revert to a strong Belgian nationalist stance. The struggle over the University of Ghent brought back the discourse of Flemish oppression amongst Walloon leaders, and strengthened the administrative separation option within the Movement. In fact, the continued Flemish push for territorial unilingualism led the Walloon Movement to adopt a firm autonomous stance as demonstrated by the resolution adopted by the *Congrès wallon* of 1945.

The First World War represents a key moment in the history of the Flemish Movement. The Germans developed during their occupation of Belgium a *Flamenpolitik* which consisted of "giving preferential treatment to the Flemings and their language so as to incite them to collaboration."⁹ The positive response of only a small minority of Flemish activists to this German policy brought great shame and discredit upon the entire Movement following the war. French-speaking elites were quick to associate Flemish nationalism with treason, although the vast majority of Flemish activists remained loyal to Belgium in the hope of being rewarded for their conduct.¹⁰ This episode halted the process of nationalist mobilization in Flanders. It also created a group of disgruntled and angry Flemish leaders who were lambasted for their cooperation with the occupier. These people became strongly anti-Belgian, and viewed the Flemish identity as incompatible with the Belgian identity. For the first time in its history, a relatively significant stream of the Movement advocated the destruction of the Belgian state which was viewed as the oppressor of Flemings, and the

⁹ Louis Vos, "The Flemish National Question", p.88.

¹⁰ Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*: p.27.

creation of an independent Flemish state. These activists formed the Flemish nationalist party *Frontpatrij* in 1919. The successor parties to the *Frontpatrij*, the *Verdinaso* created in 1931 and the *Vlaams Nationaal Verbond* (VNV) formed in 1933, generally retained the goal of independence for Flanders although some of their members suggested the unification of Flanders and the Netherlands. These parties also adopted a strong authoritarian, anti-democratic, and often fascist, position, which was accompanied by an exclusivist definition of the nation based on ancestry. In sum, WWI created within the Flemish Movement a radical stream which found its formal expression in fascist and separatist political parties. For the Walloon Movement, the discredited Flemish Movement of the late 1910s and early 1920s meant a pause in mobilization efforts. Walloon leaders pounced on the collaboration of some Flemish activists. It depicted the Movement as treacherous, and associated any claims for change in the Belgian institutions to collaboration behaviour. It reverted, during this period, to its Belgian nationalist stance, and was a strong advocate Belgian unitarism.¹¹

The *Flamenpolitik* of the German occupier also left the seed for the re-mobilization of Flemings by the Movement. The Germans turned the University of Ghent, which was located in Flanders but operated in French, into a Dutch-speaking university. This policy proved popular among Flemish activists, even those who remained loyal to Belgium.¹² When the War ended, the Belgian legal order was reinstated which meant that the University of Ghent was French only once again. The moderate stream of the Flemish Movement used the University of Ghent situation to rekindle nationalist mobilization in favour of its programme

¹¹ Chantal Kesteloot, "Growth of the Walloon Movement", p.145.

¹² Lode Wils, *Histoire des nations belges*, p.219.

of linguistic change. Walloon leaders opposed the Flemish claims on the University and saw in its 'Flemishation' another act of calculated theft. They suggested that: "[T]out projet qui a pour résultat l'exclusion du français de l'une ou l'autre partie de notre instruction publique accentue la séparation du pays en deux régions de langue et de mœurs différentes."¹³ In 1923, in the midst of growing Flemish pressure, the University of Ghent started giving courses in Dutch. Viewing in this event a sign that Flemings were increasingly having their way in Belgian politics, Walloon leaders became staunchly autonomist. The introduction of (male) universal suffrage in 1919 added to the Walloon leaders' fear of *minorisation*. With the creation of the *Ligue d'Action wallonne*, they re-focused their mobilization efforts squarely on Wallonia, 'abandoning' Francophones in Flanders and, to a lesser degree, those in Brussels. The fact that the turning of the University of Ghent into a Dutch-speaking university in 1930 and the legislation of 1932 on territorial unilingualism met with virtually no opposition from Walloon leaders reflects the fundamental changes undergone by the Walloon Movement during the 1920s.

By the start of the Second World War, the moderate stream of the Flemish Movement had achieved a large portion of its programme. The radical branch, however, viewed the linguistic gains of the last half century as largely insignificant. Radical Flemish activists, still a small minority within the Flemish Movement, saw in WWII the German war of revenge that would finally destroy Belgium and collaborated with the occupier. As was the case after the First World War, the whole Flemish Movement was temporarily discredited as a result of the

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Raoul Engel, *L'Université flamande. Les Conséquences. Le Point de vue Social. L'Avis des Professeurs*, pp.12-13.

action of its radical branch. However, the severe repression of collaborators by the Belgian state breathed new life into nationalist politics in Flanders. Flemish Movement leaders suggested that the hunt for collaborators was focused solely on Flemings (there were collaborators in Wallonia and Brussels as well), and that it was meant to crush Flemish nationalism in general.¹⁴ The 'repression question' was turned into a major contentious issue between the two linguistic communities. Not only did it strengthen feelings of persecution among Flemings as articulated by Flemish Movement leaders, it also further reinforced the autonomist position of the Walloon Movement. At the 1945 *Congrès wallon*, the resentment of Walloon leaders against 'Flemish collaboration' and the Flemish Movement's claims of bias in the prosecution of collaborators combined with acute fears of *minorisation* in the context of demographic imbalance and evidence of economic stagnation in Wallonia to produce a show of force and a rejection of the Belgian unitary state. During a first vote, the 1500 participants (primarily politicians, professors, doctors, businessmen and union leaders) voted in favour of a union with France. This vote is often called 'sentimental' but was more than simply an emotional move. It was also meant as a proof of the renewed determination of the Walloon Movement in not letting the Flemish Movement dictate the agenda. In a second vote, often called 'rational', a majority of the participants chose the autonomy/federalism option.¹⁵ The 1945 *Congrès wallon* signalled a new phase in the evolution of the Walloon Movement. Since its emergence in the late 19th century, it had always been a purely defensive movement

¹⁴ Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, p.31.

¹⁵ On the two votes, see Chantal Kesteloot, *Mouvement wallon et identité nationale*, p.37.

which took its cue from the Flemish Movement and attempted to limit the losses incurred as a result of Flemish activism. From 1945 and on, it became much more aggressive and sought to shape the Belgian political agenda.

The war and inter-war years represent a period of great fluctuations for nationalist mobilization in Belgium. The Flemish Movement, which had experienced a gradual increase in its mobilization power until 1914, was temporarily hurt by the collaboration of a few of its activists during the two World Wars. Flemish elites were able to rekindle nationalist fervour in Flanders following both Wars in large part due to the University of Ghent and repression issues. Both times they were greatly helped by a Walloon Movement which strongly denounced the Flemish Movement's actions and opposed its claims. In fact, the key lesson to be drawn from the 1914-1945 period is that variations in the intensity as well as changes in the nature of nationalist mobilization may be explained by the dynamic of the two Movements' struggle. The development of a radical anti-Belgian, separatist and fascist stream within the Flemish Movement following WWI prompted Walloon leaders to champion Belgian nationalism and unitarism once again in the early 1920s. The strong comeback of the moderate stream of the Flemish Movement forced the Walloon Movement to become resolutely autonomist, a position expressed particularly clearly in the context of the repression crisis. The development of a firmly autonomist Walloon Movement and the creation by a few Flemish activists of a formally articulated anti-Belgian stream were two forces which, along with the moderate Flemish Movement, would stimulate post-WWII mobilization and force the traditional parties to pay attention to the *problème communautaire*.

4.1.3 The Institutionalization of Centrifugal Forces: The Transformation of the Belgian Party System as Prelude to Institutional Change.

The period ranging from the end of the Second World War to the first state reform in 1970 saw both the Flemish and Walloon Movement increase their mobilization power and their influence on Belgian politics. The Flemish Movement, which already had a considerable following before 1945, took advantage of some political crisis, most notably the *question royale*, to play the nationalist card. The Walloon Movement, whose popular appeal prior to WWII was still extremely marginal, turned the strikes of 1960-61 to its advantage by equating the workers' struggle with the Walloon cause. The two Movements also succeeded like never before in turning Belgian politics into nationalist politics. This crucial development in the history of contemporary Belgium finds its immediate origins in the creation of the nationalist *Volksunie* (VU), the regionalist/nationalist *Rassemblement wallon* (RW), and the regionally-based *Front Démocratique des Francophones* (FDF). The influence of these parties on the Belgian party system was enormous and quite disproportional to their actual popularity. They forced the traditional parties to pay attention to the *problème communautaire* by eating away at their electoral support. This move changed the dynamic of electoral competition in Belgium. It opened the way for new political strategies and favoured mechanisms of nationalist 'outbidding'. It put a severe strain on the traditional parties who struggled to respond coherently to the claims of both Flemish and Walloon nationalists. The imposition of the nationalist agenda upon the traditional parties produced growing tensions between leaders and members of different language groups which in turn exacerbated nationalist feelings in the population. By the end of the 1960s, the nationalist/regionalist parties had been

so successful in straining the relationship between the language groups, especially within the party system. that another major crisis was likely to bring about major political and institutional change. As we will see shortly, this crisis ended up concerning the status of the University of Leuven (Louvain).

Nationalist mobilization in post-WWII Belgium began in earnest with the *question royale*. For socialist leaders in Wallonia, the fact that the King had stayed in Belgium during the War while the government was in exile in London made him a traitor. They asked that he did not return. The Catholic family, strongest in Flanders, supported its return. In 1950, a referendum held on this issue revealed that 58% of Belgians supported the return of the King. Most Flemings supported the King's return while most Walloons did not. The King did return but only to abdicate after violent demonstration in Wallonia forced the Social Christian government to resign. Flemish Movement leaders argued that the King's abdication was a humiliation for all Flemings and a further proof of Francophone domination. The *question royale* triggered a revival of the moderate stream of Flemish nationalism which had been wounded by the collaboration of the radicals during WWII. The Movement's resurgence translated into renewed nationalist activism within Flemish press, schools, cultural association, and students organizations, and allowed it to attract a younger generation of Flemings.¹⁶ A second event that was not immediately related to the *problème communautaire* but was made a Flemish-Walloon issue by the Flemish Movement was the 'schools struggle'. In 1954, the Socialist-Liberal coalition attempted to reduce the support given by the previous Social Christian government for Catholic education in favour of state schools. Flemish Movement

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Louis Vos. "The Flemish National Question", p.91.

leaders denounced this policy as a Walloon one, and the initiative met with strong opposition in the form of mass Catholic (primarily Flemish) demonstrations.¹⁷

The Flemish Movement used these two events to suggest that, although Flemings represented the demographically dominant group in Belgium and were technically able to translate this strength in the political arena in virtue of the universal suffrage, they were still an 'oppressed minority' within the Belgian state. Consequently, institutional changes that would make Flemings a majority within a politically significant unit were necessary. The nationalist party *Volksunie* (VU) was created in 1954 to push for a federal system organized on the basis of the two main language communities (bipartite federalism). VU was to a certain extent the successor to the nationalist-fascist parties and did include an authoritarian wing. It made the amnesty of collaborators a major issue. It evolved, however, into a party willing to work within the liberal-democratic framework and developed a left-wing platform on issues non related to the *problème communautaire*. VU was the embodiment of the Flemish Movement not only in terms of the moderate-radical ambiguity but also in terms of programme. In addition to supporting bipartite federalism, it also advocated the fixation of the linguistic frontier and the 'containment' of Brussels.

The Walloon Movement was unsuccessful in using the 1945 *Congrès wallon* to build its momentum and increase its popular following. The *question royale*, which brought claims by Walloon leaders that the King was pro-Fleming, did not lead to a significant increase of sustained popular support for the Movement. The crucial moment in the history of the

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Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, p.32 and p.112.

Walloon Movement came with the strike of 1960-61. The austere *Loi unique* adopted by the Social Christian-Liberal coalition met with strong opposition among trade unions and in the Socialist family. Strike action was uneven. It enjoyed more support in Wallonia from the very beginning, but the discrepancy became more important as time went on. For the socialist *Fédération générale du travail de Belgique* (FGTB) and union leader André Renard who had attempted to mobilize the whole Belgian working class against the bourgeoisie, the strike was a profound disappointment. Renard and other union leaders began articulating the idea that the workers' struggle was a Walloon struggle, and that Walloons were, like workers, an oppressed minority within Belgium. They began to advocate a region-based federalism as a way for Walloons to take control of economic-related issues which could not be left in the hands of Flemings and Brusselers.¹⁸

Following the strike, Renard created the first significant Walloon party, the *Mouvement populaire wallon* (MPW), which would press the federalist agenda.¹⁹ The strike led Walloon Movement leaders to articulate more clearly than ever that Walloons were now an oppressed minority within Belgium. It gave the Movement the opportunity to increase its popular following. Indeed, only in the 1960s following the move of the Socialist family in

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Vincent Vagman, *Le mouvement wallon et la question bruxelloise*, pp.26-29.

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The MPW was, like its successor the *Rassemblement wallon* (RW), partly a nationalist and partly a regionalist party. These organizations included people that had abandoned Belgium as a national framework and replaced it by Wallonia and others who retained it but sought to maximize the power of the Walloon region.

Wallonia towards the Movement does it become a mass movement.²⁰ It is also only in the 1960s that claims for federalism gain in Wallonia some popular acceptance.²¹

In 1961, the Social Christian-Socialist coalition decided to seek a long-term solution to the *problème communautaire*. This decision was taken in the face of growing pressure from the Flemish and Walloon Movements (and their new formal expressions), and as a consequence of the controversy over the ten-yearly census. The use of the census as a way of adjusting the linguistic frontier met with great opposition within Flemish circles since this procedure could lead to claims for increased bilingual facilities in 'Flemish territory'. In 1960, "hundreds of Flemish municipalities and town councils refused to operate the bilingual census forms which might be used as a disguised language referendum."²² Consequently, the first concerns of the governing coalition was to freeze the linguistic frontier between Flanders and Wallonia in order to eliminate potential squabbles over the census practice. This enforcement of linguistic homogeneity entailed the moving of communes. Two moves proved problematic, one more than the other. The transfer of the nine Francophone communes of Mouscron-Comines from Flanders (West Flanders) to Wallonia (Hainaut) met with some resistance among locals but was not opposed by the Flemish Movement who had initiated the freezing of the frontier. The transfer of the Voer (Fourons) district from Wallonia (Liège) to Flanders (Limburg) turned out to be extremely controversial. Residents of Voeren, where the

²⁰ Chantal Kesteloot, *Mouvement wallon et identité nationale*, pp.41-42.

²¹ Denise Van Dam, "Histoire du mouvement wallon", in Marco Martiniello and Marc Swyngedouw (eds), *Où va la Belgique? Les soubresauts d'une petite démocratie européenne*, pp.80-81.

²² Louis Vos "Introduction: A Brief History of the Flemish Movement", p.32.

vernacular was a mixture of Netherlandic and German dialects but where French was used in the administration. voted in a local referendum (93%) to remain in Liège.²³

The Walloon Movement turned the Fourons issue into a new symbol of oppression. The most controversial issue tackled by the governing coalition was Brussels. As the national capital and the capital of the European Community, the historical Flemish city of Brussels was steadily expanding into Flanders proper bringing with it its French influence. Flemish leaders argued that this expansion was something akin to an 'oil stain', and that it had to be contained by freezing the border of the metropolitan area. Both Walloon leaders and especially French-speaking Brusselers wanted to include the communes of the periphery, which had a substantial Francophone population, into Brussels and denounced the idea of limiting the expansion of the capital through a legislative 'iron collar'. The resulting compromise consisted in limiting the Brussels capital region to the 19 communes of the metropolitan area but in giving six peripheral communes with an important Francophone population a special status and 'bilingual facilities'. This compromise, which was widely viewed as a Flemish triumph, was denounced by leading French-speaking Brusselers who were also dissatisfied with the strengthening of Brussels' increased bilingual status. They were especially critical of Walloon who had refused to concede to bilingual facilities in Wallonia in exchange for a more flexible Flemish position on Brussels' periphery.²⁴ They decried the Walloon sellout and formed a

²³ Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, p.153.

²⁴ Ibid., p.154.

party to 'speak' for French-speaking Brusselers, the *Front Démocratique des Francophones* (FDF).²⁵ The 1961-62 language laws created a third 'oppressed minority' in Belgium.

The attempt to solve the *problème communautaire* for 'a generation' increased the level of nationalist mobilization in Belgium and worsened the relationship between language communities. This new dynamic profited the community parties. They each argued that the laws represented a loss or were insufficient for their respective communities: Flemish nationalists denounced the facilities of the periphery, Walloon Movement leaders argued that the laws only answered Flemish claims and French-speaking Brusselers decried the 'iron collar' around the capital. The result of the 1965 election illustrates the beneficial effects of the two latest crises (the strike and the legislation of 1961-62) for the fate of the community parties.²⁶ VU won 12 seats compared with 5 in the 1961 election. For the first time, two Walloon parties, including the MPW won seats (one each). The FDF won three seats in its first ever election. Besides the 'new' parties, the biggest winner of the 1965 elections was the Liberal Party which had not been part of the preceding governing coalition and profited from resentment in its bastion of Brussels. Social Christians lost support in Wallonia, but also in their stronghold of Flanders where the Liberals and the Volksunie made progress. Flemish Social Christians, for whom competition coming from VU was a matter of great concern, interpreted the party's poor showing in Flanders as a sign that it needed to be more aggressive on the *problème communautaire*. Socialists also saw their support decline in Flanders and

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The FDF was originally neither a nationalist nor a regionalist party. It was, in fact, strongly unitarist

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Pascal Delwit, "Elections et gouvernements en Belgique depuis 1945", pp.236-240.

in their fortress of Wallonia where Liberals and the two small Walloon parties made significant inroads. For Walloon Socialists, the party's decline in the South was seen partly as a warning that future 'Flemish gains' would translate into further electoral misfortune.

The strong performance of the community parties in the 1965 elections put tremendous pressure on the traditional parties which started showing signs of division almost immediately.²⁷ Formally autonomous wings emerged within the Christian Social party in 1965. The Socialist party developed *de facto* separate wings in their 1966 congress as a result of disagreements on future constitutional reforms, and held distinct Flemish and Walloon congresses in 1967. The Liberals experienced strain after the 1968 elections over the issue of Brussels. These elections saw the community parties make further gains at the expense of the traditional parties. VU increased its electoral representation to 20 seats, the FDF to five, and the new *Rassemblement wallon* won five more seats than did its predecessor parties with seven. This rise in popularity of the community parties came at the expense of the Social Christians, especially in Flanders, and the Socialists in Wallonia.

The results of the 1968 elections were to a large extent a consequence of the new dynamic that had shaped Belgian politics since the end of WWII. The immediate context for these elections was provided by the increase in nationalist mobilization which surrounded the Leuven (Louvain) issue. The Catholic University of Leuven, the most prestigious university in Belgium, was a historically Francophone university which had become increasingly bilingual since the 1930s. The university location in Flanders made this situation very controversial for the Flemish Movement. The controversy grew stronger in the early 1960s when senior

²⁷

Ibid., p.143.

university professors and administrator suggested that the *town* of Leuven be given special bilingual status, and that the university expand to a nearby Walloon district. (Leuven is located only a few kilometers from the linguistic frontier.) The passage of the latter proposal into law in 1965 prompted the Flemish Movement to galvanize opposition to the Francophone presence in Leuven by presenting it as a Flemish capitulation and using the 'oil stain' metaphor. The organization by the Movement of mass, often violent, student demonstrations demanding the 'expulsion' of Francophones from Leuven made the issue extremely explosive.²⁸ The situation was further complicated when the Flemish show of force prompted the Walloon Movement to defend the 'right of Walloons' to stay in Leuven. The crisis took a new turn in 1968 when plans for an increased Francophone presence in the University brought down the government. Feeling the pressure from the Flemish Movement, the Flemish Social Christians refused to approve the projected legislation associated with these plans and withdrew their support for the government.

The 1968 elections were contested in an atmosphere of extreme polarization which struck at the very heart of the traditional parties. The Social Christian were particularly divided since Flanders was the stronghold of the party and Leuven was a Catholic University. The results of these elections further added to the general climate of crisis and to the pressure felt by the Flemish Social Christians to adopt a more aggressive position on the *problème communautaire*. Following the elections, the Flemish wing of the Social Christians, who represented the most important political force in the country, made their participation in the government conditional to the transfer of the Francophone 'section' of the University to

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Lode Wils, *Histoire des nations belges*, p.306.

Wallonia.²⁹ The condition was accepted. The Leuven crisis left the traditional Belgian political parties more divided than ever. The Social Christian party in particular was badly polarized between militant Flemings and outraged Francophones. Its split in 1969 paved the way for major institutional change in Belgium.

A popular saying, which has been attributed to several different practitioners and observer of Belgian politics, describes Belgium as a country where three oppressed minorities coexist.³⁰ This saying finds all its meaning in post-WWII nationalist mobilization, and it nicely expresses the previously highlighted idea that the interpretations by elites of particular situations are much more important in understanding nationalist mobilization than the situations themselves. This period also highlights the importance of party politics and political-electoral considerations in shaping the behaviour of elites and transforming the institutional context in ways that make nationalist mobilization more or less likely and intense. Indeed, the creation and relative electoral success of community parties put tremendous pressure on the Flemish and Walloon elites within the traditional parties to become more militant on the *problème communautaire*. This new activism polarized the parties. In turn, the creation of linguistic wings within these parties facilitated their involvement in nationalist politics and exacerbated relations between Belgium's linguistic communities.

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Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, p.115.

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Maureen Covell, "Ethnic Conflict, Representation and the State in Belgium", p.230.

4.1.4 Structural Polarization and Political Crisis: The Federalization of Belgium.

The reform of the Belgian state that began with the 1970 constitutional revision was largely the product of the split of the traditional parties upon linguistic lines. Strong unitarists until the late 1960s, these parties gradually changed their position as the autonomy of linguistic wings and later the creation of distinct parties significantly altered their calculations. The two crucial actors of the reform were the Flemish Social Christians (CVP) and the Walloon Socialists (PS). Dominant in both Belgium and Flanders, the CVP enjoyed a certain degree of flexibility on the question of state reform. As VU's favourite target, however, it was constantly pushed to be more militant on the *problème communautaire*. Initially a hesitant reformer, the CVP rapidly became an ardent supporter of bipartite, community-based federalism. The PS, dominant in Wallonia but second fiddle in Belgium as whole, was a strong advocate of tripartite region-based federalism. The other parties have been reluctant reformers for fear of marginalization within the new institutions. Nevertheless, they had to adapt to the new political reality of decentralization. Francophone Liberals (PLP and after 1979 PRL) made the adjustment the easiest. They gradually abandoned their commitment to the strong unitary state in favour of a tripartite federal model that would include a region, Brussels, where they are dominant. The Flemish Liberals (PVV, which became the Vlaamse liberalen en democraten (VLD) in 1992), Flemish Socialists (SP) and Francophone Social Christians (PSC) for whom decentralization and autonomy meant marginalization accepted the federalization process more reluctantly. They have followed more than initiated change although the PSC has sometimes been involved in nationalist outbidding.

The creation of regions and communities in the 1970 and 1980 constitutional revisions combined with the formal separation of the Liberal and Socialist family to make Belgian politics increasingly ethnocentric.³¹ From the late 1970s, political parties did not have to be preoccupied with gaining support among Belgians of both language groups; they played to a language-specific audience. In addition, the absence of direct elections for the parliaments of Communities and Regions meant that 'national' and 'regional' politicians were one and the same. In practice, this conflation of roles meant that there were no true national politicians as they had to answer first and foremost to language and/or territorial-specific communities and simply brought this perspective in the national arena. The party which most clearly adopted a regional perspective was the PS. The PS became in the 1980s the formal embodiment of the Walloon Movement. It took advantage of a language controversy in Voeren to create a major political crisis which could be used to further the federalization of Belgium. The reforms of 1988 and 1993 gave the PS as well as the CVP and the PRL a relatively secure institutional basis for their respective power.

Transforming the unitary structures of the Belgian state had never been a priority of any of the traditional parties before tensions began dividing their Flemish and Francophone members in the late 1960s.³² The Social Christian party was the dominant political force in the country and showed little interest in a re-organization of the Belgian institutions that could

³¹ While each of the three traditional parties have split into distinct parties, parties of the same ideological family have so far always participated in government together. The CVP brings the PSC to power, the PS does the same for the SP, etc...

³² Aristide R. Zolberg, "Federalization without Federalism in Belgium", in Milton Esman (ed), *Ethnic Conflict in the Western World*, pp.117-118

jeopardize its position of power. The Socialist party viewed itself as a national party whose first objective was to defend the interests of workers, and did not see in decentralized structures a more appropriate arena for this struggle. The Liberal party was probably the strongest unitarist party of all three, for it drew most of its support from Brussels and sought to promote the interest of a city that benefited greatly from its status as the national capital of a highly centralized state. The pressure put on these parties by the community parties which led to the creation of linguistic 'wings' also triggered the emergence of 'autonomist strands'. These strands were most prominent in the CVP and, to a lesser extent, in the Francophone wing of the Socialist party. The 1970 constitutional revision driven by the Social Christian-Socialist coalition has to be understood as the result of bargaining and compromises between political parties and also between unitarists and autonomists within parties.³³ The creation of Communities competent in linguistic and cultural matters was an attempt by the CVP to meet the traditional demands of the Flemish Movement. The creation of these units presented little threat to the hegemonic position of the CVP in Belgian politics since it would naturally become the dominant party of a Flemish Community. Moreover, the actual power of these Communities remained extremely limited following the 1970 reform. This meagre decentralization of power and the decision not to have members of Community institutions directly elected represented concessions to the unitarists.

The creation of Regions was a response to demands from Walloon Socialists who sought to establish a secure basis for their power. However, severe divisions among

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Maureen Covell, "Agreeing to Disagree: Elite Bargaining and the Revision of the Belgian Constitution", *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 15 (1982), pp.451-468.

Francophone Socialists between autonomists and unitarists precluded any agreement on the powers to devolve to the Regions.³⁴ Consequently, the existence of Regions was written into the constitution but they were not attributed any powers. Francophone parties and 'wings' also obtained linguistic parity in the national executive as well as provisions stipulating that laws relating to community matters required a double majority (a majority in each linguistic group) and that those suspected to threaten a community's welfare could be held for consideration (the alarm bell procedure).³⁵ In exchange, similar measures were to be implemented in Brussels to protect the Flemish minority. The reform of 1970 did not address the question of Brussels since no agreement could be reached on the exact border of the capital and its status within the new, still developing, Belgian model.

The issue of borders centred around the communes peripheral to the 19 communes of the metropolitan Brussels area where lived a substantial number of Francophones. Flemish parties and party wings wanted to limit Brussels to the 19 communes in an effort to contain further 'Frenchification' of 'historical Flemish territory'. Their Francophone counterparts demanded that the 'natural progression' of Brussels not be impeded by the imposition of an 'iron collar' around the capital. This conflict over Brussels' exact borders was important to all parties since changes in the relative importance of language groups could bring transformations in the political balance of power. The issue of the specific status of Brussels

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Maureen Covell, "Possibly Necessary but not Necessarily Possible: Revision of the Constitution in Belgium", in Keith Banting and Richard Simeon (eds), *Redesigning the State. The Politics of Constitutional Change*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p.81.

³⁵

Maureen Covell, "Ethnic Conflict, Representation and the State in Belgium", p.253.

within the new arrangements was equally as difficult as the border question.³⁶ Leading French-speaking Brusselers looking for a power base of their own demanded that Brussels be made a Region. This position was supported by Walloon leaders who saw in the creation of a Brussels Region the making of a Wallonia-Brussels alliance against Flanders. Consequently, all the Francophone parties and wings advocated a tripartite federal model. Flemish forces opposed this idea for fear of *minorisation* at the national level. They argued for bipartite federalism and suggested that Brussels simply be incorporated within the Community framework. The bypassing of the Brussels question and the embryonic state of the new Communities and Regions gave the 1970 constitutional revision a partial and ambiguous character which reflected the diversity of the bargaining positions of the different actors involved in the negotiations, and the complicated interactions between them.

In the years following the 1970 constitutional amendment, the Belgian party system also became increasingly favourable to further decentralization and institutional change. Tensions within the Socialist party increased. The Liberal party formally split (between 1970 and 1972). The three new parties, VU, RW and FDF, reached new heights in the 1971 and 1974 elections combining for more than 20% of the seats. Of particular importance was the fact that the CVP became resolutely federalist.³⁷ In 1977, the CVP, the PSC and the Socialists brought in the VU and FDF in the governing coalition in the hope of pushing through a new constitutional amendment. These parties agreed on a major institutional reform known as the

³⁶ Liesbet Hooghe, *A Leap in the Dark. Nationalist Conflict and Federal Reform in Belgium*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p.17

³⁷ Lieven De Winter, "Le CVP: entre gestion et conviction", in Pascal Delwit and Jean-Michel De Waele (eds), *Les partis politiques en Belgique*, p.71.

Egmont pact. This agreement represented a blueprint for a federal model composed of two Communities and three Regions with increased power. The creation of a Brussels region was a concession that both the CVP and the VU were now willing to make in order to erect a powerful Flemish Community. The important decentralization of powers met with opposition from the unitarist strand of the traditional parties but it was the specific provisions of the pact concerning Brussels that made it greatly controversial. The Egmont pact limited the Brussels Region to the 19 communes of the metropolitan area but allowed French-speakers of several peripheral communes "to elect a fictitious domicile within any commune of Brussels-Capital for electoral, administrative, judicial, and educational purposes".³⁸ This last arrangement was meant to satisfy the FDF and represented another concession by the CVP and VU who were more concerned with the autonomy of Flanders than with the status of Brussels' periphery.

The Flemish Movement strongly denounced both the CVP and the VU for that 'capitulation'. Pressured by the Movement and facing possibilities of internal revolt, both parties distanced themselves from the pact and the government fell. The failure of the Egmont pact left the Belgian party system more polarized than ever. The Socialist party split in 1978. That same year, some Flemish nationalists left VU to create a more radical nationalist party, the separatist and fascist Vlaams Blok (VB). This failure did not preclude a Social Christian-Socialist-Liberal governing coalition to attempt another constitutional revision in 1980. It did, however, incite the parties to postpone the resolution of the Brussels issue. Consequently, the 1980 reform only embodied changes upon which the major political forces of both language

³⁸

Kenneth D. McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies. Belgium*, p. 166.

groups could agree. The CVP saw considerable powers transferred to the Communities while the PS finally obtained the effective creation of Regions. Ironically, the electoral success of the FDF allowed the coalition to circumvent the Brussels issue since it had deprived the Francophone parties (with the possible exception of the PLP) of any significant Brussels presence. Therefore, the PS and PSC were able to enter negotiations as Walloon representatives without having to suffer from any major internal backlash.³⁹

The reform of 1980, like the 1970 constitutional revision and the 1962-63 language laws, was intended to settle the *problème communautaire*, or at least to bring social peace in Belgium for an extended period of time. As was the case for the two preceding efforts, this objective was not achieved. In fact, the reform of 1980 had very similar consequences to those of earlier attempts at solving Belgium's community question in that it led to increased tensions between these communities. The driving force behind these increased tensions were the very institutions that were supposed to alleviate them. The Communities and Regions quickly became centrifugal forces in the Belgian political system.⁴⁰ The conflicts and rivalries that strained their relationships were carried over to the national arena as both levels of government shared a same political elite. National politicians were, in fact, first and foremost the representatives of their Region or Community. They had little incentive to adopt a Belgian perspective to conflict resolution, and most of the time they did not. The consequence of this dynamic for political parties was to radicalise their position. On the Flemish side, this process

³⁹ Maureen Covell, "Ethnic Conflict, Representation and the State in Belgium", pp.253-254.

⁴⁰ Lode Wils, *Histoire des nations belges*, p.315.

was most visible within the CVP which became in the 1980s a staunch advocate of the maximisation of powers for the Flemish Community.⁴¹ The other Flemish traditional parties did not have similar stakes in massive decentralization as did the CVP which was the dominant party in Flanders but they nevertheless began embracing the idea of further devolution of powers.⁴² Even the Flemish green party Agalev, created in 1982, supported important decentralization.⁴³ The nationalist party VU was still a fervent advocate of federalism while the VB demanded outright independence for Flanders.

The radicalisation of political parties was even more pronounced among Francophone parties. The PS led the charge. More than any other party, it made a conscious decision to 'turn away from the national level' and focus on a sub-national unit.⁴⁴ Starting in 1981, the PS chose to strongly advocate federalism as it saw in a strong Wallonia the best option for its political-electoral future.⁴⁵ This new strategy also represented a way for the PS to neutralize and eventually integrate RW. In turn, this move accentuated the nationalist drive

⁴¹ Lieven De Winter, "Le CVP: entre gestion et conviction", p.72.

⁴² The SP more than the PVV. See Serge Govaert, "Le Socialistische partij (SP)" and Kris Deschouwer, "Le VLD ou l'impasse structurelle du libéralisme en Flandre", in Pascal Delwit and Jean-Michel De Waele (eds), *Les partis politiques en Belgique*, p.54 and p.127.

⁴³ Benoît Rihoux, "Agalev 1970-1996: d'un mouvement marginal à un parti systémique", in Pascal Delwit and Jean-Michel De Waele (eds), *Les partis politiques en Belgique*, p.143.

⁴⁴ Liesbet Hooghe, *A Leap in the Dark. Nationalist Conflict and Federal Reform in Belgium*, p.77.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.77-78.

of the party.⁴⁶ The PSC, known for a long time as the most unitarist of all the parties, was forced to adopt a more militant stance by the PS whose nationalist discourse translated into electoral success in Wallonia. Marginal in Brussels, the PSC had to fight the PS on its own battleground and chose to outbid the Socialists in the nationalist game. It did not, however, accompany its new militancy with significant claims for federalism. The PRL did not engage in a similar struggle for power in Wallonia, since its stronghold was in Brussels. It did mimic the PS' strategy of incorporating a community party when it entered in an electoral federation with the FDF in the early 1990s.

The PS was the main instigator of the 1988 reform as it took a local language controversy and turned it into a national political crisis. In 1982, Walloon nationalist José Happart was elected mayor of the small municipality of Voeren which had been transferred from Wallonia to Flanders following the freezing of the linguistic frontier in 1962-63.⁴⁷ Happart was leading a campaign to have the Fourons (French for Voeren) returned to the province of Liège. When he became mayor, he refused to use Dutch in official proceedings as the law demanded. The PS pounced on the controversy. It presented Happart as a Walloon hero resisting Flemish oppression, and defended his action in Voeren. In 1984, Happart was elected to the European parliament on the PS list. Riding the Happart-nationalist wave, the PS enjoyed great popularity in Wallonia. This success threatened the PSC first and foremost. The Francophone Social Christians tried to match the PS's activism in the Voeren issue. This

⁴⁶ Marc Swyngedouw, "Les rapports de force politiques en Belgique", p.49.

⁴⁷ Voeren has a population of about 4,000 people.

new militant attitudes severely strained its relationship with the CVP for whom any revision of the commune's language status was unacceptable.⁴⁸

In 1987, disputes over Voeren led to the fall of the government. The subsequent election was a tremendous success for the PS. Its militant strategy paid off as it won 44% of the Walloon vote. The new coalition (CVP-PSC, PS-SP and VU) had to decide what to do with Happart and the Voeren issue. The governing parties saw in the necessary resolution of the Voeren conflict the opportunity for a larger constitutional settlement that could put nationalist tensions to rest and provide a permanent solution to the *problème communautaire*. Indeed, the Voeren question was directly tied to the issue of minority-language facilities, and, by extension, to Brussels' border and peripheral communes. The departure of Happart was non-negotiable for the Flemish parties. He agreed to step down in favour of a more moderate Walloon candidate and received 'in compensation' increased cultural subsidies for the Walloons in Voeren and for his own political organization.⁴⁹ A new system of local governance insuring the presence of the minority member groups in the Council of Aldermen was established for all municipalities with mixed status. The Brussels question was also settled. The Flemish parties, most importantly the CVP, agreed to make Brussels a Region in its own right but only if it was limited to the 19 metropolitan communes. The Francophone parties agreed but obtained that the bilingual facilities of the six main peripheral communes be formally written in the constitution. Protective measures for the Flemish minority in

⁴⁸ Liesbet Hooghe, *A Leap in the Dark. Nationalist Conflict and Federal Reform in Belgium*, p.83.

⁴⁹ Rolf Falter, "Belgium's Peculiar Way to Federalism", in *Nationalism in Belgium. Shifting Identities, 1780-1995*, pp.187-188.

Brussels (executive parity, double majority, alarm bell procedure) mirrored those for the Francophone minority at the national level. Community powers would be exercised in Brussels by a French and Flemish Community Commission whose members would be drawn from the Brussels parliament. The 1988 reform also included major transfers of power to the Regions and Communities, along with greater financial independence. The parties fell short of making Belgium a full-fledged federation as the representatives of Communities and Regions were still the members of the national parliament. The influence of unitarists (who had really become moderate federalists at this point) within some of the governing parties was, much more than a Flemish-Francophone opposition, the main obstacle to federalization.

The reform of 1988 proved to be no more a permanent settlement of the *problème communautaire* than were the language laws of 1962-63 or the first two constitutional revisions of 1970 and 1980. Once again in 1991, an issue apparently unrelated to community relations triggered a major political crisis which would revive nationalist fever in Belgium and paved the way for a new reform. That year, Flemish left-wing parties opposed an arm-sales deal to Saudi Arabia that would have benefited the Walloon steel industry. Francophone parties translated this ideological opposition into a community issue, and accused Flemings of seeking the marginalization of Wallonia. The Walloon parliament (composed of national representatives) threatened to assume power over export licences.⁵⁰ This challenge to the constitution outraged Flemings. For all the (democratic) parties, federalism was now the favoured option to reach a new peace between communities. The Social Christian-Socialist coalition that was formed after the 1992 election received the support of Agalev, Ecolo and

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Ibid., p. 190.

Volksunie to turn Belgium into a federation. The most important element of this reform was the decision to have parliaments for Wallonia and Flanders directly elected. (The Brussels and German-speaking parliaments already were directly elected while the members of the French Community institutions were drawn from the Walloon and Brussels parliaments.) There also were changes in the Senate's composition and powers. Finally, new powers were transferred to the sub-national units, although not to the extent of the 1980 or 1988 revision. Of particular significance was the transfer of competences in international affairs that allowed Communities and Regions to pursue a foreign policy on matters relating to their own spheres of jurisdiction.

The 1993 reform was relatively unsuccessful in mitigating nationalist tensions in Belgium and keeping at bay centrifugal forces. The *problème communautaire* periodically re-surfaces through various issues. The greatest potential for acute nationalist conflict in Belgium resides most likely in the 120, 000 or so Francophones living in Flanders. For the Flemish Movement and Flemish parties, this small imperfection in the linguistic homogeneity of Flanders represents a minor yet important shortcoming in the fulfilment of the Movement's historical claims. Any perceived attempts to assimilate this French-speaking population will more than likely trigger a vigorous response from Walloon parties who might be tempted to re-create a Happart-like phenomenon. In fact, disputes and controversies over the exact status of various facilities have already stirred nationalist sentiments. Viewed as temporary and transitional measures by Flemings but as permanent fixtures by Francophones, the facilities have been at the heart of a controversy that could take Voeren-like proportions.

The existence of powerful Communities and Regions has also led to new claims for increased decentralization. The Flemish government has suggested that social security should be 'federalized', and it will likely increase the pressure on the federal government to engage in yet another constitutional reform. Flemish parties have increasingly stressed the Flemish identity at the expense of the Belgian one over the last twenty-five years. They have also begun articulating the idea of a fundamental contradiction between Belgium and Flanders. The two nationalist parties, particularly the VB, insist the most on this 'incompatibility'. They depict the position of Flanders within Belgium as peculiar and abnormal. The VB also gives Flemish nationalism a radical stream which carries a strongly exclusivist definition of the nation. The Flemish Movement as a whole is slowly moving towards a more 'open' nationalism although its long-time focus on language and linguistic homogeneity is antithetical to a purely subjective definition of the nation. Francophone parties do not articulate the idea of an opposition between Belgium and other territorial identities to the same extent as the Flemish parties. There is no nationalism in Brussels and only weak regionalism. There is in Wallonia a reluctance to embrace nationalism and to speak of a Walloon nation.⁵¹ The claims of Walloon leaders for autonomy and their attempt to develop a Walloon identity is articulated more in terms of a regional than a national project. This suspicion towards nationalism allows Walloon leaders to sidestep to a great extent the always difficult question of belonging.

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Philippe Destatte, "Present-Day Wallonia. The Search for an Identity without Nationalist Mania".

Belgian politics has been increasingly driven by the *problème communautaire* over the last thirty years. Relations between linguistic communities have deteriorated significantly since the 1960s. Political institutions and elites have been instrumental in stimulating nationalist conflict in Belgium during this period. Transformations in the structure of the Belgian party system was the single most important factor leading to acute nationalist tensions. The split of the traditional parties upon linguistic lines made almost every issue a community-related one. It allowed party leaders to espouse nationalist positions since they did not have to worry about gaining support from members of the other language group. In fact, the new political-electoral dynamic created by the polarization of the party system gave great incentive for some party to engage in nationalist mobilization and to demand the transformation of Belgium's unitary structures. For the PS, whose stronghold was in Wallonia, it made sense to seek the creation of autonomous Regions and to adopt an aggressive pro-Walloon position. For the PSC who competed against the PS for Walloon votes, it was necessary to match or outbid the Socialists' claims. For the CVP, dominant in both Flanders and Belgium as whole, power could be achieved either within unitary or federalized structures. However, the presence of Flemish nationalist parties in the system pushed the CVP to often take a hard line on community issues and to become strong a strong advocate of federalism. The creation of sub-national institutions whose members were members of the Belgian parliament compounded the centrifugal tendencies of the party system. There was no independent force defending the Belgian state and consistently adopting 'Belgian positions'. National politicians were really representatives of Communities and Regions, and Belgian politics became nationalist politics.

The increasing integration of Europe is a political-institutional variable that will affect that trend, although it is still unclear exactly how it will do so. So far, the EU has most likely stimulated rather than stifle nationalist mobilization in Belgium. It has also emboldened nationalist leaders in their claims. The key to these outcomes rests on the impact of European integration on nationalist discourse. The EU allows nationalist leaders to present current national boundaries and systems as being in decline and, indeed, bordering irrelevance. It has enabled them to articulate a different (European) institutional model which is more compatible with their political objectives. Flemish elites, for example, suggest that a confederation of smaller political units is the most likely form of political organization for Europe, and that Flanders' long-term future resides in such a structure rather than in Belgium.⁵² The EU also allows regional elites to adopt strong nationalist or regionalist positions because it may be invoked as a political and economic safety net. It places these elites in a better position to present potential transitions towards independence, or even extensive autonomy, as marginal and benign political changes. This argument is particularly important in Wallonia where regionalist/nationalist leaders such as José Happart have attempted to alleviate fears that the region's structural economic decline leaves it vulnerable to further decentralization, or perhaps the break-up, of the Belgian state. As a consequence, Walloon leaders might take an increasingly aggressive stance of the community question and alter the historical pattern of reaction to the Flemish Movement. This is one example of the potential consequences of continuing European integration for patterns of nationalist mobilization in Belgium.

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This was especially the case under the leadership of Luc Van den Brande. See Francoise Massart-Piérard, "Les entités fédérées de Belgique, acteurs décisionnels au sein de l'Union européenne", *Politique et Sociétés*, 19 (1999), p.18, note 58.

4.3-Spain

4.3.1 Patterns of Political Activism and the Rise of Ethnonationalism in late 19th and early 20th Century Spain.

A popular saying among Spaniards and observers of Spanish politics is that the Basques want to leave the country whereas the Catalans want to run it. This metaphor illustrates a fundamental difference between the claims and objectives of the two nationalist movements. The Catalan movement is mostly autonomist while the Basque movement is guided by the idea of independence. The roots of this difference may be traced to the development of ethnonationalism in these two regions at the end of the 19th century, and to the distinct patterns of elite influence and relationships that were at its centre. The creation of the Catalan nationalist movement was one of the initiatives taken by regional elites in the context of their attempt to exert influence over the Spanish state and shape its policies. For the liberal bourgeoisie seeking protectionist positions for its products, the end of political and administrative corruption, and a general 'enlightenment' of Spain's power structure, nationalism was both an alternate and complementary option to a strategy consisting of penetrating the central state. For left wing leaders, it was part of a larger effort of political-institutional restructuring that featured most importantly republicanism, and represented a strategy to improve the socio-economic condition of the working class. In the Basque provinces, nationalism was an extension of foralism. The Basque nationalist movement was created by Sabino Arana as a weapon against the forces of centralization and modernization. Arana's 'conversion' from Carlism to nationalism represented a strategic change for the Basque traditional elite looking to preserve the society's social structures through isolation.

The development of ethnonationalism in Catalonia was the byproduct of the bourgeoisie's desire to acquire influence over Spanish politics and policies in order to make them friendlier to business, industrialization and commerce. Merchants and industrialists in Spain's most industrialized region sought for the better part of the 19th century to shape the central state's attitude towards economic development and trade. They took great interest in the country's commercial policy, and were particularly concerned with providing the region's textile industry with tariff protection. These objectives of Catalonia's liberal regional elite triggered the development of relationship patterns with the state that featured numerous attempts to take control of, or least become prominent in, central institutions. The success of these attempts were always short-lived. The Catalan bourgeoisie was at the heart of the 1868 Glorious Revolution which deposed Isabel II but lacked support for its liberal-industrialist perspective in a country still predominantly agrarian. Although Catalan elites were at the forefront of the 1873 First Republic, they were soon overwhelmed by opposition forces, including Basque Carlists and Catalan left wing and anarchist activists. The extremely negative reactions in Madrid to the prominence of Catalans in the Republican government (local newspapers claimed that "Spain had become the patrimony of Catalonia") served as an additional reminder to Catalan elites that controlling the Spanish state would not be an easy task.⁵³ The development of anti-Catalan feelings following this period also laid the basis for popular nationalist mobilization.

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From *El Eco de España*, quoted in Albert Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism. Past and Present*, p.31.

The Catalan bourgeoisie always accompanied its attempt to penetrate the Spanish state with a struggle against centralization. On the one hand, it attempted to influence Spanish policies and on the other it sought limit the scope of a 'backward' and agrarian state. The balance began tilting in favour of the adoption of a strong nationalist/regionalist framework among the Catalan bourgeoisie following the loss of Spain's last colonial possession in 1898. Not only did this event hurt its business interests, it was seen as the final step in the decline of a once powerful empire and received as a further proof of the state's ineffectiveness. Prat de la Riba, a leading member of this Catalan bourgeoisie, argued that the modern state was an industrial project, and that the colonial crisis of 1898 demonstrated the failure of Spain's coalition of elites to change the 'tribal' nature of its state.⁵⁴ The political activism of Catalan merchants and industrialists, both in their attempts to 'catalanize' Spanish politics and fight off centralization, triggered a stress on the Catalan language and culture, and their association with specific social and political-institutional claims. Prominent Catalan liberal elites created cultural organizations/groups in the context of their struggles. Valentí Almirall formed the *Centre Català* in 1881 and published in 1886 a nationalist programme for Catalonia, *Lo Catalanisme*. In 1887, the *Centre Català* merged with the *Renaixença* cultural group to form a new association, the *Lliga de Catalunya*.

The articulation of claims for autonomy on the basis of language, culture and historical tradition did not mean the end of the Catalan bourgeoisie's attempt at influencing Spanish politics. In the years following the loss of the colonies, it offered its support to an outsider in his bid for power in exchange for fiscal autonomy but failed to receive the promised status.

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Quoted in Jaume Rossinyol, *Le problème national catalan*, p.249.

This episode represented another key step in the bourgeoisie's focus on a regional framework although it did not lead to the termination of its relationship with Madrid.⁵⁵ The *Lliga Regionalista* then put pressure on the Spanish state to adapt its policies in a way that would allow merchants and industrialists to take advantage of the economic opportunities of WWI. It created a powerful opposition front that included left wing parties and threatened to overthrow the monarchy. When offered to participate in the government, the *Lliga* accepted. This decision infuriated the left wing stream of the Catalan nationalist movement and greatly contributed to the *Lliga*'s decline. The Catalan bourgeoisie's constant dilemma between autonomy and influence at the centre translated into a nationalist movement that did not consider cutting the region's ties with Spain. Prat de la Riba's manifesto *Per Catalunya i l'Espanya Gran* embodied this concern with Catalonia's status within Spain. Moreover, the *Lliga* did depend on the Spanish state to enforce 'law and order' in the context of socialist and anarchist activism. The autonomy-control dilemma also greatly conditioned the level and pattern of nationalist mobilization in Catalonia. While the Catalan movement of the late 19th century was essentially the realm of a small liberal elite, the bourgeoisie's 'cooperation' with the centre, especially during Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, favoured the involvement in nationalist politics of mass-oriented forces such as anarchism and socialism.

The synthesis between left wing political activism and ethnonationalism that emerged in Catalonia following WWI grew out of a struggle for republicanism. Republicanism was not a novel idea in Catalonia, and it had been associated with nationalism in the past. Almirall had

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Juan Díez Medrano, *Divided Nations. Class, Politics and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia*, pp.94-96.

seen in a federal republican model a structural adjustments that represented a logical solution to the historical centralist tendencies of the Spanish monarchy. However, the failed experiment of 1873 left the bourgeois-driven Catalan nationalist movement wary of republicanism which it associated with political and social disorder. Catalan left wing leaders, for whom the monarchy was a repressive force whose main function in the region was to crush workers' demonstration, associated the republican model with social progress and emancipation. They did not immediately establish a connection between republicanism and nationalism since the latter was associated with the 'conservatism' of the *Lliga* and its bourgeois leaders. In fact, pre-WWI republicanism in Catalonia as articulated by charismatic leader Alejandro Lerroux was strongly anti-Catalanist.⁵⁶ The post-WWI increase in social unrest that included general strikes and assassinations affected the position of Catalonia's elites. The *Lliga* welcomed an authoritarian answer while left-wing leaders began suggesting "a loosening of ties with a state that had long proved incapable of solving Catalonia's problems."⁵⁷

In the context of Catalonia's acute social conflicts and a pattern of response by the central state revolving around the use of violence (re-affirmed by the proclamation of the dictatorship in 1923), the blend of left-wing political activism and republicanism led to the articulation of claims for autonomy on the basis of Catalan social and cultural specificity. The creation of several socialist/republican/nationalist parties in Catalonia following WWI (most

⁵⁶ Albert Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism. Past and Present*, p.48.

⁵⁷ Juan Diez Medrano, *Divided Nations. Class, Politics and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia*, p.100.

notably the *Partit Republicà Català*, *Estat Català* and *Bloc Republicà Autonomista*) was a reflection of the new synthesis, and laid the foundations for the transition of the Catalan nationalist movement to a mass movement. At the end of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, Catalan republican parties insisted, and obtained, that a Second Spanish Republic come with a Statute of Autonomy for Catalonia. Political competition in the newly autonomous region stimulated nationalist mobilization as the left-wing ERC attempted to fend off the attacks of a rejuvenated *Lliga*. The Second Republic coincided with the triumph of the ERC and its programme which connected social progress to the political confederation of Catalonia with other regions of Spain.

The creation of Basque nationalism in the late 19th century was an extension of Carlism and foralism that involved both continuity and change. The Basque provinces had a long tradition of nurturing and defending their autonomy from the Spanish state. Their argument that the special nature of their historical relationship with the Crown as embodied by the practice of the *fueros* represented the basis for a permanent and inalienable right to remain free of interference from the central state was the core of a political ideology known as foralism. In the 19th century, foralism became the central tenet of a broader resistance movement against centralization that had the Basque provinces as its stronghold, Carlism. The Carlist opposition to centralization was part of a larger programme constructed by a traditional elite which featured opposition to capitalism, industrialization and modernity. Consequently, foralism became, in the context of Carlism, closely associated with a conservative social order. The failure of the Carlist movement which corresponded with the abolition of the *fueros* in 1876 led traditional elites in the Basque provinces to pursue their

struggle using a different strategy. This new strategy was nationalism. Writing about his 'conversion' from Carlism to nationalism, Sabino Arana credits his brother Luis for demonstrating to him that "Carlism was an unnecessary, inconvenient, and destructive way to prevent Spanish influence", and prompting him "to start studying with serenity the history of Biscay, and to adhere firmly to the Truth."⁵⁸ Nationalism represented for Arana and the Basque traditional elite an attractive answer to the demise of Carlism. The addition of the concept of race to the ideas of tradition and autonomy gave the new mix greater scope and mobilization potential. For prominent *Fueristas* such as Arturo Campión, nationalism was "more graphic, more intense, and thoroughly expressive", and represented a position one could adopt "without subscribing to new ideas, without adopting new attitudes."⁵⁹ For this reason, Campión, like Arana and other traditionalists, opted to "renounce the old label" and call himself "a nationalist".⁶⁰ Basque nationalism was the continuation of the Carlist and foralist struggles through different means.

The element of continuity between nationalism and previous forms of socio-political struggles in the Basque provinces embodied by a common focus on the preservation of a conservative social order was accompanied by three important and interrelated changes. The first was the formal expression of the idea of a Basque race which was associated with religion, traditional structures and the *fueros*. The second is the conceptualization of a Basque

⁵⁸ Quoted in Juan Díez Medrano, *Divided Nations. Class, Politics and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia*, pp.75-76.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p.75.

⁶⁰ Idem.

community beyond provincial borders. The third was the call for the creation of a Basque state. At the centre of these three innovations was the desire of a traditional elite, threatened with socio-political marginalization by the forces of centralization and modernization, to insulate their society from change. Arana gave birth to the Basque nationalist movement in a period where the Basque provinces were undergoing industrialization and experiencing immigration from the rest of Spain. Arana denounced the double threat of capitalism and 'foreign invasion' which he used to form the nucleus of his discourse and mobilization effort. In this context, race was a more efficient means than language to separate the morally superior Basques from the non-Basques (*maketos*). It served to avoid the 'contamination' of a way of life. The reference to a Basque race comprising all those with Basque ancestry and bearing a Basque name projected the idea of a nation composed of the three Basque provinces, Navarre and the three 'Basque *départements*' in France. Arana called for the independence of this nation and the creation of a Basque state. This new claim was the product of his combined stress on race and social isolation/preservation. Arana argued that unlike language, "[R]ace, once lost, cannot be resuscitated."⁶¹ For this reason, he suggested that independence was the only safe way to guarantee the survival of the Basque race which he described as the protector of the Basque soul and way of life.

As we have already seen, Arana invented all the symbols (the name, the anthem, the flag, etc...) that would serve to stimulate nationalist mobilization. He also articulated a hatred for Spain that would become central to the discourse and mobilization efforts of the radical stream of Basque nationalism. Arana denounced Spain's corruption of the Basque land and

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Quoted in Stanley Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, p.76.

society. He ridiculed Catalans for wanting “all Spaniards living in their region to speak Catalan” and for despising Spain only “because they would like to see it big and powerful, and instead they see it humiliated and emaciated.”⁶² He highlighted the desire of Basque nationalists not to have anything to do with Spain. The popular following of Basque nationalism was very weak in the late 19th and early 20th century. It was practically non-existent outside Vizcaya. The PNV’s greatest success came in 1917 when it won the Vizcayan provincial elections, and in the 1918 general elections when it won seven of the twenty seats in the four provinces including five out of six seat in Vizcaya.⁶³ Subsequent divisions within the PNV between followers of Arana and followers of Sota undermined its electoral fortunes and the general support for nationalism in the Basque provinces. Nationalist mobilization got a boost with Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship as the clandestinity of political action favoured culture-oriented networks. When the dictatorship fell, nationalism was no longer seen mainly as an eccentric and radical force. It was now widely considered a legitimate and credible political option. In 1933 general elections, the PNV became the most important party in the Basque provinces winning 12 out of 24 seats, although all of them were in Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa. That same year, the PNV mustered 88% of popular support for a Statute of Autonomy in what was a great victory for the nationalists.

Continuity and change also characterized the development of nationalism in Galicia. Galician nationalism grew out of a political movement of local autonomy known as

⁶² Quoted in respectively Juan Diez Medrano, *Divided Nations. Class, Politics and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia*, p.81 and Stanley Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, p.76.

⁶³ *Ibid*, pp.95-96.

provincialism, which was a mid 19th century reaction to state centralization. The movement was led by elites who either saw the loss of autonomy as a threat to a traditional Catholic society, and their own position within it, or as the progression of an oppressive state that maintained the region in a condition of economic backwardness. These elites developed cultural themes, such as the Celtic character of Galicia, that were later used to articulate a nationalist programme. Galicia's traditional elites, led by Alfredo Brañas, connected the region's distinct language with its rural-conservative past while Liberals insisted on the underdevelopment of this cultural community. Both elites denounced Spain as the enemy and suggested that self-government was the solution to Galicia's problem. The Galician nationalist movement remained divided and weak in the first decades of the 20th century. The membership of cultural/nationalist organizations such as the *Irmandades da Fala* (Language Brotherhoods) oscillated between 500 and 700 people in the post-WWI years.⁶⁴ Galician nationalism peaked after the end of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship with the creation of the PG. The party's struggle for self-government contributed to the spreading of nationalist ideas as did the drafting of a Statute of Autonomy and the subsequent struggle for its implementation in the context of the Second Republic.⁶⁵

The development of ethnonationalism in Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia in the late 19th and early 20th century points to two important lessons for understanding ethnonationalism. First, the emergence of nationalist movements is often the product of a

⁶⁴ Justo G. Beramendi and Xosé M. Núñez, "The Historical Background of Galician Nationalism", p.40.

⁶⁵ J.C. Bermejo *et al.*, *Historia de Galicia*, (Madrid: Editorial Alhambra, S.A., 1981), p.292

reformulation of older claims and movements by elites facing a threat to their power and influence. Traditional elites in the Basque provinces and Galicia put the cultural/linguistic/racial dimension at the centre of claims for autonomy historically expressed by foralism and provincialism. In Catalonia, the local bourgeoisie emphasized the region's cultural distinctiveness as its frustration grew over failed attempts to exert sustained influence on the Spanish state. Second, the early development period of nationalism is not unimportant. In Spain, it is crucial in explaining the different goals of the Basque and Catalan nationalist movements. The weakness in Catalonia of claims for outright independence is to a large extent the product of an historical pattern of elite relationship that saw the Catalan bourgeoisie go back and forth between strategies of autonomy and control. For the traditional elite in the Basque provinces whose goal was a complete and permanent isolation of their society from the forces of modernization and the preservation of a race, independence was the solution.

4.3.2 Expansion, Radicalization and Legitimization: Basque and Catalan Nationalism under Franco and During the Transition

The Franco dictatorship was a crucial trigger of nationalist mobilization in contemporary Spain. The regime's violation of human rights and its repression of cultural/linguistic distinctiveness had the unintended consequence of giving new meaning to culture-oriented forms of expression by associating them with freedom and democracy. For this reason, nationalism gained great legitimacy, became more intense and acquired a broader base under Franco. The early years of the dictatorship left little room for any type of

nationalist activity but the gradual weakening of the regime opened the door for democratic and/or revolutionary opposition which took in Catalonia and the Basque provinces nationalist forms. In the Catalan case, denunciation of the authoritarian regime did not translate into a rejection of Spain. The liberal/bourgeois and left wing/working class forces that were at the centre of Catalan nationalism in the early 20th century were also at the heart of the struggle against Franco. They operated through liberal/Catholic organizations and left wing parties which, especially in the latter case, were concerned with broad social issues. In the Basque provinces, the anti-capitalist and anti-modernization forces that created the Basque nationalist movement and demanded the creation of an independent state were at the forefront of the struggle against the dictatorship, albeit after undergoing some mutations. ETA's fight was Arana's in that its exclusive focus was the Basque Country. Its violent strategies of guerilla warfare which were designed to trigger random repression in the hope of increasing the mobilization of the Basques against both authoritarianism and Spain stimulated anti-Spanish feelings and bolstered support for a distinct political future for the Basque Country. These intense processes of nationalist mobilization fully revealed themselves after Franco's death where they triggered important political-institutional changes.

The spurt of nationalist activity that coincided with the Second Republic came to an abrupt end with the Civil War. As we have already discussed in previous chapters, one of the goals of General Franco in taking arms against the Republic was, along with the 'containment' of 'communism', the elimination of 'separatism'. For Franco, nationalism and separatism were one and the same, and the fact that nationalist movements in Catalonia and Galicia never expressed any serious secessionist desires made no difference. In fact, the

suppression of the Catalan autonomous government was one of the military's top objective.⁶⁶ Franco's triumph destroyed nationalist networks in both Catalonia and the Basque Country. Basque and Catalan leaders which escaped execution fled into exile. The first few years of the dictatorship were marked by a level of political-cultural repression that left no room for nationalist activity. From 1939 to 1945, policies destined to eradicate any cultural/linguistic particularism in Spain were applied in full force.

The victory of the Allies led both Basque and Catalan leaders, those in exile as well as those operating underground, to believe that major changes in the regime were imminent. The expected overthrow of Franco's regime never came, and the West's implicit support for the dictatorship had for immediate consequence to keep nationalist opposition weak and demoralized. However, Franco's international isolation did trigger somewhat of a decrease in repression in the years following the end of WWII. This development left an opening for a tentative mobilization of opposition forces which bundled up cultural, autonomy, human rights and pro-democracy claims. The fundamental characteristic of the resistance to Franco was the amalgamation of all the different political/ideological positions condemned by the regime. Nationalism and autonomy became *de facto* associated with emancipation and democracy. This conceptual connection was also a practical one as pro-democracy and human rights groups in Spain's 'historical nationalities' were nationalist, and vice-versa. For this reason, the level of nationalist mobilization was stimulated by, and roughly coincided with, the overall intensity of democratic opposition.

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Albert Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism. Past and Present*, p.114.

The intensity of nationalist mobilization, which remained weak immediately following the end of WWII, increased dramatically in the 1960s. In 1959, Franco made important changes in his cabinet which gave more power to a new group of young technocrats at the expense of Falangists (hard-core Fascists). This move was part of a larger plan aiming at improving the Spanish economic performance by ending its international isolation and integrating it into the Western capitalist economy. It marked a perceived softening of the regime which triggered a rapid acceleration of democratic/nationalist mobilization. In the 1960s, Basque and Catalan nationalism, bolstered by their association with the broader resistance movement, became full-fledged mass movements. In 1959, complaints and derogatory comments made by a Catalan newspaper executive about the use of Catalan in religious ceremonies and the Catalans in general triggered a massive campaign against the paper. Led by Jordi Pujol, this campaign built up so much pressure that the regime, fearing revolt, removed the executive from his position. Pujol organized the following year a concert featuring songs holding great symbolic value for nationalists, one of which (*Els Segadors*) had been excluded from the programme by the authorities. When it was performed, Pujol was arrested and jailed. His trial triggered popular outrage. It made him a hero and great symbol of the Catalan struggle. The formal Catalan Church authorities spurred this Christian-oriented nationalist agitation when the abbot Aureli Escarré issued, in an interview to the French newspaper *Le Monde*, "the toughest condemnation of the regime ever uttered from the interior."⁶⁷ These events, which reinvigorated Catalan nationalism and highlighted some

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Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain. Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, p.128.

weaknesses in the regime's armor, led the creation of several cultural associations, most importantly *Omnium cultural*.⁶⁸ In very much the same way that the struggle of Catholic organizations for human rights allowed them to exercise a leadership within the Catalan nationalist movement and exert pressure on the regime, the PSUC's democratic discourse evolved, in the context of the dictatorship, towards nationalism. The Communists were particularly influential among (illegal) labour unions and universities but also within local and women's associations. These networks provided the Catalan nationalist movement with increased mobilization opportunities. With Pujol in jail, the PSUC, along with political forces such as *Assemblea de Catalunya*, assumed a leadership role in the democracy struggle.

In the Basque Country, the intensification of nationalist activity was the consequence of the creation of a new nationalist/opposition organization: ETA. ETA was formed by youth groups, both inside and outside the PNV, who were disappointed by the historical party's opposition to Franco and disenchanted with the attitudes of Western powers towards the regime. It sought to increase the level of resistance to the dictatorship and chose to adopt the Aranist strategy of rejecting everything Spanish. While the position consisting in associating Spain with brutality and oppression was not novel in the Basque provinces, ETA gave it additional meaning through its own use of violence. Its nationalist mobilization tactics derived from Krutwig's theory of action/repression/action cycle. The logic behind ETA's violence was to highlight and accentuate the regime's repression in order to increase resentment and

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Jaume Rossinyol, *Le problème national catalan*, p.449-551.

active opposition.⁶⁹ ETA's strategists and activists suggested that carefully planned violent actions against specific Spanish political, administrative and military targets would trigger random and intensified state repression. In turn, such arbitrary violence would outrage the general population, foster deep feelings of hatred for Spain and stimulate Basque nationalism. The dynamic effect of this action/repression/action spiral would increase nationalist mobilization and put unbearable pressure on the regime.

ETA's strategy was rather successful. In 1969, an ETA member was executed by the *Guardia Civil* following a bank robbery where a police officer was shot. The killing led to mass demonstrations in the Basque provinces, transformed the victim into a hero and bolstered ETA's popularity and membership. In response to the execution and following the logic of action/repression/action, ETA murdered a police inspector. This initiative triggered mass arrests, torture and a national state of emergency, and led to more popular demonstrations. The trial of those suspected of the murder was a decisive moment in the process of nationalist mobilization in the Basque Country.⁷⁰ The Burgos trial brought international attention to the Basque movement and the Franco dictatorship. It sparked massive popular demonstrations, general strikes and university protests in the Basque provinces and also in the rest of Spain. The trial heightened opposition to the regime to the point that Franco commuted the suspects' death sentences. It exposed the weakness of a crumbling dictatorship and legitimated ETA's violent activism. ETA became with the Burgos

⁶⁹ John Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism. The Fight for Euskadi, 1890-1986*, pp.42-43.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp.92-112.

episode the embodiment of both Basque nationalism and the larger resistance movement. To criticize ETA was interpreted as supporting the regime.⁷¹

ETA's violent activism was a crucial factor in shaping nationalist mobilization in the Basque Country during the transition. The period 1978-1980 corresponds to ETA's most murderous years.⁷² This intense phase of killings was designed to put pressure on the different actors negotiating the new Spanish constitutional and institutional arrangement. ETA's main Basque target was the PNV with whom it had a very tense relationship. The competition between ETA (often through its political arm, HB) and the PNV for the leadership of the Basque nationalist movement was, especially in the context of the transition where the stakes were very high but the outcome uncertain, at the heart of the dynamic of nationalist mobilization in the Basque Country. ETA's Aranist position consisting in the rejection of any Spanish framework and the demand for Basque independence cornered the PNV and forced it to adopt rigid positions. A major issue for the PNV in the proposed constitution was what it considered to be the absence in the document of a formal recognition of the historical nature of the Basque right to self-determination. In the words of then-PNV leader Carlos Garaikoetxea, "Basque *foral* rights are fundamental rights, which at no time were granted by the state, but have always been consubstantial with the Basque people."⁷³ This position was opposed by the governing UCD, which rejected the idea of special historical rights. The

⁷¹ Marianne Heiberg, *The Making of the Basque Nation*, p.107.

⁷² Robert Clark, *Negotiating with ETA. Obstacles to Peace in the Basque Country, 1975-1988*, p.15.

⁷³ Quoted in Richard Gunther *et al.*, *Spain after Franco. The Making of a Competitive Party System*, p.344.

debate over the exact nature of the Basque *fueros* was said to be one over the Basque right to self-determination and, consequently, was associated with the possibility of an eventual independent Basque Country.

If ETA's themes permeated transition negotiations in the Basque Country primarily by putting pressure on the PNV, so did its methods. The PNV recognized the popular support ETA had gained with its spectacular opposition to Franco and took an ambiguous position towards its violent actions, not completely endorsing them but refusing to condemn them. Right-wing forces used ETA's killings to promote the Francoist position and argue that any status of autonomy would be tantamount to chaos and separatism. It was impossible, however, for the UCD to push the centralist model. Massive popular demonstrations centering on the now inextricably tied ideas of democracy, freedom and autonomy in many regions left very little room to manoeuvre. In Catalonia, nationalist/democratic mobilization was particularly intense. One demonstration in Barcelona in 1977 was estimated to have been attended by more than one million people. "Hailed as the biggest demonstration in postwar Europe, it gave an unmistakable signal to Madrid that the time for dismantling the centralist state had come."⁷⁴ The nexus democracy/autonomy shaped by several decades of centralist authoritarianism was reflected in popular attitudes towards various models of territorial division of power. In 1979, the centralist option was supported by a majority in only four regions (Old Castile 69% New Castile 52%, Aragón 53% and Murcia 51%).⁷⁵ Centralism was

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Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain. Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, p.142.

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See the data in Richard Gunther *et al.*, *Spain after Franco. The Making of a Competitive Party System*, p.248.

rejected particularly strongly in the Canary Islands, the Basque Country and Catalonia where only 16%, 17% and 21% of the population preferred this model. Support for some form of autonomy, either limited or extensive, was close to or above 60% in these three regions (79% in the Canary Islands, 68% in Catalonia and 59% in the Basque Country) but also in Valencia (70%), the Balearic Islands (68%), Andalucia (63%), Asturias (62%), Galicia (58%) and even in Madrid (68%). The independence option gathered substantial support only in the Basque Country (23%) although it was also in double digit in Catalonia (11%).

Spain under Franco shows that changes in state forms affect patterns of political mobilization which in turn condition further institutional development. At the broadest level, conflation of the ideas of democracy, freedom, human rights with autonomy resulting from the authoritarian state made it impossible for centrist and right wing Spanish elites to impose a centralized model. The spectacular resistance offered by ETA in the Basque Country and Jordi Pujol's leadership in Catalonia were powerful symbols during the transitional order. As a result, the constitution was the product of a delicate balance between autonomist and centralist forces as reflected by references to 'regions' and 'nationalities' as well as the 'indivisible Spanish nation'. The power relationships revealed in the transition period, but developed during the dictatorship, also explains the creation of 17 Autonomous Communities, three of whom (Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque Country) were intended to be given more powers than the others.

4.3.3 Territorial Distribution of Power, Elite Competition, Ethnonationalism/Regionalism and Decentralization in Democratic Spain.

The Spanish autonomy framework was put in place with the hope of defusing nationalist activity in Catalonia and the Basque Country, and weakening these regions' claims for autonomy or independence. It was supposed to represent a permanent and final answer to territorial activism in the country. The result was just the opposite. The Autonomous Community model had the unintended consequence of extending nationalist mobilization beyond Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia while stimulating nationalist politics in these three 'historical nationalities'. It galvanized autonomy claims and triggered an unplanned and unforeseen process of decentralization that saw many Communities demand increase power and more advantageous fiscal arrangements. The new Spanish institutions fostered three patterns of elite relationships that spurred nationalist politics. The first pattern involves competition between elites of different Autonomous Communities and follows three different dynamics. On the one hand, political elites of many of the regions not considered 'historical nationalities' sought to obtain powers similar to those of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia. They did not want to be left behind in the decentralization process and claimed that the Autonomous Community framework should involve every region equally, that it should bring *café para todos* (coffee for everyone). On the other hand, the 'historical nationalities' staunchly fought off any homogenization of territorial powers. They invoked their cultural and historical specificity to preserve a 'differential fact' within the Spanish framework. This general dynamic of comparative grievances has also operated among the three 'historical nationalities', primarily between Catalonia and the Basque Country, as any

perceived advantage for one Community is used by the other Community's elite to articulate claims to the centre.⁷⁶

The second pattern features political elites within the Autonomous Communities. The presence of nationalist/regionalist parties in many Communities has created a political/electoral context conducive to the strengthening of nationalist positions, especially in the Basque Country where ETA and its political arm HB kept the PNV from 'softening' its stance. The third pattern involves regional-nationalist and central elites forming parliamentary alliances. Electoral outcomes at the national level have given nationalist elites great leverage. They have been able to take advantage of the failure of the state-wide parties to win majorities in general elections by offering their support in exchange for concessions to their Communities.

The Spanish constitutional and institutional framework was designed to establish a system of autonomy that could represent a safeguard against authoritarianism and accommodate Basque and Catalan nationalism. This double logic led to the creation of two types of territorial entities and two different procedures for accession to autonomy. The thinking was that 'historical nationalities' would be entitled to acquire autonomy through a 'fast route', and to exercise substantial powers in key areas such as culture, language, health, education, social affairs and public security. In the case of the 'regions', it was thought that a 'slow route' would prove sufficient, and that those wishing to acquire autonomy (probably not all of them) would be content with minor powers. However, many regional elites came

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For the concepts of differential fact and comparative grievance, see Luis Moreno, *La federalización de España. Poder político y territorio*, pp. 107-113.

to oppose the idea of a special status for Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia. They suggested that their regions also had a particular cultural-historical heritage and were no less entitled to exercising substantial powers. They denounced the lack of uniformity in the treatment of regions, and sought popular support to give greater legitimacy to their claims.

This dynamic of nationalist mimesis was first triggered by Andalucía's challenge of the autonomy procedure for 'regions'.⁷⁷ The compromise struck with Andalusian representatives did not go unnoticed among elites of other Communities who saw in it an opening for pushing through their own claims. Regional elites in Valencia and the Canary Islands took their cue from their Andalusian counterparts and started claiming powers for their Communities similar to those of the 'historical nationalities', stimulating nationalist/regionalist mobilization in the process. Nationalist activity in Andalucía (and the popularity of the PA) declined after a compromise solution was found over accession to autonomy, but increased in the other two regions (especially in the Canary Islands where nationalist/regionalist parties experienced great electoral success). In turn, these ambitious elites seeking to 'catch-up' with the 'historical nationalities' became models for others in Communities such as Cantabria, La Rioja and Madrid that had no history of practicing nationalist or regionalist politics.⁷⁸ Indeed, "[M]ost autonomous governments have ceaselessly requested increasing financial transfers and legal powers from the central government in order

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Jack Brand, "Andalusia: Nationalism as a Strategy for Autonomy".

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Luis Moreno, "Federalization and Ethnoterritorial Concurrence in Spain", p.81.

to approach the level of the Basques and the Catalans.”⁷⁹ As a consequence, the transfer of powers to an ‘historical nationality’ was often accompanied by transfers to other regions, albeit usually not to the same extent. In the late 1980s for instance, regional elites in Valencia, Navarre and the Canary Islands followed the lead of their Catalan counterparts in claiming, and obtaining, increased powers in health services. In 1992 and 1997, ‘Pacts of Autonomy’ transferred powers in education and other fields to all 17 Autonomous Communities.⁸⁰

The mimesis effect was only one consequence of the inter-Community elite competition fostered by the new institutions. If the perspective and political-territorial activism of regional elites outside the ‘historical nationalities’ revolved around the idea of ‘catching-up’ with Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia, keeping a superior status quickly became a major preoccupation of the latter three Communities’ elite. The Basque and Catalan nationalist elites were particularly keen in preserving the asymmetry of the community system. To the slogan *café para todos* expressing the idea of a power devolution to every Community they opposed the concept of *hecho diferencial* which embodied the notion of a distinct status. These elites argued that an homogenization of territorial powers would amount to a marginalization of their region’s place within Spain, and a negation of their historical importance. They also recognized that a leveling of Community powers and status could threaten their own political leverage within Spanish politics, and consequently sought to reaffirm the primacy of ‘historical nationalities’ over regions. This desire to stress the *hecho*

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Josep M. Colomer, “The Spanish ‘State of Autonomies’: Non-Institutional Federalism”, p. 47.

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Ibid, p.48.

diferencial was a major contributor to nationalist mobilization in democratic Spain. It prompted political elites in Catalonia and the Basque Country to stress their region's distinct culture, language, traditions and history in a manner that set them apart from other regions which could also claim cultural-historical specificity. Their mobilization strategy designed to preserve the political advantage associated with the concept of the *hecho diferencial* also involved emphasizing the Second Republic's Statutes of Autonomy, the 'heroic' Basque and Catalan opposition to Franco, and the fact that Basque and Catalan nationalists were the main actors claiming autonomy during the transition.⁸¹

In practical terms, the struggle of Basque and Catalan elites to maintain a dimension of asymmetry in the Spanish political-institutional framework translated into claims for increased powers in an effort to stay one step ahead of other regions. More specifically, attempts by the central government to homogenize territorial powers, and the effort of other regional elites to achieve that same end, triggered claims for more powers in the Basque Country and Catalonia. The desire to preserve and enhance the distinct status of the 'historical nationalities' also had consequences for the institutional preferences of their regional elites. The option of federalism raises suspicion in these Communities, particularly in Catalonia where Jordi Pujol associates it with territorial uniformity.

The dynamic of comparative grievances that has been at the centre of nationalist mobilization and decentralization in democratic Spain is not limited to the relationship between regional elites in the 'historical nationalities' and the other Communities. It is also featured in the relationship between leaders of the three nationalities themselves. Most

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Luis Moreno, *La federalización de España. Poder político y territorio*, p.108.

importantly, comparative grievances are at the centre of the Catalan nationalist agenda when it comes to evaluating the region's position in the Spanish political-institutional system in relation to that of the Basque Country. The key issue is a fiscal one. In 1980, Basque representatives negotiated an agreement known as *conciertos económicos* with the central government which allowed the Basque provinces to levy their own taxes. This power had been claimed, and obtained, by Basque nationalists on the basis that similar provisions had been put in place following the loss of the *fueros* in 1876. A similar agreement involving Navarre was also reached and justified by the existence of a comparable historical right. The Catalan political elite has denounced the independent taxation system of the *conciertos económicos* as amounting to giving the Basque Country and Navarre 'brandy with their coffee', that is, of providing them with an unfair advantage.⁸² Catalan nationalists argue that the lack of a similar agreement involving Catalonia harms the region's development as it contributes more to the Spanish coffers than it receives. They have revived old claims that the Spanish state is backward and inefficient, and suggested that its failure to develop Spain as a whole is a major cause of the 'financial discrimination' suffered by Catalonia.⁸³

They have also, in that same perspective, taken aim at Spain's principle of inter-territorial solidarity. The Spanish constitution states (articles 40 and 130) that the central state, and also regional and local governments, have the responsibility to insure that all Spaniards enjoy a similar standard of living and that there exists an economic balance between

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Robert Agranoff, "Inter-governmental Politics and Policy: Building Federal Arrangements in Spain", *Regional Politics & Policy*, 3 (1993), p.5.

⁸³

Luis Moreno, "Federalization and Ethnoterritorial Concurrence in Spain", p.79.

the Autonomous Communities. This principle, which has translated into a mechanism of territorial redistribution (the *Fondo de Compensación Interterritorial*) was meant to act as a counterweight to the forces of nationalism/regionalism and decentralization. However, in the context of the political-territorial dynamic of comparative grievances spawned by the new Spanish institutions, the idea of inter-territorial solidarity and its financial and economic implementation have served to bolster the Catalan nationalist argument of unfair treatment. Among the three 'historical nationalities', the traditionally poor Galicia and the declining Basque Country have been favoured by the *Fondo*.⁸⁴ This situation has led Catalan regional elites to accentuate their condemnation of the economic and developmental policies of the state, and their criticism for the Basque special taxation system.

Nationalist mobilization and politics in democratic Spain also has roots in the regional party systems created by the framework of Autonomous Communities. Here again, the historical opposition of Basque and Catalan nationalists to Franco and their prominence in the transition negotiations is of particular importance since it provided the PNV and the CiU with the prestige to immediately assume a dominant position within their respective regional party system. The initial popularity of these parties allowed them to shape the political agenda of their Communities in terms of their relationship with the central state. Their nationalist discourse and positions quickly became crucial references for other parties seeking to compete politically and electorally with them. In Catalonia, state-wide parties rapidly adopted regional labels and structures. In the 1980 regional elections, the Socialists ran under the

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John Gibbons, "A Semi-federal State?", in Don MacIver (ed), *The Politics of Multinational States*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), p.281

double banner of the *Partits dels Socialistes de Catalunya* (PSE) and the PSOE while the Communists were represented by the PSUC which was affiliated with the *Partido Comunista Español* (PCE) but remained institutionally autonomous. Even the UCD added *Centristes de Catalunya* to its label. In the Basque Country, the UCD, AP and PCE ran as 'Spanish' parties but they did very poorly winning only nine seats out of sixty collectively. The Socialists adopted the double banner strategy presenting themselves as the *Partido Socialista de Euskadi* (PSE)-PSOE and finished third behind the PNV and the HB. In Galicia, the minor role played by nationalists at the time of the transition did not give the *Bloque Nacional Popular Gallego* (BNPG) a clout similar to that enjoyed by the PNV in the Basque Country and the CiU in Catalonia. Consequently, the 'regionalization' of state-wide parties in Galicia was not as important as in the latter two regions. The AP and UCD which dominated the 1981 elections did not have regional wings. The Socialists did, running under the *Partido Socialist Gallego* (PSE)-PSOE banner, and finished third. Election held since confirm the trend for political parties competing in Catalonia and the Basque Country to stress their nationalist/regionalist character. The Socialists are now simply the PSC in the former while in the latter they have merged with the left wing nationalist EE and run under the label of PSE-EE.

Aside from the 'regionalization' of state-wide parties in Catalonia and the Basque Country, the political dynamic of the two regional party systems has favoured nationalist politics and mobilization by giving a strong voice to smaller, more radical, nationalist parties who have sought to keep the dominant nationalist party 'in line'. This process has been particularly observable in the Basque Country where the secessionist nationalism stream was

strongest. Of particular importance were the violent actions of ETA which put the PNV in a difficult position. On one hand, Spain was now a democracy and violence no longer seemed to have its place. On the other hand, it was politically difficult to condemn a nationalist organization that had galvanized opposition to Franco. Consequently, the position of the PNV towards ETA was ambiguous for most of the current democratic period. The PNV did not approve of ETA's method but respected, if not agreed, with its goal of independence. Its positioning *vis-à-vis* ETA was rendered even more difficult by the relative electoral success of its political arm HB which consistently won between 15% and 20% of the seats. In 1988, however, all the major political actors in the Basque Country, with the exception of HB, signed the Pact of Ajuria-Enea which took a more definite stand against a violent solution to the question of the region's political future.⁸⁵ The Pact stressed, however, that the 'ETA problem' was not one of nationalism but one of democracy, revealing that the terrorist organization's claim for Basque independence was still a delicate issue for most other parties.

Ten years later, ETA's assassinations of PP councillors sparked such public outrage that violence as a strategy of nationalist mobilization was becoming a dangerous political option. ETA's subsequent announcement of a truce gave nationalist politics and mobilization in the region a new dynamic, which was further reinforced by the terrorist organization's recent return to violent activism. These events have coincided with, or rather generated, the strong condemnation of violence by all Basque parties (with the important exception of HB's successor party *Euskal Herriarok* (EH)) which have denounced as illegitimate means ETA's

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For the essence of the Pact, see www.euskadi.net/pakea/pronunciamento/22no91i.htm

of 'promoting' the Basque cause. As a result, the exercise of positioning themselves with respect to ETA is an easier task for the PNV and other nationalist parties. At first glance, this change could make the PNV's position more flexible on the issue of the Basque Country's place in Spain. However, the integration (EH) as a (almost) legitimate political actor within the Basque party system may very well increase pressure on the PNV to show more clearly a commitment to Basque independence. In other words, EH may gradually become, along with EA, another (almost) 'acceptable', although still radical, nationalist alternative to the PNV. The 1998 Basque regional elections which were held after the announcement of ETA's truce provides some insight into EH's potential future influence on Basque politics. Not only did EH improve on HB's eleven seats of 1994 by winning fourteen seats⁸⁶ but also, and more importantly, it offered parliamentary support to the PNV-EA government which was accepted.⁸⁷

CiU was not exposed to the same type of pressure to adopt radical nationalist positions. It dominates the Catalan party system much more than the PNV dominates the Basque party system, and has never had to contend with a violent secessionist nationalist organization. The only other important nationalist organization which puts significant pressure on CiU is ERC, (although the PSC is also Catalanist.) ERC supports the idea of independence but its weak electoral success (it has won about 10% of the seats in the regional parliament since 1980 including the 1999 election) has limited its ability to effectively influence CiU.

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For regional election results in Spanish Autonomous Communities see, again, *The Europea World Yearbook*, (London: Europea Publications Limited, 1984-1999).

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For the coalition document, see Programa de Gobierno (1999-2002) www.euskadi.net/infogv/programa_c.htm.

One last consideration about regional elections needs to be taken into account when analyzing nationalist politics and mobilization in democratic Spain: their timing. These elections are not held concurrently with national elections, nor does every Autonomous Community have its election at the same time. As a result of the varying degree of importance given to autonomy among the Communities, regional elections were first held in Catalonia and the Basque Country (1980), then in Galicia (1981) and Andalucia (1982), and finally in the other regions (1983). There has been no effort to homogenize the timing of regional electoral contests or to have them correspond with national elections. The consequence of this election structure has been to "give political parties in opposition to the central government more opportunities to introduce new issues onto the political agenda in order to challenge the basis on which the government party had won the previous elections."⁸⁸ Nationalist parties in Catalonia and the Basque Country have been able to develop their own agenda in regional elections without being overshadowed by the larger 'Spanish' issues of national elections. The staggered elections have also made it easier for voters to split their votes between nationalist and state-wide parties at the two levels.⁸⁹

The third pattern of elite relationship at the heart of nationalist politics and mobilization in democratic Spain involves regional and central elites. There are two dimensions to this pattern. The first is peculiar to the Basque Country and involves ETA. ETA's violence was at the centre of the PNV's relationship with the central state. It gave the

⁸⁸ Josep M. Colomer, "The Spanish 'State of Autonomies': Non-Institutional Federalism", p.45.

⁸⁹ Idem.

PNV a particularly strong bargaining position with the central elites, both during and after the transition, as the historical Basque party was able to argue that failure to grant substantial autonomy to the Basque Country could be interpreted as the failure of 'moderate' Basque nationalism and would generate support for ETA and HB. The threat of increased support for radical secessionist nationalism was instrumental in negotiating the 1980 *conciertos económicos*. It was also crucial in obtaining before any other Community, including Catalonia, privileges such as extended power over health services and a regional police force. The latter concession was motivated by the potential danger inherent to the presence in the Basque Country of Spanish law enforcement in the context of ETA's activism.

The second dimension of the relationship between regional and central elites that conditioned nationalist politics and mobilization in post-Franco Spain involves electoral competition, calculations and strategies at the national level. The proportional representation system in democratic Spain allowed nationalist/regionalist parties to gain representation in the national parliament. In the 1977 and 1979 election the CiU and PNV were the fifth and sixth political force in the country. By 1982, they had more seats than the PCE. Nationalist/regionalist parties such as EE, HB, ERC, UPN, PAR, PSA also gained representation in the national parliament early on. These parties carried little direct weight in the national arena during the first fifteen years of the democracy for two reasons. The first is the concern of the Spanish-wide parties over autonomy. In the early years of the democracy, the main national parties cooperated to slow down and contain a process of decentralization they thought could spin out of control. In 1981, perception was that the process had in fact spun out of control, and the PSOE and UCD collaborated on the LOAPA. Second, and most

importantly, is the fact that after the fear that autonomy would lead to the break-up of Spain subsided, the PSOE became dominant in the Spanish party system. It obtained parliamentary majorities in the 1982 and 1986 elections, and won half the seats (175 out of 350) in 1989.

The situation changed in 1993 when the PSOE won the election with only 159 seats. Furthermore, strong and acceptable coalition partners were few and far between for the PSOE. The party that had come in second place and which was most improved was the right wing PP that had been described as neo-Francoist by the PSOE during the campaign. A coalition between these two ideological antagonists was not an option. The centrist *Centro Democrático y Social* (CDS), which could have been a suitable partner for the PSOE, was decimated in the 1993 elections, failing to win a single seat after having won 14 in 1989. The *Izquierda Unida* (IU), successor to the PCE, opposed the process of European integration supported by the PSOE and consequently became a problematic ally. Only the nationalist parties were left. The PNV's five seats and especially the CiU's 17 seats quickly became the PSOE's target. Although mainly centre-right parties, the PNV and CiU's ideological malleability was an attractive feature for the Socialists. The nationalists refused to enter a formal governmental coalition with the PSOE fearing it would hurt their credibility as representatives of their respective nation. They did, however, accept to provide parliamentary support in exchange for promise of further transfers of powers and greater fiscal autonomy.⁹⁰

The 1993 elections marked the beginning of a new pattern of bilateral relationship between nationalist and state-wide parties that saw the former negotiate their parliamentary

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Richard Gillespie, "The Hour of the Nationalists: Catalan and Basque Parties in the Spanish General Election of 6 June 1993", *Regional Politics & Policy*, 3 (1993), p.189.

support to the latter in exchange for increased autonomy. This development spurred the process of decentralization and stimulated nationalist politics and mobilization by boosting the importance of nationalist parties. It meant that these parties were able to exercise an influence in Spanish politics that was disproportionate to their actual electoral strength, and it made a vote for such parties a potentially decisive one in the on-going negotiations on autonomy. The new importance assumed by the representation in a parliament of nationalist parties was verified in a most spectacular way in the 1996 elections. This electoral contest was won by a party, the PP, which had staunchly opposed what it considered to be excessive decentralization and which had decried the PSOE's parliamentary relationship with the CiU and PNV. However, the PP's failure to win a majority of seats (it won 156) put it in a position similar to the one occupied by the PSOE in 1993. The PP would not even consider a coalition with, or parliamentary support from, the Socialists or Communists because of deep ideological differences. The other parties that had won seats in these elections (CiU, PNV, CC, BNG, HB, ERC, EA and UV) were all nationalist or regionalist. Consequently, seeking support from some of these parties represented the only possibility for the PP to form a government that could last. The PP struck deals with CiU, PNV and CC that involved important financial and fiscal devolution.⁹¹

The 1996 elections were a crucial moment for nationalist politics and mobilization in contemporary Spain because they showed that the patterns of bilateral negotiations between regional and central elites that emerged in 1993 and which stimulated the decentralization

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Sebastian Balfour, "'Bitter Victory, Sweet Defeat.' The March 1996 General Elections and the New Government in Spain", *Government and Opposition*, 31 (1996), pp. 282-283.

process was impermeable to ideological factors. The last general election produced a PP majority. However, there will likely be more minority governments in the future, and these governments will almost certainly need the support of nationalist parties. This need for the parliamentary support of the nationalists and regionalists bolsters the political importance of these parties, provides their leaders with an additional weapon for nationalist mobilization and stimulates decentralization. In turn, the increased legislative and fiscal autonomy obtained by nationalist/regionalist parties for their Community will stimulate the dynamic of competition between regional elites. Elites from Communities not involved in the central government will claim *café para todos* while those who are will compare their 'gains' among themselves and look to stay ahead of the others. Changes within the Autonomous Communities, especially the Basque Country and Catalonia, will also shape the future of nationalist politics and mobilization.

In the Basque Country, the 1998 agreement of Lizarra signed by the PNV, EA, several associations as well as HB suggests that the importance of violence as a factor shaping nationalist mobilization is steadily declining. The agreement invokes the resolution of the conflict in Northern Ireland to argue that political will is necessary to end a conflict which otherwise could last a very long time. It points out that "El Gobierno británico y el IRA fueron conscientes de que ni el uno ni el otro iban a ser el vencedor militar y, en consecuencia, aceptaron que el conflicto -en caso de dejarlo tal como estaba- podía prolongarse durante mucho tiempo."⁹² The agreement stresses the necessity for a political approach to the 'Basque

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www.euskadi.net/pakea/indice21_c.htm. "The British government and the IRA were aware that none of the two parties could win militarily and, therefore, accepted that the conflict, if let to continue, could last a very long time." My translation.

issue', and not a military one. It states that "[E]l contencioso vasco es un conflicto historico de origen y naturaleza política en el que se ven implicados el Estado español y el Estado francés. Su resolución debe ser necesariamente política."⁹³

This general condemnation of violence changes the dynamics of Basque internal politics, possibly in a way that could stimulate nationalist politics and mobilization. Whereas the radical secessionist HB used to be somewhat of a pariah party in the Basque system because of its association with ETA, its successor EH is now closer than ever to being a viable option for political coalitions and is in a better position to exercise political influence. As we mentioned earlier, the 1999-2002 legislative agreement features a PNV-EA coalition with parliamentary support from the EH. In Catalonia, results of the 1999 elections suggest that CiU might be becoming a victim of the success of its own policies of Catalanization. It is still the dominant party following these elections but its 56 seats are four less than in 1995 and fifteen less than in 1992. The PSC's 52 seats are 18 more than in 1995. This new distribution of power within Catalonia, and the potential rise to power of another party than CiU, is likely to affect nationalist mobilization in the Community as well as the overall process of decentralization since Pujol's party has been the main driving force for both processes in the democratic period.

As is the case for Belgium, another factor stimulating nationalist mobilization in Spain is the EU. At the broadest level, the EU presents nationalist leaders in Catalonia and the Basque Country with additional opportunity structures for the articulation of their claims.

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Ibid. "The Basque conflict is a historical conflict whose origin is political and involves the Spanish and French states. It must have a political solution." My translation.

In fact, these leaders find in European institutions, particularly those which explicitly involve regional entities such as the Committee of Regions, networks that are much more receptive to these claims than the Spanish state. From a discursive perspective, European integration enables nationalist elites from these two Communities, as it does Flemish and Walloon ones, to frame their political objectives in a way that makes them less radical. This is particularly the case in Catalonia where the historically ambivalent attitude towards the Spanish state and the CiU's position in favour of extended autonomy without secession has translated, under the leadership of Jordi Pujol, into the articulation of 'Europe of Regions' model. In the Basque Country, the PNV also plays the European card, but more as a way to present independence as an unavoidable, albeit long-term, political outcome. The EU has two more notable consequences for nationalist mobilization in Spain. The first is that nationalist elites, more particularly Jordi Pujol, use European exposure to bolster their popularity, and mass support for their claims, at home.⁹⁴ The second is that European integration involves constraints on certain aspects of regional politics and, consequently, on the power of nationalist parties and sometimes also on their relationship with the central state. For example, EU policies on subsidies have undermined Basque fiscal/economic strategies, and led Basque authorities to urge the Spanish to defend their interests with the Commission.⁹⁵

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Michael Keating, "Les nationalités minoritaires d'Espagne face à l'Europe", *Études internationales*, 30 (1999), p.734.

⁹⁵

Ibid., p.738.

4.3-Canada

4.3.1 On the Fluctuations and Political Consequences of Identity: The Highs and Lows of French-Canadian Nationalism.

Nationalist mobilization in pre-Confederation Canada was, with one notable exception, non-existent. This was a consequence of the structure of the *Canadiens* French-Canadian elite and its relationship with colonial authorities. Indeed, the same clerical and conservative elites that were instrumental in shaping the *Canadien* identity and defining group interests did not actively engage in mobilization because of dependency and cooperation relationships. Dependency best characterizes the relationship between *Canadiens* and French colonial elites. The heavy economic reliance of the colony on the Metropolis left the *Canadiens* elite with very little room to manoeuvre. Moreover, their respect for absolute political power and their depiction of politics as an amoral activity did not lend themselves well to mass politics. For these reasons, "there was no fully developed sense of nationalism in opposition to France."⁹⁶ The *Canadien* identity of the 17th and early 18th century did not have political consequences in terms of claims for independence or even institutional restructuring. Perhaps more surprising is the fact that the British takeover did not spark nationalist mobilization. Following cultural theories, cultural differences between rulers and the majority of the population (in this case primarily linguistic and religious) should lead to nationalist conflict and mobilization. There was no such occurrence in late 18th and early 19th century Canada.

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Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec. Social Change and Political Crisis*, p.41.

The *Canadien* elites were initially worried about the consequences of the change of rulers for their society, and for their own position in the colony's power structure. These fears were compounded by the British authorities' initial decision to adopt policies of linguistic/religious assimilation, although for most *Canadiens* the change in rulers had little effect on day-to-day life and was largely a non event.⁹⁷ When the impracticality of the assimilationist policy led British authorities to enact the Québec Act, clerical and conservative elites were reassured. Their position in the colony's power structure was maintained by the new rulers. The seigneurs were often appointed to political bodies⁹⁸ while the clerical establishment developed close ties with the colonial authorities. This pattern of cooperation between these authorities and the dominant forces of the *société canadienne* effectively eliminated any chance that a nationalist movement would emerge. The absence of such a movement suggests that the popular idea that a French-Canadian nation was born in the early days of the settlement is a historical re-invention.⁹⁹

The early 19th century saw the rise of a genuine French-Canadian nationalism. Two interrelated developments were central to this outcome, the first one institutional and the second political. At the institutional level, the establishment with the Constitutional Act of a Lower Canada assembly created a new centre of power in the colony. At the political level, the new liberal elite began its rise to prominence. The dynamic generated by these two

⁹⁷ Arthur Silver, "La Conquête (1760)", in John Meisel, Guy Rocher and Arthur Silver, *Si je me souviens bien, as I recall. Regards sur l'histoire*, p.32.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.34.

⁹⁹ For such a suggestion, see Louis Balthazar, *Bilan du Nationalisme au Québec*, (Montréal: L'Hexagone, 1986.)

changes led to a short but intense period of nationalist mobilization. The French-Canadian petty bourgeois saw in the assembly a potentially potent weapon against two foes. The first was the Catholic Church, which was denounced for having endorsed the Québec Act. In the words of *Patriote* leader Louis-Joseph Papineau, "le clergé (...) accueille cet acte avec empressement, s'attache à la cause du gouvernement, et, négligeant celle du peuple, le trouva bon, parce qu'il lui était avantageux."¹⁰⁰

The second was the English-speaking minority which sought to alter the basic structures of French-Canadian society. For the petty bourgeoisie, maximizing its own power and preserving traditional social structures were two closely related objectives that could best be achieved through the empowerment of the assembly. In the context of British resistance, claims for responsible government articulated by the *parti Patriote* escalated in 1837-38 into mass-supported demands for autonomy and even the creation of a French-Canadian republic. As one *Patriote* put it, reflecting on his role in the revolt, "je ne désirais que le bien de mon pays dans l'insurrection et l'indépendance."¹⁰¹ These claims took the form of nationalism as the petty bourgeois framed their claims as those of French-Canadian society and transposed their own struggle upon it. French-Canadian nationalism was the product and the extension

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Louis-Joseph Papineau, "Je n'ai pas de doute", *La Minerve*, 8 (1834) printed in Georges Vincenthier, *Histoire des idées au Québec. Des troubles de 1837 au référendum de 1980*, (Montréal: VLB, 1983), p.20.

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Chevalier de Lorimie, "Lettre du Chevalier de Lorimier écrite en la prison de Montréal en date du 14 février 1839", *Liberté* 7 (1965), reprinted in Georges Vincenthier, *Histoire des idées au Québec. Des troubles de 1837 au référendum de 1980*, p.30.

of a political power struggle not primarily or immediately related to ethnic/linguistic factors.¹⁰²

It was not, as Lord Durham and several contemporary analysts have argued, the simple product of the impossible coexistence of two 'races', cultures or nationalities.¹⁰³

As we have already seen, the repression of the *Patriote* movement by the British army triggered the downfall of the petty bourgeoisie and the return to prominence of clerics and conservative elites. As we also have seen, the British authorities imposed a new institutional structure in the colony (a single legislative assembly) in the hope of defusing nationalist agitation in Lower Canada. These developments led to the emergence of a new pattern of elite cooperation involving French-Canadian conservative political elites (namely *le parti bleu*) and English-speaking leaders from the former Upper Canada. Indeed, despite the intent behind the legislative union, the social and cultural characteristics of French-Canadian society were preserved through patterns of elite accommodation that featured, most importantly, two prime ministers and a double majority decision-making system. French-Canadian elites found in this pattern of elite cooperation sufficient protection for the fundamental structures of their society and, at the same time, their own position of power. For this reason, they did not engage in nationalist politics, sought mass mobilization or suggest alternate institutional arrangements such as autonomy or independence. Indeed, the idea of a new union that led to the creation of the Canadian federation originated from the former Upper Canada. However,

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See Fernand Ouellet, "Le nationalisme canadien-français: de ses origines à l'insurrection de 1837".

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For a review of the literature on the events of 1837-38, see Gérald Bernier and Daniel Salée, "Les insurrections de 1837-1838 au Québec: remarques critiques et théoriques en marge de l'historiographie".

for the *bleus*, the concept of a union, if it could be federal in nature, proved attractive since provincial autonomy would presumably offer stronger safeguards for the peculiarities of French-Canadian society than the informal arrangements of the United Canadas. The opposition *rouge* party, while rejecting the proposal for fear that it represented a disguised attempt at assimilation and that the suggested model was not truly federal, accepted in principle the idea of provincial autonomy.¹⁰⁴ In the end, the *bleus* outnumbered the *rouges* and the federation project, which was also supported by the clerical establishment, went forward.

This episode in Canadian history further illustrates the importance of elite politics in shaping institutional preferences. It shows how both the moderate 'provincial autonomy' position that led to Confederation and the sharp claims for autonomy or even independence articulated a few decades earlier were a function of the relative power of specific elites. It also demonstrates that cultural differences are not natural and inevitable obstacles to political union.

Federalism had a huge impact on nationalism in Canada. As we have previously discussed, the creation of the new state combined with the Francophone/Catholic presence outside Québec modified the contours and territorial anchoring of the French-Canadian community. As a result, the fate of these French-speaking Catholics became, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a matter of concern for Québec's political elite. It led them to associate specific political consequences to the French/Catholic markers, namely the perils of survival in a state dominated by English-speaking Protestants, and to propose alternate institutional forms to the prevailing one. Three events were said to highlight the

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A.I. Silver, *The French-Canadian Idea of Confederation 1864-1900*.

preponderance of English-Protestant power over the French-Canadians. The first was the 1870 decision by the Manitoba government to abandon French as an official language and to de-confessionnalize the school system (a move which hurt Catholics). The second was the 1885 execution by the federal government of Métis leader Louis Riel (a French-speaking Catholic) after he had attempted to create a 'Métis government'. The third was the decision to call conscriptions for both World Wars despite the general reluctance of French-Canadians to participate. Québec politicians suggested that these policies were clear signs of the oppression suffered by French-Canadians. PLQ leader Honoré Mercier argued that the Riel execution was an all out attack against French-Canada and organized mass demonstrations.¹⁰⁵ Mercier called for the union of Québec's Liberals and Conservatives into a French-Canadian party, a goal that was partially achieved when his *parti national* rose to provincial power in 1887. Henri Bourassa, a one time federal Liberal politician who resigned to protest Canada's involvement in the Boer War to create in 1903 a nationalist organization (the *Ligue nationaliste*), strongly condemned the First World War conscription. Bourassa argued that British oppression in Canada was no different than Prussian power politics, and that action should logically be taken at home in the first place.¹⁰⁶

Despite the frequent and sometimes vehement denunciations of the Canadian political order by prominent Québec politicians before the 1960s, neither independence nor increased autonomy for the province were put forward as potential solutions. This does not mean that

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Arthur Silver, "La pendaison de Louis Riel (1885)", in John Meisel, Guy Rocher and Arthur Silver, *Si je me souviens bien, as I recall. Regards sur l'histoire*, p.78.

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Ibid., p.109.

no political-institutional changes were ever suggested. Bourassa was a firm believer that Canadian politics, particularly as it pertained to community relations, was heavily conditioned by the weight of the British Empire. He recommended breaking all ties with Britain as a means to improve the political power of French-Canadians. Bourassa's vision of French-Canadians in relation with the Canadian political community was reflective of the position of many Québec leaders throughout the first half of the 20th century. The framework for conceptualizing French-English relations, and for devising strategies for action, was strictly Canadian, as was the case for the Flemish Movement in Belgium. The struggle for modifying the distribution of political power between the linguistic/religious communities was viewed mostly as a way to build the Canadian community. While other elites such as *abbé Groulx* focused more squarely and exclusively on French Canada and even made abstract references to a separate state, claims and political mobilization for increased provincial autonomy or independence were virtually non-existent. The territorial basis of post-Confederation French-Canadian nationalism made such demands difficult and improbable. So did Québec's conservative elite's bias against radical change and the negative depiction by the clerical establishment of political activity. For these reasons, French-Canadian nationalism after the 1830s was mainly defensive and entailed little sustained effort at popular mobilization.

The emergence and evolution of French-Canadian nationalism raises several important theoretical issues. Firstly, it shows that identities do not have natural political consequences in the form of claims for autonomy or independence as suggested by primordial theorists. Nor do they spontaneously lead to mobilization or are they inherently conflictual. Despite the presence of a *Canadien* French Canadian identity from the years of French rule, mobilization

and conflict were intermittent and circumstantial. So were claims for institutional change. They were all functions, as evidenced by the events the 1830s, of the nature of the dominant French-Canadian elite and its relationship with colonial authorities, English-speaking elites or the federal government. Secondly, the lack of nationalist mobilization in early 20th century Québec defies socio-economic explanations.¹⁰⁷ As we have already mentioned, industrialization and urbanization in the province started in the early 1900s. Following structural theories, the social and economic dislocations triggered by these changes should have coincided with nationalist mobilization. There were no such consequences. Thirdly, French-Canadian nationalist mobilization, with its highs and lows, was also conditioned by the institutional context. It reached its peak with the creation of a Lower Canada assembly and was given a new dynamic as a result of the territorial spreading out of French-Canadians following the creation of the federation. In fact, federalism was to be the most crucial institutional determinant of nationalist mobilization in contemporary Canada.

4.3.2 Federal/Provincial Relations and Party Competition: Nationalist Mobilization in the Quiet Revolution and Beyond.

In addition to the re-shaping of the French-Canadian into a *Québécois* identity and the definition of new collective interests, the rise to power in Québec of a new liberal elite triggered nationalist mobilization. As was the case for the two other processes, the mechanisms leading to nationalist mobilization followed two patterns. The first of these

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Jeffrey Cormier and Philippe Couton, "The Limits of Quebec Nationalism, 1918-39. An Interwar Paradox", *Nationalism & Ethnic Politics*, 4 (1998), pp.47-74.

mechanisms, which was more specifically internal to the province, involved an effort to tilt the balance of power (social, political and economic) in favour of French-speakers through linguistic legislation. In order for the new elite's struggle to be successful, it necessitated popular support and legitimation which took the form of linguistic/nationalist mobilization. As was the case for this elite's attempt at redefining interests and re-shaping identity, their mobilization effort was rendered more potent by their control of state institutions and the structure of the party system. The second mechanism featured the struggle of Québec's new elite for the transfer of new powers from the federal government in the name of new efficient socio-economic modernization and cultural preservation. The success of this second struggle also necessitated legitimation through popular support. This mobilization effort was heavily conditioned by the federal government's attempts at patriating the constitution. As such, it translated into an emphasis on the distinct character of Québec society and, consequently, on the necessity for autonomy (or independence) and special constitutional recognition. The federal government's intent in stimulating the sense of Canadian nationalism through constitutional and legal change also conditioned the political attitudes, positioning and involvement of Aboriginal leaders and organizations.

As we have already discussed, the social and economic empowerment of Québec French-speakers was a cornerstone of the politics of the new liberal elite. A key to this objective was the strengthening of French in a language regime where English had been the key to socio-economic advancement. As 'language professionals'¹⁰⁸ whose power was

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C. Michael MacMillan, "Language Issues and Nationalism in Québec", *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, 14 (1987), 230.

strongly associated with the status of French, the new elite held particularly high stakes in the alteration of the province's socio-linguistic landscape. The first initiative of this elite in this regard was the *francisation* of Québec's economy. Its key was the development of state institutions. Indeed, the most potent weapon of the new elite in its socio-linguistic struggle was its newly acquired control of the state. For this reason, the growth of the province's bureaucratic apparatus was a logical strategy of power extension and consolidation. It involved, in the context of its immediate goal to give Francophones access to the highest levels of the province's economic structure, the creation of public enterprises such as Hydro-Québec that could employ French-speaking professionals and technicians.¹⁰⁹ It also entailed the establishment of state-controlled financing agencies, such as the *Société générale de financement*, to strengthen small to medium size French-Canadian owned companies.¹¹⁰ These moves did not instantly translate in mass demonstrations of approval. "The loose coalition of support for the Quiet Revolution that had emerged at the level of elites did not necessarily extend through the whole of Québec society."¹¹¹ However, the weight of this extended bureaucracy made up of, and controlled by, French-speaking liberal professionals gave, over the long run, a measure of irreversibility to the *francisation* project. It served as the background and underlying foundation for the nationalist mobilization of the 1970s by commencing and grounding language-oriented politics.

¹⁰⁹ Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec. Social Change and Political Crisis*, p.132.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.133.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.169.

It is with the second initiative, the introduction of new language laws, that nationalist mobilization efforts became more explicit. In this case, party dynamics were particularly important. On the one hand, the displacement of the UN by the PQ created a consensus in the party system on the necessity for the legal prominence of French in Québec. This consensus created a threshold for linguistic politics in the province embodied by the formulation by the PLQ of Bill 22 which made French the official language in the province. On the other hand, the PQ's outbidding of Liberal positions gave language activism new intensity and a new qualitative dimension by framing language issues in terms of a national struggle. The PQ argued that Bill 22 was too timid and that the PLQ had failed to deploy all the power of the state to improve the life of Francophones. Its portraying of the PLQ as a weak defender of French-speaking Quebecers and its promise for more aggressive language policies translated into a self-depiction as the party of Francophones. Its surprising 1976 election victory gave substance to this line as the virtual totality of its 41% popular support came from French-speakers.¹¹² The rise to power of the PQ gave it the opportunity to implement in 1977 a more aggressive language legislation, the previously described Bill 101. This law was at centre of nationalist mobilization in the late 1970s and the 1980s because it was presented as the emancipation of a nation. This was visible in the PQ's explanation of the law. In a document titled *Quebec's Policy on the French Language*, the party explains that

“[T]here is little choice: what Québec's French-speaking majority must do is reassume the power which is its by right. (...) To guarantee the free use of its own language is part of the task of this majority, a task which consists in establishing

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Ibid., p.237.

a people historically in such a manner that there will no longer be any danger of disintegration”¹¹³

It was also apparent that the provisions on public signs had a symbolic as well as an instrumental value. (The alteration of the names of companies had much more to do with giving subjective meaning to language than to achieve material objectives.)¹¹⁴ Here, the PQ’s intention was to make the public prominence of French a symbol for the French-speaking community and a means of nationalist mobilization. As the creator of Bill 101 put it, “Quebec owes it to itself to bring into being, on every level, the nation it in fact is; to acquire the power and the resources it needs for this end (...). It is in this perspective that the government’s language policy is situated.”¹¹⁵ And Laurin added that Bill 101 would motivate French-speaking Quebecers “to go further still and, in the near future, to take over the control of their own destiny.”¹¹⁶ Indeed, Bill 101 stimulated nationalist mobilization in many ways. Not only did nationalist organizations such as the *Société St-Jean Baptiste* welcome it enthusiastically but the general public tended to associate support for the bill with the concept of *Québécois* rather than French-Canadian, an indication that the connection between language, the new identity and nationalism had been successfully established.¹¹⁷ Opposition by English-speaking

¹¹³ Government of Québec, *Quebec’s Policy on the French Language* (Québec: Éditeur officiel du Québec, 1977), p.4.

¹¹⁴ C. Michael MacMillan, “Language Issues and Nationalism in Québec”, p.233.

¹¹⁵ Camille Laurin, “Charte de la langue française/French Language Charter”, *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 15 (1978), p.121.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.127.

¹¹⁷ C. Michael MacMillan, “Language Issues and Nationalism in Québec”, p.235.

leaders and organizations such as Alliance Québec further bolstered this connection. In 1983 for example, public hearings on the law featured briefs and counter-briefs on the part of anglophone and nationalist organizations.¹¹⁸

The PLQ also played a crucial albeit involuntary role in maximizing the mobilization potential of language legislation. The Liberals supported in principle the idea of the prominence of French in the province but opposed Bill 101 on the grounds that some of its provisions, most importantly the one stipulating that education in English was limited to children who had at least one parent educated in English *in Québec*, were authoritarian and illiberal.¹¹⁹ When the PLQ came to power in 1985 with a strong English-speaking representation, language became once again a hot issue. Two new bills (140 and 142) which would have greatly affected Bill 101 were either abandoned or watered down when the PQ and nationalist organizations led mass demonstrations warning the PLQ not to touch Bill 101.¹²⁰ Then, a 1988 decision by the Supreme Court of Canada invalidating the law re-launched the mobilization dynamic. The decision led to more demonstrations by nationalist forces while the PLQ's decision to re-instate, in the form of Bill 178, most of Bill 101's content triggered negative reactions not only among Québec's Anglophone organizations but also in the rest of the country.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p.233.

¹¹⁹ Vincent Lemieux, *Le Parti libéral du Québec. Alliances, rivalités et neutralités*, p.143.

¹²⁰ Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec. Social Change and Political Crisis*, p.419.

¹²¹ Ibid., p.444.

The second mechanism that led to nationalist mobilization in Québec featured a competitive pattern of relationship between Québec's political elite and federal authorities. Before the rise to power of the new liberal elite, Québec's leaders had never seriously challenged the scope of the federal government's action (with the exception of the conscriptions). As we have already seen, this elite's modernization effort translated into claims for power transfers and a penchant for decentralized and asymmetrical federalism. The struggle for increased autonomy, which resulted in the province opting out of many conjointly administered programs and setting up its own (most notably the Québec Pension Plan), prompted the development of two arguments that were to be at the centre of nationalist mobilization in the province. The first argument was that Québec was not a province like the others and that, consequently, it should occupy a special place within the Canadian federation. The idea that there was something peculiar about Québec was, of course, not a novel idea since it had been long presented as the homeland of French-speaking Catholics in North America. However, the argument that these distinctive features had specific political consequences had never been fully and consistently articulated.

The second argument was that the Québec government was the primary object of loyalty for French-speaking Quebecers in terms of centres of political power. This position, which was heavily shaped by developing provincial-federal struggles and instrumental to the re-shaping of the French-Canadian into a *Québécois* identity, was clearly articulated in 1965 by then Liberal premier Jean Lesage during a public address in Vancouver. French-speakers, argued Lesage, "feel that in Quebec there is a government that is able to play an irreplaceable role in the development of their collective identity, their way of living, their civilization, their

values”¹²². He added: “I believe there is nothing wrong, far from it, in recognizing this fact as one of the fundamental elements of Canada’s future.”¹²³ For Lesage, this special relationship between French-speaking Quebecers and the provincial government should translate into a special status for Québec within the federation. Threatened of extinction by the changes of the Quiet Revolution, the UN adopted a similar discourse and even pushed it further. Running under the slogan *Egalité ou indépendance*, its leader Daniel Johnson argued that a new constitution “devrait, à mon sens, être conçue de telle façon que le Canada ne soit pas uniquement une fédération de dix provinces, mais une fédération de deux nations égales en droit et en fait.”¹²⁴

This new constitution alluded to by Johnson was the Trudeau project of patriation. This project was, from its very first days, crucial to nationalist mobilization since it gave Québec’s new political elites the opportunity to voice their new vision of the federation. These elites insisted that a re-structuring of Canadian federalism was needed and that it should be done on the basis of the ideas of equality of nations and increased provincial powers. In other words, decentralized and asymmetrical federalism was said to be the logical consequence of the Quiet Revolution. Trudeau’s project, however, had for objective the strengthening of Canadian nationalism through the entrenchment of individual rights and the consecration of the principle of the equality of provinces. For Trudeau, conferring any type

¹²² Quoted in Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada. The Struggle for National Unity*, p.34.

¹²³ Idem.

¹²⁴ Daniel Johnson, *Égalité ou indépendance*, (Montréal: Éditions de l’homme, 1965), p.116.

of distinct status to Québec was engaging the country onto the slippery slope of secession. As we have mentioned earlier, Trudeau was successful in converting to his vision not only his own party, which had previously leaned towards a strategy of accommodation, but also opposition parties. The clash between Trudeau's political-institutional preferences and those of the PLQ gave new substance to the nationalist discourse by rendering the symbolic dimension of Québec's claims as important as the practical one. More specifically, it allowed PQ leaders to argue that Québec's specificity was neither recognized nor respected in Canada and to use the image of an imprisoned nation to bolster support for independence.

The PQ's rise to power was as much the product of the Trudeau strategy of national unity as it was the result of developments internal to the province. The constitutional impasse "gave added strength to the PQ's claim that Quebec's aspirations could never be met within the federal system."¹²⁵ So did the Trudeau government's frequent condemnations of PLQ policies. Bill 22 was a favourite target as Trudeau argued that it made it difficult for him "to sell bilingualism in the rest of Canada."¹²⁶ In fact, the federal Liberals' stance on Québec put the PLQ in a particularly precarious situation. Having to check the PQ and finding little help in Ottawa, it began holding an increasingly nationalist discourse, speaking of 'cultural sovereignty' and describing Québec as 'a French state within the Canadian common market'.¹²⁷ The PLQ, however, could not outbid the PQ in terms of nationalism and its

¹²⁵ Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada. The Struggle for National Unity*, p.148.

¹²⁶ Graham Fraser, *P.Q. René Lévesque & the Parti Québécois in Power*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1984), p.61.

¹²⁷ Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada. The Struggle for National Unity*, p.148.

attempt to 'keep up' benefitted its rival in that it increased the distance between the Trudeau position and public sentiments in Québec. In short, the PQ's nationalist mobilization efforts, which ultimately led to its 1976 election victory, were aided by the federal government's rigid constitutional-institutional position.

In turn, the PQ's election made the tools of political power available to the further promotion of Québec nationalism and to the idea of secession. A crucial element to the PQ's platform was the promise to hold a referendum on Québec's political future. Since its creation in 1968, the PQ had argued that Québec's independence was necessary to complete the process of socio-economic modernization, protect the province's distinct French culture and create a more egalitarian society. More simply, it posited that Québec was a nation and that nations should be sovereign. In addition to stressing linguistic solidarity and denouncing the rigidity of the current federal system, the PQ used two mobilization strategies in the context of the 1980 referendum. These strategies were 'negative' in the sense that they were meant to generate maximum support for independence by re-assuring Quebecers that it would be a smooth change.

The first was to adopt a gradualist, *étapiste*, approach. In its 1974 convention, "the party committed itself to hold a referendum to ratify the constitution of an independent Quebec-indicating that this would be after independence was declared."¹²⁸ By the late 1970s, the PQ had decided to make the road to independence go through two referendums: a first to allow the Québec government to enter secession negotiations with the federal government and a second to get approval on the results of these negotiations. The second was to speak

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Graham Fraser, *PQ. René Lévesque & the Parti Québécois in Power*, p.65.

of sovereignty-association rather than outright independence. The PQ suggested that after positive referendum results, Québec and Canada would become partner states with each assuming full political sovereignty. Although the PQ's defeat (60% to 40%) translated, in the short term, into a low period of nationalist activity, in the long term the referendum served to boost Québec nationalism. Of crucial importance is the fact that in the context of such a decision on citizenship, issues of belonging are presented in dichotomous terms. The PQ presented Québec and Canada as two distinct and incompatible nations. It argued that only in the former where they were a majority could Francophones exercise the power necessary to protect and promote their culture and socio-economic structures, and described their minority situation in Canada as hazardous to their fate. This dichotomization of political communities and political consequences served to strengthen the allegiance of Quebecers to the provincial government.

The nation-building strategies of Trudeau's Liberal government also had for unintended consequences the emergence of Native nationalism. Trudeau's effort to bolster Canadian nationalism translated, with regards to the country's Aboriginal population, into the decision to revoke the Indian status that put that population in a distinct legal position. As we have already mentioned, this proposal contained in a 1969 White Paper triggered a virulent reaction on the part of Native leaders who replied by invoking more forcefully than ever their peoples' historical identities and specifying the political-institutional structures that would best serve their interests defined in terms of cultural preservation and socio-economic improvement. The suggestion that Aboriginals should fully integrate into Canadian society was seen as a new attempt at assimilation which would eventually result in their total dis-

empowerment. For this reason and in reaction to the threat, Native leaders created or gave new life to political organizations that put forward claims for political, constitutional and institutional change in the name of specific cultural-historical traditions. They were provided the means to organize when the federal government decided in the mid-1960s that Native groups would be eligible for federal funding.¹²⁹ The NCC and ITC were both formed in 1970, and several other provincial organizations emerged around the same time.¹³⁰ Most importantly, the NIB was "propelled into national prominence and leadership of Indian peoples."¹³¹

Mobilization against the White Paper proved to be only the beginning for Native organizations as their success in forcing the federal government to revise its proposed policy spurred new claims. These claims, as we have already seen, involved self-government, achieved through autonomy and the granting of a distinct yet non-discriminatory legal status, and the recognition and enforcement of historical and treaty rights primarily in the form of ownership of, and access to, land. At their centre was the desire of Native organizations to increase the power of Aboriginal communities, an objective deemed essential to their very survival, through political-institutional re-structuring. In this context, the particular cultures and histories of Canada's various Native communities became the central weapons of a sustained mobilization effort.

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James Frideres, *Native Peoples in Canada. Contemporary Conflicts*, p.265.

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Donald Purich, *Our Land. Native Rights in Canada*, p.187.

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J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens. A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, p.233.

Nationalist mobilization in Canada between 1960 and 1980 did not simply represent, as it is widely believed, a national 'awakening.'¹³² It was a political process heavily shaped by federalism, party competition and the displacement of old elites by new ones. As such, it draws the theorist's attention to these variables. The rise of the new liberal elite in Québec and its power struggles against the province's English-speaking elite and the federal government highlights the potential consequences of such confrontations. The rise to power of Pierre Trudeau, the subsequent conversion to his unity strategy of other federal actors and the attempt to implement this strategy showed, in stimulating Québec and Native nationalism, that political practices and policies designed to address an issue can have the unintended consequence of aggravating it. The presence in the Québec party system of two nationalist parties, with the softer one continually trying to keep up with the more radical other by matching the tone of its discourse, reveals some of the most fundamental mechanisms of nationalist mobilization.

4.3.3 Mega Constitutional Politics and Nationalist/Regionalist Conflicts.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Canada has experienced a significant surge in nationalist mobilization, although fluctuations were greater than in the preceding period. Both Québec and Native nationalism experienced times of great strength where they were able to garner the support necessary to put tremendous pressure on the Canadian political order. This period also saw the beginning of a successful regionalist mobilization in the Western part of the

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See, for example, Christian Dufour, *Le défi québécois*, (Montréal: L'Hexagone, 1989), p.33.

country. The motor for this territorial mobilization was constitutional negotiations. As a consequence of Canada's federal structure, constitutional change necessitates the approval of all constituent units therefore making the whole enterprise a perilous one. Nationalism and regionalism in Canada have fed off constitutional failures. The partiality of the 1982 reform which left Québec out led the PLQ to articulate claims that formed the basis of new rounds of constitutional discussions, Meech and Charlottetown, whose failure became powerful mobilization weapons for the PQ. The failed attempts at constitutional change also stimulated Québec nationalism by shaping the dynamic of the province's party system, as the PLQ was put under tremendous pressure to 'keep up' with the PQ and adopt strong nationalist positions. Moreover, constitutional negotiations that began with the goal of addressing Québec's claims generated a dynamic of mimesis and outbidding, involving most importantly the PLQ, Reform and Native organizations, which extended processes of nationalist/regionalist mobilization beyond that province.

The key event in accounting for nationalist/regionalist mobilization in the last twenty years is the 1982 constitutional reform which was agreed upon by all the provinces except Québec. The patriation was important in three ways. Firstly, it came to serve as a powerful symbol of Québec nationalism because of both the result of the negotiations, and the negotiations themselves. When Trudeau began discussions for patriating the constitution and adding to it a Charter of Rights and Freedom and an amending formula, he found little support among the provinces (only Ontario and New-Brunswick supported the plan.) The other provinces, including Québec, opposed the idea of a Charter, which they saw as a centralizing instrument. Toying with the idea of acting unilaterally, Trudeau was told by the

Supreme Court that such a move, while not illegal because there was no existing amending formula, would be morally reprehensible and that a substantial degree of provincial consent was preferable. When Trudeau offered the eight remaining provinces a clause that would allow their legislatures to review judicial decision (known as the notwithstanding clause), the common front broke down. For the PQ, failure to come to an agreement was preferable to a constitutional package that would include a Charter since premier René Lévesque could always "return to Québec and claim that no agreement with the federal government or the other provinces was possible."¹³³ For the other provinces patriation was a politically better option than the status quo since Trudeau had successfully managed to present his proposal as the 'people's package'.¹³⁴

For these reasons, the 1981-82 negotiations resulted in a (legally binding) document supported by 9 of the 10 provinces. As we have already seen, the Québec legislature unanimously condemned the patriation. This move was significant because it hardened the subjective dichotomization between Québec and the rest of Canada by giving it a legal, negatively interpreted, foundation. Moreover, the events of 1982 became a favourite PQ mobilization weapon for its objective of achieving independence. The PQ suggests that Québec's exclusion from the constitutional amendment was an act of betrayal from 'English-Canada' and a sure sign that it could not be trusted.¹³⁵

¹³³ Hudson Meadwell, "The Politics of Nationalism in Quebec", *World Politics*, 45 (1993), p.235.

¹³⁴ Idem.

¹³⁵ See, for example, Claude Morin, *Lendemain piégés: du référendum à la nuit des longs couteaux*, (Montréal: Boreal, 1988).

Secondly, the patriation served, outside Québec, to strengthen Canadian nationalism. With its strong individualist rather than collective/territorial language, it embodied and institutionalized Trudeau's vision of the Canadian political community. Moreover, it served to rally the general population to this conception of Canadian nationalism with the exception of most Quebecers who were presented, by both the PQ and the PLQ, with a different interpretation of the nature of the Canadian political community, the Charter and the patriation process. Thirdly, the partial character of provincial support for the patriation and the resulting controversy triggered more constitutional negotiations whose failure would in turn stimulate nationalism/regionalism.

A new round of constitutional discussions became almost inevitable with the election in 1984 of the Conservative Party which had centred its campaign on the idea of national reconciliation and gained substantial support in Québec. Contrary to Trudeau, Conservative leader Brian Mulroney did not think that decentralization and asymmetry were antithetical with the idea of national unity, and he found, with the election of the PLQ the following year, a willing partner for negotiating Québec's support for the patriated constitution. The claims put forward by the PLQ were in line with the political-institutional preferences expressed by the party since it was taken over by the new liberal elite. The demand for a formal limitation to the federal government's power to spend in areas of provincial jurisdiction reflected, along with the claim for the constitutionalization of increased powers in immigration, the preoccupation with reducing the centralization of the federal system. The claims for a veto on future constitutional amendments, the constitutionalization of the presence of three judges (out of nine) from Québec on the Supreme Court and, most importantly, the formal

recognition of Québec as a distinct society embodied the idea of a particular status for the province first formulated in the 1960s. When the 10 premiers and the Prime Minister agreed on a constitutional package, known as the Meech Lake accord, that would closely reflect these claims, the PQ's secessionist option was at its lowest since the early 1970s. The accord was popular in Québec,¹³⁶ and not only had the PQ lost the central mobilization argument that 'the rest of Canada' would never meet Québec's traditional demands, but the party was divided. René Lévesque had, before resigning, found the Conservative's approach interesting and expressed interest in running the *beau risque* of renewing federalism.¹³⁷ This position sent the party into turmoil and several influential members such as Jacques Parizeau quit. By 1985, the PQ had become an autonomist rather than a secessionist party.

Despite the consensus reached by the 11 political leaders, there was some opposition to Meech. Two forces are particularly noteworthy. The first were Aboriginal organizations. As previously mentioned, the constitutional reform of 1982 had formally recognized the existence of three categories of Native peoples and acknowledged their historical and treaty rights. This constitutionalization of Aboriginal rights was accompanied by the promise that further discussions would be held to better define and give them substance. The four conferences held between 1983 and 1987 resulted in failures as the federal government, the provinces, and Native organizations could not agree on the essence and consequences of these rights.¹³⁸ A major obstacle to an agreement, in addition to the general uneasiness of the

¹³⁶ Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada. The Struggle for National Unity*, p.195.

¹³⁷ Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec. Social Change and Political Crisis*, p.383.

¹³⁸ Renée Dupuis, *La Question indienne au Canada*, pp.89-99.

federal government and provinces with the process, was the division among Aboriginal organizations on the meaning of self-government. For status Indian leaders, self-government generally means the creation of a third level of government.¹³⁹ For Inuit leaders, it tends to mean the creation of a new constitutional territory,¹⁴⁰ a claim that was met in 1999 with the creation of Nunavut. Non-status Indian and Métis leaders favour a federally or provincially delegated government.¹⁴¹ Moreover, there were problems of representation in the 1983-1987 conference. Métis and non-status Indians could not agree on a single representative organization and were consequently represented by both the Metis National Council and the Native Council of Canada. The organization representing status Indians, the AFN, split in 1985 as some of its members formed their own body, the Prairie Treaty Nations Alliance, after their proposal for a shift of strategy from historical to treaty rights had been refused.¹⁴² As a consequence of the failure of the conferences, Aboriginal leaders were outraged when the federal government turned its attention towards Québec. On these grounds, they opposed the Meech Lake accord.¹⁴³

The second force were the several political actors who espoused the Trudeau vision (most importantly Trudeau himself and several members of his old party), and denounced the accord mainly for its distinct society clause. They were quite successful in convincing English-

¹³⁹ James Frideres, *Native Peoples in Canada. Contemporary Conflicts*, p.344.

¹⁴⁰ *Idem.*

¹⁴¹ *Idem.*

¹⁴² Renée Dupuis, *La Question indienne au Canada*, p.94.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.110.

speaking Canadians that the conception of Canada embodied by the Charter they had come to identify with was threatened by the accord.¹⁴⁴ However, the ultimate cause for the accord's failure was institutional in nature. As we have already mentioned, as a result of the 1982 amending formula the approval of all 11 legislatures was necessary to give the package force of law. Moreover, there was a three year deadline for ratification. Following the agreement in principle, provincial elections led to the formation of new governments in several provinces. This brought to power politicians in Newfoundland and Manitoba who, both for ideological reasons and as a result of the dynamic of adversarial government-opposition politics, had expressed reservations concerning the accord and delayed or rescinded ratification. In the end, Newfoundland had signaled it would not oppose the accord if it was the only province to do so and Manitoba's minority government decided to ratify but needed all members of parliament to agree to an accelerated voting procedure. In an ironic twist of fate, a Native parliamentarian refused to endorse the special procedure and Meech Lake was never ratified.

The fallouts from the death of Meech were numerous and highly consequential for nationalist/regionalist mobilization in Canada. Perhaps of foremost importance was the fact that Québec's political elites interpreted the failure of the accord as a rejection of Quebecers.¹⁴⁵ The PQ, who had denounced the accord for not providing enough autonomy and recognition to the province, saw the non-ratification of Meech as an opportunity to rekindle nationalism and revive the secessionist option. Even the PLQ behaved in a way that

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Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada. The Struggle for National Unity*, pp.197-204.

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François Rocher, "Le Québec et la Constitution: une valse à mille temps", in *Bilan québécois du fédéralisme canadien*, (Montréal: VLB, 1992), p.34.

portrayed the death of Meech as an event of momentous proportion. In a famous declaration, then premier Robert Bourassa stated that “[L]e Canada anglais doit comprendre d’une façon très claire que, quoi qu’on dise et quoi qu’on fasse, le Québec est, aujourd’hui et pour toujours, une société distincte, libre et capable d’assumer son destin et son développement.”¹⁴⁶

At the federal level, Conservative members from Québec, most importantly Lucien Bouchard, as well as some Liberals left their parties to create a new nationalist party with secessionist objectives, the BQ.

In this context of nationalist agitation, support for independence reached new heights.¹⁴⁷ Of particular importance in explaining the magnitude of Québec nationalism immediately after the death of Meech was the activity of the province’s political parties. As we have already seen, not only did the PLQ give itself a very autonomist constitutional position in the form of the Allaire report, which stated there was an “urgent need for radical change”¹⁴⁸, it also engaged in a massive bipartisan parliamentary commission known as Bélanger-Campeau whose goal was to suggest options on the political future of the province. The commission de-legitimized the *status quo* and stimulated nationalism by centering its work on the two options of independence and renewed federalism on the basis of autonomy and asymmetry, and requesting that a referendum be held on one of these options before the

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Quoted by François Rocher. Idem.

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Jean Herman Guay, “L’évolution de l’opinion pendant la campagne référendaire”, in Denis Monière and Jean H. Guay, *La bataille du Québec, troisième épisode: 30 jours qui ébranlèrent le Canada*, (Montréal: Fides, 1996), p.186.

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Parti libéral du Québec, *A Québec Free to Choose. Report of the Constitutional Committee of the Québec Liberal Party*, (Montréal: PLQ, 1991), pp.3-6.

fall of 1992. In the words of the commissioners. "Two courses are open to Québec with respect to the redefinition of its status: i.e. a new, ultimate attempt to redefine its status within the federal regime, and the attainment of sovereignty. (...) Should a final attempt to renew federalism fail, sovereignty would be the only course remaining."¹⁴⁹ For the PLQ, the commission was a means to keep up with the PQ's increasingly aggressive secessionist stance and limit the political damage of Meech. It was also a way to put pressure on the federal government to put together a new Meech-like package¹⁵⁰ that could close the explosive constitutional file. This strategy was risky, however, because it involved stimulating and sustaining nationalist mobilization.

The failure of Meech also stimulated Native nationalism and Western regionalism. For Native organizations, the collapse of Meech was an empowering development which was used to demonstrate the potency of Aboriginal political action to both Natives and non-Natives. In the wake of the Meech Lake collapse, Mohawks erected barricades in the city of Oka (near Montreal) to protest the construction of a golf course on lands they considered their own. In addition to the more immediate issue surrounding the golf course, the Oka crisis was also the product of the political-institutional impasse on Native issues (the definition of historical and treaty rights, the granting of autonomy, etc...). It also took Native nationalism to new heights as the Mohawks received the support of Aboriginal communities from

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Report on the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, (Québec:Assemblée nationale, 1991), p.75.

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Alain-G. Gagnon, "Québec-Canada: circonvolutions constitutionnelles", p.95.

everywhere in the country.¹⁵¹ It made very clear to all Canadian political actors, along with the non-ratification of Meech, that any further proposal for constitutional change would have to address Aboriginal claims. The Meech Lake episode also served as a key reference for the intense Western regionalist mobilization of the 1990s. In the dying days of the accord, Western premiers began suggesting adding to Meech a Senate reform as a way to empower the West¹⁵². Moreover, it is in the context of Meech that the Reform party was born. Through Reform the idea of an elected, equal and efficient Senate (known as Triple-E Senate) became strongly institutionalized. So did opposition to any type of distinct status for Québec and Aboriginal, and attachment to the principle of the equality of provinces.

As we have already seen, the federal government responded to the pressures emanating from Québec and the concerns of both Native organizations and Western political actors through the Charlottetown accord which recognized Québec as a distinct society, consecrated the principle of the equality of provinces, created a third level of government for Aboriginal communities and instituted a Triple-E Senate. However, the very patterns of nationalist mobilization that prompted the discussions leading to the Charlottetown accord, and which shaped the accord itself, also served to kill it. In Québec, where both the PQ and the BQ campaigned against the accord arguing that it was a step down from Meech particularly as a result of the coexistence of the distinct society and equality of the provinces

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Geoffrey York and Loreen Pinder, *People of the Pines: The Warriors and the Legacy of Oka*, (Toronto: Little Brown, 1991), p.273.

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Roger Gibbins and Sonia Arrison, *Western Visions. Perspectives on the West in Canada*, p.106.

provisions, the popular perception was that the province was a net loser.¹⁵³ The post-Meech political atmosphere, driven by the Allaire report and the activities of the Bélanger-Campeau, had considerably raised the bar for what could be considered an acceptable constitutional package. In fact, the strong nationalist discourse of Québec's political elite during this period with its focus on massive decentralization and the symbolic recognition of distinctiveness rendered the Charlottetown compromise a difficult proposition.

In the West, the other region where the accord was voted down, the Reform party led the opposition. For Reform, the potential benefits of a Triple-E Senate for the West could not outweigh the problems it associated with distinct status for Québec and Aboriginal in terms of regional and group power distribution. In the context of the failure of two rounds of constitutional negotiations attempting to meet claims for autonomy and asymmetry, the new party's regionalist perspective emphasizing the equality of federate units won it a majority of seats in Alberta and British-Columbia in the 1993 federal elections. In Québec, the failure of Charlottetown compounded the effects of the collapse of Meech and pushed nationalism to new heights. The immediate result was the election of 54 (out of 75) BQ candidates, enough for the party to form the official opposition. These elections were crucial not so much because they reflected prominent nationalist-regionalist sentiments but primarily because they institutionalized these sentiments in the federal party system. Both the BQ and Reform became established parties in the 1990s by stressing, particularly in the case of the former, the regional angle of most issues. Their presence provided new forms of institutional

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André Blais, "The Quebec Referendum: Quebeckers Say No", in Kenneth McRoberts and Patrick Monahan (eds), *The Charlottetown Accord, the Referendum, and the Future of Canada*, p.203.

support to both Québec nationalism and Western regionalism. Finally, the failure of Charlottetown and the subsequent rise of nationalist/regionalist mobilization discredited outside Québec the Conservative approach to national unity and provided another boost to the vision articulated 20 years earlier by Pierre Trudeau. The debacle of the Conservatives in the 1993 elections when they were limited to two seats, and the formation of two majority Liberal governments in 1993 and 1997, further re-structured the Canadian political landscape in a way that made constitutional change even more difficult.

The failure of Charlottetown also helped the PQ, running on the clear promise of holding a referendum on independence soon after assuming power, to win the 1994 provincial elections. The PQ made a symbolic alliance with the BQ and the smaller *Action Démocratique du Québec* (ADQ, a party formed from a PLQ splinter group in reaction to a perceived 'soft' position on constitutional issues) and announced there would be a referendum in October 1995. These parties' mobilization strategy followed three patterns. The first was to present the past 15 years of constitutional negotiations as one big rejection of Québec by the rest of Canada. References to Charlottetown, Meech and the 1982 patriation were abundant during the referendum campaign and served to galvanize nationalist sentiments. The 'yes' side focused its attack on the federal government, and more specifically on Prime Minister Chrétien (because of his personal involvement in the patriation and his opposition to Meech and Charlottetown) depicting him as an enemy out to crush Québec. The evils of the federal government, as described by the PQ, BQ and ADQ, rested in its centralizing tendencies, most importantly its refusal to formally acknowledge that Québec formed a distinct and to re-structure the federation on this basis. Therefore, the federal government was said to be a

threat to Québec culture and interests against which Quebecers should react forcefully by voting 'yes' to independence.¹⁵⁴

The second mobilization tactic consisted simply in appealing to the language-centred identity that had been constructed in the wake of the Quiet Revolution. Secessionist leaders suggested that Québec, as a nation, was in a bizarre and peculiar political situation since many of the policies affecting it were designed in part by other people (English-Canadians). A 'yes' vote, the argument went, would enable Québec to take its natural place in the concert of nations, and allow it to follow the normal path to full nationhood that had been taken by most other peoples around the world. In the words of Jacques Parizeau, independence meant "dire ce que nous voulons être, à nos yeux, aux yeux de nos enfants, et à la face du monde. (...) Décider de se prendre en main, pleinement. (...) Décider, surtout, de ne plus être une minorité dans le pays de nos voisins anglophones, mais une majorité dans notre propre pays."¹⁵⁵ The third strategic move was more defensive. It involved associating sovereignty with the idea of some form of economic and even political partnership with Canada. This initiative was meant to ease Quebecers' fear with respect to the potential economic costs of secession and the perspective of an ugly rupture, therefore allowing them to translate their nationalist sentiments into a 'yes' vote. The strategy seemed to prove effective since support for independence rose when it was formally articulated in the summer of 1995, although the change could have also

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François Rocher, "Les aléas de la stratégie pré-référendaire: Chronique d'une mort annoncée", in Douglas M. Brown and Jonathan W. Rose (eds), *Canada: The State of the Federation 1995* (Kingston: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 1995), p.30.

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See the excerpts from a public address held October 1 1995, reprinted in Jacques Parizeau, *Pour un Québec souverain*, (Montréal: VLB, 1997), p.133

been the result of the increasingly important role played in the campaign by BQ leader Lucien Bouchard, who was also the architect of the partnership concept.¹⁵⁶ To this discourse, the 'no' side (the PLQ and federal Liberals) opposed mainly economic arguments. In the context of the immediate aftermath of constitutional failures and the subsequent nationalist mobilization triggered by the Québec parties, playing the game of identity politics through Canadian nationalism would have been a risky proposition. In the end, the 'yes' side almost won, falling only 1% or so short of the 50+1 objective.

The referendum had mixed consequences for nationalist mobilization in Québec. Premier Parizeau resigned after having blamed the close defeat on 'money' and the 'ethnic vote.' The ethnic vote comment, which was condemned by most other PQ members, reflected a fundamental tension in Québec nationalism between ethnic and civic definitions of the nation. On the one hand, the PQ's formal position is that all residents of Québec are Quebecers. On the other hand and as we have seen, its mobilization strategy, particularly in the context of the heightened importance and tension of self-determination referendums, revolves heavily around the idea that French is the defining character of the Québec nation. Parizeau's 'money' comments targeted the federal government. The characterization of the federal government as Québec's enemy was at the centre of the PQ's 1998 re-election as it presented itself as the party that could better stand up to the federal Liberals. Despite the PQ's re-election, support for independence has dropped since the referendum to about

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Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada. The Struggle for National Unity*, p.227.

38%.¹⁵⁷ In the hope of rekindling nationalist sentiments, the PQ is sticking to its strategy of portraying the federal government negatively. It has responded to a recent federal legislation stipulating that the federal government would evaluate the clarity of the question and result of any future referendum by arguing it sought to “restreindre l’exercice des choix démocratiques du Québec” and consequently represented an “assaut sans précédent à la démocratie québécoise”.¹⁵⁸ Sensing an opportunity, the PQ has organized a parliamentary commission to keep the issue at the centre of the political agenda. For the federal Liberals, the strategy has been to prepare for a future referendum instead of engaging in new constitutional negotiations.

This move probably means that ‘mega-constitutional politics’ is over for the foreseeable future unless an acute political crises forces Canada’s political elites to re-open the constitutional file.¹⁵⁹ This tacit decision most certainly reflects an understanding that this type of politics “is concerned with reaching agreement on the identity and fundamental principles of body politics”, involves “citizens’ sense of identity and self-worth”, and is consequently “exceptionally emotional and intense.”¹⁶⁰ In other words, Canadian elites seemed

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See the CROP survey realized in August of 1999 for the Privy Council Office. <http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/aia/docs/francais/perspective/issues/cropopinion.htm>.

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See statements by Lucien Bouchard and then PQ vice-president Fabien Béchar, www.pq.org/991215.pdf and www.pq.org/com12-12.pdf.

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Peter H. Russell, “The End of Mega Constitutional Politics in Canada?” in Kenneth McRoberts and Patrick Monahan (eds), *The Charlottetown Accord, the Referendum, and the Future of Canada*, pp.211-221.

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Peter H. Russell, *Constitutional Odyssey: Can Canadians Become a Sovereign People?* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

to have drawn an important theoretical lesson from past constitutional negotiations: constitutional activism stimulates as well as reflects nationalism/regionalism and the attempts at any global constitutional settlement may very well have the unintended consequence of leaving them with a worst situation than the one in which they started.

The three cases strongly suggest that patterns of nationalist mobilization follow changes in the configurations in elite relationships. These relationships, with their focus on power, explain the highs and lows of nationalist activity. They also condition the claims of nationalist movements. Nationalist mobilization in Belgium has revolved, both historically and in the more contemporary period, around a struggle between Flemish and French-speaking elites that has followed an action-reaction pattern. Flemish nationalist mobilization in the late 19th and first half of the 20th century was engineered to transform the linguistic regime, and became gradually more important as gains were made incrementally. It suffered weaknesses when its leadership was discredited, most noticeably following the two World Wars. Walloon mobilization was triggered by Flemish nationalism and became more intense as the Flemish Movement succeeded in modifying the language regime. The post-WWII period saw a general increase in nationalist mobilization, although periods of acute nationalist activity corresponded to political crises (the *question royale*, the strike of 1960-61, *Voeren* and so on) or 'mega-constitutional' negotiations linked to state reform which had become the major objective of the Flemish and Walloon Movement. Indeed, political circumstances and constitutional negotiations in the context of the confrontation between the Movements generated two types of conflictual/competitive relationships which further stimulated nationalist mobilization.

The first was a struggle between Flemish and French-speaking elites which involved, often for political-electoral reasons, denouncing the injustice of a situation or settlement by stressing how their own linguistic group had lost while the other had gained. The second featured a competition between parties of one language group on who could better represent and defend the interests of members (a charge led on the Francophone side by the PS and on the Flemish side by the nationalist parties, and to a lesser extent, the CVP). The fact that the Flemish Movement is the motor of nationalist mobilization in Belgium partly explains why French-speaking elites have not matched its claims of confederalism, or even independence, which developed as a result of its historical struggle over linguistic/cultural change and then protection. Also, the spread of territorial mobilization should be understood mostly in terms of leaders of other groups being pushed to conduct politics as nationalist politics, since in Belgium it is the majority Flemish group, not a minority group, who tends to be at forefront of nationalist activity. In other words, the main source of nationalism is also the core political influence and demographic weight of the country, and that creates an overall context favourable to nationalist politics.

The Spanish experience strongly highlights the centrality of the central-regional elites relationship for nationalist mobilization. The beginning of nationalist activity in the late 19th century in Catalonia, the Basque provinces and Galicia was the direct product of a political power struggle over territory. The attempt by an emerging liberal elite in Madrid to centralize and take effective control of all Spanish territories led regional elites to engage in nationalist politics and mobilization as a means of resistance and/or disengagement. The position of regional elites had long-lasting effects on the specifics of ethnonationalism in Spain. The use

of nationalist politics in the Basque provinces by Arana and other traditionalists as a way of isolating the area from the rest of Spain underlies contemporary claims for independence. The Catalan reaction, which was one of hesitation between partial disengagement with Spain and attempting to take control of the Spanish state, represented a prelude to the more moderate and ambivalent character of Catalan nationalism. Nationalist mobilization was stimulated by the repressive policies of the Franco regime and peaked in intensity during the transition period when Spain's institutions were designed. The democratic era has seen mobilization patterns shaped by multiple relationships. Nationalist activity in the 'historical nationalities' was spurred by at least three different elite relationships: an effort on the part of the nationalities' elites to preserve the institutional asymmetry at the expense of elites from the 'regions'; a struggle/competition among elites of different historical nationalities for symbolic as well as material signs of distinctiveness and autonomy; an occasional pattern of bargaining between regional and central elites that features parliamentary support being exchanged for territorial concessions. Mobilization in the 'regions' has primarily occurred as a result of their elites claiming for their Autonomous Communities a status approaching that of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia.

The most intense periods of nationalist mobilization in French Canada/Québec's history correspond to instances where the Catholic Church lost socio-political power or, in other words, when the cooperation pattern between clerics and colonial authorities/conservative political elites was broken. This was the case in the mid 19th century and, of course, with the beginning of the Quiet Revolution. In the last forty years, intense nationalist mobilization in Québec has coincided with periods of acute conflict between

provincial and federal elites which have themselves stemmed, more often than not, from 'mega-constitutional' negotiations. (The relationship between constitutional negotiations/reform is similar to the one observed in Belgium). In fact, intense Aboriginal and Western regionalist mobilization has also occurred in the context of these negotiations. The 'lows' of nationalist mobilization in Québec have corresponded to periods where relationships between provincial and federal elites were not as conflictual, sometimes because many of Québec's nationalist leaders were coopted by the latter as was the case for most of the 1980s. In turn, these 'lows' have tended to produce a decrease in the intensity of Aboriginal and Western mobilization as they rendered the Canadian political system as a whole less conflictual. Despite these fluctuations, nationalist mobilization in Québec has been on an upward trend since the 1960s, triggering and /or bolstering territorial politics in the rest of the country in the process (This is a dynamic very similar to the Belgian one where Flemish nationalism leads the way.) Of particular importance in explaining this trend is the outbidding/catching-up dynamic existing between Québec political parties: the attempt by the PLQ to remain close to the PQ in terms of nationalist position and the PQ's desire to preserve its edge fuels a nationalist spiral. Moreover, this dynamic partly explains the PQ's continuing secessionist agenda as its strong nationalist stance is the single most important political-electoral element differentiating it from the PLQ.

The elite relationships that shaped nationalist mobilization in the three countries were structured by specific, and often changing, institutional contexts. In other words, political institutions have played a key role in conditioning the intensity, nature and patterns of mobilization. With respect to the state, for example, at least two trends are noticeable. The

first is that discriminatory and/or repressive structures have triggered and/or stimulated nationalist mobilization by putting culture at the forefront of the political agenda. This was the case with the Flemish Movement, whose early activism revolved around the Belgian language regime; the three 'historical nationalities' of Spain which were specifically targeted by the authoritarian state; and Canada's Aboriginals who have been second-class citizens for most of their experience in the Canadian regime. The second is that a centralizing state also tends to stimulate territorial mobilization since it threatens the power of regional elites. Ethnonationalism in Spain emerged as a result of an attempt at centralization. *Québécois* nationalism, and to a lesser extent Western regionalism, flourished as the Canadian state sought to establish its prominence at the expense of provinces. Two other state-related institutional variables, which are theoretically significant, are highlighted respectively by the Canadian and Belgian cases. The first is the constitutional isolation of a territorial unit which, as the case of post-1982 Québec seems to indicate, gives regional elites an attractive reference for nationalist mobilization in the context of their struggles with the central state. The second is changes in the rules of democratic participation which, as the introduction of manhood suffrage in Belgium has shown, can alter the socio-political balance of power in ways that make the mobilization of a specific group more or less likely.

Territorial distribution of power is also key in moulding the relationships between elites which directly condition mobilization. In Spain, the whole spectre of elite relationships previously discussed which is at the centre of contemporary nationalist and regionalist mobilization stems from the system of Autonomous Communities. Moreover, the first occurrence of nationalist mobilization at the end of the 19th century was the product of

regional elites whose very existence derived from the country's historical territorial structuring. The Canadian case shows how political conflict in federal arrangements are often territorially-based as a result of the complicated web of central-regional relationships, and therefore conducive to nationalist and regionalist mobilization. It also suggests that constitutional-institutional change is harder to implement because the approval of all the territorial units are needed. This is a particularly important feature since failures in constitutional negotiations tend to aggravate conflicts between elite and favour nationalist mobilization. Belgium shows how regional units created in the context of a transition from a unitary to a federal state can quickly become centrifugal forces. Indeed, new regional elites may be tempted to take advantage of the transition process to gain more power for their institutions (and themselves) through nationalist/regionalist mobilization. The Belgian case also shows that the centrifugal effect of new institutions are particularly strong if they share a political elite with the national level through a double mandate practice.

Party systems represent another institutional form which condition relationships between political elites and, consequently, nationalist mobilization. This variable was most important in Belgium. Indeed, contemporary nationalist mobilization has been heavily conditioned by two transformations in the Belgian party system. The first was the relative electoral success of community parties during the 1960s which threatened the traditional parties, forced them into the realm of nationalist politics, and resulted into internal confrontations between leaders from different language groups. The second was the split of these parties upon linguistic grounds which removed from Belgian politics the moderating effect of national parties having to please voters from all language groups. In Canada, the

Québec party system with its two nationalist parties leaves, as we have already pointed out in the chapter on identities, little room for politics being conducted without the nationalist angle. It provides the structural conditions for the 'outbidding' and 'catching-up' dynamic previously described. Moreover, the creation in the 1990s of the BQ, a party whose strength in Canadian politics derives in part from the country's single-member plurality electoral system, further accentuated the conflation between nationalism and politics in Québec. In Spain, both national and regional party systems have shaped nationalist mobilization in the democratic period: the former because of the presence of nationalist/regionalist parties which explains the bargaining processes already mentioned; the latter primarily through the domination in the Basque Country and Catalonia of the PNV and CiU which produces a situation similar to Québec's where the scope of politics tends to be reduced to nationalism.

Two larger issues come out of the comparison of nationalist mobilization in Belgium, Spain and Canada. The first is that negotiations surrounding constitutional/institutional change tend to stimulate mobilization. Each one of the cases highlight a particular aspect of that relationship. The Spanish experience of major constitutional and institutional re-designing that took place during the transition to democracy suggests that the sole occurrence of these types of situations is conducive to nationalist mobilization because their high stakes and open-ended nature leads participants to try to build a position of power for themselves. In this context, popular support generated and expressed through territorial mobilization is a strong asset for elites engaged in negotiations. Belgium, with its federalization process, shows that there may very well be nationalist/regionalist fallouts to processes of institutional change even when formal agreements are reached by elites and indeed implemented. It suggests that

political opponents of those involved in the negotiations will be quick to identify losers (their own group and/or territorial unit) and winners (everyone else). The Canadian case shows how failure in constitutional negotiations that have been built up as leading to a 'final solution' for national unity crises is very likely to represent one of these contingencies of history which changes the political and institutional environment in a way that stimulates nationalist mobilization. It suggests that this type of failure gives more credence to nationalist and regionalist arguments.

The second issue is that claims associated with nationalist mobilization in one group/territorial unit often trigger similar reactions in other groups/units. Regional elites tend to compare grievances, that is, they articulate claims and choose tactics following, or in reaction to, what is done elsewhere in the country.¹⁶¹ In other words, the process of nationalist mobilization is a strongly dynamic one. This poses a difficult problem for nationalist and territorial management since the activity of one nationalist movement often spawns related phenomena. It makes the introduction of asymmetrical structures or distinct status, and indeed their mere suggestion, a tricky proposition. On the one hand, elites from other groups/regions are likely to claim for themselves the status awarded to others, and lead, as a result, processes of nationalist or regionalist mobilization. On the other, elites from those groups/regions benefiting from a special recognition will probably seek to preserve the symbolic (and sometimes material) differences by sustaining, or intensifying, mobilization.

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Luis Moreno, *La federalización de España. Poder político y territorio*, p.113.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

The primary objective of this research was to put historical empirical evidence in a new light so as to draw larger theoretical lessons or, at the very least, improve our understanding of ethnonationalism. In this context, the study attempted, with respect to the cases, to find a middle ground between macro-level and detailed empirical analysis. On the one hand, the relatively large number of cases renders difficult the type of empirical investigation that can be conducted on a single case study. Furthermore, excessive bias towards detailing the story of a country's experience may somewhat hinder theorizing. On the other hand, even modest generalizations, such as the ones discussed in the concluding sections of the last three chapters, necessitate a good account of empirical evidence. In addition to these generalizations, this study makes several strong claims relating to the nature of the subject matter, ontology, theory, method of analysis and epistemology/methodology. These claims may be summarized by the following five propositions.

The first is that ethnonationalism is a political rather than a cultural or socio-economic phenomenon. It is a form of politics which means that it is primarily about power. This is why what is needed is a political approach rather than a primordial or structural one. Indeed, approaches centring on cultural or macro socio-economic conditions lack explanatory power whereas the political approach used in this study has shed (some) light on the specifics of ethnonationalism: origins, timing, ideology, claims, programme, changes in intensity and profile, institutional forms, and so on. The second proposition relates to ontology as it suggests a specific way of seeing ethnonationalism with respect to the two conceptual poles of state and society, that is, as a 'top-down' rather than 'bottom-up' process. This proposition entails that ethnonationalism is a process whose causality

runs from state to society: its most striking manifestations may be at the mass/societal level but its core may be found at the level of the state and elites.

The third proposition relates to the analytical framework most appropriate to study ethnonationalism. This study has suggested and used, a tri-dimensional framework inspired by an analytical distinction between three processes of ethnonationalism: identity formation and transformation, interest definition, and nationalist mobilization. Many studies of ethnonationalism lose explanatory power because they tend to stress one of these angles at the expense of others, presenting and conducting their analysis in terms of identity, interests or mobilization. Some others do tackle each of these themes but generally fail to clearly distinguish between the three processes. The advantage of our tri-dimensional framework is that it allows for, and indeed leads to, a systematic, rigorous treatment of all three key components of ethnonationalism.

The fourth proposition, which is perhaps the single most important one coming out of this study, is a theoretical one relating to the core of the causal mechanisms forming the three processes: political elites and institutions are at the heart of ethnonationalism. Elites shape, transform, and indeed sometimes create, identities by providing objective markers with subjective meaning. They define group interests. They also stimulate, sustain or ease nationalist mobilization. These actions are sometimes the product of conscious, strategic decisions, and some other times the contingent results of specific patterns of elite relationships, most importantly competition and conflict. The most important variables in shaping elite relationships and determining if they will be conducive to the processes of ethnonationalism are political institutions such as state structures, territorial division of power, constitutional/legal provisions and party systems. Moreover, political institutions may also have an independent impact on these processes by, for example, setting the objective and subjective boundaries for political communities. For these reasons, this study has built a theoretical framework for ethnonationalism using historical institutionalism and

elite analysis. The former represents a perspective that gives theoretical importance to political institutions while the latter provides the necessary complement of agency. Together, they present the analyst with all the tools needed to illuminate ethnonationalism.

The last proposition is an epistemological/methodological one which derives largely from the historical institutionalist perspective. At the epistemological, or even philosophical level, this study has argued, although most often implicitly, that gaining insight into ethnonationalism necessitated a genuine historical perspective. Ethnonationalism is a long-range, incremental process. For this reason, considering older socio-political outcomes is crucial in understanding more contemporary ones and, indeed, in shedding light on the whole. This means that history, even pre-20th century, is more than simply 'context' or 'background'; it is a crucial element of causation. This study has also suggested that learning about ethnonationalism involves focusing on variables, such as political elites and institutions, that are close to the actual outcomes the analyst is seeking to explain. This choice translates into an epistemological stance whereby generalizations will be of the 'middle-range' and historically-grounded variety rather than general and all-encompassing. The method most conducive to this way of gaining and generating knowledge on ethnonationalism is one of historical comparison. This study has used, and indeed advocated, such a method which involves comparing 'slices of history' using intermediate level variables.

This study suggests, both by what it offers and by what it lacks, some related research avenues. In fact, it can be built upon in at least three ways. The first is to use its theoretical and analytical apparatus to explain forms of territorial politics other than ethnonationalism. This was done to some extent in the study since nationalist movements in Belgium, Spain and Canada are best understood when put in their dynamic context. However, defining a research programme to explicitly cover all forms of territorial political activity, whether it produces claims in the name of the nation or not, is a much more

ambitious project with potentially important theoretical implications. Indeed, such a research programme could serve as a way to broaden the scope of the approach put forward here, and lead to some generalizations about *territorial politics*. In the most optimistic scenario, it could produce a general approach to territorial politics. Historical institutionalism, elite analysis and the analytical framework developed in this study represent tools that could help scholars gain insight into phenomena related to ethnonationalism. For example, regionalism as it can be found in France or Italy are instances of territorial politics that are clearly shaped by state structures, territorial division of power and elite behaviour. They involve processes of identity construction, interest definition and territorial mobilization.

The second research avenue opened up by this study comes as a result of its greatest shortcoming: the marginalization of external factors. To fully take advantage of the theoretical and analytical framework presented here, and to generate additional insight into ethnonationalism and other forms of territorial politics, both continental and global variables will have to seriously be taken into consideration. In Western Europe, the most important continental variable is, of course, the EU. As an evolving supra-national institutional architecture, it shapes territorial boundaries while presenting political elites with both constraints and opportunities. In that respect, it is theoretically no different from, and indeed represents another dimension of, the transformation and evolution of the nation-state. In North America, the free-trade zone, while being currently devoid of any element of political integration, still presents a continental regime whose rules increasingly shape the behaviour of regional elites and, in the process, territorial identities, interests and mobilization. A comprehensive analysis of any case of territorial politics in the West would also have to give some consideration to global variables. The structure of the international system also shapes territorial activity. Regional elites can establish links with other regions, and even nation-states, as a means of empowerment as well as a way to bolster prestige and

status. They sometimes find a niche in some international organizations, an outcome which also gives them leverage in their political struggles. Finally, there is no doubt that ethnonationalism and regionalism are, especially from a longer term perspective, shaped by the globalized structures of the world economy, and that these structures would need to be included into a more in depth analysis of territorial politics at the beginning of the new century.

This study points to a third research avenue: nationalist conflict management strategy. Researching and theorizing ethnonationalism is almost always related in some form to a concern for conflict management and, indeed and in a more general sense, political stability and civil peace. This study's goal was to improve our understanding of ethnonationalism but as such an exercise was conducted, hints about conflict management emerged. At the broadest level, the study suggests two general lessons. The first is that political elites need to be provided with incentives to act with moderation. In other words, such an attitude should not be considered normal or usual. The second is that constitutional-institutional design is a risky business which tends to lead to unintended and unforeseen consequences that may very well worsen the very situation it sought to ease. Here again, if there is one guideline for institutional architects that could be extrapolated from this study, it is the need to design constitutional-institutional frameworks that will favour elite cooperation and moderation rather than competition and outbidding. With these ideas, and indeed the core arguments of this study in mind, nationalist conflict management strategies involving institutional change such as federalization and regionalization should be revisited. Specialists of federalism, particularly as it pertains to multiethnic societies, need to view institutions as much more than mere instruments of regulation: they have to consider them as independent variables.

Another strategy of accommodation that should be reviewed is consociationalism. This study is well positioned to evaluate the consociational model for nationalist conflict

management since it discusses the relationship between political elites (the central concept of consociationalism) and ethnonationalism. It puts forward theoretical claims regarding the nature of ethnonationalism and its central causal mechanisms (claims that were given strength by the empirical material) that weight heavily on the theoretical and ontological foundations of consociationalism. For this reason, this study concludes with a critique of the consociational solution.

4.1-Revisiting the Consociational Solution to Nationalist Conflict.

Political scientists are deeply divided on the strategies that should be used to regulate politics and manage conflicts in multiethnic societies. The long-standing but still heated debate surrounding consociational theory illustrates the profound disagreements among specialists on how to preserve civil peace and political stability in these societies. 'Consociationalism' or 'consociational democracy' has been presented and hailed by some as their only hope for democratic stability and criticized by others as a bankrupt, and even a dangerous, idea.¹ Its merits as a conflict management strategy were debated particularly intensely as the end of apartheid in South Africa and the possibility of peace in Northern

¹ The main proponent of consociational theory is, of course, Arendt Lijpart. See *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977). Other supporters include John McGarry and S.J.R Noel. See "The Prospects for Consociational Democracy in South Africa", *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Studies*, 27 (1989), pp.3-22. Notable critics include Ian Lustick and Brian Barry. For Lustick's views, see "Lijphart, Lakatos, and Consociationalism", *World Politics*, 50 (1997), pp.88-117. For Barry's, see "Political Accommodation and Consociational Democracy" and "The Consociational Model and Its Dangers" in *Democracy and Power. Essays in Political Theory*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp.101-135 and 136-155. First published respectively in *British Journal of Political Science*, 5 (1975), pp.477-505 and *European Journal of Political Research*, 3 (1975), pp.393-411.

Ireland presented these two societies with seemingly insolvable dilemmas.² Indeed, both of these situations highlighted the paramount importance for political scientists to gauge the value of consociational theory. This study's investigation of the processes of ethnonationalism brings relevant, if not determinant, insight into the debate on consociationalism.

Consociationalism is not exclusively a theory of political regulation and conflict management for multiethnic states. In fact, it was first identified as a strategy to deal with religious and class cleavages. Its origins may be traced to the 1967 World Congress of the International Political Science Association where two scholars working independently of each other, Arendt Lijphart and Gerhard Lehmbruch, questioned the pluralist thesis which held that democratic stability was only possible in societies where an homogeneous political culture allowed for cross-cutting alliances.³ Lijphart's challenge of the cross-cutting

2 On consociationalism and South Africa, see Arendt Lijphart, *Power-Sharing in South Africa*, (Berkeley: University of California, Institute of International Studies, 1985); Courtney Jung and Ian Shapiro, "South Africa's Negotiated Transition: Democracy, Opposition, and the New Constitutional Order", *Politics & Society*, 23 (1995), pp.269-308; Thomas Koelble and Andrew Reynolds, "Power-Sharing Democracy in the New South Africa", *Politics & Society*, 24 (1996), pp.221-236; Ian Shapiro and Courtney Jung, "South African Democracy Revisited: A Reply to Koelble and Reynolds", *Politics & Society*, 24 (1996), pp.237-247. On consociationalism and Northern Ireland see, Brendan O'Leary, "The Limits to Coercive Consociationalism in Northern Ireland", *Political Studies*, 34 (1989), pp.562-588; Paul Dixon, "The Politics of Antagonism", *Irish Political Studies*, 11 (1996), pp.130-141; John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, "Proving Our Points on Northern Ireland (and Giving Reading Lessons to Dr. Dixon)", *Irish Political Studies*, 11 (1996), pp.142-154.

3 See Kenneth D. McRae, "Theories of Power-Sharing and Conflict Management", in Joseph V. Montville (ed), *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies*, (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1990), pp.93-94. For Lijphart and Lehmbruch's respective contribution see, "Typologies of Democratic Systems", *Comparative Political Studies*, 1 (1968), pp.3-44 and "A Non-Competitive Pattern of Conflict Management in Liberal Democracies: The Case of Switzerland, Austria, and Lebanon", in Kenneth D. McRae (ed), *Consociational Democracy*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), pp.90-97. For the classic pluralist position on social cleavages, see David Truman, *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion*, (New York: Knopf, 1951).

cleavages hypothesis proceeded from a penetrating critique of Gabriel Almond's famous typology of social systems. This typology placed Western states in one of three categories.⁴ The first comprised the 'Anglo-American' democracies whose stability was thought to be directly related to their coherent political culture. The second included most of the states of 'Continental Europe', and traced the source of their instability to a fragmented political culture. The third was a subsidiary category that included states such as the Scandinavian Countries, the Netherlands, and Switzerland which were seen as falling somewhere in between the states of the first two categories. Lijphart argued that the states in Almond's third category could not be seen simply as representing a middle-ground between the 'Anglo-American' and 'Continental European' continuum. He argued instead that they exhibited two characteristics generally thought as antithetical, stability and cultural fragmentation, and that the processes, procedures and policies they had developed to achieve democratic stability reflected a distinct logic and made them theoretically crucial.⁵ Lijphart modified Almond's typology and labelled these states 'consociational democracies'.⁶

Lijphart described consociational democracy as government by elite cartel.⁷ He suggested that the missing variable needed to explain political stability in the Netherlands,

⁴ Gabriel Almond, "Comparative Political Systems", *Journal of Politics*, 18 (1958), pp.391-409.

⁵ Cultural fragmentation in the early days of consociationalism was associated primarily with class and religious divisions. (The latter referred to both inter-group cleavages and the secularisation debate). In the case of Switzerland, the linguistic cleavage was also included.

⁶ Arendt Lijphart, "Consociational Democracy", *World Politics*, 21 (1969), p.211.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.213.

Austria and Switzerland was elite behaviour.⁸ In consociational democracies, Lijphart argued, the leaders of the different cultural, religious or ideological 'segments' make a deliberate effort to counter the destabilizing potential of fragmentation. He suggested that the success of these states in avoiding violence and instability rested less in any specific institutional arrangement and more in the purposive accommodation of their elites. The voluntarist character of this central explanation for the political stability of divided (or plural) societies made possible the claims that consociationalism was both a descriptive and a normative theory.⁹ Indeed, consociationalism was presented as 'a basically valid empirical theory' and as the best, or in some cases the only, hope for divided societies.¹⁰ For consociational theorists, this hope is offered by the idea that the political leaders of these societies acquire an understanding of the danger inherent to fragmentation which, along with the 'general interest' as well as their own, dictates patterns of cooperation that are likely to become regular and habitual.

Beyond the idea of elite accommodation, consociational theory comes with an array of theoretical baggage that may be organized in three categories: processes and arrangements, devices and favourable conditions. The processes and arrangements category is never expressed as such by consociational theorists but represents nevertheless the essence of the consociational idea. It refers to the organization of society and politics in a way that is supposed to make elite cooperation workable and conducive to stability.

8 These three countries, along with Belgium (but only in relation to its religious and class cleavages), became the 'classic' consociational cases.

9 Arendt Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*, pp.1-3.

10 Arendt Lijphart, *Power-Sharing in South Africa*, p.83 and p.101.

Indeed, the construction of a consociational democracy corresponds to a process of socio-political engineering that follows three steps.

The first is the identification of the segments that constitute a plural society, and their pronouncement as the main, if not exclusive, reference for self-identification, social activities and political claims. The second consists in freezing these segments, building their internal coherence, and isolating them from each other through the development of distinct and autonomous segment-based political parties, trade-unions, voluntary associations and other organizations. In the third step, segmental leaders must distance themselves from the masses and acquire the autonomy deemed necessary to practice politics of accommodation. The specifics of this politics is covered by the device category. Consociational theorists have associated their model with four political strategies or tools.¹¹ The first, and most important, is the grand coalition which allows leaders of all segments to be included in government. Indeed, these theorists reject the majoritarian government-opposition model of democracy as inadequate and dangerous for plural societies, and advocate instead governing by consensus.¹² They suggest that comprehensive coalitions represent the operationalization of the latter idea and the best means to translate the principle of elite accommodation into everyday politics. The second is the mutual veto which is meant to avoid a 'tyranny of the majority' by ensuring that important decisions are approved by leaders of all segments. The veto is intended to act as a complement to the grand coalition by providing additional assurance to the different segments that no law will be adopted without their leaders' approval. The third is proportionality which allows the

11 Arendt Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*, pp.25-44.

12 Kenneth D. McRae, "Contrasting Styles of Democratic Decision-making: Adversarial versus Consensual Politics", *International Political Science Review*, 18 (1997), pp.279-295.

segments to be represented in proportion to their demographic weight within the structures of government. This strategy is designed to eliminate potentially conflictual issues about representation by introducing a 'neutral' criterion. The fourth and final device that is intended to give substance to the principle of elite cooperation is segmental autonomy or federalism. The decentralization of power to the segments is meant to lighten the decisionmaking burden at the centre in the hope of reducing the potential for inter-segmental conflicts.

Consociational theorists have identified favourable conditions to the construction of consociational arrangements and the use of their related devices.¹³ The first is a multiple balance of power and stability among segments. This condition reflects the idea that strategies of domination are more difficult to enforce, and therefore less likely, if there are more than two segments in a plural society. The stability of the different segments is thought to further improve the likelihood of cooperation by leaving no hope to segmental leaders that they can eventually be in a position to govern without the support of leaders of other segments. The second is segmental isolation and coherence. These two features are considered necessary to provide elites with firm control over their respective masses. Isolated and coherent segments are the building blocks of consociational socio-political engineering, and their presence in a plural society, at least in an embryonic state, is assumed to facilitate the construction of consociational structures. The third is related to country size and geopolitics. Consociational theorists argue that external threats and the development of interpersonal relationships between elites, presumably more likely in small

¹³ Arendt Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*, pp.53-103; Adriano Pappalardo, "The Conditions for Consociational Democracy: a Logical and Empirical Critique", *European Journal of Political Research*, 9 (1981), pp.365-390; Pierre du Toit, "Consociational Democracy and Bargaining Power", *Comparative Politics*, 19 (1987), pp.419-430; Kenneth D. McRae, "Contrasting Styles of Democratic Decision-making: Adversarial versus Consensual Politics". I categories.

states, favour cooperation. Finally, a tradition of elite cooperation and the existence of some overarching loyalties are said to facilitate consociationalism. Consociational theorists do not consider any of these conditions sufficient or necessary for the successful construction of a consociational democracy. In fact, they argue that their model is always preferable to any other for plural societies, even if the conditions do not appear favourable.¹⁴

Consociational theory has been attacked from several different angles.¹⁵ First, critics have questioned the empirical validity of the theory. M.P.C.M. van Schendelen has challenged Lijphart's interpretation of Dutch politics. Van Schendelen suggests that the degree of polarization of Dutch society between 1917 and the 1970s was not as high as Lijphart pretends, that the frequent government changes are not exactly a sign of stability, and that elite cooperation was more the result of the electoral system than of any voluntary and purposive behaviour.¹⁶ These observations are particularly significant since the Dutch case served as the empirical basis for consociational theory. Brian Barry has expressed his reservations concerning the theoretical significance of two other consociational 'classic cases': Switzerland and Austria.¹⁷ He argues, using an authoritative study by Jürg

14 See, for example, John McGarry and S.J.R. Noel, "The Prospects for Consociational Democracy in South Africa". Laitin has criticized Lijphart on this basis, particularly with regards to the South African case. See "South Africa: Violence, Myths, and Democratic Reform", *World Politics*, 39 (1987), pp.264-265.

15 For Lijphart's response to these criticisms, see "Consociational Theory and Its Critics", in *Power-Sharing in South Africa*, pp.83-117.

16 M.P.C.M. van Schendelen, "The views of Arendt Lijphart and collected criticisms", *Acta Politica*, 19 (1984), pp.35-38.

17 Brian Barry, "Political Accommodation and Consociational Democracy", pp.101-103.

Steiner¹⁸, that Switzerland fails to meet the consociational model on every point: there exists a strong consensus in Swiss society, and between political parties, on virtually all important questions: linguistic and religious groups are not isolated or internally coherent: they are not represented by specific political parties: and the practice of referenda defies the idea of highly aloof and autonomous elites who avoid engaging in majoritarian decisionmaking.¹⁹ Barry also argues that the panoply of consociational devices used in Austria between 1945 and 1966 can not be convincingly connected to that country's political stability.

Second, many observers have highlighted the imprecision of consociationalism's key concepts. Jürg Steiner argues that consociational theorists fail to specify if the idea of 'plural society' refers simply to cultural diversity or if it entails that this diversity serve as the basis for a system of social and political organization.²⁰ This hesitation considerably obfuscate the concept of plural society since, according to the first definition, every society in the world could be considered plural. The second definition is also problematic because it does not specify the degree of 'segmentation' (social and political organization on the basis of culture) required to call a society plural. In other words, "when is a division within a society a cleavage and when is a cleavage segmental? Or, to raise a delicate methodological question: on the basis of which criterion can one say that some division is

18 Jürg Steiner, *Amicable Agreement versus Majority Rule: Conflict Resolution in Switzerland*, (Chapel Hill: University of California Press, 1974).

19 Jürg Steiner and Jeffrey Obler also express doubts on the consociational nature of Swiss democracy. See "Does the Consociational Theory Really Holds for Switzerland?", p.337.

20 Jürg Steiner, "The Consociational Theory and Beyond", *Comparative Politics*, 13 (1981), pp.340-341.

not a cleavage and that a cleavage is *not* segmental?"²¹ Critics have also argued that the indicators used to qualify 'political stability' (system maintenance, civil order, legitimacy and effectiveness) are too vague, and that they do not adequately capture the important dimension of problem-solving.²² Consequently, the coding of 'stable' and 'unstable' systems is difficult.²³ Finally, Sue Halpern finds that 'conceptual elasticity' also affects the consociational devices.²⁴ She argues, most importantly, that the grand coalition is a "catch-all concept, describing any joint governmental or quasi-governmental activity pursued by segmental elites whether they undertake that activity as bloc representatives or not."²⁵

Third, numerous observers have expressed doubts about the democratic character of consociationalism.²⁶ Drawing from the observations of different experts of Dutch politics, van Schendelen suggests that the closed elite system of secret negotiations associated with consociationalism is more an oligarchy than a democracy.²⁷ The high

21 M.P.C.M. van Schendelen, "The views of Arendt Lijphart and collected criticisms", p.31.

22 Ibid., p.32.

23 Ian Lustick, "Lijphart, Lakatos, and Consociationalism", pp.105-106.

24 Sue Halpern, "The Disorderly Universe of Consociational Democracy". *West European Politics*, 19 (1987), pp.189-192.

25 Ibid., p.190.

26 Sam Nolutshungu, *Changing South Africa: Political Consideration*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), p.28; Pierre van den Berghe, *The Ethnic Phenomenon*, p.82.

27 M.P.C.M. van Schendelen, "The views of Arendt Lijphart and collected criticisms", p.39.

degree of deference and passivity required by the consociational model has also been viewed as antithetical to participatory democracy. Lustick sees in Lijphart's claim that the breakdown of consociational democracy in India was the result of 'mounting democratic activism' an acknowledgement that consociationalism is less than 'fully democratic'.²⁸ Finally, other analysts have attributed consociationalism's lack of democratic credentials to the perpetual absence of an opposition resulting from the practice of grand coalition government.²⁹

While these three criticisms undoubtedly raise serious concerns about the theoretical and normative value of consociationalism, observers have put forward a fourth one which is particularly significant in evaluating the pertinence of the consociational model for multiethnic societies. Barry and van Schendelen have seen in consociational theory's treatment of elite behaviour and political stability a form of circular or tautological reasoning.³⁰ This idea is crucial to understanding the implications of the construction of consociational arrangements in multiethnic societies because it triggers questions on the motivations of elites, the consequences of the different patterns of their relationships, and the very nature of politics. Therefore, the full significance of the consociational tautology needs to be better appreciated and more fully explained. Moreover, the development of the

28 Ian Lustick. "Lijphart, Lakatos, and Consociationalism", p.117. For Lijphart's statement, see "The Puzzle of Indian Democracy: A Consociational Interpretation, *American Political Science Review*, 3 (1996), p.264.

29 Courtney Jung and Ian Shapiro. "South Africa's Negotiated Transition: Democracy, Opposition, and the New Constitutional Order", *Politics & Society*, 23 (1995), pp.269-308.

30 Brian Barry. "Political Accommodation and Consociational Democracy", pp.102-103; M.P.C.M. van Schendelen. "The views of Arendt Lijphart and collected criticisms", p.34 and pp.42-43.

tautology argument eventually lead to a fifth criticism regarding the consociational conception of ethnic groups and identities.

Consociational theory is articulated around two related tautologies. First, elite accommodation is defined both as consociational democracy and as the force behind consociationalism (or as what makes consociationalism possible). Second, consociational democracy is by nature a stable democracy, but also serves as the explanation for stability in plural societies. (There is a third, less important, tautological relationship to be found in the favourable conditions for consociationalism: one of these conditions is a tradition of elite accommodation!) The first tautology raises questions about the forces or mechanisms that may trigger elites to adopt cooperative behaviour. Consociational theorists leave this question hidden in their circular reasoning and largely unanswered. They argue that elites have a rational interest in cooperating, but do not explain the nature of this interest or how and why it can trigger and sustain regular, almost uninterrupted, cooperation. They tend to simply assume that elites will think of 'the general interests' first, and that they will see these interests as synonymous with stability. In short, consociational theorists tend to take elite cooperation as natural and habitual behaviour. The second tautology presents the dilemma of consociationalism as the cause or consequence of political stability. Steiner and Obler as well as van Schendelen have argued that periods of stability in Switzerland and the Netherlands might simply be explained by an absence of real potential for conflict rather than by presumed consociational arrangements.³¹ These questions raise doubts about the behaviour of elites in plural societies, and its relationship with political stability.

Consociationalism advocates the institutionalization of ethnic categories as a strategy of political regulation and conflict management in multiethnic societies. It holds

31 Jürg Steiner and Jeffrey Obler, "Does the Consociational Theory Really Holds for Switzerland?", pp.337-340. M.P.C.M. van Schendelen, "The views of Arendt Lijphart and collected criticisms", pp.35-36.

that this permanent polarization allows political elites to structure government on well-defined, isolated, stable and coherent 'pillars' upon which they can exercise full control. It fails to recognize that competition may not be completely and consistently taken out of politics. It is unrealistic to expect political elites to constantly act in an altruistic manner, and to always favour long-term objectives of system maintenance rather than short-term political gain. Indeed, political elites do not always equate their interests (especially immediate ones) with politics of accommodation and system stability. On the contrary, "trained politicians (...) not only discern the dangers, but also the opportunities deriving from a divided society."³² Consociational structures only add to the strategic possibilities inherent in these societies. The extreme polarization they create also makes the 'defection' of only one major actor likely to trigger a 'domino effect' hazardous to democratic stability. Consociational theorists also fail to appreciate the contingencies of elite relationships which may produce situations more conducive to competition than cooperation. Changing contextual conditions, either macro socioeconomic or event-specific, may shape the configuration of elite relationships in favour of confrontation rather than accommodation. The masses may also exert pressure on elites to alter patterns of cooperative behaviour. Consociationalism voluntarily takes the 'genie' of ethnic identity, politicized or not, out of the box. (It sometimes even creates that genie.) Political elites, even if they would consistently strive to control this genie and always benefit from favourable conditions, may not always be able to keep it in check. The consociational tautologies express the theory's difficulty to justify its assumptions about elite cooperation, and to explain its relationship with political stability. A more realistic position is that competition, whatever its proximate and underlying causes in various situations, always plays a part in politics, and that elites in a multiethnic society who are not provided with incentives to adopt moderate positions are

32 Ibid., p.45.

likely to engage in ethnic politics. The consociational idea of structuring politics around ethnic categories almost guarantees that when different variables favour competition, it will take the form of ethnic conflict independently of the nature of the issues contested.

This discussion of the potential consequences of consociational arrangements under conditions of political competition suggests an evaluation of their theoretical and ontological foundations which leads to a fifth criticism. Consociationalism is a primordialist theory.³³ It assumes that ethnic identities are fundamental and politically charged realities that pre-exist socio-political relations and carry with them specific claims and interests. It views ethnic groups as objective, coherent, stable and naturally antagonistic entities. These primordialist assumptions are clearly reflected in the logic of consociational arrangements. The idea of structuring politics around ethnic markers stems from the belief that these markers have a natural subjective meaning, and that they necessarily produce identities which represent unavoidable realities. The process of erecting 'ethnic pillars' finds its logic in the idea that they are built upon well-defined, self-contained and unified blocks. The goal of keeping these pillars isolated from each other, and their base at a great distance from the elites stems from the assumption that ethnic groups are naturally hostile, and that ethnic conflict is essentially a mass phenomenon.

Consociationalism is built on flawed assumptions. Ethnic identities are not 'givens' of social existence, but rather contingent and situational phenomena that are shaped more by socio-political processes than objective markers. They are not inherently political but have to be made politically relevant. The consociational process of freezing the boundaries

33 Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison*, pp.337-339. Ironically, critics of consociationalism sometimes use primordialist arguments to challenge the theory. Brian Barry has argued that consociational structures are particularly inefficient to deal with ethno-linguistic cleavages since these cleavages produce identities more fundamental than any others, and are more conducive to 'acts of gross inhumanity'. See "Political Accommodation and Consociational Democracy", p.131.

of ethnic groups fails to take advantage of the fluidity of ethnic identities. The idea of building their internal coherence negates the possibility that the contradictions inherent in these groups may bring an element of moderation to politics. The isolation of ethnic groups prevents the development of inter-group solidarities that are crucial in mitigating tension. The strategy of making ethnic groups the centre of politics marginalizes the importance of the contingencies, fluctuations and irregularities of the political manifestations of ethnic identities. It defies the fact that ethnic markers have no natural meaning and political consequences. The consociational reification of ethnicity creates a permanent polarization of society and politics by guaranteeing that all issues are viewed through ethnic lenses. It rewards ethnic entrepreneurs at the expense of those wishing to cut across these cleavages.³⁴ Consociationalism finds its logic in a primordial conception of ethnonationalism. The more empirically accurate instrumental (or situational) vision destroys its foundations and exposes its weakness.

The primordial grounding of consociational theory has more far-reaching consequences than simply its failure to take advantage of the fluidity and contingency of ethnic identities and their political consequences. It also fails to appreciate the multidimensional character of the relationship between political institutions, elites and ethnonationalism. As we have demonstrated, political institutions are not merely instruments to manage given identities and claims. They also contribute to the creation, transformation and politicization of ethnic identities. Similarly, political elites of multiethnic societies are not always benevolent wisemen seeking the long-term stability of the system. The wisdom of institutionalizing ethnonationalism and relying on political elites to maintain civil peace is particularly questionable in the light of the fact that ethnic identities are political constructs and political factors, and that they are created, shaped and given political

34 Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *South Africa without Apartheid: Dismantling Racial Domination*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p.206.

significance by institutions and elites. The consociational strategy of institutionalizing ethnic identities is likely to sustain, politicize, and even trigger the emergence of ethnic identities that might have been ephemeral, without political significance or simply non-existent. The idea of providing elites with great autonomy from the masses, and to assume that these elites will consistently adopt moderate positions without any particular incentive ignores both the consequences of changing patterns of elite interactions and the strategic necessities of politics. Consociational structures create the conditions for competing elites to engage in processes of identity creation, politicization and mobilization. They also lose any potential for accommodation that may appear in the masses by consistently preventing them from exercising any influence on elites.

The consociational solution for multiethnic societies challenges both empirical evidence and recent theoretical developments on ethnic identities and their political manifestations, this study included. The fact that ethnic identities are fluid and contingent rather than stable and objective, and that they do not have a natural political relevance but have to be made politically significant considerably undermines the foundations of consociational theory. The key role played by political institutions and elites in creating, shaping, politicizing and mobilizing ethnic identities raises serious doubts on the wisdom of strongly institutionalizing ethnic identities and leaving their management in the hands of elites without giving them any incentive to adopt moderate positions. Indeed, this inquiry into the processes of ethnonationalism suggests that the consociational model is likely to exacerbate and even create the conflicts it seeks to pacify or avoid.

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