THE EUROPEAN UNION AND MINORITY NATIONALISM:

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE SPANISH

AND TURKISH CASES

by

Gordon O'Connor Dunne

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The dissertation of   **Gordon O'Connor Dunne**

has been approved by the following supervisory committee members:

Howard Lehman	, Chair	**2/3/2015** Date Approved
Marjorie Castle	, Member	**2/3/2015** Date Approved
Samuel Handlin	, Member	**2/3/2015** Date Approved
Tobias Hofmann	, Member	**2/3/2015** Date Approved
Douglas New	, Member	**2/3/2015** Date Approved

and by   **Mark Button**   , Chair/Dean of

the Department/College/School of   **Political Science**

and by David B. Kieda, Dean of The Graduate School.

ABSTRACT

European integration has brought about dramatic and far-reaching social, economic, and political changes in Europe. Some of the consequences of integration have been unpredicted and unintended and have created something of a paradox. One example of such a paradox is the phenomenon of substate or minority nationalism. In the context of the European Union (EU), where the goal has been to do away with national rivalries and forge a European identity, nationalism itself presents an interesting puzzle, minority nationalism even more so. This dissertation addresses the issue of the EU as an unnatural but effective supporter of minority nationalism. The central argument is that through integration generally and more specifically through the processes of increased democratization, multilevel governance, and the establishment of new norms and institutions at the EU level minority nationalists have found an opportunity structure and support system to further their political goals. Through a historical analysis of two cases, Spain and Turkey, this study demonstrates that integration has benefited minority nationalists and their political representatives in significant ways; however, integration has had a more limited impact on Kurdish nationalism compared to Basque, Catalan, and Galician nationalism because of Turkey's EU candidate status. Furthermore, an analysis of the evolution of the EU's regional representative body, the Committee of the Regions, reveals an increasingly significant and assertive role for substate authorities within the EU polity, which is particularly promising from the minority nationalist perspective.

Overall, this study argues for the historical significance of integration in relation to

minority nationalism, its increased significance in the current era of crisis and change in

Europe, and how independence is still a goal for some minority nationalists, but within

the context of an EU structure, that allows for new concepts of the nation and the state.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Europe has just commemorated both the 100th anniversary of the start of World

War I and the 75th anniversary of the start of World War II. This dual anniversary of the

20th century's greatest conflicts provides an opportunity for reflection. This is particularly

true for Europeans today who are currently living through one of the toughest tests of the

postwar era, where the very foundations of the European dream of unity and harmony

have been shaken. Rooted in the Great Recession, the Eurozone crisis has presented

enormous challenges to the European project. Many have even begun to question the

viability of the European Union itself.

What is certain is that Europe is changing. The crisis has brought into focus the

very essence of European integration, its purpose and direction. There are questions of

transparency, accountability, legitimacy, representation, participation, and sovereignty, as

well as other more basic questions related to jobs, security, immigration, and the

environment. The dream of Europe as envisioned by founding fathers such as Jean

Monnet, Robert Schuman, and Altiero Spinelli was to do away with war once and for all

and build a new history "with attention to quality of life, sustainability, and peace and

harmony" (Rifkin, 2004, p. 7). Since the end of World War II Europe has managed to

avoid continental war and to create a prosperous and pacific zone through a form of economic and political integration that is unique in history. With Europe home to some of the most important economies in the world and armed confrontation virtually unthinkable, its successes are remarkable, yet the dream is incomplete. The financial crisis and the recent turmoil in Ukraine have jolted the European dream and highlighted more of Europe's divisions than its unity.

One major source of conflict and disunity that the founders of the EU wished to do away with was nationalism. National rivalries, particularly between France and Germany were seen as important contributors to war. One of the earliest steps, therefore, in the integration process was the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952 which brought coal and steel production (the basis for a war economy) under joint ownership.[1] This was the first major move in a long process of deepening and widening European integration that ultimately led to the creation of the European Union. However, while integration has played a large part in preventing war and has brought about a high level of economic prosperity in Europe it has not erased strong national sentiment and identities. Most Europeans identify first and foremost with their nations, the often almost visceral attachment to land and ancestry as described by Michael Ignatieff in *Blood and Belonging* (1994) is still prevalent among many of Europe's peoples; and so the idea of a European demos remains an elusive aspiration. Eurobarometer statistics reveal that European citizens have the strongest sense of belonging to their nation (94%) followed closely by their region (91%), whereas

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[1] See Nugent (2003). The original agreement was between France and West Germany but Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg were invited to participate and they accepted. The six countries signed the Treaty of Paris in April 1951 and the ECSC came into effect in July 1952.

European identity is a distant third (74%).[2] Interestingly, in the same survey a notable 68% of those polled expressed strong feelings of belonging to their region and only 8% do not identify with a region. Realistically, as long as there are nation-states there will be questions of identity and nationalism, including regional questions related to minority nations; this issue will continue to be on the political agenda; in Europe it has taken on interesting dimensions as a result of the on-going process of integration.

This dissertation examines the phenomenon of minority nationalism in the context of European integration especially in light of the changes occurring as a result of the economic and financial crisis, or what Europeans more broadly and simply term "the crisis." I argue that the EU's founding fathers not only underestimated the enduring strength and appeal of nationalism but also failed to predict that through integration a new opportunity structure would emerge for stateless nations or minority nationalists to assert and defend their own rights regarding collective identity and national self-determination. I wish to highlight the paradox of integration in that it has unintentionally provided an opportunity space and external support system for minority nationalists in pursuit of their long-term goals of increased autonomy or independence.

The regionalist and minority nationalist question has a long and complex history intricately linked to the gradual withering away of feudalism and the emergence of the state-system in Europe, which was eventually confirmed and consolidated by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Powerful centralizing monarchies in England, Sweden, Spain, and France led the way in creating strong central governments with control over large territories that often included populations with different traditions and languages who did not necessarily identify with the center. While some of these peripheral populations were

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[2] See Eurobarometer 71.

successfully integrated into the state others retained their separate identity. The central state repressed these identities but was often forced to accommodate them by allowing for a degree of autonomy and/or the retention of traditional rights and privileges, as in the case of the Basque Country and Scotland. Other regions were not so easily accommodated and/or never fully integrated and ultimately broke away to form their own independent state, e.g., Ireland and Norway. Contemporary Europe's nation-states are a product of centuries of complex state-building through mostly conflictual processes of unification and secession and Europe's regions and 'stateless nations' are firmly rooted in this history.

The regions of Europe exhibit a high level of diversity in terms of size, population, economy, and level of distinct identity even within states. For example, in the UK, Scotland and Wales are regions with strong national identities, whereas England, although a nation in its own right, is not a region per se but is divided into several regions, e.g., West Midlands, East Anglia, etc. These English regions were created for purely functional purposes within the framework of European regional policies, including designation of the European Regional Development Fund. The disparity in wealth between regions is also striking, especially since the 2004 expansion which saw many former communist countries join the Union. For example, Hamburg's PPS (Purchasing Power Standard) is 202% of the EU-28 average, whereas in Romania, the region of Nord-Est has a PPS of just 29% of the average.[3] Furthermore, some regions, although large, e.g., Rhône-Alpes, operate in a centralized state and therefore have fewer powers than,

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[3] See Eurostat
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&plugin=0&language=en&pcode=tgs00006

for example, the *Länder* in Germany and Austria, the federated regions of Belgium, or the autonomous communities of Spain, all of which enjoy legislative rights.

      The model of the centralized state as exemplified by France, the UK, as well as many smaller nation-states like Denmark, Finland, and Ireland has given way to a more decentralized model where central governments are devolving powers to local and regional authorities. This has been an uneven process but a trend nevertheless. Since the second half of the 20th century regions have grown steadily more important, gaining increased competencies in areas of politics and the economy. The pressure on the state to relinquish certain powers has come from below and above. Domestically, regions have fought to maintain their often threatened culture and traditions; in addition, many regions are less well-off than the center and have sought decentralization as a means of addressing economic inequalities. Central governments have implemented various forms of devolution or political federalization in an effort to resolve economic disparities but also to appease would be separatists. From above the effects of globalization have dramatically altered traditional means of economic and political interaction; cities, regions, states, all interact with each other on a global stage in increasingly novel ways where borders become less meaningful. The European Union, itself partly a product of globalization, encourages cross-border cooperation between regions to further its own political and economic integration (Anderson, 2001).

      However, it would be a mistake to assume that regions are replacing states and that European integration is inexorably leading to some decentralized federation of regions or a "Europe of the Regions." As Charles de Gaulle once said, "…there is and can be no Europe other than the Europe of the states – except of course, for myths,

fictions and pageants" (Bullmann, 1997, p. 3). De Gaulle was probably correct when he

made this comment in 1962, but it is less accurate today. For sure, the EU is still in many

ways very much guided and shaped by the member-states, with the Council of the

European Union representing the most important EU decision-making institution,[4] but

Europe has evolved significantly; the Single European Act of 1986 and the Treaty on

European Union (Maastricht Treaty) of 1992 were instrumental in advancing the

integration process to new levels.[5] The result has been a shift in decision-making to the

supranational level with subnational authorities becoming part of a wider system of

European multilevel governance (Marks, 1992).

Significantly for regions, the Maastricht Treaty institutionalized the place and role

of subnational authorities by establishing the Committee of the Regions. All local and

regional authorities are permitted and encouraged to become members of the Committee.

One of the major consequences of Maastricht and subsequent treaties, especially the

Lisbon Treaty of 2009,[6] is that the EU has managed to provide a more favorable political

environment for regions in which the traditional state-centered rules have been replaced

with a system of shared sovereignty, more diffused authority and multilevel governance.

In particular, strong regional actors, e.g., regions with legislative powers and/or regions

representing minority nationalities have been able to push the limits of these emerging

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[4] The Council of Ministers (now officially called the Council of the European Union) remains the most powerful and influential institution in the EU as it is the principal meeting place of the member-state governments. Member-state governments are therefore at the center of most EU decision-making.
[5] See Nugent (2003). The integration process was reinvigorated by The Single European Act (SEA) of 1986 which was seen as the most far-reaching revision to the founding treaties and provided the EC with a broader policy remit. The 1992 Maastricht Treaty took integration to the next step and created the current EU based on three pillars: the European Communities, a Common Foreign and Security Policy, and Cooperation in the Field of Justice and Home Affairs. Maastricht also established a timetable for economic and monetary union, some veto powers to the European Parliament, and prepared the way for the Committee of the Regions.
[6] See Chapter 2 for a more detailed account of the effects of the Treaty of Lisbon.

institutional arrangements and project their own identities and interests in places like Brussels and Strasbourg.

That European integration has presented these opportunities for groups like minority nationalists and the apparent growing presence and significance of such actors in world politics is intriguing. Traditional modernist views posited that national minorities would and should disappear by means of modernization and the consolidation of the nation-state; however, empirically this has proven not to be the case and the state-system has evolved in a more challenging and conflictual manner resulting in the vast majority of states having complex heterogeneous populations often with multiple allegiances and/or national identities (Keating & McGarry, 2001). As mentioned, the state is under considerable pressure from below and above: the one-size-fits-all homogenizing approach from central states is passionately resisted by minority groups while globalization has produced notions of postnationalism that go beyond traditional ideas of state identity and sovereignty (Kearney, 2002).

Globalization has, in fact, strengthened nationalism because of a number of important factors and the European Union as part of the globalization process is an example of how the risks associated with independence have been reduced (Keating & McGarry, 2001). Firstly, even small regions have access to global markets and do not have to rely on their association with a larger state to be globally competitive. Secondly, in terms of security, which is for many who study international relations the primary concern of states, both European integration and multilateral defense, i.e., NATO are powerful guarantees of peace and stability. Thirdly, the advances in technology, especially communications technology, while threatening some minority nationalists with

the dominance of the English language,[7] simultaneously allows minorities to use these same tools to advance and promote their own language, culture, etc. Finally, the global spread of universal human rights, of which the EU is a primary advocate, has expanded liberal ideas to include not only individual rights but also group rights. Minority nationalists have consistently utilized human rights discourse to defend their demands for self-determination.

European integration has impacted the way in which local and regional authorities view themselves and how they interact with their central governments. The most prominent of these regional actors are representatives from regions with legislative powers who are also, although not always, minority nationalists. This dissertation focuses on the latter group and the political parties they represent. Minority nationalist parties are defined by their primary political goal of autonomy and self-determination, but there is considerable variety amongst these parties in terms of the level of autonomy desired. What is common to all minority nationalist parties has been the need for them to respond to the deepening and widening processes of integration. In so doing, minority nationalist parties have become Europeanized in the sense that they have reoriented their goals to take into account the effects of integration (Lynch, 1996).

In many cases this Europeanization has served to revitalize the party itself both regionally and nationally; Jorge Gordin (2001) notes how voting for regionalist parties in national elections has significantly increased in recent decades; and while some traditional minority nationalist parties have experienced a revival other new regional parties have emerged (De Winter, 2006). This rise of minority nationalism is having a

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[7] It is interesting to note that not only minority nationalities are threatened by English as the language of technology, Québec is a good example, but large nation-states such as France and even China have tried to push back on the technological and cultural hegemony of the US.

significant impact on the nation-state with central governments pressured into making concessions to the periphery. Since integration began in the 1950s Belgium has become a federal state, Spain has produced a new constitution that includes 17 autonomous communities all with legislative capabilities, Italy officially recognized its historic regions, and even a highly centralized state like the UK devolved powers to national assemblies in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

This dissertation examines the effects of European integration on the phenomenon of minority nationalism, paying attention to the historical evolution of regionalism and minority nationalism within the context of integration, the impact of the current situation of crisis and change in Europe, and predictions for the future direction of the EU. The main argument that will be developed in the chapters below can be summarized as follows: European integration has provided an opportunity structure and external support mechanism for minority nationalists who wish to pursue nation-building activities that can assist them on their road to more autonomy and self-determination. Such opportunities are not available to minority nationalists within their states nor are they available to such an extent in any other political context. The EU, especially since the crisis, is heading in the direction of deeper integration (not wider for now), which, in an age of globalization, will involve more multilevel governance and local and regional input and participation; this will be necessary if the EU is to restore confidence in its citizenry. The potential for regional and minority nationalist groups to benefit from the current changes in the EU are high. Overall, I want to draw attention to the persistence of nationalism in Europe as a force to be reckoned with and at the same time challenge the idea that integration will ultimately lead to minority nationalists accepting something less

than independent statehood. Finally, the goal is to present some general conclusions about the effects of integration more broadly on minority nationalism.

1.2 Research Question

How does European integration affect minority nationalism in EU member-states and candidate states? This is the core question of this dissertation. For certain, the question touches on the notion of unintended consequences stemming from the European project.[8] When studying the European Union, the unpredicted and unexpected results of European integration often present the most interesting puzzles. The goal of this research, therefore, is to attempt to discover the reasons behind a particular trend in Europe where we are witnessing in many cases increased assertiveness in regional and local politics and in some instances growing agitation by regions that represent minority nations. The argument here is that there are new opportunity structures in place that allow for substate level authorities and more significantly substate nationalist parties to, in effect, circumvent the central state and more effectively pursue their political goals. This is not to say that European integration per se, leads to the rise of minority nationalism rather that the European Union offers an attractive alternative arena for such groups to pursue political goals. Various studies have posited that the EU is, in fact, a major player, albeit inadvertently, in promoting regional autonomy.[9] If this is indeed the case, how do regionally-based political parties utilize the institutions of the EU to their advantage and how does this dynamic change their calculus when it comes to advancing their interests? This dissertation focuses on the opportunity structure available to substate authorities,

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[8]See Hall and Taylor (1996) and Thelen (1999). Unintended consequences are an important part of historical institutionalism and institutions do not always produce the intended outcomes.
[9] See, for example, Sharpe (1993), Keating (1995, 2001b), Hooghe (1996), and Laitin (1997).

more specifically minority nationalist parties, within the context of an evolving European normative and institutional environment. For this reason, the role of the European Union's primary institution for dealing with regional issues, the Committee of the Regions, will be the subject of scrutiny in terms of its effectiveness and influence in linking regions and regional issues with Brussels. Finally, since the case studies include a member-state of the EU and a candidate state, the broader goal is to draw some general conclusions about the overall effect of European integration on the phenomenon of substate or minority nationalism.

Previous research has looked at the EU and the connection with substate interests ranging from local authorities and cities to regions with legislative capacities.[10] Various conclusions and theories have arisen from this body of work. However, relatively little has been written about the effects of European integration on minority nationalism in states that are candidates for EU membership. The selection of Turkey as a case study seeks to make a contribution on that score. Since Turkey is not a member-state, Kurdish nationalism through the lens of European integration allows for a different context that serves to illustrate the reach and impact of European integration on minority nationalism. As for Spain, there are 17 regions, three of which represent national minorities, i.e., the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia. The Spanish case provides variation in terms of type of region: large, like Andalusia, to relatively small, like Murcia as well as numerous local authorities. Significantly, Spanish regions hold legislative powers that have steadily evolved since Spain's accession to the European Union in 1986. Catalonia is of special interest. Following in the steps of Scotland's bid for independence, Catalonia also held its

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[10] See, for example, Sadler (1993), Van Houten (2000), Keating (2001a), Gagnon (2003), Criekenmans (2010), Fitjar (2010), Panara and Becker (2011), Donas and Beyers (2012), Tatham and Thau (2014).

own, albeit unauthorized, referendum in November 2014. These two referendums represent a serious challenge to the idea that European integration would ultimately offer alternatives to minority nationalities short of independence.

In addition, the Committee of the Regions as a lesser known institution of the European Union has received far less scholarly attention compared to the other major institutions in Brussels such as the Commission or the Parliament. The majority of research conducted on the Committee of the Regions has been primarily concerned with its effectiveness and ability to influence legislation.[11] While this area will also be of interest to this research, recent changes affecting the capabilities and mission of the Committee, which stem from the Lisbon Treaty and the Committee's own reorientation and stated goals, have yet to be studied in depth. Like all organizations in Brussels, the Committee of the Regions competes for influence and the Lisbon Treaty has provided the Committee with a promising opportunity. The direction the Committee will take and how much influence it gains remains to be seen, but these latest developments are indicative of an ever changing environment and opportunity structure for substate entities in Europe. Furthermore, while the Committee of the Regions' involvement with member-states is well-documented, less so is its association with candidate states. Part of this study will, therefore, seek to establish the extent of the Committee's contacts with Turkish local and regional authorities and more specifically measure the degree to which Kurdish nationalism endeavors to engage with Europe as a means of pursuing its political (and economic) agenda. This will be one indication of the EU's influence on substate nationalism. The case of Spain illustrates how autonomous regions interact with the process of European integration over time and what challenges and opportunities present

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[11] See, for example, Neshkova (2010), Panara and De Becker (2011), and Cloots et al. (2012).

themselves. The Committee of the Regions is therefore relevant to this research because of its unique position as the official institution representing the regions in Brussels; it therefore serves as an important point of reference for integration as it pertains to regional and local interests.

This dissertation also contributes to several theoretical debates. Firstly, it examines theoretical approaches to nationalism and tries to place the phenomenon of minority nationalism within the context of European integration. Secondly, in the area of political opportunity theory, I support many of the ideas articulated by Sidney Tarrow, David Meyer, and other social movement scholars regarding opportunity structures that allow for political contention and change. In this instance, the European Union represents a platform for contending politics and opportunities for various actors, including substate actors. In a similar manner, this study builds on theories of multiculturalism and multicultural policies, emphasizing the Spanish and Turkish cases as examples of what many scholars see as a global shift in attitudes towards minorities and a rejection of the policies of homogenization.[12] Again, the background of European integration is informative here. Finally, this study also adds to the admittedly crowded debate regarding the European project itself and its future.[13] Here, I explore the inability of intergovernmentalism to explain the increasing prevalence of substate actors in Brussels, as well as the implementation of policies and passing of treaties that are favorable to increased substate influence.

The contribution, therefore, pertains to the literature on the European Union, but I also aim to contribute to the literature on nationalism. Many see the European integration

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[12] See Kymlicka (2007).
[13] See Moravcsik (1998).

process as challenging the traditional ideas of nationalism. In fact, Europe provides an environment in which competing ideas of nationalism play out.[14] As previously indicated though, it could not be the intention of the European Union (an international organization) to in any way actively promote nationalism, especially substate nationalism since the EU is not only made up of and directed by member-states (several of which are wary of separatist regions), but from its inception part of the goal of European integration was to do away with competing nationalisms which had been so long an underlying source of conflict for the continent. In this sense EU policy has created a contradiction; on the one hand it promotes unity through a common market, legal system, monetary union, etc. but on the other hand it allows for substate, i.e., local and regional representation in Brussels. The active participation of substate entities in EU affairs emboldens these representatives and in the case of minority national regions recognizes and reinforces their separate identities. Nationalism, therefore, has not gone away and on the contrary there is evidence of not only increased nationalism in member-states but also at the substate level. Perhaps the EU's motto, "Unity in Diversity," captures something of the complexity and challenge. Fundamentally, European integration is upsetting the Westphalian model of the nation-state and allowing substate nationalists space to redefine and challenge the existing order. This is why, for the most part, regional and minority nationalist parties are enthusiasts of European integration and look to Brussels for support.

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[14] See Keating (2000) and Csergo and Goldgeier (2004)

1.3 Theories of Nationalism

Nationalism is not a well-defined concept, or some might say it is perhaps an overly defined concept. Max Weber, himself a German nationalist, never provided a systematic theory of nationalism, while Émile Durkeim and Karl Marx predicted its demise.[15] To understand nationalism one must first place it in its time dimension. The creation of nation-states has been a historical process and the current manifestation of nation-states is a recent phenomenon. Nations or "Peoples" have existed from time immemorial; however, the concept of popular sovereignty of these peoples into different states is a modern occurrence. The drive towards nation-states through national movements can come through various means: social movement, political elite, or even an individual leader. Nationalism must also be understood as referring to different scenarios, i.e., in terms of the particular accomplishments and aspirations of specific cases: a state that has yet to be realized (an aspiration), an extant state, a goal to bring a diaspora under one state, to secede from a larger state, or expelling a group(s) that are identified as not part of the authentic nation (Hagendoorn et al., 2000).

> Generally, nationalism refers to the phenomenon that leaders, elite groups, or populations feel that the state they live in should be the state of their nation. In other words, nationalism refers to ethnicity, a feeling of common heritage (in terms of history, lineage, language, or religion) and fate. Nationalism is a scheme, vision, or matter of elite propaganda if the identification of a people with itself as a state has yet to be evoked. Nationalism is an actual social force if the identification is already there and has widespread popular support. In both cases, nationalism specifies political goals. (p.5)

Identifying with a nation or state is not the same as nationalism because nationalism is about a movement to change or modify the existing state, e.g., defend it, enlarge it,

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[15] See Guibernau (1999).

secede, exclude, etc. Not all nations are nation states nor do they want to become so; however, all states are populated by nations and must come to terms with this fact (p.5).

Montesquieu is often accredited as being the first to deal with nationalism in a systematic way. The preservation of society was a moral principle for Montesquieu and such preservation necessitated the existence of a government. Since government was necessary for the well-being of society, establishing and maintaining the government became a moral imperative. Yet to achieve this, citizens must have an incentive. This incentive is achieved through the nationalist virtue of love of country. It makes sense, therefore, to speak of the boundaries of government being based on nationality and this was a point made by John Stuart Mill (2001). The idea of each nation having its own state is treated by philosophers like Herder as a natural condition ordained of God. However, if we understand that a government should be based on and be at the head of a nation, this begs the question regarding how a nation comes about and once established what are its boundaries? In Ernest Renan's famous lecture of 1882 he asked the question, "What is a nation?" For Renan the answer basically comes down to individual choice where national self-determination is an expression of the people's will. This is an on-going occurrence, what Renan called a daily plebiscite. Elie Kedourie echoes this sentiment and explains that there is really nothing natural about nations or nation-states. There is just as much reason for peoples of different languages with the same historical/political experience to form a nation as for people with the same language; in fact, people with the same language may often form different nations because they feel fundamentally different (1993, p. 75). Kedourie goes on to argue that nationalism is not derived from some durable ethnic past or the persistence of certain identities throughout the centuries; rather

it is a political doctrine that began in Europe around the time of the French Revolution and was exported around the world because of the power and influence of Europe. Ethic identity has, in fact, proven to be plastic and fluid over time; national identity is one's self-view and one's will, or to put it another way, "one's estimation…of oneself in the world" (p. 141).

While Kedourie presents an overall negative view of nationalism, regarding it as "one of the most pernicious doctrines to have been afflicted on a long-suffering humanity," Anthony Smith argues that Kedourie overlooked the advantages of nationalist revivals, e.g., contributions to art and culture as well as its humanizing and civilizing effect (1979, p. 13). Furthermore, nationalism has legitimized, modernized, and stabilized regimes, often introducing sweeping social change (p. 14). Therefore, for Smith, nationalism is a rational and not altogether inappropriate application of Enlightenment principles to the modern world (p. 15). In *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* Smith asks what the relationship between ethnic identities and nations is. He accepts that nations cannot be thought of as a given of social existence or a natural, primordial unit of human existence; however, he also does not accept that it is a totally modern phenomenon (p. 3). "No enduring world order can be created which ignores the ubiquitous yearnings of nations in search of roots in an ethnic past, and no study of nations and nationalism that completely ignores that past can bear fruit" (p. 5). Smith, therefore, sees nations and nationalism as rooted in the distant past where group identities and sentiments existed. He tries to find a middle ground between the modernists and primordialists by introducing the concept of "ethnie," or ethnic community (p. 13). The notion of identity for Smith relates to a sense of community based on history and culture rather than ideology (p. 14).

Benedict Anderson's aim is to attempt an interpretation of the "anomaly" of nationalism (Marxism's supposed great historical failure). He claims that nationalism is a cultural artifact of a particular kind created towards the end of the 18th century (1991, p. 4). Anderson's definition of the nation is an imagined political community; it is imagined because even the members of the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (p. 6). Furthermore, the nation is imagined as limited because the other exists outside its borders (no nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind). The nation is imagined as sovereign because it came about in the age of the Enlightenment when universal claims of the Church were replaced by sovereign nations. Finally, it is an imagined community – the idea of fraternity which leads to ideas of horizontal comradeship and also allows for human sacrifice (p. 7). Key to Anderson's thinking is what he calls "print-capitalism." "Creole Pioneers" in the Americas introduced print-capitalism especially through newspapers: these were instrumental in (often indirectly) creating a sense of us and them (colony and metropole; p. 62). Anderson, therefore, rejects the idea that economic interest, liberalism, or the Enlightenment created nationalism, instead it was the creole functionaries (who were subordinate to European-born functionaries) and creole printmen who played the decisive historical role (p. 65). The American creoles produced independent states and their own nationalisms. In turn, Europeans caught on to these movements and initiated their own 'awakenings.' Much of this awakening became based in language, which served the nationalists well because language is ancient with no particular date of origin (p.196). The opposite was true in the Americas where having the same language as the metropole (and religion and culture) made the first national

imaginings possible – the creoles made no asserted attempt to use the native tongues as the languages of nationalism (Guaraní in Paraguay is an interesting exception). So in Europe a factory owner in Lille was connected to a factory owner in Lyon, not through the traditional ties of aristocracy but through print-capital; they knew thousands of others like themselves existed, thus a literate bourgeoisie was the first class to achieve solidarities on an essentially imagined basis (p. 77). By the second decade of the 19th century a model of independent national states was available. This model was a complex composite of French and American elements: the new middle class intelligentsia of nationalism had to invite the masses into history and the invitation card had to be written in a language they understood (Nairn, 1977).

From about the middle of the 19th century there developed 'official nationalisms' in Europe (Seton-Watson, 1977) and these nationalisms were historically 'impossible' until after the appearance of popular linguistic-nationalisms, for they were responses by power-groups (dynasties and aristocracies) threatened with exclusion from or marginalization in popular imagined communities. These nationalisms were conservative and reactionary policies adapted from the model of the largely spontaneous popular nationalisms that preceded them. Such policies were conducted in Europe by Hungarians, English, and Russians, in Asia by Japanese and Burmese. In these cases such official nationalism tried to conceal the discrepancy between nation and dynastic realm – Slovaks were to be Magyarized, Indians Anglicized, and Koreans Japanified, but these were never permitted to administer in the metropole. This was not simply racism; it was also the fact that at the core of the empires nations too were emerging: Hungarian, English, and Japanese and these nations were instinctively resistant to 'foreign' rule (pp. 110-111).

Anderson also highlights some of the paradoxes of nationalism: the objective modernity of nationalism to the historian's eye versus their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists; the formal universality of nationalism, i.e., everyone has one, like gender versus its particularity, e.g., Greek nationalism is sui generis; the political power of nationalisms versus their philosophical poverty and even incoherence, i.e., nationalism has never produced its own great thinkers – Anderson believes nationalism should be linked more with ideas of kinship and religion rather than liberalism or fascism (p. 5).

The idea of a nation being an imagined community is very much in line with Ernest Gellner's position. Gellner opposes the idea of ethnically rooted nations engendering nationalism as well as Kedourie's treatment of nationalism as an avoidable aberration accidently spawned by European thinkers (1983, p. 125). For Gellner "Nationalism is primarily a political principle, [it is a theory of political legitimacy] which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent" (p. 1). The idea of each ethnic nationality housed within its own state excluding other ethnicities and ruling its own people in an international system of states has a certain desirability and logic; however, this is often not the reality we find. Gellner goes on to explain how national sentiment is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfillment and that there are a variety of ways in which the nationalist principle can be violated: the political boundary of the state does not include all the members of the nation, or it includes foreigners, or a nation can exist in a multiplicity of states so that no single state can claim to be the national one. The worst offense is when the rulers of the political unit belong to a different nation (p. 1). Crucial for understanding nationalism is to examine what occurs when a social order is brought

about in which the clerisy becomes universal, when literacy is no longer a specialism, and when virtually all occupations cease to be hereditary and obligations to these occupations are above the claims of kinship. In this scenario, the relationship of culture and polity changes radically. A high culture pervades the whole of society, defines it, and needs to be sustained by the polity. That is the secret of nationalism (p. 18). Nationalism is rooted in a certain kind of division of labor, one which is complex and persistently changing (p. 24). Industrial society demands mobility because this is necessary for economic growth, and progress is the highest demand of modern society. In turn, this mobility creates egalitarianism because a changing society cannot maintain traditional structures of rank, caste, or estate nor can it tolerate inequality because it is no longer hallowed by custom (p. 25). The key to modern society is education: it is the professor, not the executioner who is at the base of the modern social order and who is the main tool and symbol of state power. The monopoly of legitimate education is now more important, more central than is the monopoly of legitimate violence. The roots of nationalism lie not in human nature, but a pervasive modern social order. Nationalism does not have any very deep roots in the human psyche (p. 34).

According to Gellner the state is the only organization large enough to ensure a literate unified culture that produces viable and usable human beings (even in countries where private or religious organizations play a large role the state takes over quality control). We live in an age of nationalism because the state and culture must now be linked (p. 38). Nationalism demands a kind of cultural homogeneity and this serves the purpose of industrial society. Nationalism is an effect of industrial social organization, although not the only effect (p. 40). Gellner goes on to argue that nationalism is not an

awakening of an old, latent, dormant force; rather it is the consequence of a new form of social organization, based on deeply internalized, education-dependent high cultures, each protected by its own state. The idea of nations as some natural God-given way of classifying mankind is a myth; in fact, nationalism may take existing cultures and turn them into nations, or may invent them, or sometimes destroy them (pp. 48-49). Nationalism, as an erroneous idea of awakening, is actually very weak when considered in this light. Most of the potential nations – those groups of people with a distinct culture and language – have not awakened (and they probably never will; p. 49). On the other hand, Gellner claims that his understanding of nationalism and how it comes about, i.e., through industrialization of society, presents nationalism as a very strong force, though perhaps not unique nor irresistible (p. 50).

What is a nation? Echoing Renan's question Gellner, however, dismisses the ideas of will and culture as too general and expansive to define a nation (pp. 53-55). Nationalism as a fusion of will, culture, and polity results from the conditions of industrialization and it is nationalism which engenders nations (not the other way round; p. 55). The cultures nationalism claim are often inventions modified out of all recognition and nationalism has its own amnesias and selections which can be profoundly distorting and deceptive (pp. 56-57). Nationalist ideology suffers from pervasive false consciousness: its myths invert reality – it claims to defend folk culture while in fact it is forging a high culture; it claims to protect an old folk society while in fact helping to build up an anonymous mass society (p. 124).

From this brief overview of some of the main contributors to theories of nationalism it is evident that there is no real consensus regarding its origins nor is there

much agreement about the extent of nationalism's role in modern society. To add to this puzzle is the idea of substate nationalism. Substate or minority nationalism places itself in opposition to the official nationalism of the state. The origins of this type of nationalism have been outlined by Hroch who sees three levels of intensity (A, B, and C): where Phase A = a period of scholarly interest, Phase B = patriotic agitation, and Phase C = rise of mass national movement. The decisive phase for small nations is B, which sometimes leads to Phase C but sometimes fails (1985). There are differences between substate nationalist movements but overall they each have one overriding goal and that is to detach themselves from the central state and establish their own nation (Seton-Watson, 1977). The main distinction between nationalism and substate nationalism is that the latter positions itself against the state. However, in *Nations Against the State* Michael Keating reminds us that there are nations that do not aim at the creation of their own state; nevertheless, he argues nationalism will continue to be important as the traditional nation-state gives way to new and more complex forms of interdependence (2001a, p.21).

One important facet of minority nationalism is the idea of a homeland. The homeland is, however, already part of an existing state (or states as in the Basque and Kurdish cases). Minority nationalists will claim certain exclusive rights over this territory and this is often supported by historical evidence, but is also sometimes supported by mythical beliefs (Taras & Ganguly, 2006). Moreover, territory can also be regarded as a social system that may be constructed on a number of levels: global, continental, state, regional, municipal, etc. Defining territory is inherently conflictual because it affects the distribution of power and resources; it is therefore always contested and redefined in politics, society, and economics (Keating, 1998b). Minority nationalist parties or substate

parties (also sometimes known as regional or ethno-regional parties) have capitalized on the periphery-center contest championing the cause of the periphery. In this sense, minority nationalist parties are at the forefront of contested political issues regarding territory, resources, and identity. This is what distinguishes them from other political parties (De Winter & Türsan, 1998). Minority nationalist parties have seen gains in support since at least the 1960s as a result of a number of factors including centralization and a general dissatisfaction with the mainstream political parties of the state and the central government itself. Typically there is more than one minority nationalist party representing the minority population; however, one party tends to dominate. This is the case in Spain's three minority national regions: the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia, as well as amongst Kurds in Turkey.

The political goals of minority nationalists vary considerably, ranging from increased autonomy and decentralization within the existing state to full independence. De Winter (1998) classifies four types of minority nationalist party in Europe according to their goals: non-separatists, European federalists, independentists, and irredentists. These positions are by no means static. The minority nationalist parties in Spain and Turkey represent part of this spectrum and also represent diverging political views including left/right divisions; however, the single issue they have in common is national autonomy and this can be expressed through various forms of political ideology and discourse. What this dissertation seeks to make clear is the fundamental connection between European integration and national minority movements; the minority nationalist parties that represent various regions of Europe have by and large latched on to the process of European integration as a means of advancing their nationalist agendas. This is

the primary paradox that this dissertation wishes to discuss, i.e., that integration provides an opportunity structure for minority nationalism.

European integration has therefore transformed the nature of the relationship between the state and the substate regions (Keating, 2001a) where the EU acts "as a living laboratory in which experiments about new ways to understand sovereignty, territoriality and identity are currently tested" (Guibernau, 1999, p. 149). Csergo and Goldgeier (2004) contend that within the EU there are actually four competing forms of nationalism: traditional, substate, trans-sovereign, and protectionist, and that as the EU deepens and widens, states and groups will choose among these four nationalist strategies that will continue to form a core part of Europe's dynamic. Scholars have recognized the paradox of integration and minority nationalism but have only begun to examine the phenomenon more precisely.[16] For example, historian of European integration Alan Milward focuses on how the EU provided a support structure for the state. Milward does not consider how the EU has also provided support for substate groups.[17] This is the area of the literature I wish to contribute to and I argue that a different phase of integration has arisen in the post-Cold War era and with the onset of increased globalization. The next section examines why this is the case.

1.4 Theories of Political Opportunity

To what extent does European integration present attractive political opportunities for minority nationalism or more specifically minority nationalist parties? The EU does

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[16] See, for example, Lynch (1996), Bourne (2008) and Elias (2009). Also, De Winter and Türsan (1998) highlight how integration has led to two contradictory outcomes: "deterritorialization via globalization of market forces and resuregence of the salience of territoriality of political forces" (p. 3).
[17] See Milward (1999).

not intentionally promote or support minority nationalism; however, it adheres to two principles that are nevertheless linked to minority groups. The first is the EU's explicit recognition of the value and place of all of Europe's peoples and cultures; the Bretons and the French, the Venetians and the Italians, etc. are all seen as contributing to Europe's overall identity and cultural heritage and just because Bavaria or Scotland are not now independent states does not make them any less significant in terms of their role in Europe's identity. Apart from this cultural and historical recognition there is also the political imperative to localize decision-making. The emphasis on subsidiarity is advantageous for local and regional political actors, including minority nationalist parties. For these two reasons alone, Europe is favorable to minorities, in terms of their identities and interests.

The opportunities exist for minority groups but how do they take advantage of them? In *Power in Movement* Sidney Tarrow (2011) explains how contentious politics occurs when ordinary people (often in alliance with more influential citizens and with changes in public mood) join forces in confrontation with elites, authorities, and opponents and this usually takes place under conditions of changing political opportunities and constraints. People contend through known repertoires of contention and expand them by creating innovations at their margins; contentious politics is therefore produced when threats are experienced and opportunities are perceived, when the existence of available allies is demonstrated, and the vulnerability of opponents is exposed; contention creates social movements when it taps into embedded social networks and connective structures and produces vivid collective action frames and supportive identities able to sustain contention against powerful opponents. Repertoires

of contention, social networks, and cultural frames lower the costs of bringing people into collective action, induce confidence that they are not alone, and give broader meaning to their claims.

Applying Tarrow's logic to minority nationalists in Europe we recognize how such groups would seek to pursue policies regarding their identity and territorial claims within a European context rather than a domestic one where the central government would be likely to suppress these claims. As a social movement, minority nationalism fits well into this type of analysis. At the same time, however, Tarrow does not categorize political parties as social movements; however, political parties are typically the most coherent voice for a wide variety of people. The limitations of this dissertation mean that the focus is on minority nationalist political parties rather than the vast array of social movements in civil society stemming from regional actors, yet the principles of confrontation with elites and changing opportunities are the same. It is important to note that the main minority nationalist parties in Europe do not promote violence, rather they work towards their goals within the democratic institutional framework of European politics. Organizations such as ETA in the Basque Country, or the PKK in Turkey, for example, are outlawed in their respective countries and listed as terrorist organizations by the EU. In general, the more extremist nationalist (minority and state) movements do not favor European integration and thus the EU does not represent an opportunity structure in these cases. This falls in line with Claudio Holzner's thinking where he argues that "specific institutional environments do not distribute political opportunities equally; rather they create opportunities for some and constraints for others" (2010, p.45).

David Meyer's essential insight into political opportunity is "that the context in which a movement emerges influences its development and potential impact" (2004, p.125). In this case the emerging movement is minority nationalism and the context is the process of European integration. The European Union's evolving legal, normative, and institutional environment have produced an opportunity structure for minority nationalism. Holzner reasons that "the institutional environment influences political behavior directly by shaping the incentives and opportunities (or obstacles) for political action" (2010, p.3) and that "all human behavior, including political activity, occur within institutional constraints that shape actors' choices of political activities and influence the incentives they have for undertaking them" (2010, p.13). Thus minority nationalist parties as representatives of their regions have been able to meet with EU officials and work through regional offices in Brussels. Many aspects of the EU's institutions and policies simply favor subnational groups; this ranges from treaties recognizing regional representation in Europe to the principle of subsidiarity that is supposed to ensure that decisions are taken as close to the citizen as possible and "that constant checks are made to verify that action at Union level is justified in light of the possibilities available at national, regional or local level."[18] Institutions such as the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions provide venues for regional interests, including minority nationalist interests. Moreover, the platform provided by Europe allows minority nationalist parties to bypass obstacles set up by central governments and present their political goals in a more acceptable and accommodating environment, which in turn allows these groups to popularize their political agendas at home.

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[18] See http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/subsidiarity_en.htm

Keating (2001a, p. 43) queries how institutional change from above (through European integration) and below (through decentralization) is affecting the state. He sees a new credibility arising for regional actors, including separatist movements; in Europe this is expressed as a new political arena which acts simultaneously as a basis for economic and political resources that can be used in nation-building (p. 59). Keating goes on to argue that the new minority nationalisms have a view of sovereignty that is more fluid and they are quick to emphasize weaknesses of the traditional nation-state in an age of interdependence and globalization (p. 63). In a similar manner, Keating speaks of a "new regionalism" in Europe that has moved beyond the nation-state and become an actor in the global market presenting a novel form of political action and mobilization (1998, p. ix). Keating contends that across Europe regionalism has graduated from a movement of territorial defense through economic modernization to a movement for constitutional change and transformation of the state (p. 71). However, the region is a contested territory in that there is tension between forces from above (the state) and below (the local level) to control regional policy. Through globalization and the changing nature of the state and the EU, European regions have "escaped the boundaries of traditional territorial management" and are now in competition with each other in the European and global market place.

Yet regions vary greatly in not only size and population, but also political aspirations and assertiveness. European integration does not affect each region and each minority nation to the same degree. The reasons for this are manifold and beyond the scope of this study; however, the literature defines several factors in terms of regional assertiveness. In his analysis, Fitjar (2010) sees two main factors leading to regionalism:

a highly distinctive regional party system and a high level of economic development (linguistic, cultural, and geographical variables are important but not as crucial). Significantly, Fitjar also sees European integration as positively correlated with regionalism (p. 12). Van Houten (2000) attempts to explain patterns and variation in regional assertiveness in Western Europe. He defines regional assertiveness as occurring when, "regional political actors demand changes in the distribution of competencies between the national and regional level of government, in favor of the regional level" (p.2). Basically he wants to answer the question of why some regions are more assertive than others and why do some political actors in assertive regions make stronger demands than others, as well as explain the variation in demands between regions. Answers to these questions can be partially found through studying the cultural, economic, and political tradition of each region; however, Van Houten argues that his model that links the nature of party competitions in a region to regional assertiveness is a strong indicator of the level of assertiveness. His argument is that a region with several competing regionalist parties will be more assertive in its demands than a region with one dominant party, which will be more likely to show restraint. Overall he finds four main factors in accounting for regional assertiveness: the presence of a distinct regional language, relatively high regional income per capita, a large regional share of GNP, and the structure of the regional party system.

The essential reasons to explain differences in regional assertiveness in Europe, therefore, fall into the following broad categories: (1) cultural distinctiveness,[19] (2)

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[19] Connor (1994) presents the primordialist view that a strong cultural distinction between a region and the central state is sufficient to account for regional assertiveness. Other scholars agree that cultural distinction is a necessary condition for regional assertiveness, but argue that it is insufficient and that other socio-economic factors are also necessary. Therefore, distinct cultural or ethnic regions will be likely to exhibit

economic advantages and/or disadvantages of regions,[20] (3) regions that have certain

political factors such as type of government, electoral process, and territorial organization

of the state,[21] and (4) European integration. The last point is, of course, the focus of this

study and there is a fairly strong consensus among scholars[22] that EU integration provides

new opportunities and incentives for regional autonomy. My specific hypotheses as

outlined below focus on how integration will provide opportunities for minority

nationalists if EU organizations representing regions become more influential, if

multilevel governance becomes the norm, and if there is a continued push for more

accountability and responsiveness to citizens, i.e., democratization, at the EU level.

Minority nationalists can now combine the traditional pressure from below the level of

the state with that emanating from above the level of the state to challenge the central

government's authority and dominance. It is even possible to imagine and promote a new

political arrangement where more regional autonomy or even independence in achieved

within a future European institutional framework. Basque nationalists, for example, have

envisioned an association of the historical nations of Europe within a new European

system where the traditional state no longer exists. The overall notion is that the regional

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stronger regional demands but this is by no means inevitable; see Esman (1977), Gourevitch (1979), De Winter and Türsan (Eds.) (1998), Hechter (1999).

[20] Bookman (1992), Harvie (1994), and Fitjar (2010) all argue that those regions that are better off economically compared to other regions in the state but are (or perceive that they are) politically disadvantaged will push for regional autonomy, whereas Rokkan and Urwin (1983) make the opposite argument, i.e., that disadvantaged regions are more likely to agitate. Bolton and Roland (1997) look at how both economic advantage and disadvantage play a role. Omae (1995) and Storper (1997) look at the effects of globalization.

[21] According to this argument existing political institutional arrangements within states play a part in determining the type and extent of regional agitation. Which political arrangements give rise to which outcomes is not always clear; however, see Meadwell (1991) and Newman (1996). One of Fitjar's (2010) two variables for explaining regional assertiveness is a highly distinct regional party system (the other being a high level of economic development).

[22] See, for example, Sharpe (1993), Keating (1995, 2001b), Hooghe (1996), and Laitin (1997).

parties in general, whether nationalist or otherwise, view the European project as transformative and complementary of their core political goals.

Minority nationalist parties respond to European integration in three main ways (Nagel, 2004) and they favor integration for three main reasons (Elias, 2009). The first possible response is to be anti-Europe. This was the typical position for most regional and minority nationalist parties during the era of the European Economic Community (EEC) in the 1960s and 1970s. However, this has become by and large a marginal position. The second response is to go along with the process in the hope that integration will eventually lead to a "Europe of the Regions." This idea, popular with the Basque Nationalist Party, for example, looks to a federalized Europe of historic nationalities rather than the current state system. The third position is similar to the second position in that these parties wish to use the EU as a means to change the status-quo. However, in this case the goal is for the region in question to become its own state. Seceding from the central state would be cushioned by the newly formed state simultaneously becoming a member of the European Union.

In terms of why minority nationalist parties tend to be pro-European these days there are three main explanations that reflect positions two and three above. In the first place there is the weakening of the state with the internationalism of economic and political relationships and the reallocation of decision-making capacities upward (supra-national institutions in the EU for example) and downward (more local bodies such as regions and cities). From a minority nationalist perspective this an attractive situation and for European stateless nations the idea of a Europe of the Regions where power would be shared above and below the level of the state is something that could not be achieved

without the EU. Secondly, The EU provides a new arena for minority nations to pursue

their goals, i.e., something other than the state in which they are located. Furthermore,

the nationalist parties present the idea of independence in Europe for a number of

reasons, many of which are based on the reduced risk involved in maintaining

membership in the Union (military, economic, etc.). Finally, European integration has

fuelled new theoretical and philosophical debates about the nature of sovereignty and

statehood. The legitimacy of the Westphalian system is being seriously questioned.

Keeping in mind that the ultimate goal of any self-respecting nationalist is to

establish a state for her or his nation, European integration has greatly reduced the costs

of independence. De Winter makes the argument that "…the framework of a politically

and economically united Europe will permit [the] region[s] to achieve greater autonomy

or even full independence and yet still prosper economically and remain integrated in the

international political community" (210-211). This idea is succinctly captured by the

Scottish Nationalist Party's slogan "Independence in Europe." There is more to it,

though, than politics and economics; there is also a normative dimension that is quite

powerful. The European Union is foremost in the world in terms of upholding human

rights, including the rights of minorities. The "diversity" part of the EU's motto "Unity in

Diversity" signifies the importance of recognizing and protecting cultural distinctiveness.

The Council of Europe sees it as one of its aims to sustain Europe's cultural heritage. One

interesting example of this effort to recognize minority rights was the Council's

establishment of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) in

1992.[23] This charter represents a type of support mechanism for minority national groups,

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[23] See http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/aboutcharter/default_en.asp

in this case with a mission to protect and promote vulnerable European languages. It is worth mentioning, however, that this protection and promotion does not extend to immigrant minority languages and the ECRML is in many ways indicative of Europe's ongoing difficulties with its large African and Asian immigrant populations. Nonetheless, for European minority national groups it is clear that there is growing institutional and normative support for their claims.

This normative support is largely based on the prevalent human rights discourse within the European Union as expressed in a multitude of statements, documents, and opinions, including the Charter for Fundamental Rights.[24] This discourse includes ideas of democracy and respect for collective rights. Much of this thinking is in line with Allan Buchanan's (1991) critique of classical liberal theorists for assigning low value to collective rights and the communal life of a group. Buchanan argues that protecting a group's culture assures its individual members of a meaningful context for choice (a goal liberalism would readily embrace). Therefore, moral reasons to justify opposing the government not only should encompass violations of individual rights but also group rights, e.g., where a group (especially an ethnic group) is suffering injustice. In this way one may contend that there is a moral justification and even obligation to promote and protect minority groups, including minority nationalities within a state. This moral argument, under certain circumstances, could also be justification for increased regional powers and even independence. Several of Buchanan's justifications for secession are easily applicable to a number of European regions, which include: (1) the original union is obsolete or irrelevant (independence movements in Scotland and Catalonia are

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[24] This Charter was given binding legal effect with the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009. The Charter covers citizens' rights of dignity, freedoms, equality, solidarity, and justice. While these are expressed as individual rights, the broad liberal interpretation would also cover group rights.

examples of this argument); (2) discriminatory redistribution, i.e., the national

government does not operate for genuine mutual advantage and discriminates or exploits

certain groups; (3) the preservation of culture, i.e., more autonomy or independence can

best enhance the flourishing of a culture and in this way contributes to the lives of the

individuals of that culture; and finally, (4) the normative principle of nationalism where

every nation or people is entitled to have their own state. Admittedly, this last point is an

unrealistic aspiration in most cases and it implies that multicultural, pluralist states are

inferior somehow to ones that embody the pure nationalist principle. Furthermore, there

must be a statute of limitations to such divisions.[25]

Overall, we see a strong moral and normative element present in the process of

European integration, which emboldens all types of minority activists and groups,

including minority national groups. When minority national political parties utilize

human rights and especially minority rights discourse available to them within the

European framework they are in an advantageous position vis-à-vis the state; central

governments cannot so easily disregard minority nationalist claims that are based on

principles of democracy as well as their cultural, linguistic, and group rights of autonomy

and self-determination.

The EU, as a political system, provides space for a multitude of both state and

nonstate actors to promote their own interests and most obviously regions are interested

in the EU's regional policy (Jones & Keating, 1995). The EU has sought regional

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[25] Buchanan remarks, "If the nationalist imperative is that each ethnic group…is entitled to its own state, then it is a recipe for virtually limitless upheaval, an exhortation to break apart the vast majority of existing states, given that most if not all began as empires and include a plurality of ethnic groups or peoples within their present boundaries" (p. 2). In other words, secession has serious consequences for international order: the break up existing states, often violently, international war, domestic disturbances in other states, the end of old alliances and the creation of new ones altering the balance of power, refugee crises, economic turmoil, etc.

partners, some linkages between the EU and the regions have been direct, others through national governments; the result is a complex political order in which regional politics are Europeanized, European politics are regionalized, and national politics are both (Keating, 2001a, p. 61). In concrete terms European integration has created what might be judged a plethora of local and regional organizations; but in keeping with the EU's principles of inclusive, participatory democracy and subsidiarity this should not be all that surprising. So it is reasonable to talk of regional empowerment when one considers these various organizations and channels in which subnational groups can operate.

In the first place there is the Common Regional Policy which was established to assist regions with lower economic development and lower per capita income levels.[26] Financial assistance, collectively known as Union funds, is designed to improve the economic structure of underdeveloped regions and promote the overall EU goal of economic and social cohesion (Evans, 2005). The structural funds set aside for these "backward" regions have been a major boon for many peripheral parts of Europe. Since minority nations tend to be found on the peripheries, minority nationalist parties have also benefited from increased investment in their region and this is a clear economic argument for support of European integration. However, this argument does not directly apply to a region like Catalonia, which is more economically advanced than most of the rest of Spain; nevertheless, all regions can benefit from EU funding to some degree. Moreover, regional and local governments have created important partnerships with EU officials in order to more effectively coordinate and manage the funds. The European

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[26] Article 158 EC states: "In order to promote its overall harmonious development, the Community shall develop and pursue its actions leading to the strengthening of its economic and social cohesion. In particular, the Community shall aim at reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least favored regions or islands, including rural areas."

Commission has published its latest cohesion policy (2014-2020) in which it will make available around 350 billion euros to invest in Europe's regions.[27]

Some of the most important local and regional organizations operating in Europe include The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Assembly of European Regions, the Association of European Border Regions, the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, and *Regions de tradition industrielle.* Foremost among these is the Committee of the Regions which acts as the official consultative body to the Commission for all the regions. An analysis of this organization and its contribution to regional empowerment is provided in Chapter 2 and serves as an indication of how these institutions in general affect regions and therefore by extension minority national groups.

It is apparent, therefore, that through regional empowerment emanating from EU policy minority nationalists have been presented with a new and promising opportunity structure. However, one must be cautious not to exaggerate or overestimate the extent of this opportunity; there are real limits and impediments that cannot be ignored. The most important reality is that the state is still number one. Certainly the combined processes of decentralization, globalization, regional assertiveness, and European integration have taken their cumulative toll on the nation-state; the state, nevertheless, is still the most important actor on the political stage. The European Union is, after all, made up of member-states and although the states are not the only actors in Brussels, they are the dominant players. The intergovernmental nature of EU institutions and policy-making is still strong. This fact makes it all the more intriguing as to why subnational entities are making such headway in Europe.

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[27] See http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/index_en.cfm#_ftn1

So what do these realities mean for minority nationalist political parties? In her book *Minority Nationalist Parties and European Integration* Anwen Elias (2009) responds to the popular notion of nationalist minority parties being very pro-European as they are seen to benefit politically from EU policies. Elias claims there is paucity in terms of scholarly work on the linkage between nationalist parties and European integration (p.11). She argues that observations have been descriptive and offered on a case-by-case basis. She also criticizes the analyses on general evaluations of party positions through public opinion surveys and content analyses of party programs as being unable to discover anything more than formal statements of party positions on Europe. Elias does not see enough "in-depth systematic empirical analyses" that might reveal a more complex (and accurate) picture. She notes that attitudes of nationalist parties and particularly changing attitudes to the EU have been on the whole insufficiently theorized and poorly hypothesized (p.12).

Elias argues that while it is true that European integration has offered minority parties new options in terms of pursuing their political objectives, at the same time the EU presents real obstacles for these parties in terms of their overall long-term goals. Furthermore, she challenges the claim that minority and regionalist parties are Europhiles. She does this by firstly presenting a comparative analysis of how European integration impacts various nationalist parties' political programs, noting how the result is not always positive from the nationalists' perspective. Secondly, she identifies some of the difficulties faced by minority nationalist parties when they try to address their long-standing political issues with their respective central governments at the supranational level of the EU.

Elias also questions the empirical accuracy of the scholarly literature on nationalist party attitudes towards Europe, arguing that support is not as uniform as many assume and there is far more complexity involved. She notes that nationalist parties have varying conceptualizations of their nation's place in Europe; some have the goal of more autonomy within the existing state (e.g., the CiU with the goal of a pluri-national Spanish confederation) while others pursue full independence (e.g., SNP with their slogan of "independence in Europe") and then there are groups that pursue the more idealistic view of a postsovereign Europe based on the idea that the traditional state will fade away (e.g., Plaid Cymru in Wales).

Some minority nationalist parties are hostile toward certain aspects of European integration. The Bloque Nacionalista Galego (BNG), for example, is critical of many of the EU's economic and political policies. Similarly, the Lega Nord in Italy has been outspoken in its criticism of the EU's integration policies as well as its bureaucracy (p. 8). There was also opposition to the European Constitution in Spain in 2005 from minority nationalist parties where one of the chief complaints was that state interests were protected at the expense of the political, cultural, and linguistic rights of Europe's historic nations. Even parties that supported the constitution were divided internally.

Elias is also skeptical about the notion that European integration provides a solution to the aspirations of minority nationalist parties. She argues that nationalist demands for self-determination have not succeeded within the European Union so far and she suspects that this failure will have repercussion as far as support for the EU is concerned. She notes how the sovereign state has remained intact and how state actors are dominant in EU affairs (p.9).

Elias goes further and argues that the EU has actually undermined regional parties and their political goals. The claim is that other EU member states would oppose a region's secession and subsequent petition to join the EU as a new independent member as this might encourage a chain reaction of secession. In other words, there might be high costs to secession. Costs would not only be political but economic as Elias argues that only advanced regions would be able to benefit from joining the EU economic zone while poorer regions would suffer due to market pressures and having to compete with more competitive states. This economic disadvantage is exacerbated by the EU's expansion eastward into much poorer parts of the continent resulting in less subsidies overall (p. 9).

In a later study (Hepburn & Elias, 2011) further doubt is cast on the assumption of regional and minority nationalist support for European integration by highlighting some of the most peripheral regions, in this case Corsica and Sardinia. The authors find that in neither island were the stateless nationalist and regionalist predominantly Europhile or Eurosceptic. What seem to be at play are complex factors specific to each case. In the end, however, Elias along with the majority of scholars on the subject recognizes that despite exceptions and difficulties European integration has, on the whole, led to increased opportunities for most minority national parties. The important point these authors are stressing is the need for more analysis on the extent of party support for Europe, recognition of the variety of responses and the complexity of the issue – minority nationalist and regional parties are not a monolith – and the importance of not overstating the positive effect of integration.

Considering the arguments above I would agree that the complexity and variation of minority nationalist parties must not be underestimated or dismissed. At the same time,

however, I argue that a distinction needs to be made between how parties view the EU per se, and how they view the opportunities provided by the EU. While a party like the CiU might perceive its own ideology to be more or less in line with the type of globalized market capitalism represented by EU integration, the BNG, on the other hand, might have serious reservations. The former party therefore appears more of a Euroenthusiast than the latter. Nevertheless, economic and political opportunities are available to both; therefore, the BNG adapts its rhetoric and modifies its position to enable itself to work within the system and avail of the benefits. I demonstrate that this is actually what occurred with the BNG and I argue that a similar process will take place for AGE, the new more radical break-away Galician nationalist party. The general argument, therefore, is that even minority nationalist parties ideologically opposed to the EU will prefer to work within the EU institutional framework rather than without and will support and benefit from those aspects of integration that can advance economic and political goals.[28] This argument falls under the theoretical framework of Europeanization, which can be defined as "a process by which domestic policy areas become increasingly subject to European policy making" (Börzel, 1999, p. 571).

National minorities have had to deal with a traditional opportunity structure which has been largely determined by the state since the state is the center of power in the international system. However, the argument here is that the EU as an ever evolving supranational entity provides a new political architecture which is more open and amenable for reasons to be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 and in the case studies

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[28] This argument applies only to minority nationalist parties that adhere to the general democratic principles of the EU and international law. The nationally and internationally outlawed Basque Herri Batasuna (now merged into Euskal Herritarrok) and the Kurdish PKK are prohibited from having official relations with the EU.

in Chapters 3 and 4. For now the essential point to be made is that despite real and continuing obstacles to change, the process of European integration is altering our understanding of the nation-state and enabling minority nationalist parties to pursue their goals within a more favorable environment, largely as a result of the European Union's institutional structure as well as its evolving norms.

<div align="center">1.5 Theories of Multiculturalism and Multicultural Policies</div>

A significant portion of the opportunity structure for minority nationalist parties rests on explicit and implicit understandings of minority rights within the normative and institutional framework of the European Union. The EU likes to present itself on the world stage as progressive, a champion of human rights and Europe takes pride in providing headquarters for many of the world's international organizations, including the International Criminal Court in The Hague, United Nations offices in Geneva, the Minority Rights Group International based in London and Budapest, to name just a few. However, as a global leader and advocate of international law and human rights, including minority rights, Europe must also pay close attention to its internal minority populations. It is helpful at this point to define what we mean by minority group. Steven Wheatley (2005) argues that when it comes to minorities we should follow the definition presented by Francesco Capotorti:

> A group numerically smaller to the rest of the population of the State, in a non-dominant position, whose members—being nationals of the State—possess ethnic, religious, or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if not implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion, or language. (p. 18)

The focus for Wheatley is how minorities are treated by the state. Does the state deny particular rights based on association with a culture, language, religion, etc.? Again, it is important to note that although indigenous or historical European minority nationalities have been able to take advantage of a powerful human rights discourse, other minority groups, such as immigrants, have not. The reasons for this are complicated and outside the range of this study; suffice it to say, however, that for some groups, in this case European regional and minority national populations, shifts in attitudes based on ideas of multiculturalism and multicultural policies have been favorable.

In Europe and much of the world there is an important debate surrounding minority rights within the state. Much of the debate centers on the question of how to accommodate minorities whose identities often are in opposition to the state's official culture and identity. Political theorists and philosophers approach this topic through a number of theoretical positions such as classical liberalism, liberal democracy, cosmopolitanism, and communitarianism where issues of justice, equality, liberty, and democracy are highlighted (May, et al., 2004). In Europe in particular there is a tension within states where on the one hand there is a trend toward postnational discourse (Kearney, 2002), the type of melting away of borders and forging a new European identity that many Euroenthusiasts envision, while on the other hand there is a growing movement advocating self-determination. How to reconcile these two factors is an important question with no easy answer (Ben-Ami, et al., 2000). In many ways Europe can be seen as an example of Inglehart's (1997) theory of postmaterialism: having more or less attained a high quality of life people are less interested in material issues related to survival and employment but are more attuned to nonmaterialistic issues such as those

related to the environment, equality, and human rights. Related to this area one could make the argument that citizens in the increasingly wealthy regions of Europe, seeing their material situation as relatively secure within the EU, will turn more to identity politics. The state, which may or may not have played an important role in the economy of the region will be viewed as less significant since the region can form economic ties with any part of the EU's common market and even beyond.

How have we arrived at this more favorable scenario for regions and national minorities? European integration has been crucial, but it has occurred in the context of general shifts in attitudes to multiculturalism and multicultural policies. The nation and national identity are not fixed nor are they static. In fact, there is continuous struggle over the state's legitimacy and the meaning of popular sovereignty (Wolfe, 2007). A long-standing, popular notion is that if a state is to function efficiently it is important that there is an official language; the state aims at the simplification and homogenization of society for many reasons, including bureaucratic. This simplification is achieved in a number of ways, mass education being one of the most important. The language of the center becomes the high culture and the key to progress and sometimes survival. The argument is that the more homogenous the state is in terms of language, culture, norms, religion, etc. the stronger it will be (Scott, 1998). Nation-building can be seen as involving political integration into a common national state, compliance to the rules and norms of the state, and assimilation of all the dissident groups into a common culture and language; none of which occurs in a linear fashion (Deutsch & Foltz, 1996). These are traditional views of optimal nation-state building with the ultimate goal of a strong, homogenous, and unified state. Still, the reality is that very few states can claim to be

strongly homogenous in terms of culture and identity. As Amy Gutmann (2003) argues, the typical democratic state is multicultural; however, government policies tend to promote the dominant or privileged culture through the educational system, media, etc. These policies are not necessarily in place to intentionally disadvantage minorities, but the effect is the same.

Will Kymlicka (2000) argues that states will favor certain ethno-cultural groups over others because the state inevitably promotes an education system based on the dominant culture and language. The idea of some sort of neutrality when it comes to competing ethno-cultural identities within a state is, in his opinion, mythical. Furthermore, the postethnic world as seen through the lens of modernist theory has not been realized; ethnicity is salient in the 21st century, more especially in postcolonial states and many parts of the former Soviet and Communist world. Nor has economic prosperity and upward mobility weakened ethnic identity. He states that "the myth that the state can simply be based on democratic principles, without supporting a particular national identity or culture, has made it impossible to see why national minorities are so keen on forming or maintaining political units in which they are a majority" (p. 35).

State-making has always contained elements of assimilation and homogenization. There are varying degrees, but to some extent every modern state has attempted to impose a single national identity within its territory. Traditionally, a homogenous national identity was seen as a sign of unity, stability and power; however, this idea has been challenged in the face of the failure of many states to achieve this ideal. The essential idea that a nation-state can be homogenous and politically unified has been largely dismissed as unrealistic. Modern states are unlikely to eliminate minorities within

their territories whether they exist because of history or migration. Even though states may have pursued a program of assimilation in the past, they may choose (or be forced to choose) multicultural policies in the future. Multiculturalism is the accepted norm; in the 21st century many states have witnessed a decided shift from assimilation-based policies to official policies promoting minority cultures.[29]

Iris Young (1990) explains how the homogenous nation-state is an ideal-type. There are countries that come close: Japan, Korea, Denmark, and Portugal. However, most states fall far short of encompassing a monolithic national identity within its borders and many states are admittedly multicultural, multilingual, and multinational. In an attempt to come to terms with alternative identity claims states have a number of options. Coercive assimilation is a time-honored practice that has had mixed results to say the least. More recently, considerations of the politics of pluralism and multiculturalism question the role and efforts of the state at consolidation and homogenization. Critical approaches see national identities or cultures as artificial creations rather than natural or a given. States may choose to relax certain assimilative policies in favor of accommodation, inclusion, and reform of existing institutions and rather than adhere to a nationalist mentality opt for the "politics of difference." [30]

It is within this more accommodating approach that the European Union tends to operate in terms of its dealings with regional and minority identities. There is, however, no universal position and as already stressed, recognition and support does not extend to all minorities in Europe equally and this is especially true for immigrant groups. Certainly the rhetoric from several European heads of state more recently has been

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[29] See Fallers (1974), Miller (1995), Brubaker (2004), and French (2010).
[30] In a similar way Taylor (1994) talks of the "politics of recognition" which can be linked to Young's "politics of difference" and Kymlicka's idea of multicultural citizenship.

anything but sanguine about the prospects of multiculturalism; most famously Chancellor

Angela Merkel declared the death of German multiculturalism and how it had failed

utterly. Such sentiments have been echoed across much of Europe. The focus of these

comments, however, has been on immigrant groups rather than national minorities, yet it

is apparent that there is an often wide gap between the attitudes and policies of the

member-states concerning multiculturalism and minority rights in general and the

position of the EU. In many ways the assimilation approach is still alive and well in

European states. As a result, there are real obstacles to regional and minority national

groups to pursue goals related to promoting identity and autonomy within the setting of

the state.

This is part of the reason why European integration is so pivotal for minority

nationalists; it provides a more favorable and sympathetic venue in terms of multicultural

policies. Judith Kelley (2004) emphasizes the role of EU institutions in accommodating

minority rights in member-states through conditionality and normative pressures. She

argues that it is the EU that is largely responsible for mitigating and even reversing the

restrictive measures of member states against minority groups within their borders. The

minority groups themselves are far less effective in achieving change than the EU. This

situation has created a new dynamic in relations between the state and national

minorities, which Kymlicka (2007) sees as wider global revolution. Kymlicka goes on to

argue that although this change has strong domestic factors there is a growing

international dimension to it too:

> International intergovernmental organizations are encouraging, and sometimes
> pressuring, states to accommodate a more multicultural approach. Those states
> that are prepared to consider adopting models of multicultural citizenship will
> find an array of international organizations willing to provide support, expertise,

and funding. Those states that cling to older assimilationist or exclusionary models find themselves subject to international monitoring, criticism and sanction. In short, we are witnessing the increasing "internationalization" of state-minority relations. (p. 3)

Although on one level the EU is about unity through a common currency, economic standardization, a European passport, etc. it is also about diversity as exemplified by its 24 official languages (which include languages like Irish and Maltese spoken by a tiny percentage of Europe's population). The EU is committed to policies that promote multiculturalism. This makes sense based on the EU's own motto of "Unity in Diversity," as well as the necessity of assuring member-states, especially the smaller states, of their place and status in a Union alongside large states like Germany, France, the UK, and Italy. An unexpected consequence of such policies of recognition and acceptance between member-states has been a move for the same type of recognition and acceptance for diversity within member-states. It is difficult for the EU, which claims to represent all citizens of the Union, to promote the cultural contributions of, for example, Spain, Italy, and Britain, without also recognizing Catalonia, Piedmont, and Scotland. In many cases these regions have had long histories of independence and have had a significant impact on the development of Europe.

The centuries long process of state-building through assimilative and coercive strategies has in few cases produced a truly homogenous nation-state. Even in states that might be categorized as homogenous in terms of language and culture, there are usually sizeable immigrant populations. Despite the efforts of many central governments to continue nation-building through traditional techniques most admit that the modern nation-state is diverse and dynamic and ignoring this reality is an act of self-deception and futility. Embracing diversity and opting for the politics of recognition and difference

is ultimately more beneficial for all and is, in the end, a better guarantee of stability.

Claims of the death of multiculturalism in Europe speak more to member-states' failed

policies of integration of immigrant groups, particularly Muslims, rather than

accommodation of national minorities. Although in many cases controversial and

potentially extremely disruptive, the promotion of minority nationalist rights and political

goals in Europe is receiving institutional and normative backing because of the process of

European integration and what that means for the indigenous peoples of Europe.

Multiculturalism is at the heart of the European project and it must be if the Union is to

be inclusive and attractive to all its citizens, but multiculturalism is not limited to the

political and cultural identity of the member-states, it extends to its many and diverse

regions. This speaks to the legitimacy of the EU, which is linked to its political system.

Multiculturalism is a norm that is strengthened and promoted in EU institutions and is

therefore an important element in terms of political opportunity for minority nationalists.

How minority nationalist interests fit into the EU polity and how political opportunity

spaces exist at the EU level will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

1.6 Methodology

The research question seeks to investigate the relationship between European

integration and the phenomenon of minority nationalism. In this sense the independent

variable is European integration and the dependent variable is minority nationalism. To

answer the question regarding the conditions under which minority nationalism might be

affected by integration I consider three hypotheses. The hypotheses represent the

argument that the overall structure of the EU is conducive to providing an opportunity

space for minority nationalists. I hypothesize that the propensity for the EU integration process to favorably influence minority nationalism will depend on the extent to which minority nationalist parties Europeanize and play an active role at the EU level and the extent to which EU norms and institutions favor minority and regional rights.

- Hypothesis 1: EU integration will provide more opportunities for minority nationalists if minority nationalist parties are engaged with official EU institutions charged with supporting and representing regions.

Currently, the Committee of the Regions acts in primarily an advisory role and has fairly limited ability in pursuing policy preferences; however, the Committee's role and capacity are changing as the organization matures and seeks a stronger voice in Brussels. Theories of international organizations recognize that it is often the case that organizations will stray from their original purpose and become autonomous often producing outcomes contrary to state preferences as well as creating new norms, actors, and meaning.[31] Although the Committee of the Regions is careful to pay deference to the member-states of the Union, it nevertheless has substate interests as its main objective and works towards promoting those interests which may or may not be at the expense of the state. The Committee also continues to pursue support from other EU institutions, especially the Parliament and Council and actively seeks to build consensus. Minority nationalists will benefit from active association with the Committee of the Regions as well as the European Parliament and other EU organizations.

- Hypothesis 2: EU integration will provide more opportunities for minority nationalists if the EU continues to pursue a multilevel governance system.

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[31] See Barnett and Finnemore (1999).

The European Union is moving more and more towards a system of multilevel governance. This makes sense in an age of globalization where the argument can be made that any approach to politics and the economy that does not take into account multiple actors and levels of governance will be seriously ineffective. Decentralization is more conducive to producing a vibrant modern economy. Furthermore, many politicians and economists recognize the importance of a partnership between global and local governance. Furthermore, ordinary citizens (who tend to trust local government more than central) also are calling for more inclusive European governance and a greater say for local and regional authorities in EU decision-making. Minority nationalist as some of the most influential actors in local and regional politics stand to gain from this trend toward multilevel governance at the EU level.

- Hypothesis 3: EU integration will provide more opportunities for minority nationalists if efforts to legitimize the Union continue through the processes of democratization.

Like multilevel governance, democratization is another trend in the EU and this has been the case since at least the time of Jacque Delor and gained momentum in the 1990s. The image of the EU as an unaccountable bureaucratic machine is at the root of much of its unpopularity. Overcoming this negative perception has been a major goal for EU officials. The direct election of European MPs was one significant step; however, the powers of the European Parliament are not on par with national parliaments and the overall democratic accountability of the EU remains quite weak. At the same time, however, the EU can be seen to strengthen democracy through its support of local and regional autonomy and particularly its goal of subsidiarity, which brings decision-making

as close to the people as possible. The EU has lofty goals, including its goals related to responsiveness to its citizens and it certainly falls short of achieving many of these goals. Yet, what is also significant is the normative and institutional environment that these goals and efforts to democratize create. As a supranational organization representing all of Europe's citizens, the EU must also take into account the grievances and aspirations of minority nationalists who function within the democratic system. Minority nationalists can take advantage of the democratic institutions and norms available to them at the EU level and as these institutions become more accountable and more responsive they will benefit such minority groups.

The appeal of applying the comparative method is not only being able to discover the similarities and differences between cases but it also presents the possibility of arriving at a more informed understanding of the changes occurring in terms of minority nationalism in general. I will use the most different system design as I am analyzing countries that differ in many ways but are similar in terms of the particular political phenomenon at the center of this research: minority nationalism. This study will apply a primarily qualitative research design utilizing comparative historical analysis including elements of content and discourse analysis. The study also brings in data analysis related to the most recent legislative activities of the Committee of the Regions. Overall, therefore, this research reflects a multimethods approach. While recognizing that not all mixed strategies are productive (Lieberman, 2005) I believe that this particular research question will benefit from such a method.

The comparative historical study is theoretically informed by historical institutionalism and method-driven by content and discourse analysis.[32] The advantages here are a better understanding of processes over time and a clear emphasis on contextual analysis with the focus being on discourse related to the core themes of political opportunity, multicultural policies, European integration, the state, sovereignty, and nationalism. Substantive knowledge can play a key role in understanding explanations (Freedman, 2010) and process tracing as a tool of causal inference involves "the examination of 'diagnostic' pieces of evidence within a case that contribute to supporting or overturning alternative explanatory hypotheses" (Bennett, 2010, p. 208). Process tracing, although like all methods of causal inference is subject to weakness, at the same time it provides an effective means of distinguishing between rival explanations in historical cases; it can make valuable inferences with the right kind of evidence, i.e., types of evidence that have more confirming attributes (p. 219). Brady, Collier, and Seawright (2010) explain how

> In fact, it is difficult to make causal inferences from observational data, especially when research focuses on complex political processes. Behind the apparent precision of quantitative findings lie many potential problems concerning equivalence of cases, conceptualization and measurement, assumptions about the data, and choices about model specifications such as which variables to include. (p. 22)

The same authors argue that no particular method or approach can be seen as best, but satisfactory results can be attained by combining methods and techniques, both qualitative and quantitative. This study has tried to follow this recommendation. For this research my primary and secondary sources include newspapers, magazines, newsletters, bulletins, manifestoes, statements, speeches, party programs, legal documents, treaties,

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[32] For content analysis see Lasswell (1948) and for historical comparative analysis see Mahoney and Rueschmeyer (2003).

briefings, and interviews. The content analysis of these sources will be the process whereby I test my hypotheses. I will specifically look for indications of how minority nationalist parties frame the European integration process to their advantage and also how the Committee of the Regions presents its mission and how this institution communicates with both member-state and candidate state local and regional authorities.

There are two case studies: Spain and Turkey, the former a member-state of the EU and the latter a candidate for membership. In addition, the Committee of the Regions is highlighted as the key organ of the EU dealing with regional and local issues, which by definition can also be referred to generally as substate issues (although as the study will point out the Committee's work also includes linking various regions, cities, etc. in a cooperative manner to achieve various goals, which then presents an interregional and international dynamic). Spain, as a member-state since 1986, represents a state with national minority parties, primarily the Convergence and Union (CiU), Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), and the Galician Nationalist Bloc (BNG) that have been directly impacted by the EU integration process in terms of their identity and political aspirations. Turkey, as a candidate state has been involved with European integration as early as 1959; however, since Turkey has not yet been granted membership of the EU the impact of integration has been more limited on Kurdish nationalism. In this research The Committee of the Regions, founded in 1994, symbolizes the reality of regional representation in Europe and of the evolving place for substate actors in shaping EU policy; this extends to national minority regions and parties that utilize the Committee (along with the European Parliament if candidates are successfully elected) as an access point to the EU.

The selection of the Committee of the Regions and the two country case studies limits the scope of the research; one cannot include all organizations civic and political that represent minority nationalism nor can all EU bodies associated with substate entities be included. Therefore, in the case of Spain, a general analysis is made regarding the effect of European integration on the country and its 17 regions. However, since the research question focuses on minority nationalism, the three historical nations of the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia and the main nationalist parties that represent these regions are the focus. In the case of Turkey the focus is on Kurdish nationalism and the political parties representing the Kurdish cause. The political parties chosen are the most influential in their respective regions and/or among their national groups and so tend to position themselves as the foremost representatives of their nations. In this sense the minority nationalist parties are the most important or at least most prominent expression of nationalist discourse.[33] There are significant differences between each of the national minority parties based not only on political philosophies but also relationships with the central state and attitudes towards European integration.[34] However, there are also important similarities: each party is rooted in a cultural and linguistic identity distinct from than that of the central state; each party represents a minority nation within a larger state; the central states (Spain and Turkey) are involved either directly as in the case of Spain or indirectly as in the case of Turkey in European integration; each region (and therefore regional/nationalist party) has contact with the Committee of the Regions. The key difference between Spain as a member state and

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[33] In Turkey the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) is the most popular voice of Kurdish nationalism but is not analyzed in detail in relation to European integration since it is listed as a terrorist organization and cannot form official ties.
[34] For example, see Elias (2009).

Turkey as a candidate state in the context of minority nationalism is that in the case of

Spain, minority nationalist parties have direct access to certain European institutions. For

instance, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, or the European

Economic and Social Committee, as well as access to structural funding for their regions

and other opportunities, whereas Kurdish nationalists in Turkey are far more restricted

since Turkey is not a member state.

Other limitations to the research should be pointed out. The analysis is limited to

the impact of European integration on member-state and candidate-state minority

nationalism and more specifically the effect of European integration on the opportunity

structures for minority nationalities, i.e., the political goals, strategies, and ideologies of

minority nationalist parties. By extension this analysis will also speak to relations

between the EU and substate regions and the impact on the central state itself. The

timespan of the research covers approximately the last 25 years. This is significant for a

number of reasons. In 1986 after over 2 decades of difficult negotiations Spain became a

member of what was then the EEC (European Economic Community). Turkey is

currently experiencing a similar protracted accession process; in 1987 Turkey applied to

join the EEC but was only declared eligible to join (what then became the EU) in 1999

and accession negotiations began in 2005.[35] This time period also includes an accelerated

integration process highlighted by the 1992 Treaty on European Union (commonly

known as the Maastricht Treaty) and the 2009 amendment (Treaty of Lisbon), as well as

the 2004 enlargement of the Union which added 10 new members, the largest ever single

accession. Important consideration is also given to the current period of financial crisis.

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[35] See http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/turkey/index_en.htm

Finally, 2014 marks the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Committee of the Regions and its evolution particularly since the Treaty of Lisbon is significant. It is within this timeframe of heightened integration and expansion that the case studies fall.

As it ought to be, the scope of the study is therefore limited and the aim is to explain certain cases. However, as already indicated, the larger goal is to apply the conclusions to other cases and present a general argument pertaining to the impact of European integration on minority substate nationalism. The methodological approach outlined above provides appropriate tools to achieve this end.

CHAPTER 2

THE EUROPEAN POLITY AND SUBSTATE INTERESTS

2.1 Democracy in the European Union

"Our task is to unite peoples, not states." – Jean Monnet

It is only through inclusion and consent that the European Union can maintain

true legitimacy. Liberal democratic tenets such as representative institutions, the rule of

law, and the protection of basic human rights are integral elements of the EU's mission

and philosophy. Yet, if these same principles are already evident in the member-states

why should a supranational entity try to supersede the role of existing states? Despite the

tendency to talk of the democratic deficit associated with the European Union, many

argue that the EU in effect strengthens democracy by supporting local and regional

autonomy and working against centralized and bureaucratic forms of the state.[36] It is

imperative that a political system like the EU that extends over a large territory and

encompasses a variety of cultures and peoples encourages diversity and participatory

democracy. To some extent the EU achieves this as it functions in what some see as a

quasifederal manner. Yet the EU certainly has its challenges in terms of reducing the so-

called democratic deficit and convincing most European citizens that it is responsive to

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[36] See, for example, Siedentop (2000).

and representative of their will.[37] This prevailing perception of a democratically deficient EU is largely because of the weaknesses of the European Parliament, which although elected by the people does not have near as much influence as national parliaments and is weak vis-à-vis the Council and the nonelected Commission.

The European Parliament (EP) suffers from limitations to its legislative powers, low voter turnouts, and perceived or real lack of responsiveness to its citizens, but even if the EP eventually gains more influence and becomes more connected to voters there remains perhaps a deeper problem related to identity. Europeans share a common history and many cultural similarities associated with what we might generally call Western or European civilization, but they are certainly not one people in the same sense that Americans living in the 50 states are also one nation. There is simply no single European people, rather many peoples with different languages and identities. Efforts have certainly been made to forge some sort of European identity through symbols such as the EU flag, anthem, as well as emphasizing common ideas based on Europe's shared historical experience including its Christian roots, the Enlightenment, modernization and democratization, which may be said to have collectively resulted in an identifiable way of life and way of thinking. In addition, much of the earlier impetus for integration came from a strong desire to avoid another devastating European war; this has been a powerful motivator; however, for the younger generations this is no longer necessarily the case as the memories of war fade. The economic crisis and recent events in Ukraine seem to indicate more division than unity in dealing with severe challenges and this underscores the real limitations of integration. With such obvious weaknesses and divisions is it still

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[37] Habermas (2000), for example, argues that the EU is representative of a supranational organization with a technocratic top-down decision-making process that relies on committees of experts and is removed from the ordinary citizens.

reasonable to talk of legitimate democracy in the EU? This speaks to a broader question

of the role and function of international organizations and global governance.

One of the foremost scholars on the European Union, Andrew Moravcsik, is quick

to assert the democratic legitimacy and effectiveness of the EU. Moravcsik (2002) argues

that the EU is legitimate because it focuses for the most part on technocratic issues, is

constrained by its own system of checks and balances, and is ultimately accountable to

the democratically elected leaders of the member-states. Furthermore, the technical

administration role of the EU is actually more in line with how modern democracies work

and the EU should not be compared to some sort of ideal plebiscitary or parliamentary

democracy. Thus from Moravcsik's perspective, "These are matters of low electoral

salience commonly delegated in national systems…On balance, the EU redresses rather

than creates biases in political representation, deliberation and output" (p. 603).

Moravcsik's position reflects the technocratic vision of Europe, historically

represented by one of the EU's founding fathers, Jean Monnet. This is contrasted with the

vision of another influential European integration figure, Jacques Delors, who introduced

into the EU democratic practices based more on member-state systems, the most

significant of these democratic changes being the directly elected European Parliament.

Commentators have argued that while introducing more deliberation and participation is

desirable on one level, it also comes at a cost in efficiency.[38] The debate surrounding the

merits of a more technocratic-Monnet approach to the EU or a more democratic-Delors

approach is not the subject of this study; however, one of the results of the push for

increased accountability and participation within the integration process has been the

formulation of the principle of subsidiarity and the subsequent inclusion of substate

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[38] See Radaelli (1999).

interests in the decision-making processes. Allowing for substate voices in the EU as part

of its democratizing policies has to a large extent led to the opportunity spaces for regions

and minority national groups mentioned in the previous chapter.

The opportunities are not just political for subnational regions, they are also

economic and it is here, in the area of resource allocation, that the EU, in fact, performs

better when it comes to questions of legitimacy. The bottom line for most voters is the

economy and European regional and structural funds have been largely successful in

improving infrastructure and generally lessening the gap between the most and least

developed parts of Europe.[39] In this way, the EU has been responsive to the needs of

many of its citizens, particularly those in less well-off regions. It would be difficult to

achieve the same results in terms of resource allocation across a continent made up of

many independent states without the central bureaucratic structure of a supranational

organization.

The Committee of the Regions, as the principal institution of interest in this study,

is representative of a larger effort to tackle the democratic deficiencies of the EU. The

Committee is quite unique in that its members on the one hand represent local and

regional authorities but must also be elected at the local or regional level. In this way, it is

an EU institution that at the same time represents subnational interests and is accountable

to an electorate. The Committee is therefore more closely modelled on the ideas of

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[39] On the other hand, Andrew Evans (2005) argues that regional authorities "are denied guaranteed
opportunities to contribute to the articulation of cohesion requirements through participation in such
decision making" and that "the concentration of Union assistance on infrastructure and training goes
largely unchallenged by reference to cohesion requirements. However, such assistance does not necessarily
facilitate the development of weaker regions. For example, improvements in infrastructure…may render
the markets of these regions more open to producers from outside and may do little to assist regional
producers. Again, training may lead those acquiring new skills to migrate to more developed regions where
these skills are in demand" (p. 250). Evans clearly sees problems in the adaption of cohesion policy to the
regions; however, my argument is that the regions are gaining more say in how these funds are allocated
which is indicative of a more general trend of regional influence on the EU.

democracy as representation and accountability and more in line with what democratic theorists from John Stuart Mill to Robert Dahl have asserted as the key characteristics of a democracy, i.e., continued responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens. Here, we also find the principle of subsidiarity, which although highly touted in Europe for many years has not been fully realized. However, the Committee of the Regions by its very nature and mission brings policy decisions as close to the citizen as possible because it deals with regional, local, and even city authorities who directly represent the people. Yet, it is important to note at this point the major criticism associated with the Committee: it acts as a consultative body in Brussels and does not directly take part in legislation. The extent of its influence as well as its changing role is discussed in more detail below.

Overall, much of the negative views of democracy in the European Union stem from the real weaknesses of the European Parliament but also the perception that the political process in Brussels is dominated by lobbyists and private interests. Regions which democratically represent the citizens and give them a voice in Europe play a role in countering this negative perception. Understanding democracy in the European Union is part of the puzzle of this research in that it provides a background for answering the core question of how European integration affects regional nationalism. The democratization of the EU has produced many results, some intentional, some unintentional. One unintended consequence is how regions have utilized the institutions of the EU, including the organization's democratic processes, to pursue political goals that they otherwise could not pursue as successfully within the confines of the nation-state. Although the EU itself presents certain problems related to democracy and is the

source of much debate regarding representation and legitimacy, it nevertheless affords a voice for regional and minority nationalist groups where they can on the one hand advance their own interests and also seek to influence the overall direction of the integration process.

2.2 Substate Interests in the European Union

Neofunctional theories of European integration as originally suggested by Haas (1958) are based on the view that integration proceeds best by working from areas of mutual and overlapping interest in a piecemeal fashion. The key assumptions are that the issue areas are related to political economy and that people's loyalty to their existing nation-states will be steadily eroded as they see that integration has many positive benefits and that these can best be obtained and sustained by the new relationship of interconnectedness. Another important element of neofunctionalism is institution building and the view that "spillover" will occur in certain sectors, especially those areas where high levels of interdependence actually or potentially exist; in this sense spillover will be difficult to resist. Both the Commission and the European Parliament as EU institutions are, for neofunctionalists, examples of bodies that have supranational rather than state-centric outlooks and will therefore further the cause of integration. Neofunctionalism is similar in many ways to pluralism in that it assumes that politics is a group activity and that in advanced industrial societies power and influence will be diffused among a number of competing groups. Certain aspects of neofunctionalism have been called into question, however, such as the extent of the effect of spillover because of how political elites exercise authority and have veto powers, i.e., the Council of the

European Union.

In contrast, intergovernmentalism explains European integration as a process directed and controlled by governments, in the case of the EU through the Intergovernmental Conference. This is a state-centric view of integration where the nation-state is the most important actor. While neofunctionalists would argue that once lost it is difficult for states to regain aspects of sovereignty, intergovernmentalists like Moravcsik (1998) disagree and see states as voluntarily pooling some elements of sovereignty at the supranational level when it suits them and having the capacity to reassert control if necessary. However, this study questions some of the fundamental assumptions of intergovernmentalism, most importantly by highlighting the existence and evolution of the Committee of the Regions, an organization that represents subnational interests. This is a puzzle for intergovernmentalism. Although it may be argued that at its inception the Committee of the Regions was an extremely weak institution with little influence in Brussels, it has over the last 20 years increased its role and competencies substantially. This is one example of how central governments are not always in control of the processes of integration and how substate actors can be empowered.

A third theoretical approach to explaining the workings of the EU is multilevel governance (MLG).[40] The main feature of this theory is how decision making is explained as shared authority between different levels of government. In this scenario member-state governments, political parties, and EU institutions work together exercising various levels of influence on each other to arrive at an outcome. MLG, therefore, argues that national governments are not as powerful as intergovernmentalists assume. Furthermore, MLG maintains that such institutions as the European Parliament, the

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[40] See Marks et al. (1996), Hooghe and Marks (2001), and Hooghe and Nugent (2006).

Commission, and the European Court of Justice play independent roles. Most significantly for this research, MLG also explains why substate groups, such as minority national parties and other regional representatives have a say in Brussels. MLG maintains that subnational authorities have an independent role (as do European institutions) in influencing decision making processes; these nonstate actors can choose to work through their respective central governments or to work directly with EU organizations. This last point is critical as it supports my argument that European integration is creating new opportunities for minority nationalism. The MLG approach offers the best theoretical explanation for the rise of subnational influence in Europe and therefore helps explain why minority nationalist parties, for example, also see opportunities in Europe.

Associated with MLG theory, especially as it pertains to subnational groups, is interest group behavior and network theory.[41] Both these areas look at how subnational groups represent their interests through collective forms of representation and freely enter and exit various networks. This type of behavior is very evident amongst regional representatives in Brussels and networks are seen as extremely important in terms of advancing political and economic goals. Networks are a key strategy for subnational authorities to have their voice heard and actually make an impact on policy in Brussels. Jones and Keating (1995) explain that in Brussels lobbying by regional actors has the aim of extracting the maximum political capital out of a strategy that allows them to circumvent the national governments. Although the Commission is happy to talk to the regions it can rarely respond to specific demands. However, what does occur is the creation of networks, the exchanging of information, planting ideas, and gradually developing policies (p. 14). The authors go on to argue that society is increasingly self-

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[41] See Donas and Beyers (2012).

organizing. The primary function of statehood is changing – it no longer consists of production and allocation of basic goods, but of the promotion and coordination of divergent networks (p. 164). Networks are therefore part of a wider strategy for subnational groups but they are also a way of gaining recognition. As one regional official remarked:

> …this is very European: regions, local authorities…We are part of international networks; I mean we are very proud to be from a city or from a region and we act from this specificity and I think that the European institutions understand that…they understand that this is something important…I was in several conferences of climate change in Durban and Copenhagen and I see that the European Commissioner for Climate Change and the Environment, they always, always remark, that the role of the regions and local authorities in Europe…is something important so they are also giving us this kind of recognition internationally. (M. Marín, personal communication, May 7, 2014.)

In recent decades subnational authorities have gained influence within the EU political system.[42] As early as 1975 cooperation between the regions and the Commission was in place and by 1992 regional ministers were able to participate in the Council in accordance with the Maastricht Treaty. In 1994 the Committee of the Regions was established, which was another indication of the acceptance of and indeed the need for substate influence in Brussels. The Treaty of Lisbon continued the expanded participatory role of regional representatives. Thus, we see that the EU treaties themselves contain provisions that allow for the representation of regional interests at the Union level. However, this does not mean that all regions are able to benefit from these arrangements. We have not achieved a "Europe of the Regions" but a Europe of some regions. Jones and Keating (1995) remark that although the regions are becoming more important in EU policy process there are barriers to a Europe of the Regions: the regions vary greatly in their economic capacity, institutional structures, and political, economic, and social

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[42] See Griglio (2012).

demands (p. 20). The authors conclude that there is no single relationship between the EU

and the regions and this represents the various levels of energy and aspirations of the

regions, as well as the nature of the political systems of the respective member states. The

poorer regions typically have more limited political options and it is actually the

wealthier regions such as Bavaria, Lombardy, and Catalonia that are more forceful and

innovative.

It is important, therefore, to recognize that all substate authorities in Europe have

at least some form of representation at the EU level but the resource rich groups occupy a

prominent position. Wealth is one factor but autonomy is another; Donas and Beyers

(2012) find that the more influential regions in Europe have more resources and more

self-rule and that party politics matters because regions with regionalist parties are also

more likely to have a stronger presence in Brussels. In addition, regionalist parties are

mostly found in regions with legislative powers, such regions have participatory rights

within the EU political structure.[43] Elena Griglio (2012) goes further, arguing that what

she calls the "autonomist" factor is the most significant in determining regional

assertiveness. She states that,

> Such an "autonomist" factor could be defined as the institutional propensity of the
> region to see its political role recognized as being distinct from that of the central
> state, thereby extending its decisional powers to new areas of intervention; it is
> influenced not so much by the amount of powers/competences attributed to the
> region, but rather by the search for further autonomy, which, in its turn, can be
> considered to be the result of historic, social, cultural, and political elements (as,
> for example, with the presence of strong autonomist parties). (p. 206)

In Europe, minority nationalist regions are typically represented by nationalist parties and

often the region is economically advanced and has legislative powers. In the case of

Spain, both Catalonia and the Basque Country are industrial and economic centers of

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[43] See Loughlin (2005).

Spain, have regional parties, and a high level of legislative independence. The point to be made here is that substate activity at the EU level varies greatly between regions, but it is more likely that minority nationalist regions are more active and therefore influential in pursuing their goals.

One area of commonality amongst the regions is their eagerness to lobby the Commission in Brussels; the growth of regional offices is one of the most positive illustrations of increased regional awareness and self-confidence. With the burgeoning presence of regional offices and staff in Brussels it seems that regardless of the debate surrounding the prospects of a Europe of the Regions, regional representatives have come to Brussels to stay. In their analysis of the regional presence in Europe Tatham and Thau (2014) conclude that the growth of regional offices in Brussels is not just a passing phase but indicative of a trend where a more pragmatic regional representation is taking part in the everyday workings of the EU. However, the authors also note that although there are more and more regional offices, not all regions are represented and there is great disparity between regions in terms of numbers present and influence, from single-person part-time offices to quasi-embassies with a full-time staff of 29. The reasons outlined for such disparities include variations in regional authority, self-rule, policy scope, demographic weight, economic development and population density (p. 17). In terms of theoretical and policy implications the authors' findings are supportive of multilevel governance explanations and overall indicate subnational groups, especially those with devolved powers (minority national groups are mostly found in this category) are more interested in influencing policy rather than merely lobbying for funds. Again, this mobilization of subnational actors, particularly minority nationalist is evidence of a new assertive role

that could substantially change the relationship of minority nations vis-à-vis the central state.

The triadic relationship between substate regions, member-states and the EU is shifting. The first factor in determining any changes in the relationship is the existing domestic arrangements of the member-state, e.g., federal, unitary, etc. and the constitutional and legal status of the respective regions within their state. Depending on these arrangements there are any number of constraints on the subnational region to act independently; however, as already argued, opportunities still exist for regional actors to work directly with EU institutions, albeit these opportunities are not equally available to all regions. The changing dynamic between the member-state and the EU is significant here. It is possible that, in line with intergovernmentalism, member-states will dig their heels in and retain control of most policy making powers and even recapture lost ground. On the other hand, the pressure on member-states from above (the EU) and below (subnational regions) might further weaken the state and lead to a situation of strong multilevel governance with regions and cities having much more power and influence. Between these two extremes is probably the most realistic future outcome where substate authorities work alongside member-states rather than against them, or rather than trying to replace them. This scenario is what scholars have called "cooperative regionalism."[44]

In all we see a complex and evolving relationship between the EU, the member-states, and the substate regions. As Keating (1998a) succinctly puts it, "European politics is regionalized, regional politics is Europeanized, while national politics is both Europeanized and regionalized" (p. 25). With the member-states continuing to be the main actors in the EU and considering their interest in maintaining and defending their

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[44] See Newman (1996).

centralized governments a federalized Europe of the Regions is not realistic now or in the near future. At the same time, however, an intergovernmentalist view of nation-states always getting their way is not accurate. Multilevel governance exists and decentralization is occurring in Europe. The final place and role of regional and minority national actors has yet to be determined, but this evolving process has so far enhanced the position of a range of substate entities, including minority nationalists, rather than diminished it.

2.3 The Committee of the Regions

> We are the ambassadors of Europe in the regions, cities and municipalities and speak for them in the European debate. We have a direct dialogue with our fellow citizens on Europe's achievements and future challenges and we help to explain and expound the implementation and territorial impact of Community policies. (Committee of the Regions mission statement)

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) is the only official EU body in which substate representatives are given a direct voice in the EU decision-making process. The above mission statement clearly indicates that the intent of the organization is to be more than an advisory body; as the political assembly of the regional representatives its role is to be an active part of the debate regarding the direction of the Union and also act as an ambassador of the regions in the EU, upholding the subsidiarity principle in particular and promoting decentralization and partnership in general.

The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 prepared the way for the CoR which came into being in 1994. It was created under the impulse of the Commission, the principal regional and local associations already existing in Brussels, and from European regions themselves, most notably the Belgian, German, and Spanish regional governments.

Although the German *Länder* had pushed for an organization that would have consisted exclusively of regional representatives, i.e., only representatives of regions in a federal structure, the Commission insisted on a broader and more inclusive representation. The result was a body that represents an extremely diverse array of local and regional authorities ranging from cities and small local authorities in unitary states to large autonomous regions with legislative powers in federal systems.

At its inception the CoR was conceived as only a consultative body similar to the older Economic and Social Committee where European citizens' input could be gathered and conveyed without involving them in the decision-making process which might subject the whole European project to localized issues. However, this arrangement has evolved; the transforming of the CoR from a purely consultative body to something more like a policy-influencing institution started with the Treaties of Amsterdam and Nice when members of the CoR had to also hold an electoral mandate in their region or local constituency. The result was that the CoR members became political figures rather than just consultants. This move was reinforced by *The Committee of the Regions White Paper on Multi-Level Governance* in 2009 which highlighted the CoR's role within the EU as "a political body that contributes fundamentally to EU multilevel governance" (Piattoni, 2012, p.61). In this paper the CoR claims a prominent role in EU policymaking. Subnational authorities are seen as examples of the type of representation that is both political and functional. For example, on the one hand there is the European Parliament which is purely political and then on the other hand we can find an organization like the European Securities Committee which is purely functional, acting like so many other similar pressure groups in Brussels. Piattoni (2012) argues that the CoR, by combining

both political and functional types of representation has succeeded in "upgrading" or empowering the type of representation historically exemplified by substate authorities.

Multilevel governance (MLG) makes sense for the CoR because it is in the interests of the organization to have a say in how Europe is run and it is how its members, which are all subnational authorities can have a voice in deliberation and even decision-making. The arguments for MLG are quite compelling as this is seen as a more effective and representative form of governance, which includes vertical and horizontal elements and a variety of actors and stakeholders. This political arrangement creates something closer to participatory democracy and thus helps to improve the EU's overall legitimacy. One of the CoR's principal talking points is the importance of having local and regional input regarding EU policies at the earliest stages of the decision-making process since it is the local and regional authorities that are actually responsible for implementing EU directives in their respective cities, municipalities, etc. Therefore, a key element in how the CoR functions is MLG. Indeed, the CoR is committed to becoming a major reference point for MLG in the EU (Van den Brande, 2010).

This point is underscored by the CoR's April 3rd 2014 adoption of The Charter for Multilevel Governance. The Charter calls for public authorities (local, national, and European) to use and promote multilevel governance in their future undertakings. The Charter signatories are invited to experiment with innovative policy solutions in adherence with MLG principles of subsidiarity, proportionality, and partnership, and to promote the use of multilevel partnerships and instruments for joint policy action. The goal is to create a transparent, open and inclusive policy-making process and to make

MLG a reality in day-to-day policy-making and delivery.[45] Former CoR President Luc

Van den Brande stated it this way:

> Decision-making is becoming scattered, and top-down decisions are simply no longer acceptable in our European democracy. Multilevel governance offers a participatory answer by providing tools for full participation also to regions, cities, and ultimately, the citizens. This is the only way to achieve our objectives for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, for jobs and a hopeful future. In one word: to deliver better and more for the citizens by making it together. ("The Committee of the Regions Adopts the Charter for Multilevel Governance in Europe," 2014)

As a champion of MLG, therefore, the CoR sees its mission and purpose as more than an

advisory body. Indeed, as one official commented,

> The three pillars of the Committee of the Regions' work are: legislation, subsidiarity, and a meeting place. First of all, the most important one is [the] decision-making impact on European law. As we estimate, about 70% of European law is important to us so we try to have an influence, so, in one word, legislation. The second element is about bringing Europe closer to its citizens, so fighting for the principle of subsidiarity and there you can see a very important part of our work which concerns territorial cooperation… The Committee of the Regions is also a meeting place for the interests of regions and cities… So you see here a step forward to more autonomy for the regions. (K. Hullmann, personal communication, May 7, 2014)

It is apparent that the CoR is an organization that is evolving and it is pursuing

strategies that it hopes will lead to a more significant role in Europe. Any increase in

capabilities and powers by the CoR will naturally translate into a more influential role for

local and regional authorities, including national minority parties. Yet, it is important to

consider the CoR's weaknesses and limitations as well as its strengths and potential.

Certainly in its early days the CoR was much weaker, having no standing before the

European Court of Justice and no formal right to review or approve EU law. As

mentioned already and as will be discussed in more detail below regarding the Lisbon

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[45] See http://cor.europa.eu/en/activities/governance/Pages/charter-for-multiLevel-governance.aspx

Treaty, many of these previous limitations have been overcome. Nonetheless, others remain and it is not always clear just how far the CoR has come.

Even with its recent push for more influence, the CoR remains relatively weak. For example, the Commission often seeks consultation from the CoR but can at any time choose to disregard its opinion. This is a central criticism of the CoR that it only appears to have influence on EU law when the Commission allows it to do so. Still, perhaps more significant are the internal weaknesses of the organization. The most significant cleavage is between members who represent regions with legislative powers, e.g., regions from Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium, and Austria and representatives from regions with no legislative power. The former group strongly supports a legislative role for the CoR, while the latter, in general, is more favorable of the consultative position. Stronger regions, which typically include minority nationalists, therefore, are often frustrated by the "watering down" of the CoR and would prefer a separate organization containing only regions with legislative powers (what the German *Länder* proposed from the beginning). In the words of a Basque regional official in Brussels:

> We play the game, we are loyal players, the game is like that, but we fight to have something more relevant and we would like to see two different chambers: a chamber of regions with legislative powers and a chamber of the rest… so we were always concerned about gaining momentum and together with the other regions with legislative power…to boost the role of the regions with legislative powers, the role of subnational entities as well. (M. Marín, personal communication, May 7, 2014)

Other divisions exist, including north/south, maritime/mountain, etc.,[46] however, on the whole, these social, economic, and geographical differences, which are not unusual in EU organizations, generally do not result in gridlock and rather produce the usual combination of bargaining and consensus-building.

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[46] See Christiansen (1996).

How do minority nationalist parties fair in all of this? In her analysis, Anwen Elias (2009) sees representation as weak for nationalist minority parties at the EU level, especially if the party is not in power in the region. When Elias was writing only Germany, the UK, Spain and Belgium had regional representatives participating in Council of Ministers meetings. The CoR according to Elias "has proven weak and ineffectual due to its lack of formal authority, internal divisions and its excessive bureaucratization" (p. 10). She argues that state authorities have control over selecting national minority representatives to the CoR and that the principle of subsidiarity has been applied very narrowly. Overall she views the EU as having a state-centered bias. According to Elias, states such as France, Spain, and the UK with strong language-based minorities have resisted outside interference in terms of how they deal with their minorities. She argues that evidence of this resistance is seen by the lack of minority language recognition at the EU level. Defining rights has also been a difficulty because rights are typically seen as individual rather than pertaining to groups. This touches on the liberal debate surrounding rights and the EU places itself on the conservative side of the interpretation of rights fearing the extension of rights to ethnic groups and justifying the reluctance to do so as based on the danger of reification and causing political instability.

Interestingly, Elias presents minority nationalism and minority languages as examples of a lack of support for minority rights at the EU level. However, as already mentioned the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages serves as an example of a less state-centric conception of Europe and of increased support for minority rights. Here, we see how subnational interests find a way onto the European

agenda and contrary to many expectations receive institutionalized and legal backing. Similarly, minority nationalist interests get a hearing in Brussels with institutional support for these interests. Certainly, the EU is headed and steered by the member states and the Council as the most powerful institution is representative of the member states; however, the political environment in Brussels is such that no one institution or organization is dominant, which allows for competing interests to play a role in policy-making. Regional and minority nationalist parties may not have direct influence on the Commission or Council but these regional representatives are present in Brussels for a reason; their membership of the CoR, potential membership in the European Parliament and their many networking activities are a means for them to advance their political and economic goals.

In contrast to Elias' findings, Simona Piattoni (2012) presents a much more favorable analysis of the CoR and its ability to represent the voice of regions. One of Piattoni's central points is that CoR members understand the necessity and advantages of presenting a more unified and general "view from the periphery" through the CoR rather than pursuing particular territorial interests (p. 62). This not only allows regions a stronger say in EU policy-making but contributes to the EU's overall democracy. The general findings of Piattoni's research indicate that CoR members are willing to compromise and work with other regions in an effort to more effectively represent all subnational entities and "that they are political representatives both because they represent the people of their region/locality…and because they do so by connecting politically through the CoR party groups…and with members of the European Parliament" (p. 68). This unified approach as presented and articulated through the CoR

directly supports the EU's principle of subsidiarity and must therefore be considered relevant in terms of policy-making.

A criticism of Piattoni's work is the argument that the larger regions with legislative capabilities have become strong enough to by now play an individual game in Brussels. Indeed, as mentioned, these regions would like to see a more powerful CoR or a separate representation for their interests; however, Piattoni asserts that even in her interviews with heads of national delegations from such regions they understand that the "CoR has to 'speak with one voice' if it wants to have an impact on EU policy-making" (p. 73). Likewise, when I asked a delegate of the Government of Catalonia her opinion on working with the CoR she replied,

> So it's not really what we would have liked. We would have liked to have a second chamber in the Parliament, for example, represented by the regions, and maybe the regions with legislative powers. But there are advantages to working with [the] Committee of the Regions. First of all you are in the legislative process and we have seen in the last years that the Committee of the Regions has gained influence… they are quite positive and most of the regulation that the EU is adopting they have implemented at the regional level. So most of the time the input from the Committee of the Regions is very valuable. And we see that more and more and also because of that, the Commission or the Council of Ministers they take into consideration what is being said. (I. Buldú-Freixa, personal communication, May 8, 2014)

The CoR has certainly changed over the last 20 years and like the larger European Union is continuing to evolve. Opinions are divided over the role and effectiveness of the CoR, at the very least and for better or worse it is the only official EU institution that represents subnational level governments and local authorities in Brussels. Most regional representatives seem to understand this and recognize the advantages of acting with one voice in Europe and so work with the CoR albeit with certain reservations. An important question that arises is in what policy areas and to what extent has the CoR been

successful in influencing policy. If the CoR is increasing its policy-influencing capacity this will naturally be very appealing to regions, especially national minority parties representing regions with aspirations for more autonomy from central states.

2.4 Influence and Determinants of Influence

An underlying assumption of this research has been that somehow integration has empowered European subnational regions and thus allowed political opportunities for minority nationalists. However, scholars have also pointed out that deeper integration and the nature of EU legislation often implies regional disempowerment.[47] Disempowerment may occur in some regions but not in others and in other cases may be a result of central government policy (Bednar, 2004). The Single European Act (SEA) of 1987 is illustrative of regional fears of central governments designating regional competencies to Brussels. During SEA negotiations central governments did transfer some regional powers to the EU level after having had only limited consultation with regional authorities (Lynch, 2004).

Nevertheless, regions have in general not allowed themselves to be so easily bypassed. In fact, post-SEA treaties such as Maastricht and Lisbon have seen much more regional input and therefore legislation to safeguard regional competencies including participation in Council proceedings, strengthening of the CoR and the subsidiarity principle, and more rights before the European Court of Justice. Tatham and Bauer (2014) argue that "As regions have mobilized to increase their influence in Brussels they have also sought to curb European intrusions in regional affairs. This has resulted in strengthening demands for greater control over upwards power dispersion to the EU

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[47] See Bourne (2003) and Fleurke and Willemse (2006).

level" (p. 18). The authors also find that regions with self-rule along with a stronger CoR will lead to more demands for maintaining and defending regional powers. My argument is that the complex process of integration has indeed seen the powers of member state governments decentralized and although the flip side of this process has also resulted in the dispersal of some regional powers to the EU level, regions in general, and specifically larger regions represented by minority nationalist parties have responded in a positive manner to the challenge of integration and have largely been able to simultaneously uphold their regional competencies while utilizing EU institutions and treaties to their benefit. The large and growing presence of regional offices in Brussels speaks more to opportunities to gain influence rather than disempowerment. How much real influence subnational authorities have at the EU level is an important question.

Scholarly literature has debated the extent and impact of subnational authorities on EU law-making.[48] For example, qualitative studies like those of Alexander Warleigh (2005) focusing on the CoR, indicate that the Committee does play a significant role in influencing policy. Warleigh argues against the assumption that the CoR is inconsequential because of its formal weakness; from his assessment of the Committee's impact on Commission proposals and legislation he finds that the CoR plays an important part in decision making and also enjoys the support and protection of the Commission. However, Milena Neshkova (2010) questions the generalizability of much of this research and claims that because of its interpretive nature it fails to provide theoretically based propositions regarding the conditions in which the CoR is most effective when it comes to influencing the Commission. In her study, Neshkova tracks 60 legislative

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[48] See Marks et al. (1996), Hooghe and Marks (2001), Evans (2002), Van Hecke (2003), Weatherhill (2005), and Wilks (2005).

proposals initiated by the Commission between 1996 and 2007 and asks two basic questions: (1) how often the preferences expressed in the CoR's opinion are acted upon through incorporation into EU legislation, and (2) under what conditions the likelihood for incorporation is maximized. She finds that the Commission responds favorably more than one-third of the time and that the CoR is usually more successful with legislation dealing with regional and cohesion policy. Interestingly, Neshkova also concludes from her study that the Commission is likelier to listen to the elected CoR representatives when the public is dissatisfied with the democratic process in the EU. Overall, both qualitative and quantitative studies indicate that regional voices are heard in Brussels and that the regions are often seen as a means of more directly involving EU citizens. Regional influence and increased democratization go hand-in-hand and both are advantageous to regional actors, especially minority nationalists.

Of course, although important, the CoR is not the only resource regional and national minority parties have when it comes to influencing EU policy. As mentioned above, regional offices abound in Brussels and one reason for this is that a physical presence facilitates access to and participation in any number of working groups focused on a variety of policies. Most significantly, regions with legislative power can also participate to various degrees in the Council of the European Union, for example. This speaks to policies of wider and diverse representation encouraged by the EU and extends to substate representation even in the Council. On one level there is internal participation where national and regional authorities assemble prior to Council meetings where they can seek to adopt a common position; this early stage of the policy-making process is a critical time for regions to have input. A second, higher level of participation for regions

referred to as external representation is when regional ministers actually sit in on Council deliberations or represent the member state. Still, regional representation in the Council varies significantly and is largely determined by member-state policy. In terms of internal representation there are three patterns:[49] (1) equal weight to the position of the national government and the substate government in establishing a common position (Belgium is the only example of this pattern and is therefore sui generis; (2) unequal weight where regions are a junior partner, e.g., Austria, Germany, and Spain; (3) consultative role for regions only, e.g., Italy and the UK. As for external representation there are four patterns: (1) full representation of a state by one of its regions (again this is a category that fits the unique case of Belgium where Flanders, for example, can speak for Belgium as a whole); (2) the "potential" for the regional minister to represent the entire state (this is the case in Austria but has yet to be implemented); (3) regions can become part of the national delegation to the Council, e.g., Italy and Spain; (4) participation of the regional minister is decided on a case-by-case basis (this is the system in the UK).

Panara and De Becker (2011) argue that there are possible drawbacks and limitations to participation of the regions in Council meetings: "The more regions a member state has, the less the opinion of a single region weighs in the formation of a country's stance and the more chance there is of not reaching a unified standpoint" (p. 17). Also, it is important to recognize that even though regional ministers may be present at the Council they are there to assist the national government; Panara and De Becker claim that, "Genuine regional interests are not represented at the Council only national interests which may be intertwined with the interests of the regions" (p. 22). An important question for these authors is how much say the regions have concerning

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[49] See Panara and De Becker (2011).

measures that affect their position. Is their contribution to the adoption of this measure truly influential? For these authors, the answer largely depends on the quality of regional participation rights in the EU law-making phase recognized by each individual member-state. Only Germany and Austria have effective representation of regions in their national parliaments (p. 304). This position, which highlights the limitations of regional influence, rests partially on understandings of where and how the regions fit into the EU system and the interpretation of the locus standi of the regions as established by the treaties. For example, Article 263 (2) TFEU states that only member-states have the status of privileged applicant, whereas regions are at the same level of private legal persons. This supports the argument that member-states largely control the EU agenda because they are the only ones legally positioned to do so, whereas regions and other substate actors play an auxiliary role determined largely by individual member-states and existing EU treaties.

However, with ongoing decentralization of member-states since at least the 1970s[50] and the trend towards regionalization it is reasonable to question the assumption of continued strong member-state dominance in EU decision-making. While some, like Panara and De Becker assert that the EU is still "regionally blind" others see changes occurring in favor of more regional influence. The regional blindness thesis rests on the notion that the EU has maintained its intergovernmentalist approach and its members are and can only be nation-states. All other entities, including minority national representatives, are excluded from key EU decision-making. Furthermore, this is not so much about the EU's position, but of the member-states themselves: only Belgium and

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[50] For example, Italy's regions were formally recognized in 1970, Spain's regions have gained power since the death of Franco in 1975, Belgium became a federal state in 1994, the UK enacted devolution in 1997, and even France has evolved into what some refer to as a "unitary decentralized state."

Germany involve their respective regions at the highest levels. Finally, the heterogeneous make-up of the regions means that while there is a relatively small core group of regions, i.e., regions with legislative powers that are pushing for a larger role in Europe, there are many more regions, municipalities, etc. that are not as active, which tends to dilute the regional position more generally.

Although there are differences of opinion regarding the extent and effectiveness of regional involvement in Brussels all sides seem to recognize the potential of regional participation in the EU in terms of tackling the democratic deficit and moving away from the influence of lobbies and corporate interests. Regions which democratically represent their constituents in Brussels could be a powerful force. Nikos Skoutaris (2012) argues that, in fact, the institutional framework of the EU is such that the idea of regional blindness is no longer a reality and that it is clearly evident now that the regions with legislative powers have participatory rights in Brussels. There may be only a handful of regions with such rights and their powers are quite modest, nevertheless, the fact that they do play a role represents a change in EU governance that favors substate actors. The regional question is here to stay and with it comes the rights and aspirations of minority nationalists. One can only expect minority nationalist parties to be spearheading the rights of regions and ensuring that the EU does not suffer from any further regional blindness.

Regardless of the actual extent of regional influence in Europe, public opinion is largely favorable of local and regional involvement in Brussels and surveys indicate that most Europeans would like to see increased substate participation. Figures from

Eurobarometer 307, for example, support this argument.[51] Firstly, the findings demonstrated that Europeans rate local and regional public authorities almost as highly as national authorities in terms of having the most impact on living conditions.[52] See *Figures 1* and *2* on the next page.

Secondly, although Europeans have a relatively low overall trust in government institutions they rate local and regional authorities slightly higher than the European Union and considerably higher than national governments. Half (50%) of EU citizens trust their local or regional authorities, 47% trust the European Union, and 34% trust their national government. Thirdly, according to the survey, European citizens do not think that regional and local public authorities are sufficiently taken into account in the EU's policy-making process.

Finally, there is also a strong indication that Europeans generally favor shared representation and decentralization. Answers to two related but different question support this position. The first question asked who is better placed to defend citizens' interests at the EU level. The response was a fairly even distribution between national politicians (29%), the European Parliament (26%), and local and regional politicians (21%). The second question asked who is better placed to explain how EU policies affect daily life; 28% placed the responsibility on national representatives, 26% on local and regional representatives, and 21% on members of the European Parliament. Again, the responses demonstrated that most Europeans view politics and governance as a shared responsibility among different actors.

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[51] Eurobarometer 307: "The Role and Impact of Local and Regional Authorities within the European Union" Publication: February 2009.
[52] It is important to note that the survey included small unitary states like Denmark, Ireland, and Malta where large regions do not exist and therefore this is probably part of the reason the importance of the national level appears somewhat stronger overall.
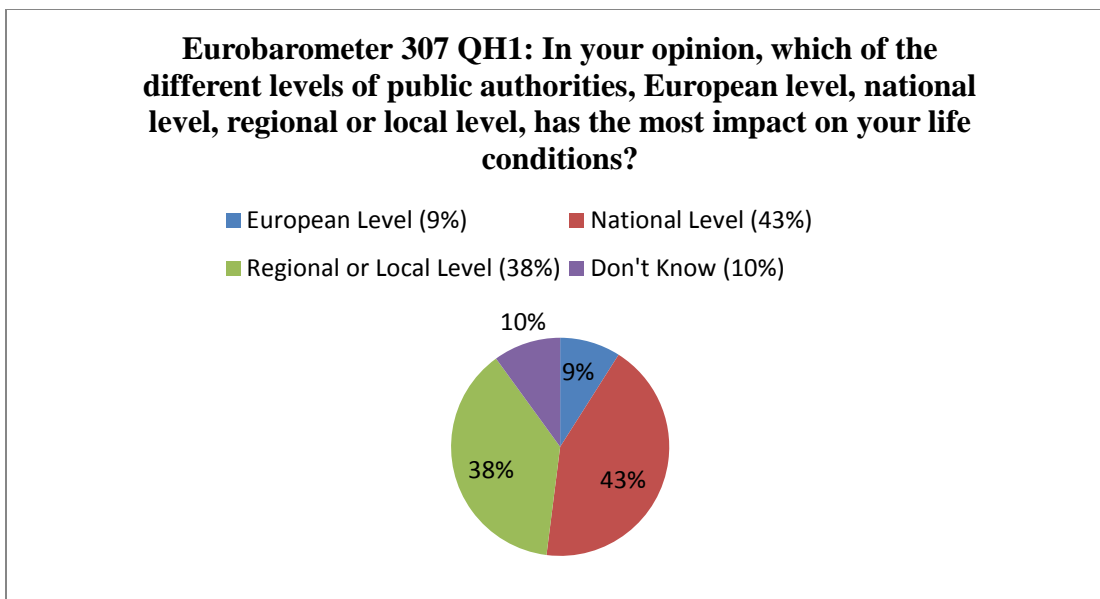
Figure 1: European attitudes to the impact of different levels of public authorities
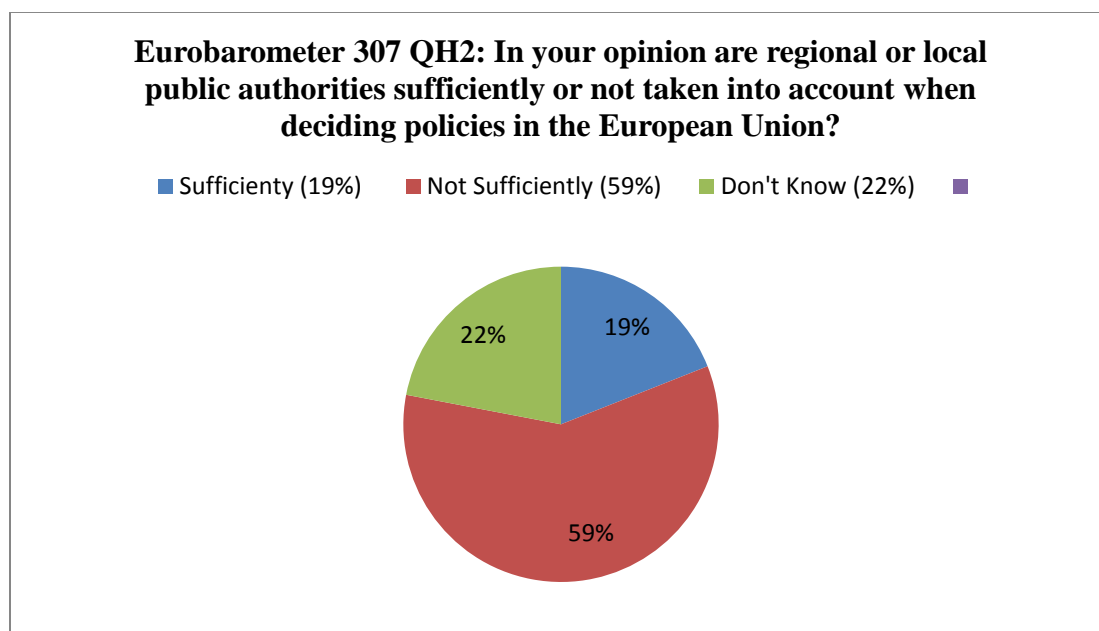

Figure 2: European attitudes on the role of local and regional authorities in decision-making policies of the European Union

If the EU truly wishes to be responsive to its citizens it would seem that it must move in the direction of regional empowerment. EU citizens recognize the impact of local and regional authorities in their everyday lives; they tend to trust these authorities more than the central government (and the EU); they therefore naturally want to see local and regional authorities have more say in Brussels, and they see their local and regional representatives as sharing an equal role in governance and communication of policy as national representatives or Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). As an organization based on democratic principles one would hope that the EU would respond at least to some degree to Europeans citizens' support of regions; after all, Europeans are historically very attached and loyal to their region and the relatively more recent creation of the nation-state has not completely eroded that attachment. It therefore makes sense for Brussels to support the regions, culturally, economically, and politically. National minority parties stand to gain from the general consensus among Europeans that what the EU needs is more democratic accountability and shared governance; much of this is seen as achievable through involving substate authorities in more consequential decision-making processes.

2.5 The Lisbon Treaty and Beyond

A clear indication of the EU trending toward more democratic participation, multilevel governance, and local and regional involvement is the passing of the Treaty of Lisbon (ToL). The changes the Treaty has brought for regional actors is quite positive and speaks to Europe's response to its citizens' interests in having more local representation and say in Brussels as well as recognition of the rights and place of

subnational groups in the European polity. Minority nationalists have everything to gain

if this trend continues since they can have a more influential voice in actual policymaking

by channeling their opinions through the European Parliament and the CoR. The ToL,

which came into effect on 1 December 2009, for the first time explicitly acknowledges

the principle of regional and local self-government within the EU member states. There

are several important changes that the ToL has brought into effect for the CoR and

therefore by extension subnational actors. They are as follows.

- New responsibilities in the EU legislative process: Probably most importantly

    through the ToL the CoR has gained a greater presence in the legislative process;

    the European Parliament, Commission, and Council must consult the CoR for all

    EU laws that have a regional impact.[53] Overall, since the passing of the ToL the

    CoR has had more scope to influence policymaking at every stage of the

    legislative process as indicated on the next page by *Table 1*.

- Increased contact and cooperation with the Commission: In effect the CoR seeks

    to act as intermediary between local and regional authorities and the Commission

    by assessing the potential regional impact of legislation and determining if the

    subsidiarity principle is being maintained. The ToL obliges the Commission to

    present its annual work program to the CoR whereby the CoR can identify areas

    of mandatory consultation. In addition, the Commission receives opinions from

    the CoR on the effects of previous legislation as well as suggestions for future

    policies.

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[53] Consultation is mandatory for all EU laws in the areas of economic, social and territorial cohesion, trans-European networks, transport, telecommunications and energy, public health, education and youth, culture, employment, social policy, environment, vocational training, and climate change.

Table 1: How the Committee of the Regions influences the legislative process

CoR consults with Local/Regional Authorities and the Commission	Within 8 weeks CoR works with parliaments to ensure compliance with subsidiarity	CoR works with LRAs and other partners and adopts opinion on proposal	CoR adopts revised opinion on altered legislative proposal		CoR monitors implementation and reports violations of subsidiarity to ECJ
Pre-legislative phase	Commission adopts legislative proposal and consults CoR	EU institutions discuss proposals. The EP and Council consult CoR	Cases where a proposal is significantly altered by other EU institutions	**EP and Council adopt EU legislation**	Implementation of EU legislation (~70% of which is implemented at regional level)

- A closer working relationship with national parliaments: The ToL established an "early warning system" whereby national parliaments have 8 weeks to voice any concerns they might have over EU legislation being drafted. In its opinions the CoR can oppose or support the concerns of national parliaments and ask the Commission to move forward or reconsider its proposals. The CoR can also join an action brought to the European Court of Justice by any national parliament seeking to annul an EU law on the basis of subsidiarity.

- The right to challenge EU laws in the European Court of Justice: The ToL allows the CoR access to the European Court of Justice in cases where the CoR believes EU institutions have not respected the Committee's rights to consultation or if an EU law does not respect the subsidiarity principle, especially where there are violations of local and regional competencies. Recourse to the ECJ is an

important achievement for the CoR since it strengthens and upholds its

consultation rights throughout the legislative process, including situations where

proposals have been substantially altered subsequent to the initial opinion.

With these increased powers the regions have the possibility to strengthen their

influence within the institutional framework of the EU. With the CoR acting as

subsidiarity watchdog, it has the potential to contribute in meaningful ways to the future

direction of European integration and also help maintain a balance of powers between the

Union, the member-states and the subnational authorities.

While not wishing to overstate the point, it is important to note the influence of

minority substate actors on the outcome of the ToL. The case of the Åland Islands, an

autonomous region of Finland, serves as a good example.[54] The Finnish parliament

approved the ToL in June 2008; however, it was not until November of the same year

that the Åland Government decided to accept the treaty. This delay on the part of the

Åland Islanders was because of four accommodations they sought: a seat in the European

Parliament, the right to appear before the ECJ, a role in the interpretation and

safeguarding of the principle of subsidiarity, and participation in Council meetings. In the

end the Helsinki government granted all of these requests with the exception of the seat

in the European Parliament. Certainly there exists variation among European states in

terms of how much autonomy regions have; however, in the context of European laws

and European political space, substate actors, especially autonomous regions see

opportunities for a greater independent role at the supranational level. This is at the heart

of the argument of this dissertation: minority nationalists while often limited by legal and

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[54] See Skoutaris (2012, p. 210).

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other means, in this case through opportunities provided above the state. Through efforts

to enhance participatory and decision-making rights at the EU level, autonomous regions

and minority nationalist can justify and legitimize their political and identity claims as

separate and unique regions or nations in Europe. As already noted, increased autonomy

for regions and the breakup of existing states is not the intent or goal of the EU, indeed

the European Union is about "union"; nevertheless, the process of integration has brought

about certain contradictions and paradoxes.

Emboldened by public support, moves towards greater multilevel governance, and

favorable treaties, where do the CoR and local and regional authorities stand today and

what do they see as their future role in Europe? In a debate celebrating 20 years of the

CoR, outgoing CoR President Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso commented:

> Looking back I believe no one could have anticipated 20 years ago the impact the
> CoR would end up having in shaping the EU strategic objectives. I believe it is
> fair to say that, today, the CoR is not merely an advisory body but a fully-fledged
> political assembly. If Europe is to climb out of the crisis, local and regional
> authorities need to be empowered to help shape EU policies. This is why I plea
> for the strengthening of the CoR's political and institutional role. ("CoR
> Celebrates 20 Years," 2014)

In the same debate other participants commented on the CoR's growing ability to

successfully influence EU decision-making and to safeguard local and regional

authorities' interests. In addition, it was noted that the CoR had moved beyond its

advisory role and was now active in assisting in the development of policy. The Charter

for Multilevel Governance in Europe and the creation of the European Grouping of

Territorial Cooperation were cited as examples of key initiatives.

In terms of future goals, the overarching aim is to restore public confidence in the EU by promoting multilevel governance and more local involvement in decision-making. As CoR First Vice President Mercedes Bresso remarked,

> The added value of the CoR and its members is that their involvement in EU legislation and in communicating Europe brings to the EU a political legitimacy that is complementary to that of the members of the European Parliament and the national governments represented in the Council. At a time where the EU is facing unprecedented distrust, the CoR can help close the "delivery gap" of EU policies on the ground which is more than ever needed. ("CoR Celebrates 20 Years," 2014).

To achieve these aims the CoR must consolidate its political role by working closely with the Commission, the Council, the European Parliament as well as national and regional parliaments. If and when there are revisions of EU treaties, subnational voices will need to have a say to ensure as much democratic legitimacy as possible. At its 107th Plenary Session the draft resolution entitled *Empowering Regional and Local Authorities in the European Union* included commitments to assert the CoR's "legitimate, unique and complementary role within the European Union's institutional set-up" and "defend its political independence and operational autonomy…by making use of all the potential offered by the Treaty of Lisbon" ("Empowering Regional and Local Authorities," 2014). Critically, the resolution envisages a greater political and institutional role for the regions in the next revision of the treaties.

An interesting vision of the future role for substate authorities in Europe was presented by CoR President Valcárcel Siso in a special report in June 2014 which largely reflected the resolutions of the 107th Plenary Session. Among other recommendations (50 in total) the report presented the idea of a European Senate of the Regions. In recommendation 47 it states:

>…in its role as EU institution, the CoR might gradually develop into the "European Senate of the Regions." This Assembly of the EU's LRAs [Local and Regional Authorities] would be a "Reflection Chamber" with semi-legislative powers, rather than a fully-fledged third legislative chamber, at EU level. However, the Senate's formal "assent" would be required for all legislative proposals regarding economic, social or territorial cohesion. (Valcárcel Siso, 2014)

Valcárcel Siso goes on to explain that this Senate's primary task would be to screen legislative proposals so as to ensure they are in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity, proportionality and multilevel governance. In addition, the Senate would present its own opinions or what he phrases "reflection positions." Eventually the Senate would become a branch of the EU legislature.

In another towards-the-future-type-report, Van Aken et al. (2014) present five possible future scenarios for regional representation and influence at the EU level. The first scenario sees the CoR as continuing to function primarily as a consultative body, i.e., a continuation of the status quo albeit with more effective consultative abilities and impact. The second scenario involves a treaty change where the CoR is integrated into the European Parliament as a sub-chamber with a special charge to ensure that the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality are upheld and specializing in local and regional issues using its expertise to implement EU policy at the local and regional level. The third scenario, also involving a treaty change, positions the CoR in the Council. In this scenario CoR Members would work alongside Council working parties and provide valuable local and regional input in the legislative process. Scenario four, which would need a minor treaty change, has the CoR as a territorial platform supporting the Commission. Again, the CoR would offer the Commission its expertise in regional affairs and contribute to legislation at the earliest stages. Finally, scenario five echoes Valcárcel

Siso's vision of a third legislative chamber. Here again we see the notion of a European Senate formed from elected local and regional representatives. Such a chamber, it is argued, would add to the checks and balances of EU government and politics and represent a greater diversity of EU citizens.

While a number of these proposals and recommendations might be seen as overreaching or even naïve by some, they nevertheless underscore a new sense of confidence and ambition on the part of regional actors in Europe. It has been shown that over time the CoR's remit has been enhanced in important ways and it is not unreasonable to believe this trend will continue. Minority nationalists, like other substate actors, are attuned to this trend and their presence in Brussels, membership in the CoR, and participation in a host of supranational networks is evidence of the real opportunities available at the EU level.

I have focused on the CoR as a key indicator of subnational influence in the EU, but as already mentioned there are a range of other possibilities in Brussels for regional actors, especially through the European Parliament, networking and other cooperative activities. Nevertheless, the CoR represents the official institutional channel whereby subnational authorities can access policymaking and potentially have the greatest impact on the direction of Europe. For regional groups such as minority nationalists the desire will not only be to protect regional autonomy but to promote it and continue to legitimize substate rights at the European level. The evidence would indicate a stronger voice and increasing opportunities for substate representatives; however, at the same time there are of course real limitations to how far regions can push their agenda. The EU is still, for the most part, run by the member-states and an aspiring institution representing regions, like

the CoR, remains relatively weak (although not as weak as before) vis-à-vis the

Commission, Council, and Parliament. Despite obvious improvements, questions remain

about the CoR's internal features and institutional weaknesses.

Although recognized for its usefulness and as the only official EU regional

representative body, the perception of the CoR by local and regional authorities is mixed

at best. While the regions with legislative powers would prefer a separate organization

more in line with their natural tendency for a stronger and more independent position in

Europe, the smaller regions, cities, etc. are generally more satisfied with a limited

consultative role. Still, even these smaller groups have certain misgivings about just what

the CoR does and its overall place in the political arena in Brussels. When asked about

the role of the CoR, for example, an official of the Irish Regional Office Secretariat

responded,

> So, the Committee of the Regions, I think… it's a bit of a strange organization to be perfectly honest with you. It sees itself moving towards the model of what the Parliament is and even moving away from an emphasis on national delegations into the party specific groupings: Socialists, Christian Democrats, etc. And that's something that's come more to the fore in the last number of years. And I'm not sure about the effect it has---possibly has more effect than the Economic and Social Committee (I don't see a lot of effect from what they do) and they are more or less siblings; they were established in the same vein…I remain to be convinced. I think the CoR has grown in numbers/tentacles but what that means I'm not entirely sure. It could probably be a lot more cohesive about how the subnational tiers are represented. And to be fair there was an article there on the Charter for Multi-level Governance that they've put the electrodes to try and invigorate [it], like Frankenstein's Monster perhaps. They're seeking to reinvigorate that and get signatories of member states and the bigger institutions to be cognizant of that. They need to be seen to be doing something because that's more or less what their remit is about. (R. Gingles, personal communication, 8 May, 2014.)

This comment is quite revealing in that it reflects an awareness on the one hand that the

CoR is somewhat effective (at least when compared to its sister organization the

Economic and Social Committee) although there are doubts about the extent of its

effectiveness and cohesiveness. The CoR's push for more multilevel governance seems to

be well-known in Brussels. Finally, there is awareness that the CoR is moving towards

something more akin to a true representative assembly.

In fact, many of the tough questions for the CoR pertain to the idea of

representation. Who precisely do CoR members represent? Is it the political interests of

the parties they belong to, their territorial interests, or some aggregate of the interests of

EU citizens at the local and regional levels? As the Irish official also remarked,

> You know, I wonder how networked the activities of the members are when they're coming and they're voting on amendments to reports and opinions and sometimes they're writing the opinions themselves and sometimes it's their own volition and initiative, but it's not something that's particularly networked into what their local authority, of which they are members of in the first place, or of their regional body from whence they drive their membership of the Committee of the Regions. (R. Gingles, personal communication, 8 May, 2014.)

Simona Piattoni (2014) also asks these questions in her study as she takes up the

topic of the CoR as representative assembly. Specifically she asks, "Can CoR members

balance institutional, functional, political and territorial representation and deliver full

political and democratic representation? Is this an impossible mission?" (p. 87). These

questions are asked in the context of the financial crisis where its impact as well as the

effects of fiscal policies are felt unevenly across regions; thus, subnational representatives

have an obligation to voice their opinions regarding economic strategies emanating from

Brussels. Strictly speaking, fiscal policy lies outside the remit of the CoR; however, it

may still defend the principle of subsidiarity if this is being violated and it may also offer

opinions on both political and economic matters. Piattoni endeavors to measure the

response of the CoR to the financial crisis in terms of its contribution to political and

democratic representation. She examines CoR opinions on the crisis from 2010 to 2013 and notes that overall the CoR succeeded in strongly articulating reservations about policies that impose restrictive measures on governments, the danger of a shift to intergovernmentalism and how this would negatively affect territorial cohesion and multilevel governance.

Through her analysis of these opinions, Piattoni is optimistic about the CoR's ability to represent subnational interests; she concludes:

> As these documents demonstrate, in its opinions specifically dedicated to the economic and financial crisis, the CoR manages to strike a balance among the many interests it represents that could fragment its voice. Rather, the CoR manages to "upgrade" its institutional, political, economic and territorial interests by arguing in favor of greater equity and solidarity all while standing guard of democratic principles such as participation, transparency, accountability and subsidiarity. In performing this representative function, it does not simply report the desiderata of its constituencies nor does it simply reflect its internal disparities. Rather, it manages to give voice to a "subnational tier," "the periphery" or "the man in the street," which would not be heard without this representational activity. (p. 103)

European integration has seen an evolution in how subnational authorities are represented and the degree to which they can participate and influence policy at the supranational level. We have not arrived at a "Europe of the Regions" and this has a lot to do with the relatively small numbers of regions with legislative powers; nevertheless, with a more empowered and assertive CoR and a broad consensus and drive for multilevel governance and more democratic participation at the EU level there is a higher likelihood that regional voices will become stronger, especially those regions that already enjoy a certain level of autonomy. It is already apparent that the regions with legislative powers in their respective states also enjoy some participatory rights at the EU level. Since the regional question, which in some important cases is linked to questions of

identity and nationalism, is not likely to disappear, it is not unreasonable to imagine greater participation and involvement of subnational authorities in directing EU policy. Even the idea of a third chamber in the legislature for local and regional representatives is not entirely far-fetched. What minority nationalist groups and political parties stand to gain from these changes and processes is not completely clear. At the very least, integration has provided and continues to provide a political opportunity space for such groups. The following case studies endeavor to underscore the reality of this opportunity structure, to trace the effects of integration on minority nationalist regions and their respective parties, and to link the more recent events that have transpired since the economic crisis such as the Treaty of Lisbon and the moves by the CoR for increased multilevel governance and regional participation to my argument of enhanced opportunities for minority nationalists in Europe.

CHAPTER 3

SPAIN

3.1 Spain and the European Union

"Spain today is a state for all Spaniards, a nation-state for a large part of the population, and only a state but not a nation for important minorities." – Juan Linz[55]

"Spain is the problem. Europe is the solution." Thus spoke renowned Spanish liberal philosopher José Ortega y Gasset in 1910 barely a decade after the loss of Spain's last major colonies in the American-Spanish War. Ortega y Gasset was not alone in thinking that a stronger connection with Europe could help resolve many of Spain's social, economic, and political weaknesses. However, closer ties to Europe would elude Spain until close to the end of the 20th century. A major obstacle was Spain's authoritarian regime that emerged from the civil war in 1939 and proved suspicious of and resistant to European integration. However, by the 1960s changes were occurring and what was then the European Community became increasingly relevant and appealing for Spain for a number of reasons. Firstly, there was the attraction and need for capital and foreign investment; secondly, tourism was becoming a major part of the economy and most tourists came from the six member-states of the Community; finally, most of Spain's emigrant workers whose remittances were significant, lived and worked in EC

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[55] Linz (1973).

countries (Powell, 2011). Although Spain requested accession negotiations to the European Community as early as 1962, political and economic circumstances prevented this from happening. Economically, Spain was predominantly agricultural and underdeveloped having implemented essentially autarkic economic policies until at least the late 1950s. Yet, the real obstacle to membership was political: Spain was an authoritarian dictatorship and the founding six members of the European Community, all democracies, were not keen to add a nondemocracy to the club. Article 237 of the EEC Treaty stated that any European state may apply to become a member of the Community;[56] the underlying assumption, however, was that the applicant state adhered to a democratic political system. This requirement has never changed and, in fact, became an explicit precondition after the debate in Europe that ensued following Spain's initial request.

It was not until the death of General Franco in 1975, which heralded Spain's transition to democracy that membership became a real possibility for Spain. Both Spain and Portugal formally applied to join the European Community in 1977 (Portugal had also just recently transitioned to democracy with the overthrow of the Caetano regime in 1974). The subsequent accession process for Spain has been described as protracted and difficult (Nugent, 2003); this was due to a number of factors including the size of Spain's agricultural sector and fishing fleet and the perceived problems associated with opening the Community to a flood of cheap labor from the south. Despite the obstacles there existed a strong political will in Madrid to make the necessary, often painful, structural reforms to qualify for membership; there was also the political will from Brussels to stabilize and normalize the political situation in the Iberian Peninsula which had for

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[56] See Nugent (2003, p. 29).

decades been ostracized from the rest of Europe. In terms of the economy, Spain, as a larger European country, was seen as a valuable market and membership would certainly increase the Community's economic potential. Finally, since the period of Spain's accession coincided with the Cold War era, Spain was seen simultaneously as a prime candidate for NATO.

Looking in more detail at Spain's accession to the European Community and its relationship with the EU provides important background knowledge for understanding how Spain's minority nations fit into the integration process. The fact that the EU took a tough stance against Franco Spain meant that Spanish public opinion was mostly favorable towards integration and in the immediate post-Franco period Spaniards viewed Europe as part of the solution to the social, political and economic woes they had endured under the dictatorship. It was also part of the reason why the transition government was able to undertake difficult structural reforms without having to contend with overwhelming public opposition. Under Franco, who had a narrow nationalistic view of Spain, minority nationalities, especially Basques and Catalonians had suffered disproportionately during the civil war and its aftermath. The prospect of reintegrating into Western Europe and therefore adopting liberal democratic principles was particularly appealing for minority nationalists in Spain who had seen their political rights as well as their cultural identities brutally repressed.

During the Franco period (1939 – 1975) Spain had become isolated and excluded from Western Europe. While Spain has sometimes been seen (mostly by its own people) as peripheral and "different" to the rest of Europe – celebrated by the long-standing tourism slogan *España es Diferente* – the extent of separation and marginalization went

beyond what were after all the unique geographical and cultural differences of the Iberian landscape and people. In reality the Franco era had detached Spain from its traditional home as an integral part of Western Europe; the return home, so to speak, in the post-Franco era was welcomed by the vast majority of Spaniards and European integration as the mechanism for that repatriation was broadly accepted and even enthusiastically embraced.

Probably the most difficult and darkest period of the transition and accession process for Spain directly involved issues with minority nationalists. Violent resistance to the Franco regime came from the Basque nationalist group ETA (Basque Homeland and Freedom). In the 1970s the situation was particularly tense. When three members of ETA were sentenced to death by a military court protests broke out across Europe prompting the Commission to issue a warning to Madrid that its accession was in jeopardy. On this occasion Franco commuted the death sentences. However, when ETA assassinated Franco's chosen successor Luis Carrero Blanco there was renewed tension, which ultimately led to the execution of five ETA activists. These executions saw the withdrawal of EC ambassadors from Madrid and the suspension of accession negotiations. Shortly after these events Franco died and with his death and that of his successor hopes were once again restored for Spain's full transition to democracy and membership of the European Community.

As a whole, the European Community had refused to accept the Franco regime and punished it when there were obvious human rights violations. By doing so Brussels sent a strong message to Spaniards that authoritarianism would not be an acceptable form of government in a progressive modern Europe. Liberal democracy, prosperity, and

stability were seen as mutually reinforcing attributes of the European Community of which Spain was now eager to join. Significantly, the EC in many ways provided fundamental reassurances for Spaniards as the country made the turbulent transition from authoritarianism to democracy. The reassurances provided by the EC not only extended to those who had been oppressed but also to the erstwhile supporters of the old regime, in terms of placating this group's fears of revolutionary upheavals and reassuring the protection of property rights, etc. As for minority nationalists, Basque and Catalonians were among the big losers of the civil war and the transition to democracy within the context of European integration offered the first real opportunity structure to redress their grievances since the defeat of the Second Republic.

In his coronation speech 2 days after Franco's death King Juan Carlos directly addressed the issue of European integration stating, "…the idea of Europe would be incomplete without reference to the presence of Spain and without consideration to the activities of my predecessors. Europe must take Spain into account, because we Spaniards are European" (Powell, 2011, p. 33). Still, the fact that it would be 10 more years before Spain gained full membership of the EC is evidence that it was not all plain sailing during the transition. Brussels was unimpressed by the initial transition proceedings dismissing Madrid's early liberalizing and reform efforts as half measures. Nevertheless, to buoy up domestic support for the new king, who turned out not to be the figure of continuity Franco had hoped for, but rather a "motor of change" (Carr, 1980, p. 173) the Council agreed to resume talks on accession in early 1976. Juan Carlos faced a number of early setbacks, however, both externally with the oil crisis of the 1970s which Spain could not weather as effectively as EC members, and internally including his

government's decision to arrest a number of opposition leaders and ban the communist party as well as put in place measures to create a nonelected Senate in the Cortes. Brussels expressed its sharp disapproval of such actions. Fortunately, for the king, his unpopular Prime Minister Carlos Arias Navarro resigned and the king chose to replace him with Adolfo Suárez, a move that substantially improved relations with the EC as the new prime minister paved the way in 1977 for Spain's first free elections in 40 years (which included the now legalized communist party). The result was a peaceful election with a turn-out of 80% (Carr, 1980, p. 176). The electorate rejected both the extreme left and the extreme right, indicating that the population was less sharply divided as many had assumed; it was a clear indication of a desire for change and a moderate approach to transition. By 1978 the Commission published a favorable opinion of Spain's progress toward membership albeit recognizing difficulties that had yet to be overcome (*Commission opinion*, 1978).

One difficulty that Madrid wished to overcome domestically was the regional nationalist question. If joining the EC was political in that it helped legitimize the post-Franco government, here, we see another major political motive for pursuing integration: an attempt to resolve Spain's center-periphery cleavages (Quintanilla, 2001). In the 1977 election parties supporting regional autonomy were victorious in the Basque Country and Catalonia (Carr, 1980). Yet, even after the death of Franco and the move towards democracy ETA continued its terrorist activities; the provinces of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa were in a state of permanent political agitation. Minority nationalists in the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia maintained the hope that through integration not only would their linguistic and cultural rights be reinstated but that they would also attain

greater political powers. Integration would see competencies shift upwards to Brussels and downwards to the regions at the expense of the central state. This was an optimistic but not completely unwarranted notion on the part of minority nationalists as they perceived, correctly, that European integration was an evolving phenomenon with new opportunities for all who wished to participate within the institutional rules – rules that could be revised. As for the central government in Madrid, it was confident that the EC was run by its member-states all of which would strongly resist any attempts to undermine state unity and was therefore happy to entertain the devolved powers notion as long as it guaranteed the backing of regional parties in establishing a unified democratic Spanish state and its pursuit of EC membership. Thus, we see some important differences between the Spanish state's interests in integration and that of the minority national regions.

One event that deserves attention regarding Spain's bumpy road to EC membership is the February 1981 attempted coup d'état, dubbed "23-F." The abortive coup was led by Lieutenant-Colonel Antonio Tejero who with 200 *Guardia Civil* held the Congress of Deputies hostage for 18 hours before being forced to surrender. Although there were other simultaneous movements around the country, including tanks ordered on the streets of Valencia, these were few and far between. The military was not united behind the coup and most importantly the king denounced it publicly on television stating, "The Crown, the symbol of the permanence and unity of the nation, cannot tolerate, in any form, actions or attitudes of people attempting by force to interrupt the democratic process, a process which the Constitution, voted for by the Spanish people,

determined by referendum."[57] The failed coup underscored the fragility of Spain's

democratic transition, its economic hardships, but also highlighted right-wing discontent,

especially among the military at the prospect of the fragmentation of the Spanish state by

regional separatists.

Spain's political crises in the early 1980s weakened its accession bid in the short

term. With what appeared to be another coup attempt in October 1982, many observers

began to doubt the possibilities of a peaceful democratic transition never mind accession

to the EC. However, ironically such events also had the effect of focusing efforts both

domestically and internationally on avoiding a situation where Spain was backsliding into

authoritarianism. Because the Commission formally and openly condemned the coup and

due to subsequent pressure from the European Parliament to speed up accession

negotiations, in the longer term it served to convince Spaniards and the rest of Europe

that EC membership was key to ensuring a successful transition to democracy.

The final push towards EC membership came under the auspices of the socialist

government led by Felipe González that took power in a landslide victory in 1982, with

PSOE (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*) winning 48% of vote.[58] González's goal was

full EC membership as fast as possible. The urgency stemmed from Spain's declining

economic performance and high unemployment, reaching 21% by 1985 (Powell, 2011, p.

37) but also the threat of waning public support for the EC because of the seemingly

unending process of accession. Overall though, Spaniards remained Euroenthusiasts but

there was a limit to how long this enthusiasm would last. In an effort to accelerate

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[57] See http://www.outsidethebeltway.com/the-day-king-juan-carlos-saved-spanish-democracy/

[58] See http://electionresources.org/es/congress.php?election=1982

negotiations both González and Juan Carlos made diplomatic visits to European capitals.

Most time and energy went into convincing the two largest and most important members

of the EC, Germany and France that Spain should be accepted into the club. The German

Chancellor Helmut Kohl was supportive, as enlargement was in Germany's economic

and political interests. On the other hand, French President, François Mitterrand was

holding out for reform of the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) and a solution to

Britain's EC budget rebate demands. The French wanted to shape these outcomes to their

advantage before enlargement. Agreements on the CAP and the British rebate were

reached in June 1984. Finally, Mitterrand announced Spain's (and Portugal's) accession

date for January 1st 1986.

Spain's early stages of integration into the EU coincided with its dramatic and

turbulent transition from authoritarianism to democracy. The role of the European

Community was a crucial element during this defining period. Brussels never negotiated

membership with the Franco regime and by taking this position the EC simultaneously

was able to undermine authoritarian Spain and bolster the European Community as a

champion of liberal democracy in the eyes of the Spanish people. Most Spaniards

realized that Europe was indeed the solution to many of Spain's problems and this belief

was simply reinforced by Brussels' noncompromising stand against Franco which turned

many Spaniards into Euroenthusiasts. In fact, for most people in Spain the only legitimate

transition to democracy was one that was coupled with European integration. For those

who wished a true and transparent democratic transition, the EC was the guarantor, but

even for those in Spain whose interests rested with the old order, the EC provided

important reassurances in terms of maintaining the rule of law, protecting property rights,

and discouraging the possibility of extremist excesses or even revolution.

Since 1986 Spain has reaped many of the social, political, and economic benefits from EU membership that were predicted and hoped for during the accession process. The net result has been "an unprecedented boost of modernization and progress" (Alumnia, 2011, p. 1). Spanish GDP as a percentage of the EU average rose from 70% in 1985 to 103% in 2009 (p. 2). Indeed, some have gone as far as to say the period since accession has been the best in Spanish history (Barón, 2011). Spain has proven to be a strong advocate for integration as well as a leader in Europe with figures such as Gil-Carlos Rodríguez Iglesias chairing the European Court of Justice and Javier Solana serving as Europe's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy to name just two. Overall, Spain's association with the European Union has been very positive, the greatest outcome being the consolidation of democracy and the reintegration of Spain into the European sphere.

While Europe has certainly provided solutions to many of Spain's most serious problems as Ortega y Gasset and other liberal thinkers rightly predicted, it has not solved the perennial issue of Spanish unity. As mentioned, European integration appealed to the Spanish state and to its regions for different reasons. For sure Basques, Catalonians, and Galicians welcomed the oversight of Brussels during the transition to democracy, but the minority nationalists also harbored hopes that integration would weaken the central state and present regions with opportunities to increase their autonomy. The same European principles of democracy, human rights, and freedom celebrated by Madrid are also celebrated in Bilbao, Barcelona, and Santiago de Compostela. For the regions these principles are viewed as the legitimate normative and moral basis, enshrined in European

laws and institutions, to pursue the rights and self-determination of Europe's historical nationalities. I will now turn to the interplay between European integration, the Spanish state, and the Spanish regions with the purpose of assessing the impact of integration on Spanish regionalist and minority nationalists. The central question is the extent to which integration has allowed the regions to realize their political goals of increased autonomy in the face of opposition from the central government. I wish to demonstrate that opportunity structures have opened for subnational groups over time with the evolution of a favorable normative and institutional environment at the EU level through the processes of democratization, multilevel governance, and the supranational strengthening of regional influence and representation.

3.2 Minority Nationalism in Spain

Regional autonomy in Spain has its historical roots in the cultural and linguistic differences of peoples living in the peripheral areas of the northwest and northeast: Galicians in the Atlantic northwest whose language is closely related to Portuguese, Catalonians in the Mediterranean northeast who speak a romance language with similarities to Spanish and French, and Basques in the extreme northeast bordering France and the Bay of Biscay who have a unique language of unknown origin. In total, Spain has 17 autonomous communities, all of which have powers at the regional level. In Valencia and Baleares a variety of Catalan is spoken, which these regions often use to assert their unique differences; and the Canary Islands, mostly because of geographical distance from the mainland, also tend to take a strong regionalist position. However, the

three historic national minorities (along with the special case of Navarre)[59] enjoy a higher level of autonomy and political power. Uneven industrialization beginning in the late 19th century saw development heavily concentrated in Catalonia and the Basque country, which only served to reinforce these regions' sense of difference (Anderson, 2001). Even today a major grievance for Basques and Catalans against the central government and argued justification for independence is the extent to which these regions are subsidizing the backward center and south.

Of the three historic nations (a term often used in Spain to describe these regions) Catalonia has probably the most prestigious history of independence and was for long periods a powerful influence in the Mediterranean and beyond. Catalonians have maintained a constant will to self-governance over the course of centuries, embodied in such institutions as the *Generalitat*, created in1359 as well as its own unique legal system (*Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia*, 2006). Historically, the Basques have also exhibited a strong sense of nationalism and independent identity, known as sea explorers but mostly isolated in their mountainous corner of the Pyrenees they found themselves split between two powerful European states, France and Spain. The French Basques, small in number, have not been very vocal nationalists, part of the reason being the success of France's nation-building. The Basques in Spain were able to come to an accommodation with Madrid, but this was frustrated by the civil war and Franco's absurd Spanish nationalism that viciously stifled any other cultural identity that did not fit the Castilian ideal he espoused. As Franco characteristically remarked, the Catalan and Basque languages were "fit only for dogs" (Anderson, 2001, p. 43). Militant Basque nationalism came to fruition

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[59] Navarre and the Basque Country enjoy a fiscal independence in which they collect and administer their own taxes.

during the Franco era and remained well into the democratic transition. Finally, Galicia

represents the smallest and least assertive of the three historic nations. Part of the failure

of early Galician nationalism can be explained by its adverse social conditions and

problematic political opportunity structure. Traditionally there has been a tension

between conservative and liberal nationalism, an imbalance between the cultural

development of nationalism and its political manifestation, and constant "communication

problems" between nationalist groups and elites (Losada, 2000, p. 152). The result was a

fairly weak Galician national identity compared to the Basque Country and Catalonia.

Again, the civil war and Franco's regime resulted in suppression and further setbacks.

The great irony in all of this of course was that Franco himself was Galician.

The post-dictatorship 1978 constitution stressed the unity of the Spanish state but

in an effort to prevent serious conflict resulting from the possible secession of the Basque

Country and Catalonia it also allowed for significant decentralization and regional

autonomy. However, the Statute of Autonomy was a state-wide plan that applied to all of

Spain's regions. It was a top-down approach with little or no negotiation with the

territories involved (Moreno, 2001). The idea was to mollify the historic nations, keeping

them within the Spanish state, but also to avoid a scenario in which the three regions

would be fundamentally different in terms of political arrangements from that of the rest

of Spain. The result was that devolution was indeed granted to the Basque Country,

Catalonia, and Galicia but a level of autonomy was also handed to regions with far less

sense of regional identity and certainly no nationalist movements. Furthermore, there was

an uneven distribution of competencies with, not surprisingly, the three historic nations

being granted much higher levels of autonomy. The arrangement may have prevented the

break-up of Spain, but in itself engendered new tensions between the regions and Madrid.

Nevertheless, Spain had transitioned to democracy peacefully and remained a united country. Much of this was thanks to the European Union, which acted as a social, economic, and political stabilizing force. To what extent have regional minority nationalists used this new political arrangement with the EU to pursue goals and circumvent the central state? How appealing is the new political structure and are minority nationalists successful in advancing their respective causes in Brussels? I will argue that European integration has provided real opportunities for minority nationalists to make limited gains vis-à-vis the state and that despite significant constraints the EU is evolving in a way that should provide more rather than less opportunities in the future.

To begin with, Galicia as already mentioned, while regional identity remained strong, nationalism had not matured due to particular sociopolitical issues and the effects of Francoism. Still, Galician nationalists did not immediately take advantage of the new opportunity structure available as a result of the 1978 constitution. The massive electoral defeat of Galician nationalist parties in 1981 where over 80%[60] of voters chose all-Spanish parties was enough to signal a rejection of nationalist policies and therefore an overhaul and reassessment of the nationalist position. The nationalist party that managed to emerge from the disarray was the BNG (Galician National Bloc). Reversing the trends of the past, the BNG became a well-organized party with high levels of activism. It also developed a strategy of moderation, relinquishing some unhelpful traditional ideologies which made it more appealing to a wider population. The BNG accepted the constitution and worked within its parameters "in defense of the interests of Galicia" (Losada, 2000, p. 155). Over time, all parties in Galicia, not just nationalist, have adopted a regionalist

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[60] See Appendix A

position, i.e., even mainstream all-Spanish parties in Galicia incorporate the discourse of

regional identity. The success of the BNG speaks to the opportunities presented by the

Statute of Autonomy and the democratic reintegration of Spain into Europe. Ramón Máiz

(2003) explains how

> …the [BNG] went from being a marginal force to the second largest regional
> party in the Galician autonomous parliament…due both to the favorable political
> opportunity structure of the new institutional setting of the Spanish state of
> autonomies and also to its outstanding capacity for a multilevel organization,
> charismatic leadership and effective mobilization repertoires, together with the
> moderation of its initially radical nationalist discourse. (p. 20)

However, when compared to the main Basque and Catalan minority nationalist

parties, the BNG has been the least enthusiastic about European integration. This

Euroscepticism stems from the party's Marxist roots. However, the realities of integration

and Galician domestic politics obliged the party to adapt and by the 1990s the BNG had

fundamentally reconsidered its position on Europe and presented a more positive

discourse that linked European integration with its goals for Galician autonomy and the

transformation of Spain into a plurinational state.[61] Furthermore, as a party of regional

government in Galicia, the BNG has consolidated its position as a supporter of

integration seeing Europe rather than the Spanish state as a more realistic means to

pursue greater autonomy; essentially the BNG shifted from an anti-integration party to

moderate supporter of the EU (Elias, 2009). The BNG still maintains reservations about

Europe, especially its slow progress in recognizing and advancing regional goals;

nevertheless, the BNG has adopted a pragmatic attitude that supports the idea of Europe

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[61] The BNG's transformation in the 1990s produced positive effects in regional elections: in 1993 the party
won 18.4% of the vote and 13 seats, whereas in 1989 it won only 8% and 5 seats. See
http://electionresources.org/es/gal/parliament.php?election=1989 and
http://electionresources.org/es/gal/parliament.php?election=1993

as an alternative to the status quo and as offering possibilities for change.

The BNG, therefore, is a good example of how the processes of integration have a transformative effect on minority nationalist parties; the BNG significantly evolved from its Marxist, antisystem position to become a more mainstream party with a broader appeal. This transformation was due in part to domestic pressures and consistently poor results in elections in the 1980s, but also because of the reality of integration and the benefits and opportunities Europe provided for regions, both economically and politically. In fact, ironically, the BNG as the least Euroenthusiastic of the three regional parties represents traditionally the most pro-EU region of the three (see *Table 2* and *Table 3* on the next page).

Interestingly, the BNG is currently facing a serious crisis. In 2012 the party experienced a major schism resulting in the creation of a new coalition party, AGE (Galician Alternative of the Left). AGE represents an array of left-wing, antiglobalization, anticapitalist, and nationalist elements. In contesting the 2012 regional elections, the new party came in ahead of the BNG winning almost 14% of the vote compared to the BNG's 10.1%.[62] The schism and results are indicative of on-going divisions in Galician left-wing nationalism and also most likely a reflection of the population's frustration with the economic crisis. In terms of AGE's attitude and involvement in Europe it is revealing to note that they were successful in sending a deputy to Brussels and have joined the European United Left/Nordic Green Left Parliamentary Group in the European Parliament. The party plainly promotes and celebrates their role in Europe as indicated on their website.[63] Their motto in Europe is

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[62] See Appendix B
[63] See http://lidiasenra.com/

Table 2: Regional attitudes to Spain's membership in the EU

	Catalonia	Basque Country	Galicia
Something good	61.4	58.7	70.1
Neither good or bad	17.6	31.3	17.1
Something bad	14.2	6.3	7.1
Don't know	6.8	3.7	5.7

Data Source: Observatorio Político Autonómico

Table 3: Regional attitudes to European integration

	Catalonia	Basque Country	Galicia
Beneficial	58.4	44.2	52.7
Neither beneficial or harmful	18.9	41.5	24.4
Harmful	17.0	8.7	15.6
Don't know	5.7	5.7	7.4

Data Source: Observatorio Político Autonómico

Galiza na Esquerda Rupturista Europea (the Galician Left disrupting Europe), which is

not surprising considering their antiglobalization and anticapitalism tenets. They have

also been quick to make associations with other like-minded European parties as

indicated by their choice of parliamentary grouping and exemplified by working

alongside other nationalist parties like Ireland's Sinn Féin.[64]

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[64] See http://lidiasenra.com/index.php/para-manter-agricultura-labrega-e-imprescindibel-organizarse-para-parar-o-ttip-e-o-ceta/

It would seem therefore, that AGE represents some of the more discontented and Eurosceptic elements of the former BNG along with a combination of other disaffected left-wing nationalists. However, their eagerness to contest European elections in May 2014 and their activities in Brussels demonstrate the importance of the European political arena regardless of the level of Euroenthusiasm or skepticism. Whether or not AGE will, like the BNG of the 1990s, come to take a more moderate position as it experiences the realities of integration and regional government remains to be seen. What is evident is that the party already recognizes the importance of the European dynamic in shaping its political goals and possibilities.

Moving from Galicia to the Basque Country, this region, including Navarre, traditionally represented the most conservative, Catholic, and autonomous parts of Spain. The early liberal vision of Spain that famously had its birth in Cádiz in 1812 was strongly opposed by the traditionalist and absolutist Basques. The Carlist movement, which was a country-wide reaction against liberalism, was prevalent in the Basque region and remained so during the 19th century. The ultimate defeat of Carlism led the way for its replacement in the Basque Country by nationalism led by Sabino Arana. Nationalism was seen by the Basque elite as the appropriate tool to take up the fight against the liberalizing and centralizing Spanish state (Lecours, 2007). Much of the Basque demands for autonomy were satisfied with the creation of the Second Republic. However, a second wave of Basque nationalism came about after the civil war, a conflict which destroyed the Spanish Republic and resulted in violent military oppression. The targeting of the Basque people by the Franco regime resulted in tighter cohesion in the Basque community and ultimately violent resistance in the form of ETA (Llera, 2000). Even after

the end of authoritarian rule and the return to democracy, Madrid had to contend with a dissatisfied and combatant ETA. However, militant nationalism has receded significantly in recent years with ETA declaring a permanent ceasefire in 2011, which has so far been honored. Reasons for the end of ETA activities have a lot to do with effective cooperation between French and Spanish intelligence and security agencies, but also the influence and results of the Northern Ireland peace process and the negotiated IRA ceasefire, which served as something of a model for the Basque Country.

Is Basque nationalism entering a new more peaceful and promising stage? The moderate nationalist PNV (Basque Nationalist Party) founded by Sabino Arana after the defeat of Carlism, is the oldest and most influential party in the Basque Country. After the Statute of Autonomy was passed the PNV began to transform itself from a radically nationalist, socially conservative party to a more Christian Democrat position (Zirakzadeh, 1991). The goal of the newly oriented PNV was to promote and protect traditional Basque autonomy while integrating into the European Community. The result was increased popular support for the party and when the Basque Parliament held its first elections in 1980 the PNV won a clear victory with 38% of the vote.[65] The PNV was able to consolidate its position further when members of second place *Herri Batasuna* (ETA's political wing) refused to take their seats in the parliament. The PNV has remained the most popular party in the Basque Country; the most recent elections of 2012 show only a small decrease in popularity since 1980 with the party winning 34% of the vote.[66] Interestingly, in the same election the new left-wing nationalist coalition *Euskal Herria Bildu* (Basque Country Unite) won almost 25% of the vote. Many members of the former

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[65] See Appendix C
[66] See Appendix D

Herri Batasuna party have joined this new coalition. The figures show that in the Basque Country around 60% of the electorate favors nationalist parties.

Through the transition to democracy and the Statute of Autonomy all of Spain's regions have gained a degree of self-government. The Basque Country has maintained and gained important rights related to establishing its own government, collecting and administering taxes, its own autonomous police force, authority regarding areas of education, media, health, and transportation and of symbolic importance, the co-official status of the Basque language, national anthem and flag. In all there is clearly a high level of autonomy in the region. However, this falls short of full independence and for many Basque nationalists this is still the ultimate political goal. Furthermore, the Statute of Autonomy established Navarre as a separate autonomous community, but Basque nationalist see Navarre as part of the greater Basque homeland. In addition, since the 1978 constitution also upholds the unity of the Spanish state it establishes a clear limit to nationalist aspirations. The opportunity structure for minority nationalists in Spain created by democratization and regional autonomy hits a barrier when it comes to full self-determination.

Enter the EU. With Spain joining the European Community in 1986 minority nationalist parties recognized a new dynamic at play. Unlike the far left, anticapitalist and Eurosceptic *Herri Batasuna*, the PNV was quick to support integration and saw political and economic opportunities ahead. For the PNV, European integration offered at once a means to tap into EU regional development funds, to make connections in Brussels with other regional and national players, and ultimately to project a unique Basque identity on the European scene. This novel political arena bred new life into the PNV and its

nationalist agenda.

Crucially, the context of European integration presents national minority and regional parties like the PNV with a new political discourse in which to express ideas of self-determination that does not necessarily involve direct confrontation with central governments. For example, the PNV has expressed a vision of a "Europe of the Regions" where sovereignty is shared between states, regions, and European institutions; in fact, this scenario would see the actual replacement of the nation-state in Europe with a more complex system of power sharing. Despite the realities of member-state dominance in Europe, and what may seem an unrealizable dream, minority nationalists and regionalists continue to push for change, promoting their alternative visions. If anything the recent financial crisis in Europe has lent legitimacy to cries for major change both in terms of how the economy is managed and also how Europe is governed politically. In March 2014 Andoni Ortuzar, Chairman of the PNV presented a seminar entitled *European Elections and Citizenship* in which he urged his audience to

> …convince citizens that states are no longer the only entities in European history. Their power and their leading role are being inexorably diluted in the face of the demands of pervasive globalization and calls for self-government by cultural nations and regions. We need more Europe and a better Europe to tackle present and future challenges and ensure a future in peace, justice and freedom for our citizens. We do not need more Europe in the sense of interventions in tasks which the principle of subsidiarity dictates should be allocated to institutions closer to citizens.[67]

Minority nationalist and regional parties as exemplified by the PNV are able to capitalize on citizens' uncertainties and disappointments in an age of globalization as well as their mistrust of national governments and the EU in general to offer solutions stemming from a more local setting. This may be an attractive alternative for citizens as they tend to trust

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[67] See http://english.eaj-pnv.eus/blog-noticias/must-convince-our-citizens-states_37336.html

local government more (as indicated in survey data in section 2.4 above). Such a strategy offers minority and regional parties opportunities to influence policy by capturing a larger percentage of the vote at election time. Regional party representatives may likely increase in number, not just in their regions' parliaments but in some cases nationally. With regional parties stronger overall, their influence will be felt at the European level with more and stronger representation in both the Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament.

One phenomenon that characterizes minority nationalist and regional parties' aptitude for building on the opportunity structure of the EU is paradiplomacy. Paradiplomacy or regional substate diplomacy can be defined simply as "foreign policy" or international relations conducted by regional governments (Criekenmans, 2010). Regions conduct paradiplomacy for many of the same economic, political, and cultural reasons sovereign states do. The third category, "cultural reasons," is very important to minority nationalists and in the context of European integration paradiplomacy allows regions to promote and project their distinct identities and differentiate themselves from their central states. Flanders is arguably the most adept region at performing paradiplomacy; the Belgian Constitution provides the federated entities the privilege of acting abroad and entering into foreign-relations, including treaty-making in areas in which they are competent. Flanders has diplomatic representation in several European capitals as well as Flemish representation to the EU and other international organizations in Geneva (Van den Brande, 2010).

While the Belgian case might be unique, other regions are likewise actively involved in paradiplomatic activities although perhaps not quite to the same extent as

Flanders. The PNV is no exception. The Basque government's involvement in paradiplomacy began in earnest with Sabino Arana in the late 19th century as the nationalist leader looked to the international community for support for a Basque state. The PNV pursued paradiplomacy after Arana's death and throughout the 20th century. Examples of the Basque nationalists' engagement with international relations include a telegram of approval to U.S. President Wilson in 1918 praising his doctrine of national self-determination, and formal Basque government visits to the Vatican in 1911 and 1936 and to Uruguay and Argentina in 1934 (Lecours, 2007). During the Franco period the Basque government in exile continued to reach out to the international community for support and consistently tried to focus international attention on the human rights abuses meted out by the dictatorship against the Basque people.

Under the Statute of Autonomy the Basque government was restored and was able to more effectively function and enter into international relations, but the 1978 constitution places all international and foreign relations firmly within the remit of the central government. Yet, European integration has allowed for PNV-led Basque governments to operate above and beyond the regional and state level. This is another example of on the one hand the clear limitations facing national minorities within the state and on the other hand a new opportunity structure available through continental integration. For the PNV, Basque autonomy must also have an international dimension if the region is to function in a globalized world and at the European level (Lecours, 2007). The most significant and far-reaching possibilities for the Basque Country to engage in international relations are found in Europe. The establishment of a Basque regional office in Brussels did not, however, occur without strong opposition from Madrid. During a

lengthy judicial process before the Constitutional Court the Spanish government

challenged the right of the Basque Country to have a delegation in Brussels, "alleging

that there could be no relation whatsoever between the Basque public institutions and the

European institutions" (Skoutaris, 2012, p. 225). However, the court rejected the

argument and confirmed the right of the Basque Country to be officially represented in

Brussels holding that Union law applies domestically and affects the competences of the

Autonomous Communities. Marta Marín, Basque delegate to Brussels, put it this way:

> In 1994 the Spanish Constitutional Court decided that we were right, it was lawful to open a representation here [in Brussels] because of the nature of the European Union because they [the EU] were dealing with domestic powers related to the territory of the Basque Country. So we were right to open a representation because of the institutions that were taking decisions regarding our domestic powers. In 1995/96 we put in place this office, which is the institutional representation of the Basque government, but we also represent through a formal and informal agreement between the whole institutions in the Basque Country, the Basque Parliament, the different provinces…we are representing them, the whole interest, institutional, economic, social; we act as a single voice…we passed formal agreement with the different provinces in the Basque Country, but there is a tacit agreement that we will represent all the interests. But we depend…formally on the Basque Government; we are part of the Basque Government, a part of the external action secretariat, depending directly from the president and we are all civil servants…which is important to remark because when you see…other representations they are mixed, they are a kind of partnership but we are really with a permanent vocation. (Personal communication, 7 May, 2014).

This "permanent vocation" in Brussels represents an obvious opportunity for the Basque

Country not only to network with important political and economic groups and influence

EU policymaking, but to also build a unique and independent Basque identity.

What better symbol of independence than to have your nation represented

internationally through visible official bureaus and delegations in Europe's capital? Still,

this is more than purely symbolic and although there are limits to regional participation

and influence in Brussels, regional voices are heard and are growing. The Basque

government is therefore an enthusiastic supporter of European integration. The Basque

External Action Secretariat has listed as its first objective the active participation of the

Basque Country in European affairs and the debate over the future of Europe (Lecours,

2007). We can see that the Basque strategy, which mirrors other regions, is to in the first

place project its independent identity internationally, but also to have a real say in

directing the evolving European project. With this in mind the Basque delegation is

actively involved in the Committee of the Regions and will use whatever means to push

for more policymaking rights for the organization and Basque nationalist MEPs will take

their seats in the European Parliament. Ideally, the Basque Country would like a

permanent independent voice in the Council and as demonstrated it is not unprecedented

for subnational authorities to be represented at the Council level, e.g., Germany and

Belgium allow this.[68] The Basques and other minority regions with a strong tradition of

autonomy will continue to pursue independent representation and greater participatory

rights at the EU level because the opportunities exist to do so.

     Galician and Basque nationalism have benefited both from Spain's transition to

democracy and its integration into Europe. However, while the Statute of Autonomy

granted many privileges of home rule to the regions, the Spanish Constitution imposes

certain limitations to self-determination as the unity of the Spanish state is seen as

sacrosanct. As Article 2 states: "The Constitution is founded upon the indissoluble unity

of the Spanish nation, the common and indivisible patria of all Spaniards, and recognizes

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[68] Regional governments throughout Europe have pushed for participatory rights on the Council and this was also a long sought-after goal for the Basque government. The Maastricht Treaty permitted regional ministers authorized by their state to be Council members. Most federalized and regionalized states in the EU allow regional participation in the Council. Participation was authorized for Spain's autonomous communities in December 2004 (see Bourne, 2008). What the Basques (Catalans and Galicians) would like is an independent seat on the Council rather than as part of the Spanish representation.

and guarantees the right to autonomy of the nationalities integrated in it and the solidarity among them." [69] European integration, on the other hand, has presented the autonomous regions with a more open and evolving political arena in which to pursue political goals. The EU has certainly not been the perfect answer or solution for minority nationalists; nevertheless, it has offered opportunities denied to them at the state level. For this reason, the PNV has been largely enthusiastic about Europe and the BNG has modified its anti-integration philosophy and rhetoric in favor of a more accepting position.

For the PNV integration is an important part of Basque self-government. The prominence of multilevel governance in the EU means that Basque, Spanish, and EU competencies overlap in many areas (Bourne, 2008). Spain has had to make institutional changes and apply EU laws, which have allowed the Basque Country and the other autonomous communities to be more active in Europe. As Angela Bourne (2008) concludes in her analysis of the effects of integration on the Basque Country:

> Basque authorities have developed an elaborate European policy encompassing preferences on both longer-term issues, like the future path of European integration, and more routine EU policy and legislative processes. They have dedicated public resources and developed an institutional apparatus to execute this European policy. (p. 135).

The largest and in many ways most dynamic of Spain's historic nations, Catalonia, offers a particularly interesting and insightful look at how European integration is affecting opportunities for minority nationalists. Following the example of Scotland's independence bid in September 2014, Catalonia held a similar (albeit unsanctioned) referendum in November. What has occurred within the EU that two prominent regions have made secessionist moves? What are the factors that have

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[69] See *Tribunal Constitucional de España*
http://www.tribunalconstitucional.es/en/constitucion/Pages/ConstitucionIngles.aspx

permitted these events to take place in the way that they did? Obviously these are complex questions. My argument is that part of the answer lies in the social, economic, and political environment engendered by European integration. The Scottish Nationalist Party's motto is "Independence in Europe" and similarly any other EU regional move for independence takes place in the context of accommodating its independence within the existing European polity. Europe has not diminished the nationalist voice; in fact, it has empowered minority nations by providing them with a favorable economic, institutional, and normative framework in which they are able to put forward an idea of independence that is less threatening, less disruptive, and more legitimate because it would take place within the established order of the EU.

3.3 The Case of Catalonia

Catalonia has a population of 7.5 million which accounts for almost 17% of the total population of Spain; it has the fourth highest regional GDP per capita,[70] its capital, Barcelona is Spain's second largest city and a major center of industry and culture. To say that Catalonia is an important part of Spain is an understatement. In comparison, Scotland represents 32% of the geographical area of the UK but its population is only 8.3% of the total.[71] An independent Catalonia would certainly affect Spain more that an independent Scotland would affect the UK. For obvious reasons, the central government in Madrid while tolerating a high level of autonomy in Catalonia, views independence as completely unacceptable as it would destroy the integrity of the Spanish state; this attitude is particularly true of the ruling conservative PP (*Partido Popular*). Since

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[70] See *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* http://www.ine.es
[71] See http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-24866266

democracy Madrid has tried to accommodate the historic nations of Spain within a unified Spanish state. European integration has created another layer of complexity to the uneasy compromises between center and periphery.

In 1998 the main nationalist parties of Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia signed a joint declaration in Barcelona outlining their dissatisfaction with the persistence of the unitary character of the Spanish state and demanding a change in the Constitution whereby the currently unrecognized nationalities would be clearly defined. Commenting on 20 years of democracy the signatories remarked:

> During this period we have endured a lack of political and juridical recognition, and even social and cultural recognition of the specificity of our national realities within the Spanish state. This recognition, which is fair and democratic, is absolutely essential in the context of a Europe enmeshed in the process of political and economic restructuration which in the medium term will involve the redistribution of political power amongst its different layers of government. A Europe whose union should be based upon respect for and the structuring of its different peoples and cultures. (Guibernau, 2003, p. 127)

What is noteworthy is the reference to "Europe enmeshed in the process of political and economic restructuration." Using this type of discourse is a clear example of how the processes of European integration affect the relationship between the state and the regions. Regions are able to embed their political goals and agendas in a European institutional and normative context that tends to be seen as more legitimate, more forward-looking, and perhaps less directly confrontational with the central state. Unsurprisingly though, the declaration was not well received by Spain's two main political parties, the PP and the PSOE.

Three years later, in 2001, partly in response to the conservative PP's political campaign, the main Catalan leftist parties published the Catalan Self-Government Report (Guibernau, 2003). The report was essentially a call for greater Catalonian self-

government and the redefinition of Spain as a plurinational state. Again, the point being

made was the lack of recognition of the possibility of more than one national identity in

Spain. Furthermore, the report argued for the right of Catalonia to have its own

representatives in Brussels as well as other official international delegations. Like the

Basque Country, Catalonia has given prominence to external relations, for many of the

same reasons as the Basques, i.e., an international platform for projecting an independent

image and an opportunity to influence supranational policies. Paradiplomacy is not a

surprising phenomenon for Catalonia considering its historical roots as an independent

maritime power. Preceding Spain's EU membership, Catalonia had already been

preparing for the accession to the European Union and even established an office in

Brussels in 1986, the same year as Spain's accession. At first the office was a consortium

representing various aspects of local government and civil society but ultimately evolved

into the official Catalonian Delegation to the European Union. Imma Buldú-Freixa,

Institutional Affairs Coordinator of the Delegation explained to me:

> …this office is now the delegation of the government of Catalonia, of the region
> of Catalonia… we were also making the European institutions aware of the reality
> of Catalonia…that it is an important economy and that we have a lot of ideas and
> proposals that maybe they could be taken into consideration in Brussels in order
> to tackle certain problems or questions or issues. (Personal communication, 8
> May, 2014).

The Catalonian government is headed by its main nationalist party the CiU

(Convergence and Union)[72] and like its counterparts in Galicia and the Basque Country,

the CiU is pro-European. It is also a center-right party like the PNV. An interesting

political pattern in Catalonia is that in general elections the Catalan Socialists tend to

obtain the majority while in the regional elections the center-right CiU is dominant,

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[72] The CiU is in fact a nationalist alliance made up of the CDC (Democratic Convergence of Catalonia) and
the UDC (Democratic Union of Catalonia).

which demonstrates that nationalist sympathies are found on both sides of the political spectrum. In the first election to the Catalan Parliament in 1980 the CiU won the most seats (43) with almost 30% of the vote.[73] With its brand of non-secessionist autonomy the CiU has maintained a broad appeal and under the leadership of Jordi Pujol for many years managed to form coalitions with Spain's major parties, especially the PP and in so doing won concessions for Catalonia. The 2012 regional elections show the CiU as still the strongest party with over 30% of the vote.[74]

Notwithstanding the successes of the CiU, the relationship with the PP has been called into question, especially when in 2000 a majority PP government came into power that no longer needed CiU support (Guibernau, 2004). This loss of bargaining power has undercut the CiU's political clout and prestige and forced it and Catalan nationalists in general to reconsider their strategy and ultimate political direction. Furthermore, the PP now free from its CiU partnership has exhibited a much more pro-Castilian, centralist view of Spain. This is resulting in a reactionary response by Catalonian nationalists that is more defensive and confrontational in nature. In fact, the PP's position threatens to alienate not only Catalonians but Galicians and Basques too and to put the central-periphery balance in jeopardy. The reaction and changes occurring in Catalonia are already quite revealing. In 2001 according to a poll conducted by the *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* 35.9% of Catalans favored independence (Guibernau, 2003, p. 130). In 2013 this number had risen to 45.3%.[75] Significantly, in the 2012 regional elections, while the CiU still managed to win most seats it was a decrease of 12 from the

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[73] See Appendix E
[74] See Appendix F
[75] See *Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió*
http://ceo.gencat.cat/ceop/AppJava/pages/estudis/categories/fitxaEstudi.html?colId=5088&lastTitle=Bar%F2metre+d%27Opini%F3+Pol%EDtica+%28BOP%29.+2a+onada+2014

previous election. On the other hand, the pro-independence ERC (Republican Left of Catalonia) came in third just behind the socialists with an increase of 11 seats from the previous election.[76] This is an indication of the loss of support experienced by the CiU in large part because of its long association with the PP and also a sign of a shift towards independence.

The CiU has been forced to reassess its regional, national, and European position with the rise of the pro-independence movement in Catalonia, a majority conservative party leading in Madrid, and the ever changing nature of European integration. With these changing forces and factors the CiU has moved from its traditional moderate nonsecessionist nationalism to a more pro-independence stance. The part European integration has played in the CiU's evolution is significant. From its earliest days the CiU viewed Europeanization as progressive and a means of modernizing the Spanish state. During the Franco period and subsequent transition to democracy, Catalan nationalists, like all opposition groups regarded Europe as a source of support, a goal, and a unifying objective (Giordano & Roller, 2002). Long time CiU leader Jordi Pujol consistently supported European integration, seeing the EU as a force for decentralization and accommodation of state diversity, including plurinationalism and plurilinguilism in which Catalan nationalism would not threaten the unity of the Spanish state (Hargreaves & García Ferrando, 1997). This was the early CiU and mainstream nationalist approach to Europe, which was widely supported in Catalonia.

A key element of European integration for the CiU is the role of subnational authorities in decision-making. This is why the Catalan Delegation to the EU is particularly active in the Committee of the Regions and is strongly in favor of regional

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[76] See Appendix F

participation in the Council and other institutions. In line with many of its regional counterparts, the CiU has promoted the idea of multilevel governance and shared sovereignty between regional, national, and supranational levels. Although Europe has not delivered in many ways in terms of regionalists' aspirations, the potential for the EU to alter the nature of the state is high and the process of integration has already resulted in significant changes. The CiU's goal in Europe is to try to capitalize on these opportunities for change and if possible influence the direction Europe is taking, especially in terms of ideas of sovereignty and the nation-state.

Change has accelerated since the 2009 economic crisis. Questions are being raised about the viability of the EU but also the role of the state in dealing with global crises. New concepts of governing and functioning in an age of globalization are being debated. Regional parties like the CiU have had to respond to these changes. At the European level the CiU has continued to support integration and participate actively in Brussels, but the rhetoric and focus have now moved away from Pujol's erstwhile inclusive nationalism to a more separatist tone. The turn to independence for the CiU has a lot to do with its break with the PP whose greatest electoral victory came in 2011.[77] The PP has since used its mandate to take a strong position against any moves towards more autonomy for the regions. The domestic changes for the CiU have therefore been reflected at the supranational level in Brussels. The opportunity structure in the EU allows Catalonia to contest the PP government's position in a political arena outside the boundaries of the Spanish state.

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[77] See http://electionresources.org/es/congress.php?election=2011

The rise of the ERC and its attitude to Europe is also informative of the role the EU plays in influencing minority nationalism. Like the CiU, the ERC's attitude to Europe has been positive but it has criticized the CiU's concept of co-sovereignty with Spain arguing that "if we [Catalonia] are ready to share sovereignty, it is better to do it with Europe" (Giordano & Roller, 2002, p. 110). The ERC is also critical about what it sees as the CiU's dominance of the Catalonian Delegation to the EU. The ERC's hope for European integration was that it would lead, in a similar way to the PNV vision, to a "Europe of the Regions" and a fading away of the nation-state. This position has evolved over time to represent a "Europe of the Peoples" but again with the same outcome of the replacement of the traditional nation-state and state boundaries with a federation of peoples based on language and national identity. The ERC also supports the Committee of the Regions' proposal for a second chamber or senate that would represent these peoples. Overall, the CiU has come closer to the ERC's position on Europe, i.e., as a place to advance independence. Integration has been something of a roller-coaster for regionalist parties with many disappointments along the way, including the seemingly unrealizable Europe of the Regions. Nevertheless, integration continues to impact and shape regional politics and overall Europe has offered a venue for political action and has served as a unifying force for Catalan nationalists.

Currently the political situation in Spain is not conducive to addressing the grievances and aspirations of Catalan nationalism or that of the other historic nations. A central problem is that the Constitution does not recognize Catalonia, the Basque Country, or Galicia as proper nations within a multinational Spain. As a result the conversation with the central government can only go so far. The EU opens up the

conversation and provides opportunities for minority nationalists to engage in nation-building practices at the supranational level and it also allows space for discourse and debate regarding different ideas of sovereignty and governance. Because of the changing nature of the nation-state and the integration process we are witnessing, as Guibernau (2004) predicted, the radicalization of Catalan nationalism. With an inflexible PP government in power the trend will continue as a more homogenous Castile-based identity is promoted from Madrid at the expense of peripheral identities. In this scenario the possibilities for multiple identities will diminish as one identity (the Spanish) is seen as exclusive of others.

The reaction of Catalonians has been to reject the centralizing and homogenizing forces emanating from Madrid and to respond with a shift towards a pro-Catalan posture. The public expression of this change in attitude came through the ballot box in the 2012 regional elections with the clear victory of nationalist parties and the drop in support for the two main all-Spanish parties, the PP and the PSOE.[78] In September of the same year an estimated 1.5 million people participated in an independence rally in Barcelona to express their discontent at among other things, Catalonia's financial transfers to poorer regions of Spain.[79] In January 2013 the regional parliament approved a "Declaration of Sovereignty" with the aim of holding a referendum on independence. The proposed referendum was ruled unconstitutional by the Spanish Constitutional Court; however, Artur Mas, leader of the CiU and regional president authorized a nonbinding referendum for November 2014. The referendum went ahead on November 9th and citizens were asked a two-part question: "Do you want Catalonia to become a state? If yes, do you

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[78] See Appendix F
[79] See http://electionresources.org/es/congress.php?election=2011

want this state to be independent?"[80] The electorate could therefore choose "no," which indicated approval of the status quo or less autonomy or "yes/no," which indicated support for a Catalan state within a federal or confederated Spain. The "yes/yes" vote was for full independence from Spain. The Catalan government tallied the total vote count at 2.3 million with the "yes/yes" outcome winning 80.76% of the vote.[81]

Unsurprisingly, Artur Mas expressed his satisfaction with the result as a clear indication of Catalonia's desire for self-rule; however, the Spanish government was unimpressed and dismissive; Spanish Justice Minister Rafeal Catalá called the referendum political propaganda and a sham that was "devoid of any democratic validity."[82] Nevertheless, more objective commentators have regarded the event as a demonstration of force by Catalan nationalists and a wakeup call for Madrid.[83] The fact that the referendum took place in spite of the central government's ruling weakened the image of the government and the fact that there were over 2 million participants, the vast majority of whom voted for independence, cannot simply be ignored. The referendum also served to inspire the other minority nationalities of Spain. The PNV President Andoni Ortuzar issued a declaration in support of Catalonia's referendum and right to self-determination. The declaration includes the following comments:

> The right to self-determination is a basic human right; this cannot be disputed under any circumstances! If the government of Madrid wishes Catalonia to remain a part of Spain, then it is their duty to create the conditions for that, to convince the Catalan people to stay, through peaceful and democratic means. One thing must be clear: the European way of resolving problems is through dialogue and compromises, by respecting the basic human rights in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

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[80] See http://www.catalannewsagency.com/november-9-vote
[81] See Generalitat de Catalunya http://www.participa2014.cat/resultats/dades/en/escr-tot.html
[82] See http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29982960
[83] Emilio Sáenz-Francés http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/10/catalans-vow-push-independence-80-favour-split

> We recall Recommendation 1.881 (2007) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which noting that "in recent years a considerable number of new states have been created in Europe and we now face the appearance of new nations whose independence and statehood is recognized by the international community"– states: "The Assembly insists on the democratic condition of European states, which requires that these situations always be resolved through democratic processes, such as elections, referendums, constitutional and institutional reform, and the establishment of new entities; these processes must be dependent on the participation of citizens, who are ultimately entitled to decide."
> In our opinion, this applies not only to Scotland, but also to Catalonia and to all other regions, where the population expresses its will to change the status of the region, regardless whether this is aimed to achieve larger autonomy or independence.[84]

This statement from the PNV is illustrative of the type of political discourse utilized by national minority groups when confronting issues of self-determination and democratic and/or human rights. The reprimand against the central governments is clear but it is placed in the context of a wider human rights discourse and set of normative values that lend a strong degree of legitimacy and justification to minority nationalist claims. The specific references to the Charter of the United Nations and Recommendations from the Council of the EU underscore the importance of these international institutions to minority nationalists. The institutions afforded through European integration provide a supportive framework and point of reference for minority nations in their political and ideological battles with central governments.

The Catalonian case presents us with a number of points to consider. In the first place it is evident that national self-determination is limited to Catalonia within the legal and constitutional framework of the Spanish state as codified by the 1978 Constitution and Statute of Autonomy. Without a change in the Constitution there is little an autonomous community can do to gain recognition as a nation and pursue independence

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[84] Andoni Ortuzar http://english.eaj-pnv.eus/blog-noticias/declaration-favour-catalunyas-right-decide_39281.html

if the population of that region so desires. The recent ascendance of the conservative PP government has made any such hopes of revisiting the Constitution very unlikely. Secondly, European integration has been a unifying force for Catalan nationalists and nationalist parties have supported the EU on the basis that it provides real economic and political opportunities. In terms of the political opportunities, Catalonia has succeeded in projecting an independent voice on the international scene by establishing a delegation in Brussels and participating actively in the Committee of the Regions and other EU institutions. Finally, with doors shut in Spain, Catalonia will look more and more for open windows in Europe and along with other regions will push for increased participatory rights at the EU level. The increased clout of the Committee of the Regions and the continued emphasis on democratic principles of inclusion and participation in Brussels will deepen regional actors' integration into the European system while enhancing their influence. For regions like Catalonia these processes of integration will impact and shape Catalan identity and the region's idea of its proper place and status in Europe and the world.

3.4 Conclusions

The 1978 constitution which included the Statute of Autonomy was the first opportunity structure that allowed regional nationalists in Spain to pursue more autonomy. The second has been European integration. From the beginning of Spain's transition to democracy European integration was seen by minority nationalists as both a guarantor of a real and complete democratic transition but also a new opportunity to pursue economic and political goals beyond the state. The mainstream nationalist parties

and even some smaller less moderate nationalist parties (e.g., the ERC) have been by and large Euroenthusiasts. While the BNG began as a Eurosceptic party it modified its position significantly to reflect a more accommodating attitude to the EU. The recent break-off AGE party currently represents the traditional anti-EU position of the more radical left in Galicia, but the party's already meaningful association with European politics and its responsibilities in regional government may yet produce a moderating effect similar to the experience of the BNG. However, it seems regardless of where these parties may fall on the gamut of Euroenthusiasm, for minority nationalists, Europe also provides additional opportunities that are denied to them by the state, e.g., the ability to directly lobby for EU funding and influence policy through the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions, a nexus for intraregional associations and cooperation, nation-building activities through paradiplomacy and participation in international institutions.

Without a change in the Constitution minority nationalists in Spain cannot pursue self-determination beyond the limits of an autonomous community of the Spanish state. Demands for greater self-government and recognition of nation status will be resisted by the central government and the EU will then become the main recourse for minority nationalists' grievances. The EU not only provides an arena to voice these grievances, but it also offers real institutional and normative support that can pressure central governments and lend legitimacy to regional claims. The 1998 Declaration of Barcelona and the 2001 Catalan Self-Government Report are examples of minority nationalist demands for more self-government that referenced European integration in support of these demands: in the first instance as an argument for decentralization and in the second

instance to make a case for Catalan representation in Brussels and other international

cities. Similarly, the 2014 nonbinding referendum on independence for Catalonia was

supported by nationalists as a legitimate exercise of free will and democratic and human

rights as established by international and European charters.

       With the financial crisis that began in 2009 the political and economic arena has

changed in Europe in many ways. Spain was hit particularly hard by the crisis, as of

October 2014 Spain's unemployment rate is the second highest in the EU at a staggering

24%.[85] The responses to the crisis have been mixed and complex. At the very least the

integration project has become subject to serious introspection and scrutiny. Many

predicted that the response from the regions would be to close offices in Brussels or

dramatically reduce staff (Tatham & Thau, 2014). The outcome, however, is that regional

representation has remained although officials are now much more circumspect about

how they spend their limited funds. In fact, the regional response can be seen as positive

in that local and regional authorities can present an alternative solution to the economic

crisis that emphasizes the principle of subsidiarity, multilevel governance, and more local

input in terms of policymaking. In all, the state comes out poorly in dealing with what is

after all a global crisis; the EU should have the tools to do a better job but is still weak

because it lacks the powers of a federal government and a federal reserve bank. The

regions, especially those with legislative powers, are in a strong position where they can

highlight the weaknesses of a centralized state while promoting the benefits and potential

of regional solutions within a global context. It would seem, therefore, that opportunities

are increasing for regional actors to play a stronger role in not only the global economy

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[85] See Eurostat http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Unemployment_rates,_seasonally_adjusted,_October_2014.png
Greece has the highest unemployment rate at 25.9%; the EU average is 10%.

but in reshaping how we think about global politics.

The minority nationalist parties in Spain are examples of how substate nationalists in Europe have adapted their political goals to accommodate the processes of integration. The Europeanization of regional and minority nationalist parties has influenced the way these parties pursue their interests. The rhetoric of demands is couched in the democratic and human rights discourse of the EU and the demands themselves are within the context of European integration. The ideals of regionalists and minority nationalists have become intricately linked with European integration (Lynch, 1996). Does European integration cause more or less conflict between central governments and the periphery? Furthermore, has the fundamental goal of nationalism, i.e., statehood for the national group been superseded by an alternative concept of sovereignty?

For example, Tanja Börzel (2001) has argued that Europeanization has encouraged a culture of competitive regionalism where regions pursued a strategy of confrontation against the state. This, she argues, hindered rather than helped a redressing of the territorial balance of power; now regions, including those in Spain, have reconsidered their initial strategy and opted for a more cooperative approach with the result of regional participation in central-state policy-making which "constitutes a major change in the territorial institutions of Spain" (p. 91). The underlying factor here, however, is change in favor of the regions. This seems to be achieved through a combination of circumvention of and cooperation with the central state; the context for such maneuvering is the European Union.

Other scholars have argued that European integration has dramatically changed ideas of sovereignty and the nation-state to the extent that pursuing statehood is no longer

attractive or feasible; therefore, minority nationalists in Europe although actively participating in European institutions and politics will nevertheless relinquish their pursuit of full independent statehood as this will be no longer necessary or desirable in the new European environment.[86] This argument, however, is not strongly supported by facts. The September 2014 Scottish referendum that was pushed for by the SNP was not about shared sovereignty or some other formulation, but full statehood for Scotland. Although unsuccessful, the SNP were not unjustified or out of touch for holding the referendum as a large minority voted yes (45%).[87] Although the Catalonian referendum 2 months later was not official it was still significant in that close to 2 million citizens (almost half the potential electorate) voiced their approval for independent statehood, as the ballot clearly indicated, this was a yes or no vote on the question of whether or not Catalonia should become an *independent state*.

The Europeanization of minority nationalist parties does not necessarily equate to the abandonment of independence. The PNV, while articulating the sometimes amorphous idea of a Europe of the Regions or of the Peoples, retains the aspiration of Basque statehood. On the other hand, the ERC is more explicit in seeing Europe as a framework in which to pursue full independence. Minority nationalist are keen to support alternatives to the existing order and status quo as they are typically unsatisfied with the current political setup in their host states. European integration works for them because it does not diminish or threaten their identity, rather it enhances it and it allows them to imagine future political arrangements that are more decentralized with less focus on member-states and more emphasis on a community of regions and nations. Yet, the

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[86] See, for example, Lynch (1996), Keating (2001a), and Hamilton (2004).
[87] See http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-29270441

appeal of the traditional form of national statehood is still strong. This seems to be evident in the nation-building and paradiplomatic activities of minority nationalists as well as their desire to more fully participate in policymaking. The Basque and Catalan delegates I interviewed, for example, are relatively happy to work with the Committee of the Regions, but would much rather have a seat on the Council. This speaks to the persistence of the prestige and power of statehood as the Council is the primary decision-maker in Europe and is made up of member-state ministers.

This chapter has tried to demonstrate on the one hand the limitations for minority nationalists within their host state and in contrast the opportunities provided by European integration. However, the extent and potential of these opportunities need to be properly judged and not overstated. For minority nationalists in Spain the EU was in the first place a facilitator and overseer of Spain's difficult but ultimately peaceful democratic transition. This was an essential first step for Spain's minority nations. With Spain now a modern progressive democracy the expectation would be that minority nationalist demands or any other grievances arising from any portion of Spain's population will be dealt with in a transparent, just, and democratic manner. The attitude of the EU, after all, is that issues of minority nationalism are an internal affair of the state. That being said, minority nationalist parties in Spain have argued that the central government is not engaging with them in a fair and democratic manner and so have turned their attention to Europe as a useful reference point or external support system. Yet, with the EU still primarily run by the member-states limitations are also apparent in terms of just how far appeals to Brussels will be effective. Minority nationalist parties have had to come to terms with disappoints at the European level as well as the national level. Nevertheless,

the belief remains that the possibilities for change are higher and more dynamic at the supranational level. This conviction has been proven correct, at least partially, by recent treaties and increased competencies for regional actors, most notably the Committee of the Regions as well as the trend towards multilevel governance and more democratic participation and responsiveness, much of which is in response to the economic crisis.

The effects of integration on minority nationalist parties and minority nationalism in general are difficult to quantify; however, the Spanish regional parties are examples of how minority nationalists have incorporated Europe into their ideology and strategic goals. Furthermore, opportunities for paradiplomacy and other nation-building activities exist in Brussels with regions like Galicia, the Basque Country, and Catalonia operating virtual foreign embassies. It is hard to think of another scenario in which these regions could play such a role on the international scene. It is apparent, therefore, that European integration shapes minority nationalism and will continue to do so as the EU project evolves. At the same time it is also true to say that in many ways the EU itself is being shaped by regional actors.

In the next chapter I wish to explore the idea of how European integration is affecting minority nationalism in a broader context by analyzing the case of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey. As an applicant to the EU, Turkey has had a long history of contact with European institutions and therefore Kurdish nationalists would also have some exposure to the integration process. The comparison with the Spanish case will show similarities and differences and allow for some general conclusions about the connection between European integration and minority nationalism.

CHAPTER 4

TURKEY

<u>4.1 Turkey and the European Union</u>

Like Spain, Turkey has experienced a long and arduous accession process; unlike

Spain, Turkey has yet to join the EU and there are now serious doubts as to whether this

will ever actually happen. Turkey officially became a candidate for EU membership in

1999 (Brussels having come under considerable pressure from the US to finally open its

doors to Turkey) and in 2005 formal accession talks began; however, a decade later and it

seems as though Turkey is as far as ever from joining. For Europe, Turkey represents one

of the most difficult and debated issues related to its integration and enlargement project.

The reasons for this are manifold and complex but can be summarized under the

following headings: economic disparities, political institutions, human rights, security,

geopolitical location, identity, and religion.[88] Or to put it even more succinctly if not a

little crudely, many Europeans believe Turkey is too big, too poor, and too Muslim to be

a successful member. Further, the controversy is not limited to the European side; EU

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[88] Some of these issues are less relevant today while others have become more salient. For example, economic disparity was certainly an issue in the 1970s and 1980s, whereas today Turkey has a vibrant and growing economy and, in fact, economically is ahead of member-states like Bulgaria and Romania. Likewise, since the end of the Cold War and the Soviet threat, Turkey's geopolitical position is less crucial for Europe, although with the recent unrest in the Middle East, including the rise of the Islamic State, Turkey's position has now gained new significance. What appears to be the most important issue for many Europeans today is identity and religion, especially in countries with a large Muslim minority, e.g., France, Germany, the UK, and the Netherlands.

membership has been a foreign policy goal for the Turkish government for decades and was a central tenet of Atatürk's secularization program, the result being that domestic politics in Turkey have been greatly impacted by the prospect of membership.

For Spain, accession to the EU was part of the transition to democracy and signaled the country's reintegration into the European family. For Turkey, accession has been about modernization and secularization and adoption into the European family. A major stumbling block has been the question of democracy. The military and bureaucratic elite that have ruled Turkey for most of its modernizing period have been criticized for their failure to democratize and their poor standard of human rights. In the early 1970s EC-Turkey relations came to crisis point over the temporary military takeover of the government and later the refusal of Ankara to withdraw troops from Cyprus following the 1974 Athens-backed coup on the island. The Turks had their own military coup in 1980 and the EC suspended relations (Yeşilada, 2013). It was during this period that Turkey's National Security Council (MGK) gained prominence in the Turkish political system and implemented a state of emergency to protect what they saw as the indivisibility of the Turkish state in light of the growing threat from extremist Kurdish nationalists, the PKK. The MGK was also active in monitoring and disrupting the activities of religious associations that might undermine Turkey's secular constitution. According to Gulay Icoz (2013) the MGK's decision to keep the state of emergency for 14 years hindered Turkey's chances of membership. Icoz argues that it was not until there was institutional change and the curtailment of the MGK's powers that the accession negotiations could begin.

Turkey had already missed an opportunity to secure a road to membership in 1975 when Greece made its application. Turkey and Greece had both joined NATO in 1952 and become associate members of the EC in the 1960s so it seemed appropriate to many that the two should also apply for full EC membership together. This thinking was based on a Cold War geopolitical strategy where Greece and Turkey acted as the south-eastern flank of the NATO defense against the Soviet Union (Yeşilada, 2013). However, Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit passed up the opportunity. Thus, Greece joined the EC in 1981 and subsequently proved to be an obstacle to later Turkish applications because of ongoing disputes over Cyprus and other territorial issues in the Aegean.

Despite Greek objections the EC extended a customs union agreement with Turkey in 1995; Athens and Ankara had apparently made an arrangement whereby Greece would allow the customs union if Turkey would not block any future Cypriot application to the EC (Yeşilada, 2013). The customs union was a positive step for Turkey but full membership continued to seem elusive in the 1990s until the intervention of the US under the Clinton administration and a rapprochement with Greece. These two factors were instrumental in the Council's decision to award Turkey the status of candidate country in 1999, which led to formal accession negotiations opening in 2005.[89]

It is worth noting that Croatia began accession talks the same year as Turkey and became the newest member-state in July 2013. Turkey, on the other hand, has continued to face obstacles and opposition to its membership. Much of this stems more specifically from the Commission's objections to Turkey refusing to extend its customs union to Cyprus. In 2006 the EU froze the opening of 8 of the 35 negotiation chapters over

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[89] See Delegation of the European Union to Turkey http://avrupa.info.tr/en/eu-and-turkey/history.html

Turkey's refusal to open its ports and airports to traffic from Cyprus and in 2012 when

Cyprus took on the Presidency of the Council, Turkey responded by suspending

accession talks (Cengiz & Hoffmann, 2013b). Since 2006 the Commission's annual

reports on Turkey's accession progress have been less than positive which contrasts with

the reports from the beginning of candidacy in 1999 to the beginning of negotiations in

2005. The latest Commission report makes the following remarks regarding relations

between the EU and Turkey:

> The Commission expressed serious concerns about developments in the area of
> the rule of law and fundamental rights. It encouraged Turkey to have deeper
> dialogue with the Commission while preparing new initiatives and legislation and
> regarding the implementation of existing laws and policies. This was supported by
> a series of peer assessments aiming at renewed cooperation on Chapter 23 –
> Judiciary and fundamental rights. (European Commission, *Turkey 2014 Progress
> Report*)[90]

Overall, when evaluating Turkey and the EU it is important to consider certain

key issues, some historical, others more recent. The first obvious issue is Cyprus. After

independence in 1960 Cyprus' Greek and Turkish communities gradually divided with

the minority Turks in the north seceding and forming a de facto state: the Turkish

Republic of Northern Cyprus. However, the international community only recognizes the

Greek-led Republic of Cyprus. Ankara, on the other hand, continues to support Turkish

Cypriot autonomy. Turkey came into direct conflict with the EU on this aspect of its

foreign policy when the Republic of Cyprus applied for membership in 1990. The

Turkish position was that there were two nation-states occupying the island of Cyprus

and Turkey's EU membership should not be associated with a settlement of the Cyprus

problem (Kyris, 2013). However, when the AKP (Justice and Development Party) came

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[90] European Commission *Turkey 2014 Commission Report*
http://avrupa.info.tr/fileadmin/Content/Files/File/Docs/20141008-turkey-progress-report_en.pdf

to power in Turkey in 2002 this attitude changed and accession became a priority. The Turkish government therefore agreed to reconsider the Cyprus question.

In 2004 there was a major effort to settle the Cyprus issue through UN intervention. The Annan Plan, drafted by Secretary General Kofi Annan, proposed a settlement by means of reunification and integration into the EU to be decided by referendum. The Turkish Cypriots accepted the plan, whereas it was rejected by the Greek Cypriots as they perceived it favored the Turks. As a result, the Greek Cypriots lost a lot of international credibility and in contrast the Turkish community received much sympathy for their efforts to reunify and to pursue European integration (Kyris, 2013). Furthermore, the actions of the Greek Cypriots only served to stiffen the Turkish position on Cyprus and allowed them to accuse the Greek Cypriots of being inflexible. Turkey also blames the EU for failing to resolve the conflict and argues that a divided Cyprus should not have been accepted as a member-state.

Cyprus constitutes one of the major obstacles to Turkey's EU accession as the Cypriot government would veto Turkey's membership since Ankara does not recognize the Republic of Cyprus. At the same time Turkey points the finger at the Greek Cypriots for rejecting the Annan Plan and refusing to accept any power-sharing agreement with the Turkish Cypriot community. Recent opinion polls suggest that the majority of all Cypriots would support a bicommunal federation as a solution to the crisis (Sözen, 2012). If this could be achieved it would certainly open the way for Turkey to move on from the Cyprus issue and enhance its chances of membership.

A second key issue in the Turkey-EU debate is the rise of the AKP. As already mentioned the AKP came to power in 2002 and prioritized EU accession and was even

willing to accept negotiations on Cyprus as part of the conditionality package for membership. Soli Özel (2008) describes the AKP as pro-EU and a party that whole-heartedly is pursuing membership. In fact, for many the election of a popular Islamist-based political party symbolizes a democratic turn for Turkey and the best example of a Muslim democracy (Nasr, 2005). In his analysis of the AKP, Hakan Yavuz (2009) contends that the party has adapted a moderate position in politics and is not the radical fundamentalist movement many feared, neither has it dismantled Turkey's secular institutions in any dramatic form; he argues that the AKP is a conservative and democratic voice in Turkey, not because it has overcome its radical roots, but because its leaders are pragmatic: they have had to convince secularists, especially the military, that they are not bent on creating an Islamic state. Yavuz claims that the political process, including the exigencies of negotiating for power amongst competing players in a democratic rule-based system has moderated the AKP. Yavuz also claims that although international factors such as the EU have played a role in transforming Turkish politics, most of the change has occurred as a result of domestic influences: civil society, the new business class, and intellectuals, i.e., the new Muslim bourgeoisie.

However, it is difficult to overstate the EU's role in Turkish domestic politics; for certain, the AKP has greatly benefited from the democratic and institutional reforms associated with membership conditionality. Since formal negotiations began in 2005 most legislation adopted by Ankara has strengthened the AKP and protected it against the military-backed establishment. Important legislation includes measures to ensure the "civilianization of politics" and "fundamental political freedoms," which have served to reduce the influence of the National Security Council and the military in politics as well

as strengthen the AKP vis-à-vis the Constitutional Court (Saatçioğlu & Elbasani, 2013, p. 148). It is not surprising therefore that when the AKP finally came to power the party was keen to continue pursuing EU stipulated reforms and to closely align itself with EU democratic standards. This was also seen as prudent in terms of reassuring the secularists of the AKP's true democratic and non-Islamist intentions.

While it was certainly true that the AKP was supportive of accession and compliant with EU conditionality when the party first came to power, matters have changed significantly in the past 12 years as the party has held on to power and consolidated its position. Since 2002 the AKP has only gained in popularity (see *Table 4* on the next page) and since the 2007 elections there has been a notable shift in attitude and policies. For example, the party has become more selective in terms of implementing reforms; it has ignored certain EU demands that would tend to check its own executive power as well as other measures that would improve political accountability and fight corruption (Hale & Özbudun, 2010). Overall, there has been a marked reversal of democratic reform and political freedoms, especially freedom of expression and the press. In 2014 *Freedom House* ranked Turkey as "Partly Free" and of all the EU candidate states Turkey scores lowest in terms of press freedom.[91]

The argument that the AKP is a democratic and moderate Islamic-based party is becoming less credible as the party grows in power. Under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who was prime minister from 2003 to 2014 and is Turkey's current president, the country has witnessed greatly improved health care, infrastructure, and

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[91] See *Freedom House* https://freedomhouse.org/country/turkey#.VKWIJSvF9rU

Table 4: AKP general election results

Year	% of the vote	Seats
2002	34.3	363
2007	46.6	341
2011	49.8	327

Data Source: http://electionresources.org/tr/assembly.php?election=2002

income levels, as well as better overall governance. However, many see Erdoğan and the AKP as increasingly abusing power and interfering in people's lives.[92] Some critics accuse Erdoğan of polarizing Turkey and pushing a religious agenda.[93] The efforts to lift the headscarf ban, to introduce restrictive regulations concerning alcohol consumption and sales, to introduce more religious education, attempts at the grass-root level to pressure people to attend mosque and fast during Ramadan, etc. all point to increased Islamist influence over public policies (Saatçioğlu & Elbasani, 2013).

As far as European integration is concerned two phases are evident since the AKP came to power; the first is one of enthusiasm and compliance (2002 – 2007) and the second is of the downgrading of EU membership to a lower priority and selective compliance and sometimes reversal of reforms (2007 – present). The first period corresponds to the AKP's need to consolidate power and for secular/democratic credibility. The second period reflects the party's growing confidence and turn toward more religious-based policies. With the AKP in power in Turkey for the foreseeable

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[92] See *The New York Times* http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/19/opinion/friedman-postcard-from-turkey.html?_r=0
[93] See *BBC News* http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-13746679

future progress on accession does not look promising, this despite the rhetoric that might

indicate the contrary; the 2014 Commission Report contains the following statement:

> Turkey continued to express its commitment to EU accession. The then Prime Minister and current President Erdoğan declared 2014 to be the "Year of the European Union." In January he visited Brussels and met with the Presidents of the European Council, the European Commission, and the European Parliament. In September, Turkey adopted a "European Union Strategy" intended to re-invigorate its accession process. (European Commission, *2014 Turkey Progress Report*)

The true extent of Erdoğan's commitment to Europe is only part of the story when

it comes to current Turkey-EU relations; one must also keep in mind Europe's position,

especially since the crisis, which has seen a de facto moratorium on enlargement.

Furthermore, the signals the EU sends Ankara are not always encouraging, particularly

when membership negotiations are described as "open-ended" or when the idea of a

"privileged partnership" is promoted instead of full-membership. This begs the question

as to what really is at the heart of the impasse between Turkey and EU membership;

many would argue that it comes down to issues of identity.

Questions and attitudes related to identity are key issues in Turkey-EU relations

and have gained prominence recently. Public opinion polls in both Turkey and the EU are

quite revealing. From the European side, along with Cyprus for reasons discussed above,

negative attitudes toward Turkish membership tend to be stronger in Germany, Austria,

and the Netherlands, mostly because of fears of increased migration.[94] Negative

sentiments are not confined to the ordinary public; both Nicolas Sarkozy and François

Hollande have been firm opponents of Turkish membership and have clearly expressed

their desire for a privileged partnership as has Angela Merkel. Even high-ranking EU

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[94] McLaren (2007) argues that migration from Turkey to some of the EU member-states has combined with feelings of group protectiveness to produce widespread animosity towards Turkey's potential membership.

officials have voiced less than complimentary remarks about Turkey; according to

Herman Van Rompuy, former president of the European Council,[95] "Turkey is not…and

will never be part of Europe…The universal values which are in force in Europe, and

which are fundamental values of Christianity, will lose vigor with the entry of a large

Islamic country" (Kyris, 2013, p. 20). The focus on cultural and religious differences

tends to overlook the fact that Turkey is already a part of Europe as an associate member

of the EU and a member of the Council of Europe, as well as numerous other EU

associations; furthermore, Turks can point to a certain level of hypocrisy on the part of

the Europeans who view Turkey as alien to fundamental European values yet are

accepting of East Europeans whose societal values, according to indicators on the World

Values Survey,[96] are not that much different to Turkey's (Yeşilada, 2013).

From the Turkish perspective it is not surprising, therefore, to discover mistrust

and a growing disillusionment regarding EU membership. Much of the emphasis on

Turkey-EU relations is on how an Islamic country of some 81 million would impact

European culture and identity; but what of Europe's impact on Turkey and its Muslim

identity? Çiğdem Kentmen (2008) examined the extent that attachment to Islam,

utilitarian considerations and identity explain individual support for Turkish membership

amongst Turks. She found that attitudes toward the EU do not vary with one's devotion

to Islam and therefore the implication is that Islamic values are not incompatible with

being part of the EU; additionally, when it comes to joining the EU, Turks evaluate

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[95] Van Rompuy was president of the European Council from December 2009 to November 2014. These comments were made before his election to the Presidency.

[96] Yeşilada's comparison of Turkish and East European societal values is based on the Inglehart and Welzel analysis of World Values Survey data where there are two major dimensions of cross-cultural variation in the world: traditional values versus secular-rational values and survival values versus self-expression values. See http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp

accession on the basis of its influence on national identity and contributions to the

national economy. It seems, therefore, that issues of culture and religion are salient on the

European side of the debate, whereas national identity and the economy are more

important considerations for Turks.

Eurobarometer surveys suggest that overall public opinion is divided on the topic

of future enlargement[97] (see *Figure 3* on the next page). The 2006 surveys that occurred 2

years after Europe's biggest ever enlargement (eight central and eastern European

countries) and a year before Bulgaria and Romania were due to join captures public

opinion at an important juncture. A revealing aspect of this particular survey was QA 33,

which asked "For each of the following countries, would you be in favor or against it

becoming part of the European Union in the future?" Switzerland and Norway topped the

poll, each scoring 78% approval, whereas Turkey scored the lowest with only 28% in

favor. The same survey shows that 50% of Turks are in favor of enlargement.

Two years later Eurobarometer 70 shows a slight increase in those opposed to

enlargement (44%) with an almost identical number in favor (43%) and with Turkey

dropping to 45% in favor. The EU is split over enlargement with indications of a trend

against it; most likely this trend will continue unless opinion changes if and when Europe

can successfully emerge from the crisis. Central and east European countries continue to

be by far the most enthusiastic about enlargement while the older founding states are the

least enthusiastic.[98] In line with these indicators, Sara Hobolt (2014) comments on how

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[97] The topic of enlargement seems to have lost prominence in the survey since 2009. It is probably no
coincidence that this also coincides with the beginning of the economic crisis. Survey questions since 2009
tend to focus on reactions and attitudes to the crisis and opinion on the Europe 2020 initiative. The general
feeling currently in Europe and what I could discern anecdotally during my visit to Brussels, is that further
enlargement has been placed low on the list of priorities, at least temporarily.

[98] For example, 70% of those surveyed in Slovenia and 69% in Poland are in favor of enlargement, whereas
only about 25% of Germans and Austrians are in favor. See Eurobarometer 70, p. 41.
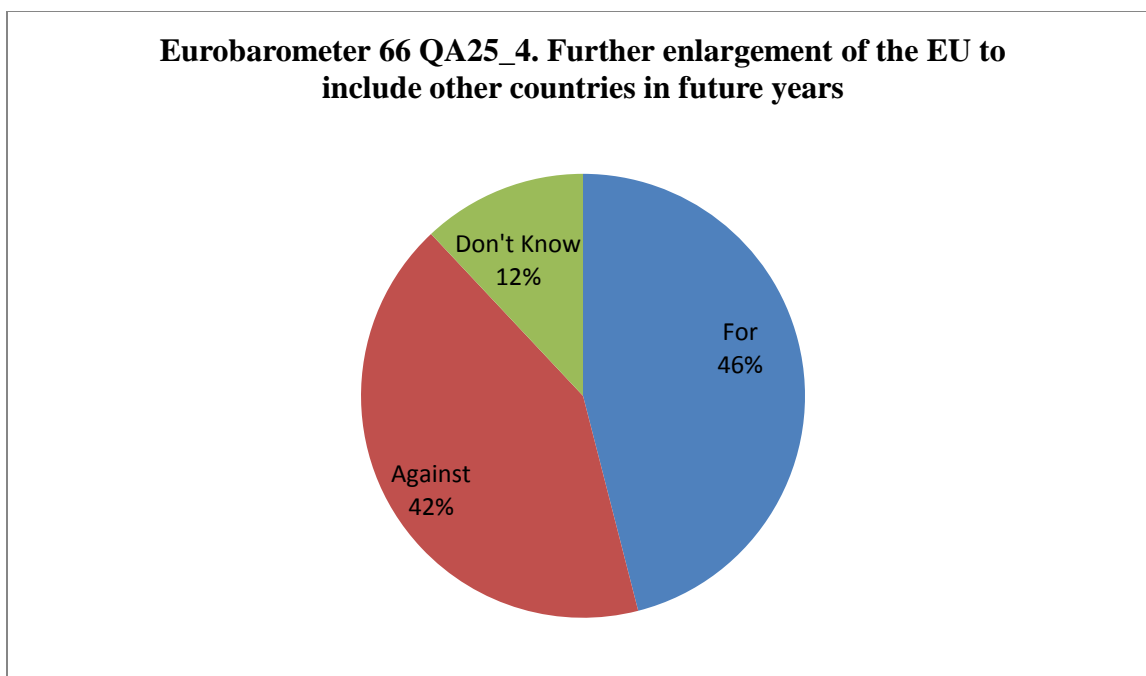
Eurobarometer 66 QA25_4. Further enlargement of the EU to include other countries in future years

Figure 3: European attitudes on further enlargement of the EU

the Eurozone crisis highlights the risks associated with further integration and in her study she finds that the "winners" of integration are high-skilled individuals in the core Eurozone countries and this group supports deeper integration but are opposed to further enlargement because they figure it will be too costly.

As far as Turkey is concerned, enthusiasm for joining the EU has eroded significantly since at least 2007. Turkish accession has proven to be even more protracted than the Spanish case; overall Spaniards' enthusiasm never really faltered because Europe was seen as both restoring democracy and saving the economy. Furthermore, although lengthy and involving considerable opposition from some member-states the accession process was ultimately successful for Spain. Turkey, on the other hand, seems to be stuck at a permanent impasse. Turkey's economy does not compare to the catastrophic experience of Spain after 40 years of dictatorship. In fact, Turkey is seen as

an emerging market that has continued to grow even through the global downturn; furthermore, it already enjoys a customs union with the EU. Nevertheless, growth has lost momentum in 2014 largely due to the sluggish recovery in Europe and the severe conflicts in the Middle East but also because of a large current account deficit and high inflation.[99] Membership would likely increase the flow of investments from the EU into Turkey but there would be formidable challenges in terms of economic harmonization (Yeşilada, 2013). In a word, the Turks do not have the same urgency as the Spanish did regarding economic recovery or political stabilization; at the same time, there are even more serious issues related to Turkish accession than there ever were for Spain.

The main reason for Turkey's growing Euroscepticism has been the long-drawn-out and disappointing accession process. The accession of less well-developed countries like Bulgaria and Romania in 2007 and Croatia in 2013 and talk of offering Turkey something less than full membership has only added insult to injury. As a result, support for EU membership has dropped from 62% in 2004 to 43% in 2013.[100] Seçkin Gülmez (2013) argues that Euroscepticism in Turkey is best explained by "general perceptions that the application of EU conditionality has been ambivalent, if not discriminatory" (p. 102). It is difficult to predict the future of Turkey-EU relations as the whole process has been something of a roller-coaster. The most recent figures actually show something of a reversal in Euroscepticism with 50% of Turkish respondents now believing their country would benefit from membership.[101] With Erdoğan's talk of 2014 as the "Year of the European Union" and Turkey's more recent economic problems there might be a change

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[99] See OECD Economic Outlook, November 2014 http://www.oecd.org/economy/turkey-economic-forecast-summary.htm

[100] See Eurobarometer 62 and 80, *Public Opinion in the European Union.*

[101] See Eurobarometer 81, *Public Opinion in the European Union*

of course from the Turkish perspective. As for the EU, it must first overcome the crisis, but also provide new open-minded leadership that would objectively consider Turkey's membership and set aside the politics of identity.

4.2 Minority Nationalism in Turkey

The Spanish case demonstrated how European integration helped solve many of the country's serious postauthoritarian problems but it did not necessarily help resolve the issue of minority nationalism, rather it added a new dynamic to the already tense and complex situation. Turkey's integration experience has also brought about many important domestic changes because of membership conditionality. Some of the most important conditions for membership relate to human rights and political freedoms. Progress in these areas actually opened the door for the AKP to contest elections and ultimately get into government. To what extent do these improvements, largely initiated by the accession and integration process, affect relations with Turkey's minorities, most importantly the Kurdish population? As discussed in the case of Spain, minority nationalists have been able to take advantage of representation and participation opportunities by means of Europe's institutions, especially the Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament and have utilized Europe's system of multilevel governance as well as its human rights framework to support their goals. Has this at all been possible for Kurdish nationalists within the setting of a candidate country like Turkey?

Before attempting to answer this question it is important to come to terms with some of the distinctive characteristics of the Turkish state and society and how the Kurds fit into this story. To in any way begin to understand modern Turkey it will be necessary

to touch briefly on the idea of Kemalism. The term derives from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founding father of the Turkish Republic. The six guiding principles of Kemalism are republicanism, statism, populism, laicism, nationalism, and reformism. Kemalism is therefore somewhat akin to Jacobinism and was described by Atatürk himself as "a method of utilizing political despotism in order to break down the social despotism prevalent among the traditionally minded Turkish-Muslim population."[102] Kemalist secularization saw the abolition of the caliphate and the removal of Islam as the official state religion. Ostensibly the laicism of the Turkish state was meant to separate the worldly and the divine and to protect religion from political exploitation. However, the failure to replace religious social bonds with a generally accepted civic ideology led to a bitter cultural cleavage between a pseudo-Westernized elite and the masses, or what Hakan Yavuz (2000) calls "white" and "black" Turks. In many ways Kemalist laicism became a tool to control Islam. Kemalism can therefore be seen as an example of paternalistic and authoritarian modernization from above (Houston, 2008). As far as the Kurds are concerned Kemalism proved discriminatory against ethnic minorities in general and violently denied Kurdish identity in particular (Vali, 1998).

This is the historical context of the Kurds of the Turkish Republic and provides an important piece of background knowledge in order to better situate Kurdish nationalism in the Turkish and European setting of the 21st century.[103] Estimates vary, but today there are approximately 30 million[104] Kurds living in the area around the borders of Turkey,

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[102] See *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*
http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0440
[103] Prominent studies of the Kurds in the English language include Bruinessen (1992), McDowall (2004), Natali (2005), and Romano (2006).
[104] There are no precise figures for the Kurdish population; Kurds tend to exaggerate their numbers while their home states tend to underestimate them for political reasons. In addition, there is debate as to whether groups such as Bakhtiyaris and Lurs are Kurds or not. See Gunter (2008).

Syria, Iran, and Iraq; they are considered the largest ethnic groups without a homeland (Lawrence, 2008). The majority of Kurds live in Turkey and make up about 18% of the country's population.[105] There is also a sizeable diaspora in Germany. The question of Kurdish nationalism and possible statehood has become more salient since the US led invasion of Iraq and the deterioration of the Iraqi state (another unintended outcome!). The creation of the Kurdistan Regional Government and the autonomous region of Kurdistan in Iraq may well be the first step to an independent Kurdistan. Furthermore, the recent rise of the so-called Islamic State has rallied the Kurds in defense of their towns and villages and they have so far proven to be one of the most effective forces in deterring the Islamists. This may prove to be a key moment in Kurdish history with the possibility of forging a stronger national bond and sense of identity through the conflict with the Islamic State and also receiving international and especially American support as a potential moderate Sunni democracy in the heart of the Middle East.[106]

Naturally these developments are being keenly observed in Ankara. For Turkey the Kurdish question has been a major domestic issue and as mentioned the heavy-handed response by the National Security Council (MGK) to Kurdish nationalism has been a serious obstacle to Turkey's EU membership bid. When the modern Republic of Turkey was internationally recognized by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 no provisions were made to address the large Kurdish minority that found itself in the new state. In fact, under the treaty only non-Muslims such as Armenians, Greeks, and Jews were officially

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[105] See *The World Factbook* https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html
[106] Historically there have been many divisions between the Kurds, exacerbated by the fact that they are separated into four different countries. The war against the Islamic State has unified Kurds against a common enemy and increased a feeling of solidarity among the different Kurdish population. Many believe this conflict will result in the consolidation of Kurdish national identity. See *Newsweek* http://www.newsweek.com/kurds-battle-kobane-unites-people-divided-borders-281242

designated minorities. Atatürk's Kemalist secularizing and homogenizing state-building

was based on the state's founding philosophy of Turkish nationalism, which heavily

influenced the legislative and judicial bodies and therefore failed to accommodate ethnic

diversity in the country (Bayir, 2012). This environment unsurprisingly alienated many

Kurds and resulted in a series of revolts during the 1920s and 1930s that were put down

by the Turkish government forces (Gunter, 2008). In the Turkish state Kurdish identity

including history and language was suppressed as well as political rights; in fact, as far as

the Turkish government was concerned Kurdish ethnicity did not exist. In the 1960s a

moderate Kurdish nationalism emerged that sought to address the issue through appeals

to democratic processes; however, these efforts were blocked (Gunes, 2012). Such

conditions led to extremism and the reappearance of violence in the 1980s with the

formation of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) under Abdullah Öcalan and the

subsequent insurgency that ensued in the mostly Kurdish southeastern and central

regions. Decades of conflict has cost more than 45,000 lives with anywhere between 3

and 4 million people internally displaced (Gunes & Zeydanlıoğlu, 2014, p. 1).

When Öcalan was captured and imprisoned in 1999 he surprised many by calling

for a democratic solution to the Kurdish problem and the ending of the insurgency. The

PKK's ceasefire lasted till 2004 and since then there has been low level conflict although

the present battles with the Islamic State around Turkey's border, especially the Kobane

region, has complicated the situation.[107] The main reason behind the continued discontent

of Kurds in Turkey is the unsatisfactory response by Ankara to their demands for cultural

and political freedoms. It was anticipated that the AKP would be more accommodating to

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[107] As of January 7, 2015 PKK, Iraqi peshmerga and YPG (Kurdish militia) forces supported by US and
Allied Arab airstrikes managed to repel the Islamic State advances in Kobane.

the Kurdish question; however, since coming to power the AKP has granted only limited

cultural and linguistic rights to Kurds. That being said, Erdoğan was the first Turkish

leader to at least admit there was a Kurdish problem and that Turkey had made "grave

mistakes," and he also called for a democratic solution (Gunter, 2008, p. 9). The context

for the AKP's approach to the Kurds is in the first place they wish to distance themselves

from the old oppressive military regime that denied their own political rights as well as

those of minority nationalists. Secondly, at least in the 2002 – 2007 period, the party was

very much focused on meeting EU demands regarding political and human rights.

Finally, in light of the changing geopolitical circumstances it is in the interest of the AKP

to resolve the Kurdish conflict and develop peaceful relations with the Kurds of Iraq and

Syria. A stable and peaceful Turkey is essential for stability in the region and Turkey is

set to gain from its connections with the oil rich Kurdistan region. This corresponds to the

AKP's overarching foreign policy goal of neoliberal pro-Islamic politics in the Middle

East (Çiçek, 2014).

  In 2009 the AKP government launched a new more comprehensive plan called

the "Kurdish Initiative," or sometimes referred to as the "Kurdish Opening" in a further

effort to address Kurdish grievances; however, this fell short of a definitive and

acceptable solution (Saraçoğlu, 2010). Casier et al. (2013) argue that the Kurdish

Initiative or Opening was, in fact, a calculated move by the AKP to restore legitimacy in

the Kurdish region and win back the lost electoral support it had lost to the Kurdish

nationalists DTP (Democratic Society Party) in local elections in March 2009. The

authors go on to explain how the Kurdish Opening was so fashioned on the AKP's own

terms that in Kurdish circles it became known as the "Kurd-less Opening" and that "Not

only did the Kurdish Opening fizzle out without addressing the real issues of cultural

identity and political control, but the AKP used its coercive power and extending

influence to try to contain and roll back the Kurdish movement" (p. 3). Similarly, Cengiz

and Hoffmann (2013a) argue that the Kurdish Opening had nothing to do with EU

conditionality but rather it was a "quick fix" to reverse the AKP's drop in popularity in

the south-east. It ultimately backfired (p. 424).

The failure of the Kurdish Opening and the AKP's efforts to appeal to Kurds was

again evident during Turkey's most recent general election in 2011. The pro-Kurdish

BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) and its allies won an unprecedented 36 seats.

However, the BDP MPs ended up not taking their seats because five of their elected

colleagues had been jailed and another was denied his seat because of alleged terrorism

offenses (Gunter, 2013). For his part, Prime Minister Erdoğan refused to intervene on

behalf of the BDP and the MPs remained in prison. Erdoğan apparently reneged on his

promise to draft a new constitution that would consider Kurdish interests and establish a

framework for solving the Kurdish problem. Furthermore, Erdoğan claimed that the

Kurdish question had been solved and that there only remained a PKK problem. This

perception is more in line with Kemalist thinking, an ideology that never conceived the

Kurdish question as an actual ethnopolitical problem but rather a matter of tribal or

regional backwardness associated with the "Mountain Turks"[108] or perhaps a foreign

conspiracy (Hirschler, 2001).

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[108] Part of the denial of Kurdish culture and language was banning geographical place names in Kurdish and calling Kurds "Mountain Turks." See *Newsweek* http://www.newsweek.com/kurds-battle-kobane-unites-people-divided-borders-281242

Whether the Turkish government is represented by the secularists or the AKP it seems that there remains an intrinsic incapacity to accept the idea of a plurinational or multi-ethnic state. Again, we see similarities here with Spain in that the Spanish Constitution by adopting the Statute of Autonomy recognizes 17 autonomous communities and grants them certain devolved powers; however, part of the rationale for such decentralization was to dilute and coopt the three otherwise distinct nations of the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia. Spanish is the only constitutionally recognized nationality in Spain despite the obvious existence of three other nations within the state. In a similar fashion, the Turkish government has refused to tolerate any notion of plural identity or nationalism and it seems that for the most part the AKP has adopted the Kemalist default position.

A further major obstacle for Kurds in Turkey is the government's position on the PKK. Ankara's repudiation of the party and its unwillingness to enter into negotiations is comparable to Britain's position on IRA-linked Sinn Féin in Northern Ireland. Until the British government accepted Sinn Féin as the legitimate representative of the majority of nationalists in Northern Ireland, and therefore the key negotiating partner, progress on a cessation of violence and democratic accommodation could not be made (Adams, 2007). Unless the Turkish government makes similar moves it is unlikely that a political and peaceful solution to the Kurdish question will be possible. There are some grounds for optimism as Ankara decided to reopen the Kurdish Initiative in 2013 and there have been reports of Turkish authorities meeting with prominent PKK members in Europe (Gunter, 2013).[109]

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[109] At the time of writing there have been increasing violent clashes between police and Kurdish protesters, especially in Turkey's border area with Syria and Iraq. Kurds are angry at what they claim is the Turkish

Like minority nationalist movements in Spain, the Kurdish national movement in

Turkey has had to face an oppressive authoritarian central government that fears any

threat to what it perceives as the indivisible unity of the nation and state. Spain's return to

democracy and full integration into Europe ended this system of oppression and opened

the way for minority nationalists to gain significant and real cultural and political

freedoms. Conservative governments in present-day Spain still defend the unity of the

state and seek to limit further autonomy, but the central argument of this study is that

European integration has ensured regional and minority rights and provides opportunities

for such groups to continue to pursue goals of national self-determination within a

supportive framework that promotes policies and ideas of multiculturalism. In Turkey the

Kurds have faced the Kemalist version of authoritarian oppression which has proved to

be more enduring and in many ways more severe, as well as an incomplete integration

process because of the on-going EU-Turkey debate. The AKP's increasing hegemony

since 2007 and its pivot away from Europe have not helped the Kurdish cause. However,

the more recent geopolitical and economic situation in Turkey and the region may offer a

new hope for Kurdish nationalism. Turkey strongly opposes the Assad regime in Syria

and will not want to in any way be cast in the same light as it tries to maintain Turkish

unity. Turkey also wants to be known as a stable and investor-friendly country and with

its current economic downturn Ankara will want to avoid wasting valuable resources on

internal or regional conflicts and will look to the West for investment and to Kurdistan

for economic opportunities. Kurdish nationalists in Turkey stand to gain from the

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government's failure to help Syrian Kurds fighting the Islamic State. Adding further complication to the situation is the on-going violence between the PKK and rival Islamist Kurdish group Hüda-Par. See *Zaman* http://www.todayszaman.com/national_14-year-old-boy-killed-as-police-pkk-affiliate-clash-in-southeast_369088.html

growing assertiveness of Kurdistan and its role as a Western ally and potential

independent state. At the very least the Turkish government will have to recognize the

reality of Kurdistan either as an autonomous federal region of Iraq or as a nation-state

and this will force a reassessment of the reality of the Kurds living within its own

borders. The question is with continued pressure from the EU and new pressure from

rising Kurdish nationalism in the east will the AKP react by resorting to old Kemalist

policies or will it use its majority position to bring about real change?

4.3 The Kurds and the European Union

The Copenhagen Criteria officially establish the accession requirements for EU

candidate countries. Besides economic criteria and acceptance of the Community *acquis*

the candidate country should meet political criteria based on stability of institutions

guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of

minorities.[110] Turkey's future membership therefore depends greatly on whether or not

the EU is satisfied with how Turkey treats its Kurdish minority, as former Turkish Prime

Minister Mesut Yılmaz seemed to understand when he remarked, "The road to the EU

passes through Diyarbakir"[111] (Gunter, 2008, p. 83). Kurdish nationalists have

consistently used the European integration process as a means of pressuring Ankara on

political and human rights issues and to further their cause of recognition and autonomy.

At the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) meeting in Istanbul

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[110] The Community *acquis* refers to the willingness and ability of the candidate country to "take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union." See
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/accession_criteria_copenhague_en.htm

[111] Diyarbakir is the unofficial capital of the Kurdish region in Turkey.

in 1999 the PKK sent a letter to the organization's leaders outlining Kurdish grievances.

Part of the letter contained the following statements:

> Despite the Turkish government's continuing antagonism, it is still our wish to resolve differences within the present borders of Turkey, on the basis of free and equal association, a common homeland, constitutional citizenship, and democratic government. Without a solution to the Kurdish issue, there will be no security and stability in the entire Middle East. The Kurdish question can only be resolved by implementing the Copenhagen Criteria and by providing constitutional safeguards for Kurds in modern Turkey… We urge the OSCE summit to initiate steps, and to implement appropriate measures, for the implementation [of] fundamental principles, particularly the Copenhagen Criteria, for a peaceful solution of the Kurdish issue.[112]

Kurdish nationalists were clearly trying to capitalize on the internationalization of human rights and minority rights issues. The effectiveness of appealing to EU norms and institutions was apparent when through pressure from the European Court of Human Rights, the European Presidency, and the Commission, Ankara suspended PKK leader Öcalan's death sentence; this was one clear example of the effects of conditionality on the Kurdish question.[113] After the Helsinki Council in 1999 Turkey was accepted as a candidate to the EU and the government began implementing the Copenhagen criteria. Thus, as it had for minority nationalists in Spain, European integration proved to be a key support mechanism for Kurds. In fact, after meetings with the Spanish Prime Minister there was even talk within the Turkish government of a solution to the Kurdish problem based on the "Basque model" (Barkey & Fuller, 1998). Major steps in the early 2000s included the lifting of the state of emergency in the Kurdish region, the legalization of

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[112] See *Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) Letter to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)* http://www.freedom-for-ocalan.com/english/hintergrund/dokumente/doc_011100.htm

[113] The 1999 Commission Report on Turkey ended its political criteria section by complimenting Turkey's encouraging signs of democratization but added, "…these efforts should be pursued and extended to all citizens, including those of Kurdish origin. The Commission hopes that the positive impact of these measures will not be undone by the carrying out of the death sentence passed on Mr. Abdullah Öcalan." See
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/1999/turkey_en.pdf

Kurdish education (in private institutions), and permission for Kurdish broadcasting (Ayata, 2013).[114] Renewed impetus for reform and democratization came in 2005 when formal accession talks began. However, as discussed, the limitations of these reforms and the stalling of the accession process are consequences stemming from the lack of support in Europe for Turkish membership, especially after 2009, and the economic crisis on the one hand, and of the growing confidence and power of the AKP and the authoritarian tendencies of Erdoğan since 2007 on the other hand. Experts and scholars on Turkey are split regarding the future direction of Turkey's politics with some predicting a form of illiberal secular or Islamist authoritarianism while others maintain that Turkey is squarely on the road to a liberal and pluralist democracy. More optimistically Şahin Alpay (2011) argues that,

> Turkey can be expected to continue its progress towards consolidating a liberal and pluralist democracy, even if the road ahead is not smooth. Had the EU remained united in supporting its accession, Turkey could have moved faster with reforms to meet the membership criteria. The accession process has, unfortunately, stalled. But the dynamic it helped set off…continues to push forward the democratization of Turkey. (p. 36)

Regardless of future predictions, the accession process has indeed stalled and considering the current stalemate in Turkey-EU relations, how does this affect the reform process and the Kurdish question? Cengiz and Hoffmann (2013a) argue that "With the decline in the EU's commitment to Turkey's membership, the Turkish government's approach toward the Kurdish minority, as well as other democratic reforms, began to be determined more openly by domestic cost-benefit structures" (p. 424). In other words, the

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[114] Bilgin Ayata (2013) argues that such reforms are often explained as a result of EU conditionality but attention should also be given to the role of diasporas and immigrant communities as effective political entrepreneurs in the Europeanization process. She argues that for a comprehensive understanding of Turkey's reforms the transnational activism of the Kurdish diaspora must also be taken into account. ROJ TV, a Kurdish television station based in Denmark, is a good example of how Kurdish issues and national identity were publicized in Europe and throughout the Middle East.

argument is that without a credible commitment to Turkish accession on behalf of the EU progress on democratic reform and minority rights will falter. In addition, without a credible EU commitment conditionality reforms have been applied selectively and strategically by the AKP to increase government powers at the expense of the military and other veto players, but the result may not always lead to more democracy (Çınar, 2011). Furthermore, there is the problem of a lack of norm internalization as numerous changes are demanded by the EU in a relatively short timeframe; the legal adoption of a reform does not necessarily signify its application.

EU support for Turkish membership is therefore necessary in order to bring about fundamental democratic and human rights reforms that would benefit Kurdish nationalists in Turkey. Without the realization of membership and full integration into the EU, however, this support is not a sufficient factor to establish a thorough and effective transformation of domestic majority-minority issues in Turkey.[115] In Spain, the promise of EU membership coincided with its transition to democracy; the eventual support for membership Spain received from the member-states, especially from Germany, reinforced the process of reform which has since been consolidated and internalized over decades of membership. For Turkey, while there is some support for its membership, mostly in Europe's periphery (Eastern Europe, Sweden, and Spain), there is strong opposition in Europe's heartland: the Benelux countries, France, Germany, and Austria. Without increased support for Turkish accession and the eventual realization of

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[115] Here, I agree with Kısacık (2014) who argues that the EU has encouraged improvements in conditions for Kurds in Turkey but that this alone cannot create a comprehensive shift in minority rights policy; however, the opportunity structure established by integration "keeps the process of domestic change open for the adoption of norms for the protection of minorities" (p. 206).

membership the Kurds will not fully benefit from the opportunity structure available for regional actors and minority nationalists at the EU level.

Since the Helsinki decision in 1999 the Kurds have seen some moderate improvements in terms of recognition and cultural rights. Taking into account current circumstances and challenges, can Kurdish nationalism still benefit from Turkey's association with the EU? The strongest voice for Kurdish nationalism is the PKK, but as is the case in Turkey, the EU does not officially recognize the legitimacy of the PKK and, in fact, blacklisted the organization in 2002. Just as this is an impediment to arriving at a domestic solution to the Kurdish question in Turkey, the outlawing of the PKK in Europe has meant that the EU cannot legally engage with Kurdish nationalists' most important representative. In 2008 the EU Court of Justice in Luxembourg ruled that the decision by European governments to list the PKK as a terrorist organization and freeze its assets was illegal under EU law, but the ruling has changed nothing and the PKK remains on the terrorist list.[116] European politicians and organizations such as the EU Turkey Civic Commission (EUTCC), which helps oversee Turkey's accession, have continued to call for the delisting of the PKK. Member of the Council of Europe, Ogmundur Jonasson, succinctly explained the problem: "We need negotiations in order to make peace. One does not negotiate with an officially-designated terrorist, so PKK should be delisted from the terrorist list."[117] The position of the president of the EUTCC, Kariane Westrheim, is that Turkey is not in serious talks with the PKK and she maintains that delisting the organization would neutralize Ankara's long-standing argument that it does not negotiate

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[116] See *The World Post* http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-l-phillips/pkk-terror-group-status_b_3289311.html
[117] See *Rûdaw* http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/turkey/10062014

with terrorists.[118] The EUTCC has held annual conferences since 2004 and has always tried to address the PKK and Kurdish issue. In its 11th International Conference on the EU, Turkey, the Middle East, and the Kurds, held in December 2014 in Brussels, much of the focus was on the Kurdish question and involved participation by the leader of the Kurdish-allied HDP[119] Sellahatin Demirtaş.[120]

Although the PKK cannot have official contact with the EU, other Kurdish parties have made efforts to forge links with Europe. The PKK-linked DTP (Democratic Society Party) was formed in 2005 and served as the principal authorized voice of Kurdish nationalism until it was banned by the Turkish Constitutional Court in 2009 who ruled that the party had become a "focal point of activities against the indivisible integrity of the state with its country and nation, considering its actions and also its ties with the terrorist organization" (Çiçek, 2014, p. 245). Much of the anti-DTP sentiment in Turkey was fuelled by the mainstream media; as Derya Erdem (2014) argues in her study of media representation of the DTP between 2008 and 2009, "…expressions of Kurdish political demands were represented within the discourse of Turkey's mainstream media as cases of 'violence' and 'terrorism'" (p. 48). Erdem concludes by stating how the labeling and representation of the Kurds and the DTP as a "source of threat and danger" only served to hinder "dialogue, reconciliation, peace, tolerance, and the creation of a democratic environment" (p. 62). The hostile domestic setting experienced by the DTP was contrasted with its European experience. In Europe the party affiliated with and was

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[118] Ibid.
[119] The HDP (People's Democratic Party) is a socialist party that is known for its support of minority rights including LGBT rights. The HDP joined forces with the Kurdish BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) in 2014 to contest local elections with the BDP running in the Kurdish regions and the HDP running in the rest of the country.
[120] See *Ekurd Daily* http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2014/12/syriakurd1745.htm

accepted by the Party of European Socialists as an associate member, although the EU did demand that the DTP renounce its connection with the PKK (the party refused to do so).

The DTP's declared position was a policy of democratic autonomy with the goal of further democratizing Turkey and constitutional recognition of the Kurdish people and their political and cultural rights as well as comprehensive devolution where the Kurdish region would have its own parliament (Saylan, 2011). In a European context, of the minority nationalist parties considered in this study, the DTP would be closest to the Galician BNG in ideology and support for the idea of a Europe of the Peoples where integration is seen as a means for peaceful democratic co-existence. However, in contrast to the minority nationalist parties in Spain, the DTP and its successor, the BDP, have not been able to take advantage of the opportunity structure available through EU integration to the same extent. Since Turkey is not a member-state, regional parties like the DTP or BDP have not had the same access to European institutions as their counterparts in member-states. Furthermore, the centralized nature of the Turkish state means that there are little or no institutions supporting local and regional representation.

The association with Europe still has its benefits though. The DTP saw its links with the EU as part of its strategy to gain support for its demands for real democratic change and a means to pressure Ankara into addressing the Kurdish issue appropriately (Gunes, 2012). In December 2004 a group representing Kurdish society that included individuals who would help form the DTP the following year drafted a document that clearly stated to the European Council how they felt integration would further their cause: "The European process offers both Turks and Kurds new and promising prospects, and

gives them the chance for reconciliation on the basis of a peaceful settlement of the

Kurdish question…"[121] The signatories highlighted the norms and political ideals that

Europe represents as well as the aspiration to have the same rights as other minority

regions:

> …the Kurds now pin their hopes for a better future on the process Turkey must undergo to become a member of the European Union, which they perceive as being, above all, a multicultural area of peace, democracy and pluralism. To join this family of democracies, Turkey itself must become a true democracy, with respect for its own cultural diversity and political pluralism. In particular it must guarantee its Kurdish citizens the same rights that the Basques, Catalans, Scotts, Lapps, South Tyroleans, and Walloons enjoy in the democratic countries of Europe – and which it is itself demanding for the Turkish minority in Cyprus.[122]

The election of Kurdish DTP MPs to the National Assembly in 2007 and

subsequent success in local elections has strengthened the prodemocratic Kurdish

movement and added legitimacy to Kurdish claims. Having Kurdish representation in

Europe serves to add further support and legitimacy. The shutting down of the DTP in

2009 temporarily derailed the movement. However, its successor party, the BDP,

continued the democratic campaign until it dissolved itself in June 2014 and formed the

DBP (Democratic Regions Party), and at the same time became a fraternal party to the

HDP (Peoples Democratic Party). The DBP, this latest iteration of Kurdish nationalist

parties represents the continuation of the Kurdish democratic movement. The Kurdish

nationalists continue to support European integration and the DBP maintains its observer

status with the Party of European Socialists.

It is apparent that Kurdish nationalists do not have the same levels of support or

opportunities through European integration as their counterparts in member-state regions.

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[121] See *The International Herald Tribune*
http://www.institutkurde.org/activites_culturelles/appels/what_do_the_kurds_want_in_turkey/
[122] Ibid.

Nevertheless, the HDP and DBP are still involved in Europe and maintain important links. While the period of accession between 1999 and 2007 arguably held more promise of membership, the current period is characterized by change and crisis both in Europe and the Middle East. In this environment, is there evidence that the EU still provides a measure of external support for Kurdish nationalism? As mentioned, the EUTCC is an organization tasked with monitoring Turkey's compliance to the Copenhagen Criteria and judging by its annual conferences, publications, and statements it seems to have taken up the Kurdish cause. On its homepage the EUTCC states that it

> …wishes to contribute to a democratic, peaceful and lasting solution to the Kurdish problem. It believes that this can only be achieved through a dialogue between the parties concerned, in which also the EU must play its part. This will require not only further changes in legislation, but a change in the ideology and mentality at all levels of Turkish society. From a state seeing the expression of Kurdish culture and language as a threat to the state, Turkey must become a state that recognizes differences and sees cultural diversity and freedom as positive and necessary elements of a true democracy. The Commission will therefore focus primarily on this problem.[123]

The EUTCC is a voluntary organization made up of members from Europe and Turkey mostly affiliated with human rights groups. It makes recommendations and publishes opinion on Turkey's EU accession process and acts in an advisory capacity only. However, its official designation in Brussels means that its opinions are heard. Most importantly for Kurdish nationalists, the EUTCC provides a venue for voicing their issues and a means to be recognized and legitimized.

A large number of Kurds have been internally displaced due to the effects of the insurgency but there is still a recognizable Kurdish region in Turkey where the majority of people are Kurds, i.e., Turkish Kurdistan. This territorial dimension gives the Kurds the potential to be represented in the EU in a similar way to Europe's designated regions

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[123] See EU Turkey Civic Commission http://www.eutcc.org/

and as discussed in the Spanish case, this provides further opportunities for minority

nations such as the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia to represent their interests in

Brussels and increasingly to participate in the decision-making process, not to mention

opportunities for paradiplomacy. The Committee of the Regions is made up of 353

members representing local and regional authorities from all 28 member states.[124] That is

to say, EU membership automatically brings with it a regional dimension. Turkish

membership in the EU would mean increased decentralization in Turkey and would offer

a ready-made institution for Kurdish regional representation. Over time it can be assumed

that the same processes of decentralization and devolution that has occurred in all

member states to some degree will also occur in Turkey. For now, Turkey's regions and

cities can only form associations with the Committee of the Regions; nevertheless,

channels of communication are open and the Committee is active in extending its goals,

objectives, and vision of Europe to include local and regional authorities in candidate

states and beyond.

  In fact, the official activities of the Committee of the Regions include relations

with candidate countries and the Committee has created working groups to open political

dialog with local and regional authorities in the candidate countries. The Committee also

expresses an opinion on enlargement. Its opinions generally focus on its commitment to

support and promote local and regional government. The opinion on Turkey in 2014

expressed how the Committee

> welcomes the fact that decentralization and the devolution of powers to local
> government were discussed in the context of the work on a new
> Constitution…and in relation to Kurdish and other minority rights, and underlines
> the growing consensus on the need to overcome Turkey's reservations regarding
> the Council of Europe's European Charter of Local Self-Government…calls on

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[124] See http://cor.europa.eu/en/about/Pages/members.aspx

the Turkish authorities to cooperate closely with the European Commission to…promote sustainable development in the South East of Turkey [i.e., Turkish Kurdistan][125]

The Committee of the Regions Working Group on relations with Turkey was set up in 2006 and meets twice a year with Turkish local authorities: once in Brussels and once in a Turkish city. Briefings from these meetings demonstrate the Committee's role in supporting and promoting local and regional level political and economic activity in Turkey. The Committee also voices its opinion on not only Turkey's accession progress, but also such areas as the country's constitution, recommending increased decentralization:

> For democracy to be a defining characteristic of the process of drafting a new constitution, the voice of Turkish sub-national authorities needs to be heard. Whilst the Copenhagen criteria do not directly mention the issue of decentralization in the process of EU accession, the basic principles and the functioning of the European Union confer an important role to local and regional authorities, making decentralization inevitable on the path towards the achievement of the *acquis communautaire*.[126]

The Committee of the Regions is by all accounts engaged with Turkey's substate authorities. While its impact may be limited, it is not insignificant and at the very least provides a platform for communication and serves as a means to strengthen ties between substate actors and Europe. For Kurdish nationalists who naturally wish to promote decentralization and regional authority the Committee of the Regions represents an important component in the external support mechanism of the EU.

Other venues exist for Kurds to make connections with Europe through local and regional organizations such as ARLEM (Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly), which comes under the Committee of the Regions umbrella and focuses on

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[125] See http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52013IR6834
[126] *Working Group on Relations with Turkey Briefing* (F. O'Loughlin, personal communication, Jan. 14, 2015).

"supporting the process of decentralization and regionalization in the Mediterranean region…"[127] In December 2014 the organization held its sixth plenary session in Antalya, Turkey and the event was hosted by Menderes Türel, Mayor of Antalya.[128] While such organizations and events do not address the Kurdish issue directly, they offer support for Kurdish calls for the decentralization of the Turkish state and underscore the economic benefits of local and regional authorities cooperating and participating in the global economy.

As long as Turkey is a candidate country the Kurdish issue remains a relevant topic in Brussels, although the official EU position on the Kurds has often been vague and cautious. Nevertheless, Commission Reports on Turkey's accession progress have consistently highlighted the lack of cultural and political rights for Kurds. More recent reports have begun to address the Kurdish issue more often. For example, in the 1999 Commission Report I found 10 direct references to Kurds, whereas in the 2012 Report I found 40.[129] The 2014 Report had 38 references to Kurds and/or Kurdish issues including the following statement:[130] "Regarding cultural rights, there were positive developments regarding using mother tongues and a steady and welcome normalization of the issue of Kurdish in public" (p. 12). Other positive statements included reference to freedom of expression where "debate on sensitive matters such as the Kurdish and Armenian issues

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[127] See http://cor.europa.eu/en/activities/arlem/Pages/arlem.aspx
[128] See "Arlem calls for a stronger territorial dimension in the European Neighborhood Policy" http://www.cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/arlem-calls-for-stronger-territorial-dimension-in-the-european-neighbourhood-policy.aspx?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=UK-December-2014
[129] See European Commission http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/1999/turkey_en.pdf and http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/tr_rapport_2012_en.pdf
[130] See European Commission http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20141008-turkey-progress-report_en.pdf

was open and lively" (p. 18) Criticism related to the government's treatment of Kurds centered on freedom of association and discrimination laws: "Court cases are pending regarding the closure of five associations dealing with human rights, and Kurdish issues in particular. Discriminatory practice was reported regarding the frequency, duration and scope of audits for rights-based associations" (p. 25) and it was highlighted how "…discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin… [was] not listed in the March revision of the Criminal Code. This affects especially important minorities as Roma and Kurds that are the most disadvantaged groups" (p. 26). The tone of the comments related to the Kurdish issue is still quite cautionary and tends to focus on cultural rights such as language rights, rather than the fundamental political problems affecting Kurds specifically. Nonetheless, this official EU report, published annually, is another factor in contributing to the overall awareness of the Kurdish issue and acts as a litmus test in terms of Ankara's Kurdish question.

4.4 Conclusions

Minority nationalism in Turkey is most actively represented by the PKK and the Kurdish democratic movement. While the PKK remains on the terrorist list it cannot enter into official dialogue with either Turkey or the EU. Kurdish nationalists still have an authorized voice, however, currently through the HDP/DBP who represent the continuation of the political strategy of the Kurdish national democratic movement to end violent conflict, recognize Kurds as a distinct nation, and accommodate Kurdish cultural and political rights within a democratic Turkey. The ability of Kurdish nationalists to pursue these goals is largely attributable to the consequences of Turkey's EU accession

process. This process, however, represents the most complicated, controversial, and protracted in the EU's enlargement history.

In economic terms the old argument of the EU taking on an overwhelmingly poor and backward country no longer hold, especially in light of Romanian and Bulgarian accession. Commission reports identify Turkey's economic promise and the potential advantages for both sides if and when Turkey joins the Union. On the political side, it is more of a mixed picture with not only the Cyprus issue but deep political cleavages between the AKP and the secularists, and of course the Kurdish issue. Democratic reforms have occurred but these are far from complete. Still, there it is again helpful to make a comparison with the Spanish case where Spain's democratic transition was assisted by European integration and where serious political and national divisions still exist but have for the most part been ameliorated and accommodated through democratic institutions. A similar outcome is possible for Turkey.

Political obstacles can be overcome with time and persistence, issues related to the politics of identity, of prejudice, and xenophobia are more challenging. EU public opinion surveys consistently rate Turkey as the least desirable candidate for membership; this is most evident in Europe's core states, i.e., the EU's founding members. Turkish enthusiasm for the EU has eroded since 1999 but seems to have levelled off at about 50%.[131] Much of the Turkish skepticism derives from the justified belief that there is a high level of anti-Turkish sentiment in Europe and also that the EU is biased towards Turkey and is therefore not an honest assessor of Turkey's candidacy. The longer the accession process drags on the more likely it will be for these attitudes to harden.

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[131] See Eurobarometer 81, *Public Opinion in the European Union.*

In the context of EU-Turkey relations it is also important to consider the current

era of change and crisis that represents the economic and political scene in Europe and

the Middle East since at least 2009 and has been an important theme of this study. My

argument has been that such rapid and consequential changes demand fresh and updated

analysis; this is true for minority nationalists and their relationship with the EU as well as

multiple other aspects of the changing economic and political world. This reassessment

also extends to how we consider EU-Turkey relations. Here an argument can be made

that we need a broader and more comprehensive understanding of Turkey-EU relations

based on the idea of post-Westernization, i.e., where a post-Western Turkey interacts

with a post-Cold War Europe.[132] The traditional idea of cleavage in Europe is the East-

West divide while for Turkey it is between secular and Islam, modern and traditional,

global and local. However, a more sophisticated approach sees Europe as being

transformed by its eastern enlargement into "…a Europe that is no longer based on

singular, western modernity, but multiple modernities" (Delanty & Rumford, 2005, p.

49). In other words, Westernization is just one path to modernity and European

enlargement is creating a very diverse Europe with an array of cultural, historical, and

ideological underpinnings. At the same time as Europe is changing, Turkey is changing.

Turkey is no longer dominated by the Kemalists nor is it defined by one elite, but by

many different and often competing identities. In this way, Turkey's EU integration takes

on a new dynamic where the East-West divide no longer applies; rather, the context is a

shifting and poly-centric world order. As Hasan Turunç (2013) persuasively puts it:

> Accession to the EU is not reducible to the implementation of the *acquis
> communautaire*, economic liberalization and institutional upgrading; the EU is

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[132] For more discussion on the post-Westernization framework, see Delanty (2006), Therborn (2006), Rumford (2008), and Rumford and Turunç (2011).

much more than that. It is a set of values enunciated by the Copenhagen Criteria, about a better quality of life, about integrating with the world via trade, investments and global civic action, about European "soft power" inspiring society to internalize civil liberties with responsibility. That is what Europe is becoming to Turkey: a catalyst for democratic change, a promoter of the rule of law, a guarantor of secularism and consolidator of democracy, a mechanism that disciplines wayward behavior, a guide to a modernity rooted neither in a single geography nor ideology and both East and West. (p. 86)

This vision of Europe's influence on Turkey is what is especially appealing for Kurdish nationalists and their democratic program for change. Europe has indeed played this positive role in many ways and it is the hope that it will continue to do so that inspires Kurds as well as other reform-minded groups in Turkey. Coinciding with the beginning of EU accession talks in the 1990s political proposals began to be circulated in Turkey to address the many cleavages in the state. During this period former president Turgut Özal promoted the idea of a common Turkish identity that would be more inclusive of minorities and their cultural differences but would have in common Islamic and Ottoman heritage (Gunes, 2012). The AKP have similarly tried to emphasize the commonalities of Islam and Ottoman history in their efforts to forge a new Turkish identity in a post-Kemalist era. On the other hand, the prodemocratic Kurdish movement has pushed for a pluralist approach that would see Turkey as a more multicultural and even plurinational society, which is more in line with the type of unity in diversity promoted by the EU.

While pursuing these goals the Kurds still have to face the harsh realities of a country that has only begun to relax some of the laws and restrictions that have suppressed their identity for decades. In a similar way to the difficulties Turks face in Europe because of prejudice and bias, Kurds must deal with a pervasive negative image often perpetuated by the media. Anti-Kurdish discourses persist on the internet and other

media portraying Kurds as culturally inferior, inept regarding modern urban life, predisposed to crime, and naturally violent and separatist (Saraçoğlu, 2011). On the other hand, Kurds, through the democratic movement have been trying to transform the very nature of the Turkish state and citizenship by promoting the idea of cultural and national pluralism that transcends the narrow Kemalist ideology. The end of the PKK insurgency, the transition from Kemalist rule, the EU candidacy, and the prodemocratic Kurdish movement are all positive steps and provide the best opportunity for a resolution to the Kurdish question. However, unless there is deeper and wider reform headed by the AKP, further de-Kemalization, and a transformation of mainstream Turkish society's attitude to Kurds, this will remain a very difficult road for Kurdish nationalists.

It is, therefore, now generally accepted that any attempt to adequately resolve the Kurdish question will involve the deepening of democracy in civil society through institutional reform as well as respect for cultural and national diversity (Gunes, 2012). Turkish nationalism was a key component of the Turkish Republic's program of Kemalist modernization. While Kemalism was the dominant ideology minority nationalism could not be tolerated and therefore this precluded any opportunity space for Kurdish nationalism. When the EU agreed to allow Turkish candidacy in 1999 an opportunity space opened for Kurds based on the protection of minority rights outlined in the Copenhagen Criteria and also through increased contact and associations with European political and civil society actors. EU demands for reform also facilitated the rise of the AKP, which in its initial years of power was pro-EU and set about dismantling some of the political and cultural restrictions imposed by decades of Kemalism.

European integration as it pertains to Turkey's candidacy has therefore been a necessary factor in the implementation of important domestic reforms in Turkey. As far as Kurdish nationalism is concerned, the impact of integration is evident because the prospect of EU membership and the accession process itself has led to a significant rise in democratic standards and consequently more institutional recognition of minority rights and cultural diversity. EU accession provides Turkey with the incentive and mechanism to develop new policies and institutions that are better equipped to deal with cultural differences. Overall, however, the EU has had a significant but limited impact on improving minority rights in Turkey, including minority nationalist rights. This outcome is partly explained by the domestic situation in Turkey where the main opposition parties, the CHP (Republican People's Party) and the MHP (Nationalist Action Party) strongly oppose substate nationalism. While these parties are willing to grant a degree of cultural recognition to Kurds this does not include recognition as a separate national group (Gunes, 2012). There are further challenges as a result of the AKP's ascendency under a suspiciously authoritarian Erdoğan and the ineffectiveness and weakness of European institutions in the face of a rising regional power. These domestic factors, coupled with Turkey's status as the "eternal candidate" and the failure on the part of the Europeans to convey a credible commitment to Turkey's membership will undermine further reform. This means that the full extent of the supportive framework and opportunity space available for minority nationalists provided by the EU may be out of reach for Kurds. That being said, the established and on-going contacts between Kurdish representatives and EU bodies like the EUTCC and the Committee of the Regions, as well as the DBP's observer status in the European Parliament allows Kurdish nationalists to have a foothold

in Europe and at the very least provides a voice and a certain level of international exposure for the Kurdish cause. Europe, through the Copenhagen Criteria, still acts as a catalyst for change in Turkey to which Kurdish nationalists can pin their hopes on further democratization and reform. Currently, however, the greatest hope for Kurdish nationalists in Turkey may lie not through EU membership but the ever changing geopolitical situation in the Middle East. It is difficult to predict the outcome of the present Middle East conflict but for Kurds there are reasons to be optimistic that an independent homeland will emerge from the chaos. For Turkey's Kurds as well as for the Ankara government this will be an interesting new scenario.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has endeavored to contribute to the debate on the impact of European integration on minority nationalism by analyzing the institutional evolution of local and regional representation in the EU as well as the experience of minority nationalists in Spain and Turkey within the process of integration. There is little in the way of literature on the EU that directly connects the Committee of the Regions with a comparative study of minority nationalism in a member-state and a candidate state. Furthermore, there is a need for renewed analysis of minority nationalism and the EU in light of the period of crisis and change occurring in Europe at present.

A central argument implicit throughout this paper has been the persistence of the power and influence of nationalism in Europe. Contrary to the hopes and predictions of the EU's founding fathers, nationalism remains a formidable force in European member-states and in some regions that represent minority nations. However, the European nationalism of the 21st century must be put in the context of integration and globalization more generally. While the French might not fear a German invasion any longer thanks in large part to the dramatic positive changes associated with integration, nation-states are under pressure from immigration and many other effects of globalization; there are

important questions related to the survival of national industries, to sovereignty, and to identity. Minority nations in Europe are emerging in an age of integration and globalization with a concept of nationalism that relates not only to statehood but also to the nation's place in an integrated European polity and a global economy.

Another key argument has been recognition of a European (and global) shift towards multiculturalism and multicultural policies. Long resisted by most nation-states, the idea of accepting and even protecting and promoting national minorities is now supported by EU and other international conventions as part of a broader understanding and application of human rights and liberal democracy. Member-states in Europe have evolved in significant ways as a result of these changes; Belgium transformed itself from a central state into a federation, the UK has devolved powers to its national minorities, and even France has undergone significant decentralization. The cases of Spain and Turkey illustrate how the EU has pressured and influenced conservative and homogenizing central governments in terms of their policies toward national minorities.

Chapter 2 discussed democracy and representation in Europe with the focus on how and where local and regional, i.e., substate authorities fit into the EU political system. This gets right to the heart of the puzzle and paradox of integration and minority nationalism. At first glance European integration seems like an unnatural supporter of minority nationalism; supranational authorities and autonomous regions are not natural allies.[133] The EU does not support minority nationalism, yet its institutions and political framework provide opportunities for regional actors, including minority nationalists to play a part in EU decision-making and policy-making, albeit at a lower level. I hypothesized that the chances for minority nationalists to pursue political goals including

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[133] See, for example, Lynch (1996) and Bourne (2008).

territorial goals would improve if the EU moved in the direction of more democratic accountability and representation, especially through multilevel governance, and if the Committee of the Regions, as the EU's official regional assembly, gained representation and participatory competencies.

There is evidence indicating that the EU is indeed making efforts to reduce the so-called democratic deficit and gain legitimacy by allowing for wider and deeper participation and reinforcing the principle of subsidiarity. Much of the impetus for these efforts is rooted in the recent economic crisis. Significantly, the Committee of the Regions has seized upon the opportunity space provided by the Lisbon Treaty of 2009, as well as the economic crisis and has been a frontrunner in enforcing subsidiarity and promoting multilevel governance. In its most recent publications the Committee of the Regions celebrated its progress over the past 20 years and now clearly defines itself as more than an advisory body. It is not unimaginable, as Committee leaders have envisioned, that the organization could evolve into a Second Chamber or Senate working alongside the European Parliament with representatives from the regional level.

However, that being said, and although recent trends look favorable for minority nationalists in terms of greater support and influence through the EU, the reality is that member-states are still in the driving-seat and will be for some time, pending major changes in the treaties. The future of Europe will be, as it always has been, negotiated between many different and varied actors. Nevertheless, for minority nationalists while a Europe of the Regions or a Europe of the Peoples may be off the agenda for now and despite slow progress and other disappointments on a number of issues, minority nations and regions have every reason to be optimistic about the way Europe is evolving.

Europeans have reacted to the crisis largely by looking inward, which may not always be a positive reaction; nevertheless, local and regional authorities can take advantage of the situation by presenting themselves as part of the solution to many of Europe's social, economic, and political woes. The demand from Europe's citizens for more transparency, more local involvement, support for multilevel governance and democratic accountability presents Europe's regions with a unique opportunity.

In Chapter 3 the analysis turned to the specific case of minority nationalism in Spain. This was the first of two country case studies that told two different but related stories. Both the Spanish and Turkish cases tell us much about how European integration affects minority nationalism in situations of democratic transition and postauthoritarianism. The cases also demonstrate variation in the reach and effect of integration with Spanish minority nationalists benefitting to a greater extent than the Kurds in Turkey since Turkey is still an EU candidate state. The cases also provide some indication of how integration could affect other democratizing, postauthoritarian states in Europe that host minority nationalists; for example, Romania, the former Soviet Baltic states, the former Yugoslav republics, and Ukraine. Some of these countries are member-states; others are candidates or potential candidates. However, there are also limits to the conclusions we can draw from these case studies; they cannot provide any firm overall general conclusions about how EU integration affects all varieties of minority nationalists across Europe, rather they provide indications for certain cases. The complexity of the many national European political systems and the wide assortment of regional cultural and historical conditions throughout Europe render any clear general outcome virtually impossible. At the same time, the cases demonstrate the existence of a supportive

opportunity structure at the EU level that has the potential to benefit all minority nationalists to some extent.

In the Spanish case specifically it was demonstrated that European integration was intricately linked to Spain's democratic transition in that on the one hand membership in the European Community was seen by Spaniards as the sine qua non of the country's full transition and on the other hand it provided certain guarantees to both the opposition and adherents of the old regime that the transition would be just and peaceful. Integration was also therefore of special importance to Spain's historic nations of the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia as they sought to reestablish erstwhile privileges and autonomy that had been lost under the dictatorship. Because of these historical factors Spain's eventual accession to the EU in 1986 was widely anticipated and warmly welcomed by most Spaniards. Spain's new democracy was now fully integrated into Western Europe, ending the country's temporary and disastrous isolation from its natural European habitat. The new constitution established in 1978 created 17 autonomous communities, partially in an effort to accommodate the Basques, Catalans, and Galician nationalists. The Statue of Autonomy went a long way to restoring the cultural and political rights of the historic nations but it was also clear in the Constitution that the unity of the Spanish state was nonnegotiable. Thus the limits were set to self-determination. The EU, however, presented a political arena outside the traditional limitations of the state and minority nationalists in Spain turned to the EU to voice grievances and to influence national policy through supranational institutions.

Minority nationalist parties in Spain were therefore Euroenthusiasts with the exception of the BNG in Galicia. However, even the BNG moderated its Marxist,

antisystem ideology to better accommodate its position as a regional government party with European credentials. Regional governments in Spain, especially the Catalan and Basque governments have established delegations in Brussels and have been able to work closely with EU institutions including the Committee of the Regions. They have also been able to network with other regions and form important working groups and alliances. In the case of Catalonia and the Basque Country these offices in Brussels are veritable embassies allowing for a sense of independence from Spain and providing opportunities to engage in paradiplomacy and other nation-building activities. Such opportunities are unique to the EU.

Overall, the Spanish case offers a strong indication that minority nationalists see opportunities in Europe to advance their political goals otherwise denied to them by the state. The importance of the regional offices in Brussels, the references by minority nationalist parties to EU democratic and human rights standards, and the growing significance and influence of EU institutions like the Committee of the Regions that are pushing for more regional rights and input are all advantages minority nationalist can gain through ongoing integration.

The chapter on Turkey brought the analysis outside of the EU to consider the effects of integration on a candidate state. The goal was to compare the Spanish and Turkish cases in an effort to arrive at some general conclusions about the relationship between the EU and minority nationalism. The Turkish case suggests that European integration had and continues to have an impact on minority nationalism even in a candidate country, but that the effect is substantially less than in member-states. There are two main reasons for this; firstly, without full membership Turkey is less likely to

thoroughly implement and internalize the full extent of democratic reforms, especially those related to minority rights as well as other EU norms and policies including decentralization. Secondly, as associate or observer members without full participatory rights and privileges Kurdish nationalist political parties and groups have less access to the opportunity structure available at the EU level which includes, importantly, opportunities for paradiplomacy and other nation-building activities. The European integration process, therefore, has the potential to greatly assist minority nationalists outside of the Union, but much of this depends on the relationship between the EU and the candidate country, the level of commitment on the part of the EU and the candidate government to membership, and the economic and geopolitical status of the candidate country.

In comparing the Spanish and Turkish cases we therefore see two different types of opportunity structure. In the former case we see how minority nationalists in Spain have been able to strengthen nationalist political parties through Europeanization, i.e., incorporating policies that enable minority nationalist parties to operate as partners at the European level. This allows these parties to be important negotiators and the principal executioners of EU policies (including funding) in their respective regions. Europeanization has also provided a means for minority nationalists in Spain to connect with a network of other European parties through membership in the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions and to even set up offices in Brussels that act as pseudo-embassies from which these nations without their own state can act very much like a state. All of this is possible because of EU treaties and institutions, as well as favorable EU norms that provide the necessary political space. Overall, the European

dimension helps empower and legitimize the Spanish minority nationalist parties at the domestic level. For Turkey the opportunity structure at the EU level is evident but not as extensive. Although the Kurds can maintain important connections with the EU through the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and other organizations, Kurdish nationalist parties cannot act as the principal interlocutor for Kurdish regional interests at the EU because Turkey, as a nonmember, remains highly centralized. Simply put, Turkey is not locked into or anchored to the same decentralizing and democratizing processes that member-states experience. For Kurds the primary source of support and opportunity is still mostly represented by the Copenhagen Criteria.

The renowned historian of European integration, Alan Milward,[134] accurately depicted the period of West European integration up until the end of the Cold War. According to Milward this phase of integration was characterized by a sort of balance in terms of the distribution of labor between the EU and the member-states, with Brussels responsible for economic market integration and the member-states responsible for social welfare. For Milward, therefore, the EU provided a support structure for the state. What Milward did not explicitly consider was that the EU also provided support for substate groups. In fact, a different phase of integration has arisen in the post-Cold War era and with the onset of increased globalization; as Bo Stråth[135] argues, "there is a need for theories that emphasize openness, fragility, and contingency in the European project, at the same time as they recognize and define the scope for political action and political responsibility for the better or for the worse" (p. 27). This dissertation recognizes the

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[134] See Milward (1999).
[135] See Bo Stråth (2011) *Still the Europe of Milward?* https://www.ucl.ac.uk/european-institute/analysis-publications/FINAL.pdf

changing international order[136] and has tried to shed some light on some of the effects of European integration – certain consequences that were unpredicted and unintended and that reflect the evolving and often unpredictable nature of the integration process specifically and the changing political world more generally.

In this study I have attempted to identify a causal chain connecting the process of European integration to the strengthening of minority nationalism by tracing backward from observed outcomes to potential causes and at the same time formulating hypotheses that would explain future outcomes.[137] The important question is what is the relationship between the evidence and the hypotheses? Measuring the outcome of integration on minority nationalism we can see that in the case of Spain there has been a high level of Europeanization of the major minority nationalist parties and the relative success of these parties can be associated in many ways to their connection to Europe. The process of Europeanization has been different for each party. For example, the CiU was quick to take on a European role as the party's political ideology did not conflict in any major way with the EU's stated objectives; the PNV on the other hand, went through something of a transformation during Spain's accession process and subsequent integration, moving from a radical nationalist position to a more socially conservative party joining the family of European Christian Democrats. The mission of the PNV has since been to promote and protect traditional Basque autonomy while integrating into the EU. Since Spain's accession to the European Community both the CiU and the PNV have consolidated their positions as European parties and simultaneously as the dominant nationalist parties in their regions. In Galicia, the BNG started off as an anti-Europe party but over time

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[136] See Keating and McGarry (2001).
[137] This is in line with Andrew Bennett's formulation of process tracing (2010, p. 209).

recognized the advantages of engaging with Europe. Largely in an effort to emulate the successes of the PNV in the Basque Country and the CiU in Catalonia, the BNG dramatically shifted from its Marxist anti-Europe ideology to a more accommodating and moderate position that allowed it access to the EU. Once this occurred the BNG's fortunes at local and regional elections changed for the better and the party soon became the leading nationalist voice in Galicia and was able to enter regional government.

Another measure of the effect of integration on minority nationalism in Spain has been the increased paradiplomacy and nation-building activities of the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia at the European level. The EU has afforded these regions the opportunity to participate in the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, and other organizations and to set up delegations in Brussels. This is certainly a far cry from the circumstances of the exiled Basque government before Spain's transition to democracy and accession to the EC. Opposition to these substate delegations has come from the central government but has been overruled by the Constitutional Court's reference to EU law. The outlook is, in fact, for a deeper and ever more meaningful regional presence in Brussels. Connected to this is the political environment of the EU itself, which has been receptive to the idea of wider and more inclusive participation. With evidence of an increasing push for multilevel governance regional actors stand to gain more participatory powers.

Finally, there is the phenomenon of rhetoric and recourse by minority nationalists to the body of human rights statutes promulgated by the EU. There is a powerful arsenal of ideas and norms available to minority nationalists within the context of European integration. Party statements and policies clearly reference the EU as a protector of

human rights including minority rights and this is evident now more than ever, especially in relation to the protection of language and cultural rights and rights of self-determination. Both the Scottish and Catalonian independence referendums were presented as expressions of democratic freedom, freedoms that should be extended to all Europeans. The responses of many national governments and some EU officials to these referendums starkly contrasted with that of other minority and regional representatives; while the former criticized the nationalists as irresponsible and dangerous, the latter group evoked the language of democracy, freedom, and human rights as principles upheld by the EU. The indication is that integration is also providing minority nationalist with a strong legal and normative basis for challenging national governments and supporting their causes.

In the case of Turkey the clearest measure of the EU's effect on minority nationalism is the contrasting period of 2002 – 2007 and 2007 to the present. In the first period the AKP came to power, largely as a result of reforms implemented through the accession process. The AKP, an Islamic-based party new to governing and insecure especially because of the old regime's mistrust and the real threat of the military removing it from power, made sure to present itself as pro-European and therefore a supporter of modernization and the secular constitution. This meant adherence to the Copenhagen Criteria and therefore continued domestic reform. This period saw real progress for the Kurdish cause with recognition of the Kurdish problem and Kurdish grievances and subsequent reforms that established cultural and linguistic rights for Kurds. However, since around 2007 and the consolidation of the AKP as the natural ruling party of Turkey, there has been a marked change in terms of Turkey's

responsiveness to the Copenhagen Criteria. The more confident AKP and the increased

assertiveness of Turkey as a regional power has meant a turn away from Europe and

subsequently a much more selective and even strategic approach to domestic reform. The

obvious consequence for Kurdish nationalism has been stalled reform and a smaller

opportunity structure. This coupled with the EU's lack of a credible commitment to

Turkish membership has meant that the opportunities presented by the Copenhagen

Criteria and ultimate EU membership have been diminished. Currently, the Kurds are

extremely limited in pursuing goals of autonomy and self-determination precisely

because the door to EU membership seems to have been closed for now.

Overall, I have tried to demonstrate how the EU has provided an opportunity

space for regions and substate actors economically and politically and how minority

nationalist parties have used the EU as an external support system to advance and defend

demands for more autonomy. The European political arena is seen as more conducive and

sympathetic to regional goals and grievances compared to the limitations of the central

state and the often conflictual relationship with conservative central governments. The

EU benefits minority nationalists in the following significant ways: (1) provides

economic opportunities and funding for regional projects including promotion of culture

and language; (2) recognizes the regions at the supranational level and allows for official

representation and a degree of participation in decision-making by means of the

Committee of the Regions while minority nationalist parties can take seats in the

European Parliament; (3) offers a unique opportunity for regions to establish a delegation

in Brussels which in turn enables regions to project and promote an independent voice

internationally and engage in networking and paradiplomacy, which can be seen as a

form of nation-building; (4) promotes and defends democracy and human rights, including minority rights.

This last point is worth highlighting. Examples in this study have demonstrated how minority nationalists actively refer to norms and standards of democracy and fundamental human rights established by the EU as well as other international organizations. There is a burgeoning international regime that supports human rights including minority group rights and places these rights ahead of state sovereignty (Keating & McGarry, 2001). The Charter of the United Nations, the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, the European Court of Human Rights, and an array of other such organizations are testament to a changing international environment more favorable to minority groups. For minority nationalists in Europe the normative and institutional framework of the EU is an essential tool and point of reference when faced with intransigence and opposition from the central state. By referencing a "higher law" so to speak, minority nationalists can better legitimize their claims while at the same time castigating the central government for its lack of adherence to such principles.

Building on these arguments I have also analyzed minority nationalist political parties and their attitude to and relationship with the EU. Minority nationalist parties are extremely varied across Europe in terms of their size and influence, political philosophies, and ultimate political goals; ultimately, however, the majority of these parties have come to support European integration. The minority nationalist parties in Spain are representative of this diversity. In Galicia the BNG initially rejected European integration on the grounds that accession to the EEC would perpetuate the economic disparity already existing between the region and more affluent parts of Spain. Since

Galicia was primarily a fishing and agricultural region it feared European intervention

and economic policies such as the CAP (Elias, 2009). Politically, as a radical Marxist

party, the BNG was also opposed to entering an organization that was based on capitalist

principles and interests. Yet, the BNG eventually reoriented itself to a more accepting

position on Europe and this occurred for two main reasons. Firstly, success in regional

elections depended to a large extent on appealing to Galicia's broader conservative base

and therefore the party jettisoned much of its more radical philosophies. This in turn

facilitated a more accommodating stance vis-à-vis Europe. Secondly, the BNG wished to

be the leading nationalist party in Galicia in the same way as the PNV and the CiU were

the established nationalist parties in the Basque Country and Catalonia. To achieve this

goal the BNG aligned itself with the PNV and CiU in terms of cooperation on issues of

autonomy at the state level. This association also extended to Europe where the PNV and

CiU had a strong presence and tradition. The BNG came to adapt the European

dimension to its nationalist program in a similar way to the PNV and CiU.

For their part, the PNV and CiU have been consistently more enthusiastic about

Europe. The parties also contrast with the BNG in that they are center-right. However,

despite their political similarities they have had quite different ideas about how

integration can advance their goals and the type of Europe they would like to see. The

PNV have sought Basque sovereignty within a European framework while the CiU have

envisioned a type of confederal Europe with shared sovereignty (Keating, 2001a).

Nevertheless, the point is that the three main minority nationalist parties in Spain have

adapted to the realities of integration and fully incorporated EU level politics into their

goals and agendas. This is also true for many of the smaller and newer minority

nationalist parties in Spain. The ERC in Catalonia have clearly stated that for them Europe is another means of pursuing independence. The AGE in Galicia represents much of the former Euroscepticism of the BNG; however, in 2014, just 2 years after this party was formed they had already contested European elections and have a representative in the European Parliament. There is every reason to believe that while the AGE will be highly critical of the EU it will modify its position to take advantage of what Europe has to offer in terms of pursuing its particular vision of autonomy.

The DTP and BDP (now DBP: Democratic Regions Party) also illustrate how European integration is seen as advantageous to the cause of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey. In the same way that minority nationalists in Spain call upon the human rights discourse of the EU, Kurdish nationalists use the same strategy in the hope that Turkey will more fully democratize and recognize minority group rights. However, the Turkish case also illustrates the limits of the effects of EU integration in that it does not provide the same degree of opportunity for minorities in candidate states; the main factor playing out in this context is often the level of engagement the candidate country has with the EU and the attitude of the candidate government towards membership. When Turkey was keen on membership there were more possibilities for Kurds to seek concessions from Ankara as the country tried to align itself with EU standards of democracy and human rights. Turkey's more recent pivot away from Europe and Erdoğan's increasing authoritarianism have had a negative impact on Kurdish minority rights. The Turkish case also underscores the limitations of the international human rights regime; outside of Europe and the West these norms and institutions are much weaker and sometimes nonexistent.

The Committee of the Regions has been the institution of interest for this study and I have tried to convey the role this body plays in providing specific opportunities for minority nationalists. However, it is also important to mention the European Parliament. Like the Committee of the Regions, the Parliament has steadily pushed for more influence since it was established in 1952.[138] The ability of minority political parties to be directly elected to the European Parliament is significant in at least two ways: it gives them an opportunity to project their interests on the wider European stage and allows them to associate with other political parties through their parliamentary group membership.[139] The importance of making connections in Europe is illustrated by the Kurdish parties who, although they could not take seats in the EP, became observer members of party groups.

In her book regarding territorial party strategies in Europe, Eve Hepburn (2010) explores the arguments surrounding opportunities for such groups. She mentions how,

> These "opportunities" include access to European institutions including the Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament, involvement in inter-regional bodies, European political parties and lobbying organizations, and special rights and minority protection under European law. This involves a two-way process of Europeanization, whereby political parties have used European integration in order to advance their territorial projects at the European level whilst, correspondingly, changes and developments in Europe, such as the regionalization debates and creation of regional institutions, have had an impact on the territorial strategies of substate parties. More specifically, the process of European integration has caused traditionally centralist and pro-federalist branches of state-wide parties to become involved in debates on the future of their regions in Europe, and to develop stronger demands for autonomy, which are framed within the context of a "Europe of the Regions." (p. 20).

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[138] In 1952 the European Coal and Steel Community established a Common Assembly, which in 1958 was renamed the European Parliamentary Assembly and in 1962 became the European Parliament. Not till 1979 did this parliament hold its first direct elections. See http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/009cd2034d/In-the-past.html

[139] See Appendix G

However, Hepburn also argues that through integration nationalist parties will see less of a need for outright independence and will moderate their demands. I disagree with the author on this point; I have argued that integration has presented minority nationalists with a supportive opportunity framework to pursue a range of goals, including independent statehood within the European Union. The 2014 Scottish and Catalonian referendums are evidence enough that the goal of independence is still alive and well and the response from other minority nationalist parties in support of the rights of Scots and Catalans to independence is indicative of a wider consensus on the part of minority nations that full rights of self-determination extend to independent statehood if that is the democratic will of the people of that region.

The reaction to the referendums from states and some EU officials sharply contrasted with regional responses and was quite informative. Leaders of member-states and EU chiefs were quick to welcome the Scottish result. For example, Belgian EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht whose native Flanders is witnessing a growing nationalist movement remarked how a Scottish split would have been "cataclysmic" for Europe, triggering a domino effect across the continent and a political landslide on the scale of the break-up of the Soviet Union. President François Hollande of France expressed fear of a possible "deconstruction" of Europe after decades of close integration. Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy in an effort to smother calls for a referendum in Catalonia commented on how the Scottish result was the best outcome for Europe and that the Scottish avoided serious economic, political, and social consequences. The German Chancellor Angela Merkel voiced her support for Madrid by stating that Catalonia was a

completely different legal situation.[140] These comments are a clear reminder of the strong

opposition minority nationalists and regions face from central governments and those

who oppose changes to the status quo. The hyperbole of the rhetoric from some member-

state governments and EU officials underscores the fears many have in Europe of

growing regional power and autonomy; it also is an example of the scare tactics often

used to dissuade would be break away regions.

Also revealing is the reaction from those regions not seeking independence but

just greater decentralization. The day after the Scottish referendum six Northern England

newspapers joined forces to publish the same demands and issued the statement that the

United Kingdom is changing and that the north must not be left behind. They demanded a

form of regional devolution with "the power and funding needed to manage our own

affairs."[141] Their statement continues:

> Our region faces the risk of being squeezed between an over mighty London in
> the south and a resurgent Scotland making the most of its new-found freedoms to
> the north. But this is also a time of enormous opportunity for the north of
> England. Let us off the leash and we will create wealth and jobs, and help the UK
> succeed in today's challenging world. Sensible devolution to regions such as ours,
> and perhaps ensuring we have a fair hearing at Westminster too, will also help to
> reassure English voters that they are getting a fair deal after so many promises
> were made to Scotland during the referendum campaign.[142]

The editor of *The Yorkshire Post*, Jeremy Clifford remarked, "The debate over the

referendum in Scotland has opened up a much wider call for increased powers for the

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[140] See *The Irish Times* http://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/eu-relief-at-scotland-result-tinged-with-fear-1.1935060

[141] See *The Guardian* http://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2014/sep/19/trinity-mirror-johnston-press
[142] Ibid.

regions…We are joining with newspaper titles across the north to ensure this vitally important part of England does not lose out in the aftermath of the Scotland decision."[143]

Despite the disappointing outcome of the Scottish referendum for Scottish nationalists, one positive result is that the regional question has gained prominence with calls for ever more decentralization across Europe. Wider constitutional reforms are now an obvious necessity in the UK. British Prime Minister David Cameron remarked, "Just as the people of Scotland will have more power over their affairs, so it follows that the people of England, Wales and Northern Ireland must have a bigger say over theirs."[144] For many observers these are signs of the emerging federalization of the UK. With the unsanctioned Catalonian referendum held 2 months after the Scottish this is certainly not the end of nationalist aspirations for independence in Europe: the Basques, Catalans, Flemish, Scots, Welsh, etc. will all pursue nationalist agendas and continue to push for ever more powers at the expense of their central governments. The politics of identity is a powerful force and in Europe this is all the more obvious in light of the EU's stated goals of integration and unity: national, regional, and local identities and loyalties are not trumped by EU identity.

It is apparent, therefore, that independence is still the ultimate goal of some minority nationalists and that other minority groups, who may be aiming simply for decentralization or more autonomy, nonetheless support the right to independence as a matter of principle. However, it is worth mentioning that minority nationalists of today's Europe are not interested in creating a nation-state "in classic nineteenth-century terms"

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[143] Ibid.
[144] See *The Economic Times* http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/a-federal-uk-scotland-vote-shakes-up-the-union/articleshow/42919279.cms

(Lynch, 1996, p. 180), nor is this type of nationalism necessarily destabilizing or somehow "tribal," (Gagnon, et al., 2003) rather they understand and even embrace ideas of shared or pooled sovereignty and collective rights within the EU and a globalized world. While nondemocratic, ethnocentric nationalism certainly exists in the 21st century there is a different category of nationalism emerging within the framework of the EU and its particular norms and institutions. This type of nationalism upholds democratic principles of inclusiveness and multiculturalism and, in fact, challenges the legitimacy of existing nation-states, the majority of which contain more than one nation within their territory (Guibernau, 1999).

Here, we begin to see part of the answer to the puzzle of integration and nationalism. While the traditional nation-state was built on the concept of unity and homogenization, the EU is being built on principles of cultural diversity. The diversity that the EU embraced was only the diversity represented by the member-states, at least initially; however, it was not long before the EU also had to recognize an even deeper and more complex layer of diversity at the substate level. As the EU has grown it has come to influence (and be influenced by) more sectors of European society than those representing member-state governments. Regional actors have celebrated the heterogeneous nature of the EU and have therefore seen it as not only appropriate but necessary that central governments do the same. By accommodating the diversity of the member-states within an economic and political union the EU has managed to achieve some of its fundamental goals, i.e., peace and prosperity. However, that same openness to diversity and inclusion has also encouraged regional and minority groups to be more assertive in pursuing their own goals within Europe.

The "Unity in Diversity" principle is only part of the story. The combined effects of globalization and integration have resulted in the realization that nationality, culture, and identity are "fluid rather than fixed, constructed rather than given" (Wagstaff, 1999, p. 18). It may be true that efforts to create a European identity have been largely unsuccessful, but this does not mean that people do not identify with Europe. Multiple allegiances and forms of identity are part of history and in today's Europe someone from Barcelona can identify as Catalan, Spanish, and European just like someone from Munich can call themselves Bavarian, German, and European. Many see integration as a gradual process of state-building and like the new forms of nationalism evident in Europe, the European proto-state is not patterned on the traditional state-building that began in the 16th and 17th centuries, rather it is arguably closer to what has been occurring in India since 1947 where multiple identities (and languages) will be the norm (Laitin, 2001).

In this context we see the affirmation of minority nationalism where statehood might still be an option for some, while increased decentralization and regional autonomy is an option for others. The argument is that there are new concepts of the nation and new concepts of the state that are emerging in the Europe of the 21st century. Furthermore, minority nations and regions are becoming increasingly important political actors in Europe because EU institutions allow the opportunity space for them to become such. Scholars have long debated the role of regions in Europe and many have been dismissive of their influence and the possibilities available to them through integration.[145] However, this study highlights the historical connection between minority nations and European integration and the more recent trends that have been occurring in the EU since the financial crisis that suggest a brighter future for regional actors and minority nationalists

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[145] See, for example, Harvie (1994) and Le Galès and Lequesne (1998).

where their role in EU governance is not just symbolic.

The nation-state remains the key actor in international relations; however, it is under strain. In Europe the twin forces of globalization and integration are changing the very fabric, scope, and capacity of the modern state including the way citizens relate to the state. Europe's regions and minority nations are well positioned to take advantage of these changes. In economic terms there is a strong argument that autonomous substate level units are more effective competitors in the global marketplace; politically, regional actors and minority nationalist are presenting themselves as part of the solution to the economic crisis and democratic deficit specifically and to the changing order in Europe more generally.

The EU project has always been about breaking with the past and experimenting with possible alternatives to the traditional international structure; in Europe's current phase of integration opportunities are opening up for minority nationalists and regionalists to play a leading and innovative role in accommodating the cultural, economic, and political needs of citizens. As Europeans reflect on the present crisis and look to the future some may recall the reprimanding words of Pope Francis as he addressed the European Parliament, lamenting the general malaise afflicting the continent and commenting that, "The great ideas that once inspired Europe seem to have lost their attraction, only to be replaced by the bureaucratic technicalities of its institutions."[146] The hope is for reinvigoration and reinvention by means of institutional and structural reform as well as through more and better democratic representation and participation. Europe's

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[146] See *The Wall Street Journal* http://online.wsj.com/articles/pope-says-europe-needs-new-sense-of-purpose-1416915190

regions and minority nations are uniquely positioned within the context of the integration

process to not only pursue their goals and assert their independent voices but also to play

a significant role in directing Europe's future.

APPENDIX A

ELECTION RESULTS FOR THE GALICIAN PARLIAMENT 1981

Party	Votes	%	Seats
Alianza Popula (AP)	301,039	30.5	26
Unión de Centro Democrático (UCD)	274,191	27.8	24
Partido dos Socialistas de Galicia-PSOE (PSdeG-PSOE)	193,456	19.6	16
Coalición Bloque-Partido Socialista Galego (BNPG-PSG)	61,870	6.3	3
Esquerda Galega (EG)	33,497	3.4	1
Partido Comunista de Galicia (PCG)	28,927	2.9	1
Partido Galegista (PG)	32,623	3.3	0
Others	60,641	6.1	0

Adapted from *Election Resources on the Internet*:
http://electionresources.org/es/gal/parliament.php?election=1981

APPENDIX B

ELECTION RESULTS FOR THE GALICIAN PARLIAMENT 2012

Party	Votes	%	Seats
Partido Popular (PP)	661,281	45.8	41
Partido dos Socialistas de Galicia-PSOE (PSdeG-PSOE)	297,584	20.6	18
Alternativa Galega de Esquerda (EU-ANOVA)	200,828	13.9	9
Bloque Nacionalista Galego (BNG)	146,027	10.1	7
Unión Progreso y Democracia (UPyD)	21,335	1.5	0
Escaños en Blanco (Eb)	17,141	1.2	0
Sociedad Civil y Democracia (SCD)	15,990	1.1	0
Compromiso por Galicia (CxG)	14,586	1.0	0
Others	30,628	2.1	0

Adapted from *Election Resources on the Internet*:
http://electionresources.org/es/gal/parliament.php?election=2012

APPENDIX C

ELECTION RESULTS FOR THE BASQUE PARLIAMENT 1980

Party	Votes	%	Seats
Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea-Partido Nacionalista Vasco (EAJ-PNV)	349,102	38.1	25
Herri Batasuna (HB)	151,636	16.5	11
Partido Socialista de Euskadi-Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSE-PSOE)	130,221	14.2	9
Euskadiko Ezkerra (EE)	89,953	9.8	6
Unión de Centro Democrático (UCD)	78,095	8.5	6
Alianza Popular (AP)	43,751	4.8	2
Partido Comunista de Euskadi-Euskadiko Partidu Komunista (PCE-EPK)	36,845	4.0	1
Others	36,672	4.0	0

Adapted from *Election Resources on the Internet*:
http://electionresources.org/es/eus/parliament.php?election=1980

APPENDIX D

ELECTION RESULTS FOR THE BASQUE PARLIAMENT 2012

Party	Votes	%	Seats
Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea-Partido Nacionalista Vasco (EAJ-PNV)	384,766	34.2	27
Euskal Herria Bildu (EH BILDU)	277,923	24.7	21
Partido Socialista de Euskadi-Euskadiko Ezkerra (PSE-EE/PSOE)	212,809	18.9	16
Partido Popular (PP)	130,584	11.6	10
Unión Progreso y Democracia (UPyD)	21,539	1.9	1
Izquierda Unida-Los Verdes-Ezker Anitza (IU-LV)	30,318	2.7	0
Ezker Batua-Berdeak (EB-B)	17,345	1.5	0
Equo Berdeak-Euskal Ekologistak (EQUO)	11,625	1.0	0
Escaños en Blanco-Aulki Zuriak (Eb-Az)	11,480	1.0	0
Others	13,371	1.2	0

Adapted from *Election Resources on the Internet*:
http://electionresources.org/es/eus/parliament.php?election=2012

APPENDIX E

ELECTION RESULTS FOR THE CATALAN PARLIAMENT 1980

Party	Votes	%	Seats
Convergència i Unió (CiU)	752,943	27.8	43
Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (PSC-PSOE)	606,717	22.4	33
Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (PSUC)	507,753	18.8	25
Centristes de Catalunya (CC-UCD)	286,922	10.6	18
Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC)	240,871	8.9	14
Partido Socialista de Andalucía-Partido Andaluz (PSA-PA)	71,841	2.7	2
Solidaritat Catalana (SC)	64,004	2.4	0
Others	156,402	5.8	0

Adapted from *Election Resources on the Internet*:
http://electionresources.org/es/cat/parliament.php?election=1980

APPENDIX F

ELECTION RESULTS FOR THE CATALAN PARLIAMENT 2012

Party	Votes	%	Seats
Convergència i Unió (CiU)	1,116,259	30.7	50
Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya-Catalunya Sí (ERC-Cat Sí)	498,124	13.7	21
Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (PSC-PSOE)	524,707	14.4	20
Partit Popular (PP)	471,681	13.0	19
Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds-Esquerra Unida i Alternativa (ICV-EUiA)	359,705	9.9	13
Ciutadans-Partido de la Ciudadanía (C's)	275,007	7.6	9
Candidatura d'Unitat Popular-Alternativa d'Esquerres (CUP)	126,435	3.5	3
Plataforma per Catalunya (PxC)	60,107	1.7	0
Solidaritat Catalana per la Independència (SI)	46,838	1.3	0
Escons en Blanc (Eb)	28,288	0.8	0
Others	75,121	2.1	0

Adapted from *Election Resources on the Internet*:
http://electionresources.org/es/cat/parliament.php?election=2012

APPENDIX G

SPANISH MINORITY NATIONALIST PARTIES IN EP 2014

Minority Nationalist Party Coalitions	Seats	GUE/ NGL	Greens/ EFA	EPP	ALDE
IP	6	5	1		
CEU	3			1	2
EPDD	2		2		
LPD	1	1			

Adapted from *European Parliament, Results of the 2014 European Elections*:
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/country-results-es-2014.html

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