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**“EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND STATELESS MINORITIES.
THE TRAJECTORY OF BASQUE NATIONALISM.”**

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A mes amours

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“Here a secrete and profound tie, which nothing could ever break, binds together in spite of Treaties, the diplomatic frontiers, in spite of the Pyrenees, the natural frontiers, all the members of the mysterious Basque family. (...) But neither France nor Spain have succeeded in disaggregating the Basque group. Beneath the fresh layers of history that have been piling upon it during four centuries, it is still perfectly visible, like a crater beneath a lake ...”.

V. Hugo, *The Pyrenees*, 1843

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FOREWORD

Since the middle of the XIX century, the nation became the instrument of major community-based planning and personal association. In cases where the ancient populations had failed in their attempts to form “the nation,” there were significant problems for both the state and the population as the struggle for its establishment posed dangers for the legitimacy of the government, due to support of the majority of community members. This was due to the popular attitude that modernity demanded participation in, and membership to, a particular “nation” or “nation-state.” The vehicle for the formation of “the nation” was nationalism. Nationalism served to “define, produce, and direct human actions in an increasingly inter-dependent world” (Williams 1-2). The promotion of freedom in the 20th century created circumstances that increased the level of self-consciousness among various countries’ populations and fostered tendencies towards nationalism in their communities.

Nationalism and the process of formation of “the nation,” observes Williams (1994), ran alongside the change from traditional ways of life to modern ones. Before the advent of nationalism, world communities believed in the provisions of universality: “human beings are inherently the same the world over in their natural form, and human differentiation was but a function of the level of civilization pertaining in different regions of the earth” (Williams 4). This concept faced a challenge near the end of the 18th century from the creation of a concept of stages in the development of nations and their populations. The concept of a nation changed to one where a variety of its own qualities underwent transition over time. The result was that nations resorted to other sources of identity and means for “cultural continuity.” Language played a major role in this respect, and a kind of reasoning developed that the presence of a unique language in the society presented the speakers with an opportunity to set up independent operations and governance structures aimed at the improvement of their welfare. Conceptions existed that language was inseparable from culture and general social reality (Williams 4-5). This conception upgraded language to an instrument in the development of nationalistic feeling.

Two major repercussions were notable in this development, observes Williams (1994). First, the use of customs as a point of reference in the determination of the identity of individuals and nations offered the process an element of inclusivity, and the feeling of belonging and unity to members. It also rendered outcast the members in a nation who did not possess the defining characteristics of the group. Secondly, it cast aside reasoning and individualism as criteria for the definition of membership to a particular group. Language was definitive and tended to be

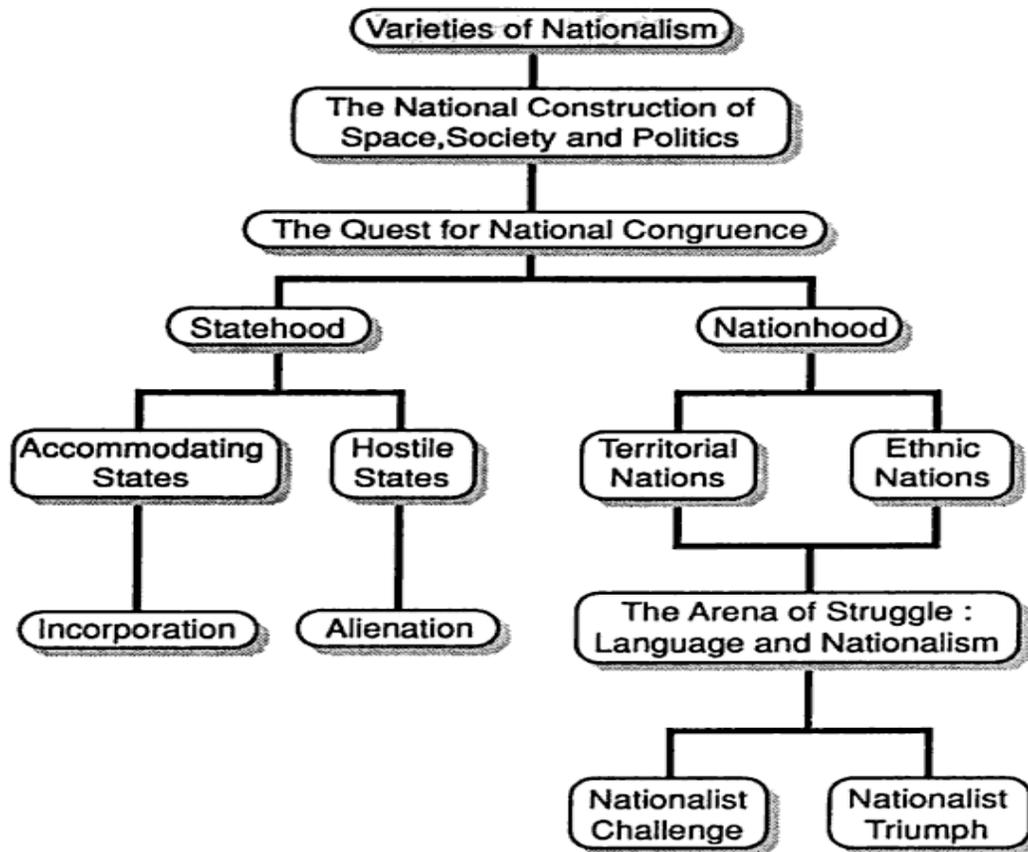
final in its description of the group to which an individual belonged. Language became “the society” since it enabled members to interact with others in different times and places (Williams 6). Language therefore became the descriptive factor in the determination of community membership.

For the comprehension of the whole community as an aggregation of the constituents, therefore, it became necessary to delve into past information. The spiritual aspects in a society became vital in the understanding of this history, and the pride of a community became “their political development as an authentic national community” (Williams 7). The participation of members in daily community consciousness became evidence of this pride, and added to the community’s collective welfare in this respect. This made “the nation” a sign of modern civilization and maturity in social development (Williams 7).

This process describes how populations developed the urge for autonomic determination of social and political welfare. The development of this urge led to the phenomenon of nationalism in western countries. It mandated language as the prime factor in the determination of political territory, as has been the case in the modern world. Although observers seem to be in conflict whether nationalism has had a place in the modern world, the facts on the ground have proven that it has been a major issue in western countries (Williams 8). Some of the features in the modern world, notably globalization, higher levels of education, and the development in information technology, which enable greater levels of contact across the world, have however affected the dynamics of nationalism.

Several steps in nationalism in Western nations and their effects have been identifiable. Nationalism led to the creation of political platforms at the society and national levels, which it used in the advancement of its agenda and ideologies. Once the public had attained a sufficient level of confidence, resource mobilization, and public awareness for action, the community, led by activists, exerted pressure on the national government to grant them the rights they demanded, and to incorporate them into the national society justifiably. This resulted in the formation of the community’s own nation after secession or incorporation of the community into the national state in a compromise arrangement. In their own state, the community struggled under the problems of language and nationalistic challenges. The handling of these challenges by authorities determined whether the nation proceeded smoothly towards advanced development, or experienced economic, social, and political difficulties, which in turn threatened its prosperity. In accommodation of the minority group in the host nation-state, the fate of the community depended on the policies of the central government. Where the government formulated friendly policy in accommodation, the community’s interests underwent successful incorporation into the national welfare; where the policies formulated by the host government

were hostile, the community experienced alienation (Williams, 1994: 13). The diagram below illustrates a summary of these steps.



Nationalistic feeling involves the demand for recognition of the differences that exist in a group of people from the rest of a human community, and the utilization of these differences to promote and demand for the preservation of these distinct features. Some of the distinct features most promoted by these groups include language, culture, and the economy (Catt & Murphy 1).

In the modern world, western countries have had to face a challenge to their stability posed by an increase in the number of groups using ethnicity, the claim of being indigenous, and nationalism, as platforms for the demand for autonomic political resolutions within the boundaries of the state. There is in fact a great diversification in the European continent in terms of ethnic composition.

Scotland and Wales, whose governments exist under the London-based British administration, elected representatives whose mandate was to push for government autonomy in 1999.

Northern Ireland, also under London, had been laying foundations for power localization and decentralization for several decades. Nationalist movements have also been alive in Canada and Spain, Italy and, after the fall of Communism, in Eastern Europe.

Some scholars, although implicitly, have identified the very European integration as the propeller for the claims of sub-state nationalisms.

The process of European integration has been accompanied by a gradual impoverishment of state prerogatives. In this process, European institutions, on one side, and sub-state authorities on the other, have been gaining increasing powers and responsibilities.

The “Treaty of Rome” sought to mobilize the citizens and governments of Europe to integrate and direct their efforts towards the formation of a progressively closer Union, an object of the “Treaty of Maastricht.” Members of the European continent view the objective as the formation of a “political superstructure” whose aim is to take precedence over the group of European nations in general – a phenomenon that has been referred to as “supranationality.” This has raised critical issues in the governance of the European people, in respect to the relationship between the Union and the respective governments. What level of independence would these governments display in the governance of their own people in the shadow of the supranational European body? What would be the nature of politics, and what would be the extent of representation of the European population’s interests, under this supranational authority? The major issue in relation to the emergence of the supranational body in Europe is that of what position the domestic governments would find themselves in (Michelmann & Soldatos 1994).

Such diffusion of power within the European governance has been pointed out as one of the main cause of instability and bad governance, in that it raised many expectations as regards the institutional involvement of sub-state minorities and therefore reinforced their self-assertion.

In this work, I pretend to demonstrate that, far from being a propeller of separatist demands, European integration, through its multilayered system of governance, has made that most of the nationalist claims have been firmly anchored to the European project and their potentially dangerous effects were neutralized.

I will also argue that, apart from the opportunity structures that opened up to sub-state national minorities as an unintended consequence of European integration, their involvement in European policy making and the reinforcement of the mechanisms that make it possible also responds to the impending need of democratizing European institutions.

This hypothesis seems to have been tested with success in some relevant cases - the European discourse of the Scottish and Breton nationalist parties, to quote a couple of

examples, although the focus here was mainly on the anti-European attitudes rather than on nationalistic/territorial claims.

Euskadi would be a particularly interesting testing ground. Being pro-European since the very beginning, PNV (Basque Nationalist Party), that led the governmental coalition from 1980 to 2009, has been adopting a pragmatic strategy through adapting its claims to the renewed context and, despite what some initiatives might suggest (such as the Ibarretxe Plan), has demonstrated a considerable European anchorage. Although the nationalistic project is still there, it has been progressively formulated in a way that is beyond the full sovereignty paradigm and however compatible with the ideas and values of the EU. Therefore, the European integration has moderated the nationalistic demands in a way that they are not only fitting with the European Weltanschauung, but that do not pose an immediate threat to those states that are equally committed to the European project.

This thesis comprises three sections, each dedicated to one of three major areas. The first section deals with sub-state mobilization and nationalism. It shall analyze how these activities relate to the process of integration in Europe, the dynamics of the nation-state in this integration, the sub-state's roles and challenges in Europeanization and the various dangers these relations and dynamics pose for the European continent. The second section shall deal with challenges of European diversity and minority ethnic groups in European integration, and the limitations of European democracy. The third section shall analyze the Basque nationalist movement and its trajectory in light of the arguments outlined in the previous sections.

PART 1.

**SUB-STATE MOBILIZATION, SUB-STATE NATIONALISM
AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION**

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The continental integration of Europe is embedded in the broader process of globalization. Intended as a growing intensification of world connections and interdependences (Guibernau, 2007), it has had a strong impact on the intrastate and interstate relations. While modifying incisively the traditional notion of nation-state in Weberian terms: “a human community that successfully claims the use of physical coercion within a given territory”, it has fragmented the decision locus into a variegated range of layers of government at the supra-state and sub-state level. In doing so, it has created a favourable environment for old and new allegiances and loyalties to persist and to emerge.

In this context, the European Union is one of the most tangible and impacting product of globalization. Started as a peacebuilding initiative among former enemies through a functional, step-by-step cooperation, its ambiguous nature of *sui generis*, open-ended and flexible polity – that has led many scholars to rename it *objet politique non identifié* – has made possible a constant adaptation to the inputs provided by globalizing forces while contributing to their consolidation. The voluntary withdrawal by the Member States from consolidated domains of sovereignty and the authority readjustments that followed seem to have influenced the feelings of belonging of European citizens to a significant degree, in an uneven and not uncontroversial way.

As a consequence of a multiplicity of factors, the process of European integration has led to a transformation and negotiation of identity and self-identification. The resulting identity pattern in the EU is fuzzy. While assisting to a growing polarization of political power at the European level and a devolution to the regional and local layer, the sense is that a volatile feeling of European identity is developing in conjunction with a resilience of deep-rooted identities, based on strong ties of belonging. Nationality still seems to be a powerful device in the formation of shared collective identity and particularly so in the case of national and ethnic minorities.

By breaking the tie between sovereignty and identity, European integration has served as a fertile ground for non-state loyalties to emerge, and, in particular, has provided sub-state nationalisms with an incentive to assert its claims and with a new clothing to advance them. Some scholars have warned about the risks that such resurgence can entail.

The objective of Part 1 is to demonstrate that, given that the process of integration might have triggered potentially destabilizing loyalties, by providing psychological and factual support to sub-state movements, the European Union has also developed the mechanisms to tackle with this issue in a successful and effective way. The research question to which a tentative answer

will be provided is the following: How has the European integration contributed to reframe the sub-state nationalistic claims in a way that is not dangerous for the European project?

First of all, a sketch on the state of health of the nation-state will be drawn in the midst of two overarching and intertwined processes: globalization, on the one hand, and European integration, on the other. The purpose is to identify the spheres where the nation-state is being mostly affected and the way in which this is occurring.

Secondly, an analysis will be conducted on the consequences of state transformations as resulting from the broader change in the European governance. In doing so, the multi-level governance account will be taken as main theoretical paradigm whereby the empowerment of sub-state authorities will be emphasized. In order to provide a comprehensive understanding on the interconnection between European integration and sub-state authorities empowerment, a critical review of the instruments and mechanism of direct representation at disposal of the latter to interact with European institutions will be provided. At the same time, I pretend to show how the multilevel Europe has contributed not only to create, but also to meet, to a considerable degree, the expectations of sub-state authorities.

Thirdly, in the broader framework of sub-state empowerment, the issue of the raise of sub-state nationalism will be addressed as well as the challenge perpetrated against the state capacity to engender and perpetuate national identity and, ultimately, legitimacy. In this context, voice will be given to those arguments that express concern about the consequences of sub-state nationalism on European stability, values, future and democracy and that are particularly pessimistic about the capability of Europe to tackle them. Reasoned counterarguments will be contrasted with the objective to demonstrate that European integration has provided both incentives and regulatory mechanisms to encapsulate sub-state nationalism within the track of moderation and Europeanism.

THE DECLINE OF THE NATION-STATE BETWEEN GLOBALIZATION AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Since the Peace of Westphalia¹, nation-state has been the praxis around which political power used to be organized in order to ensure stability and security within and among European kingdoms and empires and its formula – readjusted to the empirical circumstances – has extended beyond the boundaries of Europe. Over the last decades, however, this status quo has been visibly challenged by a combination of forces that have all contributed to the debilitation – both in the symbolic and tangible aspects – of the nation-state as the only relevant unity in the detention and administration of public authority.

First of all, the rising internationalization of trade relations – especially as global financial markets are concerned – has been influencing not only the economic priorities, but also the political agenda of policy-makers through regulatory policies and authoritative request of compliance.

Secondly and as a response to the unlimited abolition of borders and the unrelenting loss of sovereignty in the economic realm, regional integration has attempted to conciliate the globalizing trends with the pooling of public common interest, by establishing new but broader borders and a new structure of legitimate decision-making (Janowski, 2006). European integration, as it is widely recognized, is the most sophisticated form of regional integration currently existing.

Last and not least, and albeit often understudied and underresearched, there has been another force that concurred significantly to the debilitation of the nation-state. The costs associated to the maintenance of the welfare state, the burdens of the administration and an increasing sub-state activism led most states to a steady decentralization, by devolving increasing competences to lower political or administrative units.

Globalization, on the one hand, and European integration, on the other, as it will be shown later, have pushed this process even further, creating a clear-cut role for sub-state authorities also at the international level, with significant consequences on the identity and loyalty patterns. One of the most striking results has been the relation between majority and minority cultures, that has got particularly affected (Guibernau, 2007).

Deprived from side and core responsibilities by these three interrelated processes, the context in which the state has happened to operate has changed significantly. More specifically, it looks

¹ Although the definition of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 as the moment of birth of nation-state is highly inaccurate, still it is widely employed to refer to the nation and state-building process that has led to the establishment of modern states. In the practice, political power has become to conglomerate around a proper state structure between the late XVIII and XIX centuries.

like that the nation-state is being currently challenged in three crucial aspects: in its sovereignty, in its legitimacy and in its identity.

Before embarking on a more detailed interpretation of the transformations operated by globalization, European integration and sub-state activism to the detriment of the absolute sovereignty of the nation-state, maybe some definitions should be further nuanced. It is often argued that the very significance of the concept of sovereignty is being questioned as well as the new role that the state should perform in detaining it under these new circumstances. The formulation of the state as a legal autonomous entity, completely independent from other states and completely sovereign within its borders belongs more to the state-building rhetoric than to testable reality (Keating, 1997; Tierney, 2005). Such a definition, in fact, fails to depict the complex interdependence that has always encompassed states relations, of which the current version is an evolution into a even more complex one. In brief, an absolute sovereignty in absolute terms has never existed in the practice, and states at some point of their history have often needed to negotiate the terms of its exercise either through international treaties or internal agreements, despite international law has always been quite an ally for the defence of a conception of monolithic sovereignty².

Similarly, the term sovereignty should relinquish the usual elusiveness and adopt a more understandable and workable form, in order to serve as a valid platform to measure state transformations. The distinction between the legal and the political aspect of sovereignty – respectively, competence and capacity – has been an important effort towards the achievement of operationalizing this concept. By doing so, Loughlin neatly separates judicial authority (competence) from its empirical exercise (capacity) and highlights the intrinsic relational nature of sovereignty (Tierney, 2005).

The variegated economic-political dynamic known by the name of globalization, for instance, is highly deterritorialized and has been affecting in the first place the capacity aspect of state sovereignty rather than its competence. In few words, globalization has modified the concrete exercise of state authority, which now requires a broad network of interrelations and transnational support to be fully effective, without impinging the authoritative sphere. European integration, instead, has been working towards the detriment of the very authority of the state, leading to a centralization and contemporarily to a territorial redistribution of political power. As Keating (2007) observes, by constituting a legal order that coexists with statal ones, encouraging pluralism and exercising a coordinative function, European integration has

² Several milestone principles of international law demonstrate its tangible state-biased attitude, such as the right to territorial integrity.

challenged the traditional claim that democracy can only function in nationally homogeneous territories, opening up a breach into the traditional sovereignty doctrine.

Starting with the Coal and Steel Community in 1951 up to the establishment of a Common Foreign and Defence Policy, states have been requested to delegate the administration of crucial issues – economy, security – to supranational and international actors that could perform their tasks more efficiently in an interdependent world. In addition to that, European states have been also expected to denationalize values and rights that have been traditionally under firm national control, including citizenship³. Saskia Sassen (2006) rightly emphasizes the importance historically attached by the states to the right of citizenship, preferably centred in exclusive allegiance, and their reluctant acceptance of dual nationalities.

The problem with sub-state authorities is, instead, even more complex, as their empowerment seems to have inferred both the competence and the capacity aspects of state sovereignty. By relying on the changed circumstances whereby state sovereignty is redeployed as an effect of globalization and on the increased domains of authority acquired by devolution, their action cross-cuts the territorialized and the deterritorialized dimensions, representing a drive for potential instability and a threat to state authority.

In withdrawing from its function of unique right-granter and reference of authority to the advantage of international and European institutions as well as sub-state authorities, the state has given up to a vital tool for loyalty engendering. This is, in particular, the case of multinational states, where lavishing rights has worked as a good replacement for strong cultural teaser to integrate reluctant minorities (Guibernau, 2007). Such a shift in the perception of the role of the state, therefore, has eroded the role of the state even beyond the sovereignty aspect and has had rebounds on the sense of affiliation and allegiance of the population.

In fact, a part from the assessable effects that can be detected as a result of these three intervening processes, other non-tangible events have concurred to debilitate the state formula. The loss of prestige in the aftermath of the II World War in economic, political and military terms

³ In this regard, the introduction in the Maastricht Treaty of the citizenship of the European Union, endowed with a specific set of rights complementing national citizenship that was further extended in the Amsterdam Treaty, has been a symbolic breakthrough in the state monopole as supreme right granter. Partly as a consequences of the tensions occurred with respect to the opportunity of creating a second-class citizenship in the European Union, the wording of the definition of EU citizenship in the Lisbon Treaty reports that it “ (...) is additional and does not replace national citizenship” (art. 20 TEFU). Although the rights associated to it are mostly thin rights – such as standing for elections to the European Parliament, having access to official documentation, address to the European institutions in the mother tongue – EU citizenship however does have consequences on how state authorities treat their subjects, especially in the area of equal treatment and freedom of movement (Schrauwen, 2009). Therefore, it seems that a notion of citizenship in purely state terms has been overcome as a consequence of the introduction of EU citizenship, even if a proper trade-off between the two can be hardly formulated as a credible hypothesis. This shift, however, seems to have modified citizens' perception of the state as unique source of allegiance, and, consequently, their identity might have resulted affected.

(Smith, 1981) associated to the growing incapability to deliver a coherent and solid identity reference to the population have seriously affected the capacity of the state to generate legitimacy. As Lipset puts it, 'Legitimacy involves the capacity of the [political] system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society' (Lipset, 1960). The perception of inadequacy and inability to perform the tasks traditionally connected with sovereignty has led to a gradual delegitimization of the nation-state as an institution.

The legitimacy problems faced by the state have conveyed also an additional sensitive issue to cope with. Historically, political legitimacy has been correlated with homogeneous national identity: the equation between the state and the nation and vice versa is an aberration of the French Revolution. Intrinsically intertwined, state-building – conceived as strengthening and empowerment of state institutions, controlling a consolidated territory, depending on a centralized autonomous structure that exercises the monopoly of violence on the rest of the population (Tilly, 1975) – and nation-building – the process of socialization that aims at instilling and fostering an homogeneous national identity – have been mutually supportive processes that led to the establishment of the nation-state. With the withdrawal from crucial competences of the statehood and the consequent delegitimization as an institution, it is reasonable to expect that the state would also suffer also in its capacity as identity reference. While the relation between the citizen and the state progressively weakened, the capacity of the state of instilling an homogeneous identity and of perpetuating the invention of the nation has waned accordingly.

Last but not least, in a given historical period, resorting to war to solve territorial and dynasty disputes has been functional to organize authority in a centralized and hierarchical way. Therefore, the conception of sovereignty as a solid and indivisible block was primarily a military necessity. War has been traditionally an efficient tool for national identity to consolidate and transform a multinational conglomerate into a systemic and coherent unity. Smith (1981) regards it as a crucial maker of identity whereby ethnic consciousness results crystallized. By radicalizing the context of the choice, it limits the options of belonging to the "us versus them" formula (Hobsbawm, 1992). The state legitimization usually grounds on the proud defence of the state institutions operated by the state against the enemies. Europe has been the primary context where national identity has been first generated, consolidated and reproduced through war.

Almost all the documents on which the legitimacy of nation-state is grounded date back to the period between 1840 and 1919 and base on a particular version of national history, accurately re-interpreted and re-written, in light of the hegemony acquired by a given group on others. French nation is the result of the gradual ascent of the population of Ile de France to the detriment of Bretagne, Bourgogne, Corsica, Provence; Spanish nation is the product of the

expansion of the Castilian population at the costs of Catalans, Basques, Andalusians and so on (Romano, 1992).

It stands to reason that the circumstances whereby European integration took origin and its proclaimed objectives – democracy, perpetual peace, cooperation, toleration and togetherness – are at odds with the traditional conceptions of political legitimacy linked up with the preservation of an homogeneous identity. In a cooperative scheme where cooperation is the most advantageous option, state sovereignty loses its supremacy as the regulatory principle of internal and international relations.

Too small to articulate authority in such a way as to provide valid solutions for increasingly transnational problems, and too big to provide a homogeneous and immediate identity reference to all the citizens, nation-states have been progressively withdrawing from their traditional functions.

There are, however, contrasting views on the state of health of the nation-state. Some would not hesitate to proclaim its death (Hobsbawm, 1990), implying that the world is proceeding towards a blurred stateless order. On the other hand, others would reject this assumption, grounding on the evidence that states are still the most important actors of the international and national arenas and that nation-state is not declining, not even as a political project. Sub-state nationalism, it is argued, pursues political strategies aimed to a nationhood grounded on statehood. Thereby, it would be contradictory to claim that a formula is weakening when it still works as a powerful drive of political mobilization.

Virtue stands in the middle; therefore both positions should be nuanced. First of all, a distinction is due. As Connor wisely advises (1978), the two concepts of state and nation-state are not interchangeable, and it has been such a confusion that has enhanced so many state-biased approaches on the study of political institutions. The fact that the nation-state has been wounded to death does not automatically mean that the very state formula should be dismissed. Instinctively, in fact, it would be at least a perfunctory reaction to celebrate the funeral of the nation-state and the state altogether.

The state *per se*, in fact, is still very resilient in many aspects of the administration of the authority and is the key international actor, although not the only one, as it used to be. It still retains the ultimate say on vital domains and plays an important role in mediating international instances and local implementation and, to certain extent, it is even desirable that will continue to be acting this way.

Nation-state can be defined⁴ as a set of sovereign political institutions that grounds its political legitimacy on serving a sovereign nation. While the totality of European states were organized around the nation-state formula until the end of II World War, in those states that were manifestly of a multinational nature, an attempt to overcome it has passed through Constitutional reconfiguration towards a more favourable accommodation of national minorities. Such a process, however, invested Europe unevenly and was mainly dependant on the resilience of sub-state identities where the nation-state-building homogenization had been relatively unsuccessful. Also where an agreement between the majority and the minority groups has been achieved and the nation-state has ceased to serve as the standard backbone of political power, the nation-state formula has not been completely overcome at least from a symbolic viewpoint. State nationalism is one of the harshest hindrances to the furthering of European integration.

For these reasons, it seems more adequate to look at the phenomenon from a two-faceted perspective: state transformation and nation-state resilience. While states, conceived as mere institutions, have undergone a process of sovereignty re-adaptation under the effect of globalizing and regionalizing trends, nation-states, intended as culturally and ethnically grounded political unity, have borne most of the burden of such readjustment, by withdrawing from the monopole of identity and legitimacy in favour of other actors, without, however, succumbing once for all.

⁴ A scientific and uncontroversial definition of nation-state is hard to find in the literature. Here a working definition is employed that widely suffices the explicatory aspirations of the paragraph.

From the broad perspective of state transformation, European states, in particular, have undergone a process of profound restructuring in their recent history. Sharing with most of the states from the other continents the challenges posed by globalization and regional integration, they had to face a much more intense process of competences centralization towards the creation of a truly supra-national entity. It is widely recognized, indeed, that European Union is the most sophisticated and pervasive example of regional integration currently existing. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that many attempts have been put in place over the last decades to design a suitable theoretical approach on the study of European integration that would provide a descriptive and predictive-normative account.

In the context of International Relations Theories, the debate between neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism has been widely dominant.

The basic argument of classical intergovernmentalists (Hoffmann, 1966) is that the European integration is the product of a voluntary action of sovereignty of the states and that suprastate institutions have been established to facilitate agreements and consensus among the members. The resulting outcome is nothing but the reflection of the interests and relative power of national governments' bargaining. States still remain, consequently, the most important actors in national and international politics. A thought-provoking perspective from the intergovernmentalist perspective is offered by Milward. In *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*, he argues that not only has European integration not debilitated the autonomy of the states, but it has actually contributed to reinforce its capacity to attain the desired goals. It has been a process functional to the reorganization of the nation-state as main reference point of European politics, a sort of upgrading of its capacities to tackle successfully upcoming challenges.

In the effort to catch up with more concrete everyday politics situations, liberal intergovernmentalism (Moravcsik, 1995) insists on the importance of national arenas for the interaction between interest groups and the government, that is the only framework where they could have their voice heard (domestic preference formation).

On the other hand, neo-functionalism (Haas, 1964) is a non-normative, empirically based and multi-faceted theory of European integration, that assumes a transfer of authority from the declining nation-states in favour of the consolidation of suprastate institutions. Its central concept is the functional spill-over: once national governments undertook the first steps of the integration, the process slipped away from their control and went much further than what they had anticipated. In this view, the interconnections generated within one sector would have had a positive spill-over effect on other sectors and interest groups would play a strategic role as

potential future beneficiaries, claiming a direct engagement. In this framework, the European Commission is endowed with the privilege of supervising and eliciting the integration process, acquiring genuine autonomy from the Member States and working as a drive for further integration, laying the foundation for a suprastate governing structure.

Nor intergovernmentalism neither neo-functionalism, however, managed to provide a comprehensive account on one of the most striking phenomenon that accompanied the process of integration, that is, sub-state mobilization. Since the mid-80s, however, an innovative and eclectic approach has emerged. As part of a wider revisionist governance based approach on the study of European integration, multilevel governance seems particularly adequate in light of the nature of the *objet politique non-identifié* subject-matter of its study.

Governance is a broad concept which entails a public or private collectivity making demands, pursuing policies, generating compliance by employing formal and informal mechanisms for the achievement of collective goods. Governance is a more inclusive and encompassing model of coordination that emphasizes the process over the institution. Sharing with other theories of governance the prediction of the progressive dismissal of state powers, Multi-level governance contextualizes it in the framework of the European Union and firmly anchors its findings to the studies of European integration. At the same time, it serves both as an analytical model to understand the interaction of different tiers of government and its results on everyday politics and as a normative concept that governs the allocation of authority and influences formal political relations. Differently from intergovernmentalism and neo-functionalism, more than an attempt to explain and describe the integration process, Multi-level governance is interested in drawing conclusions on the observation of its functioning.

The theory, sketched in 1993 as a description of “the dispersion of authoritative decision-making across multiple territorial levels” (Marks in Sbragia, 1992: 192) and further consolidated at a later moment by Marks and Hooghe (2000), depicts a situation whereby in the last decades, European politics has been re-shaped by the concurrence of two contrasting drives: centralization at the supra-state level and decentralization within the Member States. Differently from the process of centralization that has led to state-building, European integration is characterized by a centrifugal reallocation of authority and competences, where an open-ended, multilevel polity is emerging.

Such a reallocation takes shape in terms of territorial adjustment and has had the objective to maximize the excellence of the performances of public actors in tackling with increasingly complex challenges, which could not be faced adequately by the centralized nation-state of the XIX century. Contrarily to Milward’s prediction, however, the development of European integration has been posing several problems to the autonomy and the authority of the state: in

the course of time, the state domination on policy and decision making has considerably weakened and its sphere of influence drastically constrained whereas supra-state and sub-state actors have been reinforcing by extending their competences to more domains whereas mutually interacting.

The multi-level structure of the European Union is believed to have found a favourable breeding ground in the principles that have been inspiring its planning and design.

Although the founding treaties do not specifically address how such competences should be attributed, the institutional arrangement clearly suggests that the supra-state level (EU) is only called for a direct intervention within the limits made explicit there (principle of conferral). In addition to it, the practical application of the competences has to fulfil the principle of subsidiarity: the Union should only take actions, a part from those areas that are of its exclusive competences, only when a certain activity cannot be delivered by Member States, at the national, regional and local level⁵.

The principle of subsidiarity, shaped around the Catholic social doctrine, was initially identified as one of the cornerstone of the next-to-come EU and a palatable criterion for competence repartition in the mid 70s⁶. Approximately ten years later, it was relaunched by Jacques Delors during an official speech uttered in front of the prime ministers of German Laender, about the importance of redistributing the competences in such a way, so that the decision-making process would be as close as possible to the citizen level.

Another criterion that has largely inspired the activity of European institutions is the principle of proportionality. As a complementary tool to subsidiarity, it provides for the necessity to proportionate the means to the objectives to accomplish, in order to put in place the least intrusive intervention compatible with a successful outcome⁷.

The Protocol on the Application of the Principles of Subsidiarity and Proportionality provides for a more in-depth illustration of their implementation in practice. The Protocol, originally attached to the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997, provides that in its activity of proposing legislations to the European Council, the EC "... should consult widely..." and "...take into account the regional

⁵Art. 5.2 of the Treaty on European Union (consolidated version): "Under the principle of subsidiarity, in areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Union shall act only in and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, either at central level or at regional and local level, but can rather, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved at the Union level".

⁶ The principle of subsidiarity is probably mentioned for the first time in an official report of the European Commission in 1975, in the framework of the debate on the European Union during the Paris Meeting in 1972, see G. Falcon (ed), *Dimensione comunitaria europea e realtà regionale nella prospettiva dell'Unione Europea*, Regione Autonoma Trentino-Alto Adige, Trento, 1994, page 462

⁷ Art. 5.4 of the Treaty on European Union (consolidated version)

and local dimension of the action envisaged⁸. Monitoring on the compliance of the legislation with the two principles is attributed to national parliaments, which, in turn, may find appropriate to consult with regional parliaments with legislative powers⁹. In case of infringement, the Court of Justice of the EU can be resorted to by Member States. The consolidated version of the Protocol, attached to the Lisbon Treaty, has eventually allowed also the Committee of Regions to do so within the limits of its competences¹⁰.

Within multi-level governance, two main strands of research can be identified, one emphasizing the centralization of powers in favour of the EU and the other stressing the decentralization aspect.

The latter is particularly inspiring for the purpose of this research, as its objective has been to emphasize the multi-tier dimension of the European polity, depicting it as a new political opportunity structure (Keating) for new actors to get involved. In this framework, a particular emphasis is given to the sub-state level as a consequence of the Reform of the Structural Funds in 1988, which doubled the financial assistance previously allocated to regional development and operated a drastic change in the European institutions-states way of relating. As a matter of fact, the funds were started¹¹ being administrated according to four principles: 1.additionality-2.concentration-3.partnership-4.programming. Although its specifically targeted and technical nature, this reform was indeed revolutionary and crucial for the furthering of self-confidence and self-awareness of sub-state authorities. In combination with the others, the partnership principle introduced the first breach into the monolithic separation of international and domestic politics. While aiming at maximizing the effect of the Cohesion Policy to consolidate the territorial integration and get prepared for a further enlargement, it indirectly allowed for an increased and formally recognized role of sub-state authorities, associating them to the ascendant phase (policy formulation) and even more to the descendent phase (implementation). The principle, in fact, required a close cooperation and consultation among the European Commission, the Member States and the sub-state authorities affected, at the regional and local level.

It is in this context that, since the 1980s, the enthusiasm about the involvement of sub-state authorities arose growing expectations, culminating with the idea that a “Europe of the Regions” as a possible alternative to the intergovernmental design of European Union would be next to

⁸ Art.2, Protocol on the Application of the Principles of Subsidiarity and Proportionality

⁹ Art. 5, Ibidem

¹⁰ Art. 8, Ibidem, and Art. 230 of the Treaty on the Functioning of European Union (Lisbon Treaty) and Refer to to 3.1

¹¹ Before the enforcement of the 1988 reform, in fact, the Cohesion Policy funds were administered directly by the Member States, according to their priorities, set at the national level.

come. This concept, anticipated by authors such as Denis de Rougemont or Guy Heraud, that, basing on federalist premises, emphasized the crucial role of regions in recuperating the civic community (the former) and their nature of fundamental constituencies in view of an ethnic federation (the latter), took more concrete and recent shape in the late 80s following the failed attempt of the Prime Minister of Bavaria, Max Steibl, to establish a permanent forum where Constitutionally, politically and economically strong regions would convene and agree on shared strategies.

However, the prediction that regions would replace the states as primary actors of the European integration did not turn out true. They certainly do not constitute simply administrative units subject to the decisions of the central state and that European integration has much to do with this. However, the current of affairs clearly shows that the role of the regions has increased but within the competences and the boundaries of their institutional mandates. The more realistic hypothesis, that partly coincides with the indications provided by Multi-level governance, suggests that European integration is evolving towards a Europe with the Regions (Borras-Alomar, Christiansen and Rodriguez-Pose, 1994).

Nonetheless, the direct involvement of sub-state authorities in the planning and the implementation of the Cohesion Policy undoubtedly entailed an increasing institutionalization of their relations with EC officials and a strengthened presence at the European level. However, the assumption that sub-state authorities would serve as the European Commission's natural allies to foster the EC agenda, creating a state of permanent tension with Member States that would otherwise attempt to challenge it (Toemmel, 1998) has not been confirmed by empirical evidence. The political leverage of sub-state actors, however, got certainly increased by a considerable variety of channels of direct interest representation, which allowed them to be up-to-date on the activities and initiatives of the European Union and contemporaneously to influence European policies from within. Sub-state activism demonstrably increased. Transnational and inter-regional cooperation is often viewed as a result of the adaptation of the sub-state authorities to the enlargement of the domains of increasing transnational nature (such as environment and transport) where to deploy their authority in the new European space.

One of the greatest merits of the research framework provided by multilevel governance has been indeed to unveil the positive relation between European integration and sub-state mobilization.

On the one hand, it has highlighted that one of the most striking effects of translating internally relevant issues to a supra-state authority has been to empty the concepts of foreign and domestic policy from their traditional meanings. As the integration process intensifies, the scope of the policies that were included into the regulatory capacity of the EU has widened and the

major share of public policies is now covered by it. States had to adapt to the new situation by shifting the responsibility of EU policies follow-up from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to an ad hoc governmental department charged with EU related matters.

On the other, and as a consequence of the former, it has spelled out in clear terms the mobilization of sub-state authorities, stressing their increased influence and control on the formulation and outcomes of policy and decision making and not merely in terms of increased participation. It makes a point of the fact that it is the decision locus that has shifted from an exclusive and institutionally structured decision making mechanism in the context of a sovereign state to a multi-layered system of complementary authority holders and sub-state authorities have a share in it. European integration, by promoting their direct engagement with supranational institutions, has provided them with a clear-cut role and an appealing incentive for mobilization, within and beyond the state boundaries.

As it has been mentioned, however, another strand within multi-level governance tends to emphasize the process of centralization of power towards the supranational level (Scott, 2005; Jeffery, 2007) and therefore downsizes the role played by European integration in enhancing sub-state mobilization and their ultimate impact on European policy making.

Primarily, Jeffery (2000) rightly criticizes the top-down approach employed to describe the involvement of sub-state authorities into the realm of European politics and attributes a remarkable relevance to the struggle conducted by sub-state authorities within the state aimed at increasing their political leverage and designing a reconfiguration of the relation between the center and the periphery in such a way that would be more favourable to the latter¹².

It should also be noted that the performance of sub-state authorities in active politics at the European level is not homogeneous – both in terms of instruments employed and results achieved, but it seems to vary in accordance to the Constitutional provisions at the state level. In broad terms, the external activity of sub-state authorities has proved to be more intense, the more the state they are embedded is decentralized (Hooghe, 1996). Similarly, Jeffery (2000) emphasizes a number of circumstances that contribute to create a favourable breeding ground for sub-state authorities to be mobilized: first of all, their Constitutional relevance within the member state, then the quality of intergovernmental relations within the state, the level of

¹² Some groups of sub-state authorities, in particular, have been extremely active supporting and enhancing this process and were not simply spectators. Their determination has been sometimes crucial to operate key changes in European political jargon and practice. For instance, the expression European Domestic Policy is largely due to the lobbying work carried out by German Laender and others. With the extension of the competences translated up to the European level as of the Maastricht Treaty, their claim was about classifying EU policies as domestic policies — establishing the principle that sub-state authorities should be involved in EU policy making in accordance to the competences held at the national level.

entrepreneurship and other symbolic sources providing legitimacy to their action, such as intangible variables, including the level of territorial attachment. As a consequence, the status that sub-authorities achieve internally, combined with other favourable circumstances and suitable characteristics, determines their capacity to influence on European politics.

As the integration process deepens, it is argued, sub-state authorities have tended to oppose resistance to the European Commission, particularly in the arena of regulatory policy (the vast majority of EU policies). As a matter of fact, not only do these kinds of policies not provide for additional funds and resources, but quite often reduce dramatically both their competence over them as well as their margin of manoeuvre. This is particularly true in those cases whereby sub-state authorities hold legislative power and where exclusive or co-decision power is the common practice at the national level.

In a recent, exciting work, Jeffery (2007) has provided evidence of this. In their effort of promoting their interests at the EU level, the strongest category of sub-state authorities endowed with legislative powers seems to have followed a three-stage strategy pattern: (Plan A) at the beginning, a formal recognition as a third level governance was pursued, in particular by regions with a substantial economic differential and a strong sub-state identity. This effort culminated with the establishment of the Committee of the Regions and the attribution of a disappointing advisory role in the EU decision-making process. Secondly, (Plan B) regions with favourable intergovernmental dynamics (especially in Germany, Austria and Belgium) sought a better coordination with the central government, by exercising the rights – Constitutionally granted – to contribute to the formation of the position to take on EU matters. In third place, as an attempt not to lose further control over traditional competences without a foreseen concrete compensation of formal influence on the decision-making process at the EU level, (Plan C) a defensive attitude has been adopted to avoid that further competences would be attributed to the supra-state level. During the preparatory work of the Constitutional Treaty, demands have been repeatedly advanced, which culminated in the request of re-nationalizing some policies and reinforcing national parliamentary control on the principle of subsidiarity by establishing an 'early warning system'.

The access to the EU decision-making fora, moreover, is more formal than real. The centralizing structure of the EU has forbidden that an authoritative voice of the sub-state level is incorporated into the decisions taken in the Council of Ministers, even after the alteration of the composition of the delegations representing the states with the Maastricht Treaty, which has allowed also regional representatives to participate but not to intervene as representatives of themselves. There is, in addition, a growing deception about the institutional trajectory marked by the Committee of Regions over the last few years.

The emphasis has shifted from demanding increasing participatory status in EU policy making to reinforcing regional autonomy within the state.

More recently, Carter and Pasquier (2006) have highlighted the limitedness of these two approaches, as they revealed to be too deterministic in their conclusions and they were overlooking other significant aspects of what they have called 'regional political capacity'. In order to capture the variations in the sub-state proactiveness at the European level in a more comprehensive way, they have widened the set of variables employed. To the traditional ones – such as regional type, resources, relations with central government- they also propose participation in inter-regional networks, politicization of regional identity and ideology of EU polity-building, which enrich the analysis on sub-state engagement with important symbolic suggestions. Whereas the participation in inter-regional networks can have positive psychological effects on regional political entrepreneurs by raising their political leverage, the EU stands as an opportunity to amplify regionalist and nationalist claims with a fancy political dressing. The perspective on European integration and EU polity is, moreover, an important aspect that can spur or refrain sub-state authorities from engagement.

Albeit unevenly, in an inhomogeneous way and with variegated results, sub-state authorities did mobilize and did contribute to a reconfiguration of the territorial perception of European integration. In the contingent case of Europe, in fact, not only has territory not been deterritorialized per effect of globalizing trends, but has actually acquired a new, even more rooted form. It is what Keating (1998) effectively calls new regionalism, which has been favoured by the internationalization of the market.

European integration has embedded sub-state authorities in an overarching market (Alesina, Perotti and Spolaore, 1995) and, from a mere cost-benefits viewpoint, belonging to a bigger unity has progressively become less advantageous for them. In an increasingly interdependent world, states cannot define a national interest that could be reasonably acceptable by sub-state authorities, that have started to identify more profitable channels to gain access to the global market (Paquin, 2002; Jolly, 2004). In addition to that, regions turned to be the optimum economic unit in terms of competitiveness and appeal for foreign investors. Consequently, they have started to make their own way into the international arena in order to protect their own regional interests in the outer world, breaching the traditional monopole of states as far as international representation is concerned.

The following section will give an account of the institutional and non institutional channels – the opportunity structure – that sub-state authorities have been profiting thanks to the new space created by the European integration, bearing in mind the complexity of reality and the failure to capture its essence with too deterministic tools.

SUB-STATE PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN EUROPE: THE RISE OF PARADIPLMACY

As shown, states have been relinquishing some crucial functions that were previously performed in regime of monopole. One of the most striking and visible effects of the mobilization of the sub-state authorities has been undoubtedly their direct engagement in the international arena. This phenomenon, better known by the definition of paradiplomacy, has been expanding and consolidating over the last decades also beyond the boundaries of Europe.

The internationalization of a wide range of political domains at the global level has made that the international representation performed by the state and the classic concept of state diplomacy has changed. States are requested to cooperate with increasing intensity within supranational, international and transnational platforms as the very nature of the problems to be faced – terrorism, environment, trade – is out of their control and the solution out of their reach. While the activism of the sub-state level at the international level is not a new phenomenon, it has been greatly magnified as the frontier between international and domestic policies have been progressively disappearing per effect of globalization and internationalization.

A logical connection can be easily identified between the two-fold need for the sub-state level to project externally in order to remain competitive in the wide international market and to extend the capacity to fully exercise their competences in a widened scenario beyond the constraints imposed by an old-fashioned conception of international relations. Although the motivations, the strategies and the channels adopted to implement their external activity are influenced by many concurring factors, it would be wrong to relegate it as a Europe-based and flavoured phenomenon. Evidence shows that it has affected significantly also other areas of the world that have fully integrated in the globalized economic system. This is the case of US, Australia and Canada, for instance, where Quebec paradiplomacy has been a long-standing benchmark for many scholars interested in the study and the analysis of the external activity of sub-state actors.

In Europe, however, the engagement of the regional level with European institutions has acquired peculiar traits as a consequence of the process of integration. As a matter of fact, the activity of sub-state actors has been shaping around the complex and articulated political system emerging from the interaction between European institutions and states, on the one hand, and between the different layers of government within the states. Therefore, a part from mere paradiplomacy – the formalized action of sub-state actors in the international realm – the focus of sub-state governments has been to secure an effective participation in the decision-making process within an interrelated institutional pattern (Aldecoa, 2000:84).

While regions can count on a wide institutional framework where to represent their interests and interact formally with European institutions, there is also a relevant informal aspect of their activities, which can be essentially brought back to lobbying and networking. Because of the complexity of the issue and the overlapping in the performance of the interests representation – either in person or in role - , it is obvious that this distinction turns out helpful for analytical purposes, but does not reflect everyday political practice.

As a consequence, the different channels of direct interests' representation of sub-state authorities in the EU will be presented according to a spectrum, departing from the most formal, institutionalized interaction to the least structured one. More specifically, the description will be outlined according to the following order: Committee of the Regions, Council of Ministers, European networks and associations, the Regional Brussels Offices and the lobbying activities carried out with European Commission and European Parliament.

The Committee of the Regions

The most institutionalized structure for regional representation currently available at the EU level is the **Committee of the Regions (CoR)**, established by the Maastricht Treaty in 1994. The CoR represented the climax of the relaunch of the European institutions inaugurated by Jacques Delors in his capacity of President of the European Commission. This process was conducted at the expenses of states: the increased complexity of the system at the EU level prompted a more visible role for regional authorities, while the tendency towards decentralization within Member States was growing. German Laender and Belgium were determinant to the purpose of establishing a third level chamber, frightened as they were by an implementation of the regional policy at the central level. The Assembly of European Regions (AER) provided a crucial lobbying support.

Before then, regional and local authorities could count on a very opaque representation of their interests. The Consultative Council of Regional and Local Authorities (CCRLA) was established in 1988 by the European Commission urged by the European Parliament, in light of the opportunity to associate sub-state authorities for the elaboration and implementation of policies addressed to them. However, the CCRLA did not have any real representative function, as it was composed entirely by members selected by the European Commission and without any commitment to any specific regional government. In addition, they could exercise their advisory function only when specifically requested by the European Commission and their opinions did not have any binding effects.

On the contrary, the establishment of the CoR was a significant step forward for the recognition of regions as relevant subjects in the EU arena. The mandate of the CoR covers quite a wide

spectrum of issues, including economic and social cohesion, transnational cooperation, public health, education and culture ¹³ as well as vocational training, social policy, environment, employment and transportation¹⁴. For all the aforementioned matters, the Council and the EC are required to ask and take into due account the opinions expressed by the CoR when drafting related policies; and, in case it is esteemed necessary, the CoR can express opinions on any other area that is potentially relevant at the regional level. Again, they are never binding. The Lisbon Treaty – which entered into force on December 1st, 2009 – provides the CoR with the right to appeal to the European Court of Justice to invalidate a legislative proposal in which the CoR should have been involved by virtue of its competences but was not¹⁵.

Grounding on the principle of subsidiarity, proximity and partnership, the CoR is currently composed by 344 elected representatives from the regional and the local level¹⁶, proposed by their Member States according to differentiated selection procedures.

The academic literature almost unanimously agrees to downsize the effective influence that the CoR has on EU policies.

First of all, the CoR is not a European institution and is not built on the same legal basis as the Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament and in no way does it complement the principle of territorial representation on the same basis as the Council. Moreover, its composition and functioning were subject to a number of limitations that reduced its autonomy further: the selection of representatives was left to Member States, some resources had to be shared with the Economic and Social Council, the internal procedures had to be chosen by the Council etc. (Loughlin in Jeffery, 2000). Although those restrictions have been mitigated overtime, there are other structural flaws that severely affect its effectiveness.

The heterogeneity and the fragmentation of the membership have been the hardest obstacles for the creation of stable alliances. In particular, Thomas Christiansen (1996) has highlighted five cross-cutting areas of structural division: a) local versus regional representation; b) left versus right parties; c) industrial regions versus rural regions; d) executive regionalism versus deliberative regionalism and e) northern versus southern regions. While surprisingly detecting that the relation between the local and regional level – even if not completely unproblematic –

¹³ Competences assigned to the CoR by the Maastricht Treaty, 1992

¹⁴ Competences assigned to the CoR by the Amsterdam Treaty, 1997

¹⁵ Art. 8, Protocol on the Application of the Principles of Subsidiarity and Proportionality, Lisbon Treaty, 2009

¹⁶ The Maastricht Treaty (Art. 263) initially provided that the CoR should be composed by representative of regional and local bodies; it is the Nice Treaty (2000) that made that its members should hold a regional or local authority electoral mandate.

has not translated into an opposition of the two blocks, the major clash has occurred between regions holding a different degree of Constitutional and legal responsibilities, also within the same country¹⁷.

Nevertheless, it cannot be ignored that the establishment of the CoR is the result of a compromise, with the objective of ensuring the broadest representation compatible with the wide variety of sub-state entities existing in Europe (Loughlin). The fact that some countries – such as Greece, Portugal, France, UK at that time – were not territorially organized around strong political regions in line with federal or regional states made that the relevance of the latter has been considerably diluted.

Although the CoR has not fulfilled the expectations of those that had conceived it as a third level governance and the institutional result of an incipient Europe of the Regions, it however seems to have been performing efficiently the representative, the advisory and the symbolic functions.

The accomplishment of the first and the second functions may be well demonstrated respectively (1) by the greater consensus among local and regional authorities between them rather than between them and their national governments and (2) by the great number of opinions expressed – also outside the realm of its competences (Carrol, 1994).

The symbolic function can be defined as the true added value of the CoR to EU institutional structure. Since the panorama of sub-state interest is extremely fragmented and the incorporation of the CoR's opinions into EU legislation can be hardly assessed¹⁸ the role of the CoR appears particularly consolidated in the tasks that contribute the legitimization of the EU. The coordination role played in the framework of the "Structured Dialogue" with the associations of regional and local authorities has facilitated their participation in the EU policy making. The establishment of the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network, that made the CoR a key facilitator of subsidiarity related information in Europe (November 2005) and the Forward Studies Unit (September 2008), that promotes the debate on Multi-level governance, are some of the initiatives that convey the idea of the CoR as guardian of the principle of subsidiarity in the EU. Related to that, the discrepancy between academics – more sceptical – and practitioners – more optimistic, makes sense in that the focus of the evaluation shifts from a merely institutional to a more comprehensive perspective, that takes under serious consideration also the "soft" power.

¹⁷ It has been the case, among others, of regions within countries organized around an asymmetrical federalism, such as Spain (Basque Country, Catalonia) and Italy (Trentino-Alto Adige, Valle d'Aosta etc.).

¹⁸ Because of the fragmentation of the membership, the opinions of the CoR are mostly very general recommendations about the opportunity to take the regional and local dimensions into due account, see T. Christiansen (1999).

The Council of Ministers

Another opportunity for a direct regional involvement provided by the Maastricht Treaty (art. 146) grants the Member States with the right to include regional representatives into the national delegation to the **Council of Ministers**, the main decisional body of the EU.

The access is however normally restricted to Constitutionally stronger regions, as the rank of the regional representatives should be up to the ministerial level. The faculty of enlarging the composition of the delegation is granted to Member States, which usually perform in accordance with the domestic institutional arrangements. In the practice, only federate constituencies in federal countries such as Germany, Austria and Belgium had the possibility to resort to this channel of representation. In a later moment, also Spain has decided to open up such possibility, but with scarce and contested results.

The influence that the mere presence of the regional delegates can have on the national delegation during Council negotiations should not be disregarded (Jeffery, 2007: Tatham, 2008: 500-5001) and their credibility and bargaining power – both in face of European institutions and central states – result enhanced. Still, they are not allowed to represent any regional interests, being the national (state) position the only one permitted.

The same goes for the inclusion of regional delegates in the **Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER)**, that performs a key role in the preparatory work of the Council meetings.

It follows that the participation of the regional delegates turns out to be the result of the negotiations proceeding from an intra-state mechanism and have a little to do with a genuine representation of regional interest in the context of the EU.

European Networks and Associations

Regional and local associations at the European level started as an informal instrument of public politics during the decade of the 70s. These were initial attempts aimed at concluding specific projects and activities related to sub-state development. Further to this first wave, there has been a progressive institutionalization of these networks, which has been accompanied by a proportional increase of their interventions and of their political weight. A part from those associations that promote sectoral interests at the European level, that will be dealt with thoroughly later, there are at least two significant exceptions that promote more general goals: the **Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE)**, that gives the voice to Europe's regions and municipalities from the Council of Europe countries, and the **Assembly of**

European Regions (AER), that brings together over 270 Regions from 33 countries and 13 interregional organisations. Even if the assessment of the activities of these networks is not uncontroversial (Jeffery, 2000; 5), the AER in particular has a authoritative voice and was functional in addressing regional concerns before the CoR was created. It played a crucial role in the 1992 Intergovernmental Conference that has led to the Maastricht Treaty when its establishment was eventually ratified. In addition to it, it is a fundamental point of reference for the association of interregional cooperation. Accused of defending the interests of weaker regions at the expenses of the stronger ones, its authority was unsuccessfully challenged in the early 1990s by the Conference of the Europe of the Regions. Although the variegated membership within AER might have weakened the potentiality of Constitutionally well equipped regions, the policy objective was quite ambitious and aimed to advance the involvement of regions in the decision-making process at the EU level; on the contrary, the Conference tended to fall back towards the fortress of regional competences.

Like the CoR, also regional associations perform a non-institutional advisory function and undoubtedly represent a resourceful pool of information for the European Commission during policies elaboration. The more the associations represent sectoral interests, the more they will be so. As a matter of fact, most of these associations partake in the Structured Dialogue with the European Commission and the CoR as its main facilitator. The structured dialogue, whose functioning is regulated by the Communication from the European Commission on the Dialogue with the associations of regional and local authorities on the formulation of European Union policy (COM(2003) 811 final), has a two-fold objective: on the one hand, it aims to consult with regional and local associations before leading off the formal decisional process, with the belief that the viewpoints provided would be meaningful; on the other, it helps define with more clarity EU political orientations and make them more transparent and understandable to the citizens. The structured dialogue is organized around an annual plenary session, where general issues are mainly debated, and sectoral sessions, dealing with specific matters.

Although the institutional status of these associations is relatively weak compared to that of the CoR and their outreach capacity is limited, still they represent a very flexible and agile instrument to influence EU policy, especially for weaker regions, that could hardly access to consultations with the EU institutions by themselves.

The establishment of the CoR, which AER rightly celebrated as one of its major achievements, has also raised the issue of the usefulness of regional and local associations in presence of a representative institution. However, it seems that a sort of division of the labour can be drawn between the institutional and the non-institutional realms, especially as regards lobbying, which makes of the activities of the associations a strategic complement of CoR's daily work.

In this sense, European associations lays in-between an institutionalized, formal interaction – through the structured dialogue – and the more informal one that characterizes lobbying activities.

Regional Brussels Offices

In the past two decades, there has been an explosion in number of the **offices established by regional governments in Brussels**. Since 1984, when UK local authorities and German Laender inaugurated this practice, many other local and regional authorities followed in consolidating it. Today, there are 165 Regions, 17 subregional and local authorities, 24 networks of local and regional authorities and 18 public-private entities, summing to 226 offices. They do not hold any substantial and officially recognized role in the EU decision-making process.

The interesting study from Gary Marks, Richard Haesly and Heather A.D. Mbaye (2002; 1-2) illustrates how Regional Offices delegates perceive themselves in performing their job. The data collected in 1999 through a survey distributed to all Regional Offices in Brussels (165 at that time), show quite an homogeneous consensus about the perception of the relevance of several topics (1 not important to 5 very important), among others: to gain information about funding opportunities (4.7), to gain information about upcoming EU legislation relevant to the Region (4.4.), to respond to requests for information and assistance from people at home (4.4.), to act as a liaison between groups in the Region and EU institutions (4.2.), to explain the Region's position on issues to EU decision-makers (4.1.) and to influence decision making of the EU in favour of the Region (4.0). Quite significantly, the collective objective to gain more influence for Regions in the European political process is ranked as the least important (3.2.).

Of course, a distinction in the objectives should be made between first league and second league Regions (Tatham, 2008: 507), in accordance to the Constitutional power that they can count on and the extent of the interests that they have to defend: while the former are more eager to influence EU policy directly, in light of their domestic competences, the latter are more attentive in hunting for funds and subsidies. In some cases, their ambitions and scope of action needed to be refined as time went by. At the beginning, German Laender, for example, had perceived themselves as the proactive engine of a next-to-come Europe of the Regions and the Spanish *Comunidades Autónomas* intended to employ their representation in Brussels to bypass their government. Today, they sometimes seek their Member States' support by undertaking domestic negotiations (M. Huysseune, M. T. Hans, 2008; 5). Still, Brussels offices exercise a particularly effective lobbying in the case of regional governments with legislative powers, as they normally have a facilitated access to the Council of Ministers and the EC. They

also function as an informal monitoring mechanism on the application of the subsidiarity principle and are in the forefront in claiming an increasing involvement of the regional dimension into EU everyday policy.

Working as a sort of regional embassies, they distinguish themselves from lobbies and interests groups and are primarily engaged in gathering information, networking and identifying partners and programmes relevant to the policy priorities of the institutions they represent. Their presence has become increasingly important also because they did not level out to CoR's shaky political weight and have been gaining growing room for an autonomous range of action.

Lobbying with European Commission and European Parliament

Lobbying in Brussels is quite a common phenomenon. The main factors that can explain such a proliferation is two-fold: on the one hand, the European Court of Justice has precedence over national courts; and, on the other, over 80% of the legislation of Member States proceeds from the EU. Therefore, there has been a concrete necessity to converge into interests groups in order to contribute to the EU policy shaping. At the same time, EU key decision-makers dearly welcome the information and the expertise coming from those groups and that contribute to identify the priority areas for legislation.

When it comes to regional interests representation, the lobbying activity can be either structured – by and large performed by regional associations in official settings such as the structured dialogue – and more informally, directly on members of the European Commission and the European Parliament (EP) by Regional Offices delegates.

The European Commission has detained, until very recently¹⁹, the exclusive competence on legislation proposal and has always demonstrated quite an open attitude towards outside inputs. Such an 'open-door policy' has been formalized by the Communication "An Open and Structured Dialogue between the Commission and Special Interests Group", published on December 1992, that inaugurated the involvement of external experts in the preliminary phase of policy definition and the practice of the consultative committees. The Communication on the Dialogue with the associations of regional and local authorities on the formulation of European Union policies can be interpreted, to a certain extent, as the 'regionalization' of the former. Regional representatives usually liaise with members of the European Commission with regard

¹⁹ The Lisbon Treaty (Art.8b) provides for the citizens' initiative (one million citizens from any EU country are enabled to ask the Commission to present a proposal in any of the EU's areas of responsibility) as an additional legislation proposal channel.

to matters that have a significant impact on their legislation and competences. Not only do Member States tolerate it, but sometimes they even welcome it, especially in the case that the policy under discussion is irrelevant at the national level. Again, Constitutionally stronger regions have easier access to EC officials.

Greenwood has advanced the hypothesis that, in some circumstances, the European Commission might exploit the territorial heterogeneity of a Member States, by privileging regional claims and providing them with political weight with the objective to debilitate the position of the Council (Greenwood, 2003; 251). While such dialogue has a certain influence on policy shaping and may turn out effective for the European Commission, both to gather relevant information and to strengthen its position towards the Council, regions cannot be identified as a solid partner for the European Commission, also in light of the modest political power attributed to them at the European level. Although daily practice shows that these kind of alliances may occur (Tahtam, 2008; 503), the relation between Regions and European Commission suffers from a chronic unbalance, it is inhomogeneous and unstable.

The vast majority of the scholars have not taken the European Parliament under serious consideration as a profitable channel to enhance regional interests. On the contrary, as a consequence of the continuous enlargement of its co-decision powers, MEPs can be useful to promote them, especially when they are elected on the basis of regional constituencies. Even if a small number of MEPs is probably not susceptible to influence significantly the European Commission in its proposal drafting activity, nevertheless they put pressure on it, both in their capacity of members of an institution to which the European Commission is directly accountable and as elected representatives of European citizens. Moreover, they are quite autonomous in their activity and can easily bypass their Member States, while accessing quite easily to the European Commission's highest hierarchy.

EU Regional Policy and European Territorial Cooperation

Since the Rome Treaty of 1957, the need for a coordinated community solution to regional problems and the correction of regional imbalances was one of the main task of European institutions. As a consequence of the first enlargement, that involved Ireland, Denmark and UK, and in light of the objective of a European Single Market, the European Regional Development Fund, known also as First Structural Fund – was established in 1974 (art 308 of the Treaties), as a budgetary instrument of regional policy aiming at structural development of regions lagging behind. Later on, with the establishment of the Single Market in 1986, the European Social Fund – or Second Structural Fund – was provided in order to enhance vocational training and job-creation initiatives. Ultimately, the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 provided for a new fund, the

Cohesion Fund, which aims at financing transport infrastructures and environmental project in EU countries where the GDP per capita is less than 90% of EU average.

While the attention of the literature has extensively focused on one aspect of regional mobilization, namely, the 'vertical dimension', dealing with the efforts put in place for the establishment of a solid third level in Europe, the 'horizontal dimension' – interregional, transnational, cross-border cooperation –, fostered by Regional Policy, has been not deeply analyzed for two reasons. First of all, because it was considerably more dated than direct representation, which therefore resulted more striking (Weyand in Jeffery, 2000); secondly, because it was confined either to concrete problem solving of common issues or to economic development, which did not necessarily entail a reconfiguration of the pattern of power relations across Europe.

However, some authors (Marks and Hooghe, 2001) have clearly indicated Regional Policy as an important instrument of regional development that indirectly enhanced regional mobilization also in terms of direct engagement. In Multi-level governance terms, regional mobilization is particularly striking in its external dimension, where regions takes over the management of foreign relations with other peers within the limits of their competences.

This activism is especially visible in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation, funded under the First Structural Fund. As a matter of fact, transeuropean alliances in the form of transnational, interregional and cross-border cooperation has been a widespread practice based on the belief that a joint action and a coordinated approach could be extremely useful in tackling with upcoming challenges. By targeting directly the regional dimension and rising it to European level, they have been particularly functional in enhancing regional mobilization.

For this reason, transeuropean cooperation should not be considered simply as a "complementary form of national foreign relations", as through it was a re-production of national policy at a smaller scale. It is, in fact, a "sui generis policy" with a new quality, other working methods and different forms of action. Undoubtedly, it constitutes an important instrument that contributes to building the European Public Space by seeking a common approach for solving common problems, respectful of cultural variety and differences, and to fostering European identity by involving European citizens in European projects.

Among other initiatives adopted in the context of the European territorial cooperation, the programme **Interreg** is particularly worth mentioning for its wide coverage and influence on regional mobilization. Being first launched in 1990 and having just reached its 4th issue, the programme is implemented under three strands, which correspond to the three strategic

channels of implementation of transeuropean cooperation. Strand A fosters cross-border cooperation for an integrated regional development both from the economic and the social perspective; Strand B finances transnational cooperation, involving the national, regional and local level with the objective of promoting an increasing integration among wide groupings of European regions aiming at sustainable development; Strand C aims at enhancing interregional cooperation throughout the territory of EU as well as neighbouring countries in order to improve regional development and cohesion.

While the definition of the programme priorities is substantially negotiated between the EC Directorate General for Regional Policy and the Member States, the regions are not only the first beneficiaries, but also the main administrators of the funds.

In particular, **cross-border cooperation** is an outstanding example of a cooperative structure that builds on non-hierarchical, clearly multi-level premises. With the objective of overcoming barriers in economic, social and cultural affairs, it aims at healing the artificial divisions operated by history in the course of time and to lighten the burden to peripheral regions that bears the responsibility for it.

However, it encounters a number of limitations, among others: the divide in competences among border regions that severely reduces the possibility of establishing strong institutional ties; the attempt from the Member States to encompass cross-border activities as part of their international relations, also because of the sometimes strict monitoring exercised on the activities carried out by the regions; the difference in economic development strongly limits a long-term programming, cross-border cooperation is particularly successful, thanks to the self-assertiveness of sub-state governments over the years and the support provided by the financial instruments of EU Regional Policy. Today, most cooperation agreements involve neighbouring regions. Generally speaking, the ambitions are quite limited: agreements do not aim at policies harmonization, but tend to enhance information exchange, consultation and coordination as well as promotion of contacts of the population of the two sides of the border through cultural and sport programmes.

Euroregion has become a generic term to refer to transborder alliances, involving local, provincial and regional level (Markusse, 2004). The first example of cross-border cooperation dates back to the 60s, established at the Dutch-German Border (Euregio). With the establishment of the Association of European Border Regions in 1971 and with the political incentive of the Framework Convention on Transfrontieral Cooperation of the Council of Europe in 1980, the number of cross-border cooperation increased up to 52 programmes and a number of transborder alliances. From the institutional point of view, it is an extremely interesting

experiment of genuine transeuropean cooperation, in that the decisions are taken by simple majority in the common Council and political groups are not formed according to national belonging, but to party affiliation, in line with the European Parliament.

By addressing concrete problems, it tends to resort to substantial more than formal competences. Generally speaking, there is a weaker interest in advancing political claims, which instead are dominant in interregional and transnational associations. However, as it has been illustrated earlier, it can work as an effective instrument to bridge cultural and linguistic divides operated by historical events, especially in those areas where interface minorities are present. This has woken the concern that ethnic euroregions could grow institutionalized and that powerful transeuropean regional identities could consolidate (Murphy, 1993).

This worry is not unfounded. Thanks to regionalism, European borders acquire an unexpected flexibility and common cultural features – such as language, shared traditions and collective memory – can play a vital role in aggregating identity and loyalty both beyond the central state and the European project. The principle of self-determination can be profoundly modified and moulded around regionalist claims. As an example, Jörg Haider, former leader of the Austrian liberal nationalists, actually encouraged to modify the content of the same principle according to a more achievable regionalist project²⁰.

A number of recent studies, however, tended to downsize the risk of strong ethnic euroregions. They have either emphasized the impact and influence of national boundaries (Knippenberg, 2004) or have highlighted the asymmetries between different systems of regional governments. The sense of political opportunity of regional leadership has also played an important role (Markusse, 2004). As it will be illustrated later, the identity component, however, seems to be determinant both in the political discourse and in everyday politics of some regional leaderships.

Differently from cross-border cooperation, **transnational cooperation** covers wide portions of EU territory. It has the objective to establish large areas of cooperation zones on matters of strategic importance in light of improve the cohesion, the stability and the competitiveness of the regions affected. Although the objectives are mostly oriented to economic development and the demarcation of the territories is quite arbitrary, these programmes seem to have increasingly fostered a new political community, comprising both public and private actors joining forces to build solid long-term development strategies.

²⁰ Opinion expressed during an interview released on October 15th, 1993 to Rai Uno at the inauguration of the electoral campaign of Sued Tirol Volkspartei,

Interregional cooperation, on the other hand, deals primarily with regions with common sectoral concern and common ambition for modernization. In the first place, interregional associations provide representation towards European institutions, but also facilitate the development of cooperation projects among their members, both in disadvantaged areas (such as the Conference on Peripheral Maritime Regions) and when a common interest and status needs protection and enhancement (Four Motors Europe, Regions with Legislative Power – Regleg etc).

Quite interestingly, a new legal instrument to facilitate the European Territorial Cooperation objective of the European regional development fund has been recently issued (July 5, 2006- Regulation No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council) under the name of **European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation** (EGTC). Thanks to this device, regional and local authorities will be able to create partnerships eligible under the European territorial cooperation objective without requiring an international agreement signed by the respective Member States and ratified by national parliaments.

While clearly indicating an institutional readjustment in line with the multi-level perspective, the revolutionary capacity of this instrument should not be overestimated: Member States are still required to agree on the engagement of national territorial units into transeuropean alliances and up to this moment, there are not enough reliable data available to make a credible assessment.

The increasing international and European activism of regional governments has been the object of intense investigation in the last few years (Aldecoa, 2000; Keating, 1997, 2001). This phenomenon seems to be intrinsically intertwined with European integration and to be highly favoured by that. The opportunity to attract and maintain relations with foreign investors and to administer the resulting economic gains on an exclusive basis has been among the primary motivations behind regional activism. The engagement at the European level was, of course, also dictated by considerations of political nature, with the objective to compensate the loss in authoritative power as European integration advanced. It follows that mobilization was both an opportunity to pursue their business well but also and primarily a necessity for sub-state authorities to keep on with the prerogatives acquired during the process of decentralization. European integration has set the premises for all this to happen.

As mentioned, globalization, in general, and European integration, in particular, has been playing a crucial role in favouring the emergence of a sub-state mobilization in Europe. It has also been shown that some scholars, however, warn about the truthfulness of a too deterministic perspective and reject the idea of making the formers the unique cause of the latter. On the contrary, they encourage taking into consideration multiple variables that might have contributed to enhance the phenomenon further.

There are some situations, for instance, where mobilization is clearly pre-existent and that European integration did not determine such an activism, but actually provided a new and powerful platform to advance it. This is particularly true and self-evident in the case of sub-state nationalism.

In the broader process of globalization and supranational integration, decentralization has been often seen as a consequence of a mere economic calculus aimed to lighten the load of the administration of the state in favour of central authorities. It should, however, also be considered as an achievement due to the determination of sub-state nationalist movements throughout the years. The establishment of a *Estado de las Autonomías* in Spain at the end of the 70s was a response to the long-lasting demands of the Basque and Catalan nationalisms. Similarly, devolution (followed by federalization in 1992) in Belgium was achieved thanks to the insisting claims advanced by the Flanders nationalists, empowered by a favourable economic conjunction. The same goes for decentralization in UK – where Scottish nationalists were particularly peremptory in requesting the establishment of a Scottish Parliament.

European integration has been neutral to this process. On the contrary, with the consolidation of European institutions, states have been debilitated whereas sub-state authorities have been empowered and thereby sub-state nationalism has been moving in a new, favourable context not only to advance its claims but to find a way to assert them. It is not simply that the cumbersome obstacle of a pervasive conception of state sovereignty has been removed from its way. The argument here is that European integration has also contributed to empower them, and to a great deal in comparison with the recent past. Most of the literature agrees on this external support (Lynch, 1996; Marks and Hooghe, 2001; Keating, 2001; Paquin, 2004).

It has been mentioned that, in the new political-economic pattern, from a cost-benefit perspective, sub-state authorities may possibly consider less appealing their permanence in a more encompassing territorial framework and have an additional incentive to look beyond that. This is also translated at the identity level: as the state shrinks in its function of supreme bestower of the rights and well-being of its citizens, so do the benefits connected to the national

(state-based) identification, whereas the interest and support in cultural identification have been rising. The vacuum left by the state in instilling national identity has therefore been particularly beneficial to sub-state nationalism aspirations.

The collapse of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the consequent disintegration of USSR, in particular, triggered the proliferation of nationalistic movements, at the state and sub-state level, which caused a deep discomfort among academics and practitioners. Nationalism seemed to be about to become the driving force for politics (Brzeziński, 1989). The blow and the atrocious developments of the Yugoslavian conflicts were apparently confirming such a prediction. After the Second World War, in fact, identity-based conflicts have become the dominant strand of political violence, reaching the peak in 1992-1993, right in parallel to the end of the Cold War and the Yugoslavian disintegration. The academic interest about the issues of nationalism has been growing proportionally (Wimmer, Horowitz, 2004).

With the relevant exception Yugoslavian case, however, the nationalistic impetus in Eastern Europe followed pre-existing national lines that were respectful of historical boundaries and of the administrative units drawn by the Soviet regime. In Eastern Europe, states are nation-states and their legitimacy is not questioned. At most, they have some open issues with interface minorities, such as Romania with Transylvanian Hungarians or Czech Republic with German Sudetes. In addition to that, the perspective of the involvement into the European integration and the international guarantees that this would bring along have contributed to maintain nationalist violence under control (Ragionieri, 2007).

The “nationalities question”, however, should not be relegated to Eastern Europe only. Instead, also the well-consolidated parliamentary democracies of Western European states experienced such a revival, whereby sub-state nationalistic movements have become increasingly demanding and their claims more and more territorially defined. In Western Europe, the presence of minority nationalist contestations in the periphery of major states has been long-lasting (Rokkan and Urwin, 1983).

To some, the rise of sub-state nationalism in Western Europe came as a surprise. Although the almost totality of nation-states have a clear multicultural composition, still among most scholars there was the solid belief that the process of assimilation had been successfully carried out and that the nation-building carried out by the state institutions, in the aftermath of the II World War, was complete. The absence of ethnic strife after 1945 has been erroneously interpreted as the existence of single nations framed within their states and that nationalism as a political phenomenon was over. The recently born European project was the tangible result of this process. This attitude was supported by some influential scholarships. One of the most renowned theorists of nationalism, Karl Deutsch (1969) repeatedly stated that ethnic and linguistic

differences were doomed to disappear, and for a simple reason: modernization would lead to a steady homogenization, which was to be, in most cases, favourable to the dominant group, for a national society to be productive.

Similarly, other modernist and post-modernist scholars tended to link up the process of nation-building indissolubly to state-building and therefore located it in a specific timeframe, that is, late XVII and XIX centuries in parallel to the Industrial Revolution (Gellner, Anderson). As a consequence of this attitude, nationalism is often perceived as an outmoded political strategy. Hobsbawm argues that nationalism is a phenomenon of the past, doomed to exert scarce or no relevance in the present and in the future (1990, 182). In the same shade, Ignatieff (1998: 25) dismisses nationalism as antihistorical, atavistic and anachronistic. embedded in a mythified set of symbols and ceremonies as principal drives in the shaping of nationhood. Mary Kaldor (2004), for instance, while rightly interrelates the rise and growth of new nationalism with the spread of globalization simultaneously looks down on it, with some exceptions, and sees it as a regressive and nostalgically backward-looking feeling. On the other hand, primordialists such as Smith (1981), while stressing on the timeless nature of nationalism, suggested past and ethnicity articulated in a sense of shared continuity, shared memories and belief in a common destiny.

The fact that a peaceful and universally accepted definition of nation does not exist has been one of the main obstacle to the establishment a consensus in the literature. As Walter Connor rightly emphasizes, in Western Europe like elsewhere, one of the fundamental errors committed in the study of the matter has been to equate nationalism with loyalty to the state and not to the nation (1994: 91), and therefore the phenomenon of sub-state nationalism has been either disregarded or dealt with in disparaging terms. This confusion was not lacking in ideological consequences. The definition of the national identity within a given state often coincides with the cultural, ethnical and linguistic features of the dominant group. It is its own national identity that is expressed in official terms and legitimized by political institutions. Where national identity coincides with state allegiance, the identitarian claims advanced by a non-dominant group is therefore perceived as a disloyalty towards the true, supreme nation and a threat for the institutions that protect it. European states are markedly multinational and national identity has been a social construct that favoured state-building in a given time. This does not entail, however, that other feelings of otherness have disappeared.

In the view of filling the gap between expectations and reality, Connor proposes a breakthrough interpretation on the rise of sub-state nationalism in Western Europe and makes history accountable for that. Sub-state nationalism did not break in out of the blue, but it is rooted in the same ground as state nationalism and it is the product of its evolution and extension. History, he argues, has provided signals that have been systematically misinterpreted in the course of time.

Sub-state nationalistic unrests after the II World War were, in fact, either overlooked or approached in a too context-specific way, which has hindered a deeper understanding of this phenomenon in comparative terms. In addition to that, a number of explicatory variables have been employed – ranging from the relative economic deprivation to the conversion to tribalism as a result of the alienation of the mass society to the loss of prestige of European empires (Smith, 1981) – but scarce attention has been dedicated to the problem of legitimacy (Connor, 1994: 169).

Since the Declaration of the Man and the Citizen of 1789, sovereignty has been coupled with legitimacy and legitimacy has been derived from the nation. The refrain that alien rule is illegitimate rule has been at the core of the development of the modern concept of self-determination and has been a powerful drive for self-aware groups to continue to assert their individuality within a larger territorial context. In this respect, decolonization in Africa and Asia had a profound psychological impact on those movements that had been operating in Western Europe (Connor, 1994: 173-174).

Contrarily to what Deutsch had predicted, moreover, modernization did not end up to a generalized homogenization of the identities as a consequence of the intensification of the communication. Whereas Deutsch's model well applies to those situation where a significant resistance to assimilation was lacking, usually among non self-aware ethnic groups, what is normally expected in the juxtaposition of two nationalisms is reinforcement of the respective identities – where the weakest usually resorts to defensive strategies – such as encroachment (Connor, 1994: 171). Empirical evidence has also demonstrated that national identity has been an incredible resource for collective mobilization well beyond the crucial phase of state-building of the XVIII and XIX centuries and is playing a critical role in shaping the future of the European Union.

As it has been suggested, sub-state nationalist movements have been active for a long time and well before the intensification of European integration and the reasons for their existence range from context-based circumstances to general trends that can be captured by a comparative analysis. Therefore, it would be wrong to ascribe the unique responsibility for their revitalization to the globalization and regional integration. Nevertheless, the debilitation operated by these two processes on state sovereignty and legitimacy has paved the way for a consolidation and further legitimization of non-state allegiances.

Technology and modernization have in fact played a crucial role in enhancing minority cultures: supporting technically and logistically minorities' views, it enhanced the transformation of media and education and obliged states to adopt a true multiethnic and multinational form (Guibernau, 2007).

European integration, on the other hand, provided for an increased room of manoeuvre to sub-state groups. Similarly to sub-state authorities, sub-state nationalism has taken advantage of the opportunity structure provided by European integration to mobilize and gain political leverage. and even more so where it was coupled to a regional administration or executive.

The process of decentralization within the states, in fact, was key to their reinforcement. A tradition in political philosophy attaches a great weight to political institutions in identity shaping and formation (Haas, 1971) and empirical studies confirm this trend. Many contemporary scholars interested in European governance and regionalism stress the positive relation between devolution downwards and regional identity formation. As an inspiring study carried out by Monserrat Guibernau in Spain, UK and Canada suggests, devolution has enhanced feelings of belonging also in those sub-state units where a shared collective identity was not pre-existent, by reallocating authority to new political institutions, reinforcing a pre-existent ruling class or creating a new one with associated responsibilities and privileges on the basis of administrative-historical regional boundaries. Analogously, Marks and Hooghe, while highlighting the higher level of attachment to the federated units than to the federal state in federations and a relatively solid national attachment in unitary states (2001, table 3.1.), argue that the increasing attachment to one's local community has been a general trend in the electoral and emotive behaviour of European citizens as the continental integration and devolution process has been intensifying.

The legitimization of sub-state tiers of government as preferred administrator of public authority is also confirmed by statistics at the European level. A recent Eurobarometer Survey (November 2008) demonstrates that sub-state authorities resulted the most trusted layer of government (50% vs 34% of central state) and 59 % of European citizens would also like to see the role of regional and local authorities enhanced at the European level.

As a consequence of that, the electoral and political salience of sub-state nationalist movements has been both consolidating and expanding. Empirical research has demonstrated that the relevance of such movements in electoral terms and the deepening of the process of integration are positively correlated (Jolly, 2004). It has been suggested that one of the reasons for such a success is rooted in the ability of sub-state nationalist parties to link up with the transformations occurring at the European level (Tierney, 2005; Elias, 2009). The flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances seems to have resulted quite appealing to electors, also in light to the fact that in most cases the reaction of major state parties came later and was far less enthusiastic.

The contemporary mobilization of sub-state nationalism, however, should not be *in toto* assimilated to the broader phenomenon that affected sub-state actors in general. Although they

share many similarities, still the former should be regarded as a qualitatively distinctive occurrence from the latter. The implications, both from the governance and normative perspectives, are in fact different.

Every nationalism seeks self-determination for its nation, whereas a region may simply go after some albeit relevant economic benefit. Although the equation between self-determination and secession should be rejected, it is the very nature of the objectives that is not overlapping.

A good example of this is provided by the sub-state international engagement. As it has been mentioned, one of the most eye-catching phenomena ascribed to European integration has been the development of an intense international activity by sub-state actors, known as paradiplomacy. Also stateless nations have enthusiastically got onboard, but they did so, it has been rightly argued (Paquin; 2002, 2004; Lecours and Moreno, 2006), in a qualitatively different way in comparison with other sub-state authorities where the nationalistic feelings were absent or not relevant. In fact, it is also, but not only, a matter of intensity and channels preferred to advance one's claims. It is, more than anything else, the motivational drive to make identitarian paradiplomacy one of a so different kind.

The international dimension is strictly related to the very processes of nationalism – identity construction, interest definition and territorial mobilization – and is a vital instrument to nation-building, as the positive results of state nationalism have demonstrated. The international promotion of the cultural, linguistic and institutional specificities of a stateless nation is crucial for the reproduction and self-confidence of the nation, and endows the nation with those resources – both economic and psychological – that are hard to find within the state.

In the effort to set free from the constraints imposed by their subordinate status, the development of international relations both with other sub-state authorities and states is highly symbolic.

International recognition is a key to any process of nation-building. Every nationalistic movement seeks international recognition (Guibernau, 1999): albeit international law rules it out from the basic requirements for legitimate statehood, in an interconnected world and with a conception of sovereignty in increasingly relational terms, mutual recognition is at the core of the very existence of a state-like political entity. International relations have been for a long time – but not always – prerogative of sovereign states. A breach in such a monopole carries an enormous symbolic meaning (Paquin, 2004).

International recognition, in turn, provides legitimization to the nation-building process and is a fruitful teaser to employ for electoral purposes and a powerful weapon to turn against the attempt of the states to centralize international representation. By making the states

accountable in front of the international community, sub-state nationalism puts under attack their credibility and legitimacy.

Identitarian paradiplomacy also tends to conglomerate a national interest for the stateless nation to promote externally, which could be partially or fully divergent with the national interest of the state. This could also entails the protection of privileges and concessions that are very profitable for the stateless nations but not for the broader state and could actually have significant economic spill-overs. However, even though the very content is sometimes very appreciable²¹, the most critical aspect seems to be about a direct responsibility shaping the national interest as far as the stateless nation is concerned. That is, the identitarian claim stands out as the most important one for sub-state nationalism, well above economic and territorial motivations.

By mingling international and domestic affairs even more pervasively than what globalization has been doing, European integration has therefore provided sub-state nationalism both with the incentives and the tools to break the mould of state constraints, while legitimizing their claims and reinforcing their arguments. Therefore, far from being a phenomenon of the past, not only is sub-state nationalism resilient but it has been adapting quite impressively to the new world order.

What risks for Europe?

This revival of sub-state nationalism has raised a number of variegated and intuitive concerns. In the first place, such worries relate to European stability. Stateless nations, in fact, are often perceived as “states in waiting” whose main political objective is secession, that is *prima facie* at odds with the diffusion of sovereignty enhanced by the European project.

Secondly, it is argued that the core values of diversity, tolerance, together-livingness and solidarity promoted by European integration are being put at stake. In a context where an overarching we feeling is promoted, exclusive and particularistic identities are dangerous hindrances to its achievement.

Thirdly, sub-state nationalism is accused to hinder the process of European integration, because any further centralization of power at the European level translates necessarily into a constraint of state and sub-state competences and the bargaining powers in the hand of sub-nationalism get severely restricted.

²¹ This is for instance the fierce defence of the Concierto Económico Vasco by the Basque Government in front of the European Court of Justice that culminated in a positive decision of the Court on February, 28th, 2008.

Ultimately, the activism of sub-nationalism at the international level is deemed to further complicate the already multi-layered and fuzzy European policy and decision making, and thereby it debilitates the fragile democratic accountability of the system.

European integration, it has been suggested, has provided a significant and determinant external support to sub-nationalism. By doing so, it has been serving not only as an open democratic forum where to advance legitimate political options, but potentially also as a dangerous framework where separatism, disintegration, selfishness and barbarism is fuelled. Shall we conclude that Europe, like Faustus, has sold its soul to the devil?

European Stability in Danger?

The national drive was the most powerful factor of territorial adjustment and authority legitimization in the aftermath of the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe. Although Western countries attempted to absorb the instability provoked by that epochal event by promptly pushing the boundaries of the European supranational project as much as possible towards East, still the transition was characterized by the ideological and practical employment of nationalistic discourse.

As a matter of fact, the three former Communist federations, Czechoslovakia, USSR and Yugoslavia, seceded, when possible and with relevant exceptions, according to national lines²².

Although in Western Europe the revitalized sub-state nationalist movements were, in the vast majority of cases, peaceful and democratic and, like in the Spanish case, had played a vital role in the transition towards a full democracy, most contemporary scholars, however, have tended to highlight the risks beyond the term 'nation' and 'nationalism' also in this context (Haas, 1997, 2000; Brubaker, 1996; Hetcher, 2000).

The very word 'nationalism' entails the idea of the nation as the supreme organizing principle for a political community and its ultimate objective is the establishment of an independent institution in a given territory where the equation between political and social community is guaranteed²³.

²²The behaviour adopted by the international community has never been an unconditional support to independence, following ethnic boundaries. Contrarily, in the most recent cases, such as Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and even Former Yugoslavia – but above all during the decolonization of Latin America and later Africa and Asia – there has been a repeated and sound application of the 'uti possidetis' principle. According to it, international borders of newly sovereign states should be defined on the basis of their previous administrative frontiers, regardless of ethnic claims. Chechnya, for instance, did not correspond to an administrative unit within the USSR, and therefore it was considered as not entitled to independence.

The Arbitration Commission – composed by a group of European jurists set up by the European Union in 1991 to arbitrate disputes and establish criteria for the recognition of new states arising from Former Yugoslavia – also supported this principle, by concluding that '(...) the right to self-determination must not involve changes to existing frontiers existing at the time of independence (uti possidetis juris).'

²³ This definition recalls the notion of nation-state expressed in Weberian terms: "a human community that successfully claims the use

No matter to what extent these expectations are spelled out and are indeed desirable for a specific nationalistic movement, the concepts of self-government, homeland, nationhood are potentially explosive tools aimed at subverting the state-based international order.

The most feared consequence of minority nationalisms is, therefore, secession. State-based and biased as it is, international law is particularly strict about the possibility of new states to be established. However, when exceptional circumstances occur - the disintegration of the Communist regime - or political expedience comes into play - Kosovo's independence - , European states, in particular those where politically and territorially organized minorities exist, have always been attentive in providing restrictive and context-grounded interpretations of the right of secession²⁴, worried as they were about the potential domino effect in their backyard.

European integration – in the broader context of globalization – has weakened the arguments against *Kleinstaaterei* (de Winter, 2001) and has made the option of independence within Europe more viable and attainable. While reducing the benefits of participating in the state unit, it has intuitively reduced the negative economic and psychological costs of secession. Global economy makes it relatively simple for a small economy to survive beyond state boundaries; the

of physical coercion within a given territory”.

²⁴ Several states have in fact declared that Kosovo might set a precedent for other non-state entities, whose claims might risk to find legitimizing arguments in presence of an undifferentiated acquiescent position. Kosovo may give hope and breath to nationalist and separatist movements, re-open discussions on disputed territories and provide paralegal justification to self-declared independent but unrecognized states.

A significant number of EU countries, including EU countries (Spain, Greece, Portugal, Rumania, Slovakia, Czech Republic), have discussed the Kosovo precedent, momentarily rejecting the idea of recognizing the new state. Spain declared that it will not recognize it because it does not respect international law, as legal secession requires an agreement between the parties of a UNSC resolution Spain is struggling against its own growing nationalistic movements, in Euskadi, -, in Catalonia and in Galicia.

Russia strongly opposed because of the strategic long-lasting relation with Serbia; and secondly, and not less importantly, because granting secession to Kosovo could contribute to create a more favourable environment for Chechens' claims and confer some legitimacy to the attacks perpetrated by them and exasperate the ethnic tensions that it has been suffering during the post-Communist era. As a counteraction, Russia could be more eager to recognize breakaway entities in other former Soviet States – such as Abkhazia, Nagoro- Karabakh and South Ossetia – and potentially extend this political process to other areas where there are strong nationalist oriented Russian minorities – such as Ukraine.

China –under the spotlight because of the Tibet riots – has repeatedly expressed its deepest concern on the consequences of Kosovo unilateral act to the stability of the Balkans.

Ultimately, it is in the very Balkans where the risk is more burning. The Prime Minister of Republica Sprska, Milorad Dodik, has repeatedly threatened to call a Refer toendum among Bosnian Serbs to determine their future status – in or outside Bosnia&Herzegovina – should most countries recognize Kosovo's self-proclaimed independence. There is also the worst case scenario – which is not too far from reality, according to the *leit motiv* of the protests in Mitrovica earlier this month – that the mainly Serb populated northern Kosovo could secede from Kosovo and merge into Serbia.

However, the attempts made by the international community as a whole – including those states that have fiercely endorsed Kosovo independence – to prevent Kosovo from setting a precedent is significant: as a corollary of the above mentioned EU Council conclusions, there is a sound reiteration of the adherence to the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity; a statement released by the US State Department made clear that the Kosovo case cannot be called as an example to solve territorial disputes no conflict resolution will be accepted. The very declaration of independence passed by the Kosovar Assembly stresses the uniqueness of Kosovo case.

international military protection provided by NATO, the elimination of compulsory conscription and “hard” borders have rendered national armies redundant; the integration into the European Union guarantees the financial anchorage. At a first sight, these considerations were reflected in the strategy of the Scottish National Party in the early 90s, whose slogan “Scotland Independence within Europe” was very much in this line of reasoning. At the same time, however, globalization and European integration have made the very statehood a redundant concept, not only for states, but also for sub-state nationalists, their traditional enemies, and contemporarily operated a significant transformation in the traditional understanding and possibilities of nationalism as a political project. Far from attaching an exaggerated value to material factors in the pursuance of political objectives, it is however reasonable to wonder *cui prodest?* a statehood-oriented strategy when states are at an all-time low.

Contrarily to Brubaker’s prediction (1996:2), in fact, European history is not moving back to nation-state. As a matter of fact, the Balkanization of Europe – the adjustment of the boundaries of European states according to the claims of minority nationalism along ethnic and national lines – does not seem to be a reliable prediction for the near future. This, however, does not entail that the cultural reproduction of ‘nations’ in the designed homelands that has become irrelevant. The relinquishment of statehood as ultimate objective does not render the territorial dimension of nationalism obsolete. Instead, it is the traditional notion of it that appears neither appealing nor meaningful.

Sub-state nationalism is developing high imaginative strategies by coupling European integration with the transnational economic dimension in view of a reformulation of its territorial claims. Before their critics, sub-state nationalist movements have realized that the very significance of boundaries has changed. The implementation of the provisions regarding freedom to move, live and work in any other EU country and the physical dismantlement of frontier posts and customs have profoundly changed the understanding of territorial belonging. Traditionally serving as the physical expression of sovereignty, the function and the related perception of boundaries have undergone a paramount transformation as a consequence of the process of integration. State boundaries are not anymore equated to jurisdiction: following to the dislocation of crucial competences and responsibilities from the Member States to the European Union, the locus of the sovereignty seems to have progressively shifted from the control of the territory to the policy and decision making level, which for the most part takes place in Brussels.

The main preoccupation of sub-state nationalism, therefore, has been to make sure that their voice would be heard in those contexts where decisions are made and possibly to directly participate in the decision-making process. On the one hand, European integration has attempted to facilitate such participation by associating the sub-state level, either collectively or individually, to its key phases, albeit with ambiguous results.

On the other hand, and more interestingly, the overwhelming majority of sub-state nationalism movements has tended to reconfigure their position not beyond but rather within the state in such a way as to upgrade their institutional leverage and to take over the functional control of their 'homeland', by accumulating increasing competences and responsibilities with respect to the administration of their territorial community. This is why it is not too surprising that the majority of the sub-state nationalistic movements that take active part in the party politics have opted for autonomist positions within the European Union (Smith, 1981; Csérgo and Goldgeier, 2004).

The abandonment of the concrete pursuance of statehood, however, does not seem to be homogeneously accompanied by a renovation of the imaging and political discourse of sub-nationalist movements, like the case of Vlaams Belang clearly shows (Laible, 2006). It should be noted that the acclamation of statehood as the supreme good for the nation is a *topos* of the political discourse of identitarian entrepreneurs and a valid instrument to exert the mobilization of the hard core of the electorate of any sub-nationalist movement.

Recent Constitutional debates, instead, have shown that sub-state nationalisms are well aware about the necessity to articulate their claims and to adapt them to a rapidly changing set of circumstances and that they have been increasingly tended to do so taking as primary reference existing states (Tierney, 2005). Their long-standing struggle for recognition has made that they are particularly malleable to institutional adjustments, quite creative in forging new formulas and more receptive to change than states.

It should be wrong to conclude that sub-state nationalisms are necessarily thriving toward the complete dissolution of the states and are uncritically in favour of a Europe of the Regions. There is, in fact, also a precise calculus beyond the relinquishment of statehood of political objective, even beyond the consideration of its lack of appeal in the current circumstances. A young, relatively small new state, albeit integrated in the European Union, would have to face the same debilitating pressures of globalization and supranational integration without the infrastructure, the political weight and the diplomatic leverage of their state of belonging. Security is another issue, which is surprisingly not addressed, not even by some of the most active movements (Keating, 1997). It can be rightly argued, as Keating does, that is due to the belief that, thanks to the collectivization of external security, national army is no longer a priority for a state; however, this attitude may hide the instrumental nature of the radical discourse of some sub-state nationalist movements on statehood.

Differently from statehood, in fact, a favourable Constitutional arrangement within the state ensures an extension of the capacity and the competence aspects of sovereignty coupled with a protective framework towards the centripetal attempts of European integration and the

deteriorating effects of globalization. There is, clearly, an element of free-riding involved, where sub-state nationalism aspires to retain the pros and reject the cons of state belonging.

'Death is not the worst of evils', an old motto says. As Tierney evocatively suggests, the challenges posed by sub-state nationalism to the current Constitutional settings of the states can be even more detrimental than secession. Secession is undoubtedly very destabilizing for a state that undergoes to it and has a profound impact on the collective psychology and self-understanding of the population. With the violation of its territorial integrity, the state is weakened in its prestige, in its international credibility in its institutional status of *primus inter pares*, in its authority and, ultimately, in its identity. However, technically, secession is simply the withdrawal of the sovereignty of the state from a portion, usually limited, of its territory, it being understood that its capacities and competences remain unaltered in the rest of it.

On the other hand, the accommodation of sub-state authorities within the Constitutional system aimed to a better recognition and representation, as most of the contemporary sub-state nationalistic movements request, entails a broader reconfiguration of the articulation of the authority of the state. It is, at least, arguable that sub-state nationalisms have been carrying out a post-sovereign strategy. They seem, instead, to be very much interested in preserving it, but, in turn they aspire to a more favourable re-allocation of normative authority, towards models of asymmetrical autonomy.

The search for a more comfortable institutional setting within the state by sub-state nationalism aligns with the renewed interest of sub-state authority in general to seek the support and the protection of the state from the pervasiveness of European centralization, as Jeffery predicted. There are, however, different implications. It is in fact reasonable to expect that sub-state nationalism would not be satisfied with an even more extensive decentralization of competences or with the establishment more encompassing mechanism for collective preference formation, as most of sub-state authorities would be. The qualitatively different nature of their claims implies a more radical change in the Constitutional basics, including the translation of the multinational essence of the state into tangible facts, such as the recognition of the status of 'nation' and 'people' to national minorities in the same footing as the dominant one. This transformation would inflict a formal breach into the already damaged monolithic sovereignty and provide for a brand-new conception of it, that would pave the way for more sophisticated and daring formula of together-livingness. 'Shared sovereignty' has been the key word for some recent ambitious political projects of active sub-state nationalistic movements, such as the Ibarretxe Plan in Euskadi (2003).

Sub-state nationalism has, to a great extent, relinquished the ambition of statehood. It would be incorrect, however, to imply that by doing so it stopped pursuing a full self-determination, which

is the core of any nationalist project. The two concepts are not, of course, overlapping, but political rhetoric, especially from the state perspective, often makes them interchangeable, creating a (deliberate?) confusion between legitimate claims and dangerous political projects. As it is understandable and as the path-dependence theory explains, states are less prone to undergo critical transformations and as much as possible they tend to resist to change. In addition to that, in light of the triple fire to which they have been exposed – globalization, European integration and sub-state nationalism – they have been adopting a defensive strategy in order to keep on their role of protagonist in the detention and administration of authority. It is obvious that it is sub-state nationalism to pay the highest price.

European integration, it has been argued, has given incentives and tools to sub-nationalism to flourish and assert its claims. However, it has not propelled instability in the sense of rendering secession a more appealing and attainable option. On the contrary, it seems to have contribute to a great deal to contain the potential destabilizing effects of the traditional nationalistic projects by emptying both the symbolic and the tangible meaning of boundaries and statehood of their classical content and eventually reframed its claims in a way that is perfectly compatible both with European stability and with the territorial integrity of Member States.

European Values at Stake?

The argument about sub-state nationalism not being compatible with European values proceeds from the belief that rejects nationalism as being solidly entrenched with liberalism. The traditional criticism moved by liberalism is an old and venerable one, and focuses both on the concrete outcomes and on the theoretical premises of nationalism.

As far as the former aspect of the debate, nationalism is in fact an easy target for its detractors, that emphasize its disturbance effects on the world order, that have reached very significant peak of violence, both in the far and in the recent past. The image of nationalism as xenophobic, violent, anti-democratic mirrors the kind of nationalism that has experienced Western Europe during and in-between the two World Wars (Kymlicka, 2001). The extension of this conception to modern sub-state nationalism is intuitive and is not worth of a detailed explanation.

The latter aspect, instead, is more interesting and relates to the broader antagonism between collective and individual rights. In the classical liberal tradition, in fact, only individual rights matters and are worth of protection and enhancement. Nationalism, on the other hand, has given a momentum contribution to the assertion of collective rights, and the liberal conception of self-determination in individual terms has been sidetracked onto a collectivist path and expressed in national terms. Liberalism has repeatedly warned about the risks concerning human liberty when group rights are given more moral relevance than individual rights, leading up to the belief that collectivism means the subjugation of the individual to a group.

However, a fruitful reconciliation – not lacking of criticisms of different sorts – between liberal theory and nationalism has been attempted from the perspective of multiculturalism. Tamir (1993: 35) operates a small semiotic revolution by conjoining the two terms in one expression, ‘liberal nationalism’, highlighting that the relevance attributed to individual rights and the value attached to one’s cultural membership are not necessarily antagonistic to each other. With Kymlicka (1995), the recognition of universal values proper of the liberal tradition seems to be strictly associated with a distinctive sensitivity that admits a wide range of cultural differences when it comes to their interpretation. Each of them is worth of the same appreciation and consideration as far as individual freedom is respected and enhanced. Taking distance from communitarianism and reiterating their liberal commitment, both Kymlicka and Raz emphasize that cultural membership is a fruitful resource as long as it enriches and complements the context of choice of the individuals and, on the contrary, it should be discouraged when it imposes burdens on the single members by restricting their liberties in the name of the group. Cultural membership is not as a good in itself, but as an instrumental good, aiming at the flourishing of the individual. Kymlicka rightly differentiates between external protection and internal restrictions, considering the former as a legitimate and necessary formula for a cultural group to protect itself from the pervasiveness of a surrounding dominant culture and the latter as illiberal and not legitimate for chocking personal autonomy and individual choice. External protection and internal restriction work indeed as a valid instrument to measure the degree to which nationalist movements are committed to liberalism.

The normative underpinning of multiculturalism provides not only for a respect but actually for an enhancement and active support of group rights, as long as they in turn enhance and support individual freedom. Wherever and whenever needed, group-differentiated rights promote group equality and are highly desirable for the establishment of a just society. This seems to be particularly the case of national minorities, intended as distinct, territorially concentrated societal cultures that were incorporated by larger states and which suffered from historical injustices.

Multiculturalism has provided a solid and sophisticated theoretical accommodation for nationalism within liberal theory and particularly so as far as national minorities (and therefore sub-state nationalism) are concerned.

There seems to be an emerging consensus in the literature on the credentials of liberal nationalism as part of the liberal family. Nonetheless, this has not always been to the advantage of sub-state nationalism. Most of the specialized literature, in fact, has been inspired by a more simplified and simplifying classification, that is, the dichotomy between civic and ethnic nationalism (Smith, 1991; Ignatieff, 1993; Pfaff, 1993). Although useful for the theoretical purpose of identifying two ideal types, however, this formula has proved not to be intellectually

honest. Ethnic and civic nationalisms, the former exclusive, the latter inclusive should be considered as corresponding to different stages within a same nation-building process, implying that a movement characterized by strong ethnic connotations at the first place, can later look into a more embracing national project (Keating, 1997). Instead, most of its supporters have tended to associate civic nationalism, based on civic values, with democracy, whereas ethnic nationalism, based on common descent, with illiberal political ideologies. Quite often, moreover, ethnic nationalism has been associated with culture (Kymlicka, 2001).

In the practice, this juxtaposition has led to label sub-state nationalism as greed, racist and exclusive whereas liberal nationalism has been coupled with the feeling that underpins the loyalty to the state as liberal, inclusive, value-inspired. Kellas (1993) effectively refers to the latter as official nationalism, that is, the nationalism that has accompanied the process of state-building leading to the formation of nation-states whereas Lecours and Nootens (2009) names it dominant nationalism, opposing it to minority nationalism. As bearer of an overarching culture, this banal nationalism (Billig, 1995) regularly eschews the accuse of ethnicity, even though it proceeds from the dominant group that has successfully carried out the nation-building process to the detriment of smaller and less powerful human community .

Similarly, on the ground that the attachment to a broader unity is the best guarantee to avoid the ultimate risk of ethnicity, that is, ethnic cleansing, some scholars (Dahrendorf, 1994) tend to denigrate the political project enhanced by sub-state nationalism, considering their claims of self-government, being it territorial autonomy or full-fledged secession – as dangerous attempts inspired by racial or cultural purity. States, it has been argued, can handle diversity better: multinational states are compelled to democracy and are better trained to defend concrete freedoms.

According to Connor (1996 and supra), the recurrent mistake of equating the nation to the state seems to be at the basis of the misconception about sub-state nationalism being a second-class, illegitimate, primordial feeling of belonging, that privileges the ethnia over the society. Referring to sub-state nationalism as such in terms of ethnicity, primordialism, tribalism, parochialism (Connor, 1996: 107-111), just to quote a few nouns that have been often associated to the phenomenon, is a state-biased interpretation and a defensive reaction by the state and state supporters towards what challenges legitimacy by fuelling alternative loyalties.

There are of course sub-state nationalist movements that express radical views and exclusive attitudes with respect to race, culture and language, religion etc. and may well deserve such definitions. What is contested is, however, that sub-state nationalism as political project is tarred with the same bush. The increase and consolidation of sub-state nationalist movements in the new geopolitical scenario does not automatically convey the idea that Europe is sinking into the

barbarism of ethnic clans. The ethnicization of political relations is not a prerogative of sub-state nationalist movements, which, in most cases, are fully participating in modernity and civilization sometimes more than their state fellows. The risk seems to be more related to the political area where a movement – no matter whether promoting a sub-state nationalist project or not – decides to stand with. As an interesting study on the case of Belgium demonstrates (Erk, 2005), Western sub-state nationalistic parties align themselves in the right-left political spectrum, despite the similarity of their political agenda. A xenophobic and exclusive ideology that underpins the political discourse of some of these groups seems to have to do much more with the affinity to extreme right-wing ideology rather than to their normative position with regard to the relations between the majority and the minority. The racist tones employed by the Northern League (Lega Nord) in Italy and the Flemish Block (Vlaams Belang) are inspired by a comprehensive rightist and populist political discourse, where the nationalistic component *strictu sensu* is residual and instrumental in the former case and conjunctural, in the latter.

This intuition is also supported by the fact that some of the most dangerous movements in this sense seem to be related to an ultranationalist (state) ideology. One of the recent threats that resulted in the infliction of sanctions to the Austrian government by the EU was due to the inclusion in the government coalition of Jörg Haider's racist and xenophobic Freedom for Austria Party, whose political profile and electoral consensus had been on the rise. It is also illuminating to note that the only countries that keep reliable records of criminal justice data with regard to crimes proceeding from right-wing extremism are Austria, Germany, France and Sweden (European Agency for Fundamental Rights, Annual Report 2009: 27) that is, states where sub-nationalism is either weak or totally absent.

On the contrary, empirical evidence shows that sub-state nationalism, especially when charged with governmental responsibilities, has satisfactorily incorporated the fundamental tenets of modernity and tolerance – absence of violence, inclusiveness, openness – into the backbone of its political ideology (Cséregi and Goldgeier, 2004).

The majority of those movements have been emerging alongside with liberal democracy and quite often have contributed to it in a determinant way, as the activism of Basque and Catalan nationalism during the Spanish transition recalls. The broader scenario provided by European integration is contemporarily an incentive for sub-state nationalism to remain attached to European values and a guarantee of their respect. Committed from the very outset to protecting diversity and promoting tolerance and together-livingness, European Union is the perfect environment for sub-state nationalism to find attractive cosmopolitan values and keep away from particularism. Their peaceful and rich co-existence with multi-layered identities is actually the expression of the intrinsic multifaceted nature of European integration.

However, beside their sincere and disinterested liberal commitment, there seems to be also an element of political expedience that makes that sub-state nationalism firmly stands with the liberal side.

In order to survive and to flourish, sub-state nationalism needed to reshape both its political discourse and its political project in the same line, by fully committing to democratic principles. Although radical and ethnically exclusive movements continue to operate in the European political space, they have been progressively expelled from the most influential political realms at the European level, losing momentum and electoral support (Keating, 2007).

Another recurrent but under-researched argument depicts sub-state nationalism as greed and selfish and therefore incompatible with the solidarity rooted in the set of values that underpins European integration. The core of this criticism is about the questionable moral legitimacy of the claims advanced by sub-state nationalism, especially when it does not represent an oppressed people exploited in economic terms (Kymlicka in Maiz Suarez, Requejo Coll, 2006: 115). By seeking asymmetrical decentralization and a full-self government also on its economic and financial revenues only to its own benefit, it breaks the bonds of solidarity with the state, and is therefore often taunted of selfishness and ungratefulness.

It is not clear, however, what is the ground on which the moral legitimacy of sub-state nationalism is tested, unless, we do not consider participating in state solidarity as a moral duty extendable to everyone. This is, however, a state-biased approach. For any nationalistic rhetoric, the congruence between the political and the social community is a fundamental objective and the management of economic and social policy leverages is a crucial instrument to generate consensus and mobilization around the nationalistic cause (Lecours and Beland, 2006). While it is understandable that this can be a contested issue between sub-state and state nationalisms looking after their legitimization, it is reasonable that sub-state nationalism would feel a more impelling moral duty to solidarity with the national community that perceives as its own. This does not entail that the value of solidarity *per se* is rejected; rather it is its application in a state-biased fashion that is sometimes strongly resisted.

As well as in other domains, sub-state nationalism has borne the burden of the proof to demonstrate that it is not an unintended consequence of European integration that aims to undermine its values. On the contrary, not only has it shown full compatibility with it, but it actually serves as a living memory of European immense richness in culture and diversity, by symbolizing the hard but successful long-standing together-livingness with other identities and traditions.

European Integration in Stall?

The above-mentioned criticism about the particularism and narrowness of interests of sub-state nationalism may encourage concluding that it is by definition anti-integration. It has been shown, however, that the majority of those movements are not at all as they are depicted by the state-biased rhetoric and that in some cases they are committed to modernization and cosmopolitanism to a higher degree than their state counterparts.

However, more reasoned motivations can be brought about to justify the hostility of sub-state nationalism against European integration. It has been argued (Jeffery, 2007 and supra) that sub-state authorities may feel seriously threatened by the deepening of the integration. While, at an initial stage, their formal power seems to have increased and overcome the domestic dialectic, later their real power has been put at stake, embedded in the contradiction of a steady centralization of competences at the European level and an ineffective set of mechanisms of participation to have their voice properly heard. This tendency worries all those sub-state authorities that have been relying on the opportunities opened up by European integration in order to take an increasing control of their resources and future.

As it is understandable, Constitutionally strong sub-state authorities have more to lose. European integration might have a pernicious effect on them, because, as it deepens, the outreach of the European Union competence capacity is also affecting those policy domains that are normally devolved to federated authorities in federal states. This situation can be further exacerbated in those states organized around an asymmetrical federal formula, where the wide set of competences assigned to some regions as a compensation of an injustice suffered in the past or as the recognition of a cultural distinctiveness might end up to lose significance and momentum.

Expectably, and empirical evidence supports this assumption, those regions where sub-state nationalism is dominant are, albeit not always, regions with legislative power. To the substantial loss of tangible power due to the erosion of their competences, it should be added another important aspect, which has to do with the importance attached by sub-nationalism to be the legitimately entitled authority to detain and exercise such competences. The increasing gap between policy makers and policy beneficiaries is particularly painful to accept for sub-state nationalist entrepreneurs, as it is the very principle of self-determination that is endangered.

Together with these claims, issues of political accountability – connected with electoral calculations – are raised. While the legal authority shrinks, it is the decisions and provisions negotiated by the central state in Brussels that get implemented. If things go wrong, who pays for that (electorally speaking)?

By working as a constraint to regional empowerment, European integration, irrespective of the material and immaterial value attached by sub-state nationalism to their sphere of competences, might exert a negative influence on the way it is perceived by sub-state nationalism.

European Regional Policy is often quoted as the propeller of sub-state involvement in European policy-making and a star example of regional empowerment. However, as part of its effort of equalizing regional disparities, European Regional Policy may potentially favour a distortion in the distribution and allocation of resources between richer and poorer regions, and, by doing so, may alter existing balances. This could go against the interest of those regions where sub-state nationalism flourishes, where economy is normally more prosperous than where a distinctive identity cannot be detected (Fearon and van Houten, 1998).

Quite interestingly, Whitehead (Mar-Morlinero, Smith, 1996: 255-272) argues that the need to standardize the procedures at the EU level may lead multinational and asymmetrically decentralized states to adopt the lowest common denominator formula in the application of the principle of subsidiarity, damaging, although accidentally, sub-state nationalism interests.

In light of these considerations, the enthusiastic revival of sub-state nationalism favoured by European integration should be considered as a temporary phenomenon, confirming the hypothesis advanced by the modernist school. At the long term, the only meaningful interaction will be confined to European institutions and the states. Pushing this argument further, it can be concluded that Milward (1993) said it right when he described the process of integration as instrumental and designed to guarantee the survival of the state also in an epoch of transnational challenges. Sub-state nationalism, therefore, does not have strong motivations to support the deepening of European integration, which seems to be turning against its own interest.

However, empirical evidence does not confirm such pessimistic forecasts.

Sub-state nationalism has significantly profited of the favourable context created by the European integration and the opportunities offered largely outweigh the constraints. A part from the concrete benefits derived from participating in the extended market in a forefront position – which is common to other active sub-state authorities – the symbolic significance of the interaction and interest representation at the international and European level has been of immense impact on its imaginary and should not be overlooked or downsized. The granting of cultural recognition beyond the state boundaries has had fundamental implications not only for the nation-building project of sub-state nationalism, but also for the pattern of power relations with the state.

Not surprisingly, then, throughout the process of integration, sub-state nationalist parties have adopted a very positive pro-EU attitude and have rarely turned into Euroscepticals, and, if they were so, it was because they were opposing to a specific project or idea of European Union and not to the European Union *per se* (de Winter, 2001). Similarly to what has been found with regard to the ethnicist and racist drift wrongly attached to sub-state nationalisms, a more negative posture towards European integration has been adopted by state-based protectionist nationalism movements, that use to turn their violent political invective against European integration, accused of destroying the purity of national cultures for its alleged tolerant attitude towards illegal immigrants, for its supposed ultraliberal economic receipts and its abstract conception of democracy. This looks like the typical reaction of societies exposed to fast and unpredictable social and economic change (Csergo and Goldgeier, 2004).

In terms of participation, both in the policy planning and even more so in the policy implementation, the working methods of the European Union has been particularly inclusive towards sub-state authorities, especially as far as Regional Policy is concerned. Not only have they been actively participating, but generally speaking they have done so beyond their own expectations and what they could have normally done at home. This could not be the case for sub-state nationalism, which has been usually proactive and successful to ensure a considerable room of manoeuvre in the power dynamics within the state. Having said so, still the economic benefits deriving from the regional funds have been considerable and the opportunity to have a great say in the priority setting of the allocation of such funds has also played a great role. Moreover, the dreadful distortion effect has not taken place. In a general context of development and economic improvement for all, not only stronger regions have not paid the bill of the integration by losing competitiveness in the enlarged market, but all things equals, they have benefitted more of the others in absolute terms and kept their wealth supremacy and leadership over the poorer and more peripheral regions within the same state. Although the funds allocated for the reduction of regional disparities have increased significantly - up to the 35.7% of the GDP of the EU budget²⁵ -, the enlargement towards East and the increased percentage of funds allocated to Eastern Europe has made that the equilibrium within the states has been kept.

Similarly, the mobilization and revitalization of sub-state nationalism does not seem to have the characteristics of an ephemeral occurrence in light of its steadily positive electoral results and entrenchment with European values. At the same time, the dissatisfaction with the evolution of the European integration and the contingent pursuance of more “state-aligned” strategies

²⁵ Percentage of funds made available for the Cohesion Policy for the period between 2007-2013, allocated to three entries as follows: 1. 81.54% for Convergence; 2. 15.95% for Regional Competitiveness and Employment; 3. 2.52% for European Territorial Cooperation.

should not be mistaken for the roll-back towards a traditional nation-state formula. As long as states exist and remain crucial political actors, sub-state nationalism rightly seeks an accommodation – and possibly quite a favourable one – within them. It is by consolidating their position within the state that mobilized minorities can make sure to be protected by the eroding effect of the extension of European competences and rely on powerful and institutionalized channels to enhance their vision and interests. This realistic consideration does not entail that sub-state nationalism has turned its back to European integration. It is thanks to European integration that sub-state nationalism can now ante up in its negotiations with the state and reconfigure the terms of the pacts. It follows, then, that European integration has not rescued the nation-state from its unrelenting decline. It has indeed considerably downsized its importance and sub-state nationalism has been well aware of that.

The positive relation between sub-state nationalism and European integration has been quite steady and eventually acknowledged by the mainstream literature (Keating, 2001). Empirical data also confirm this trend. As a recent study based on quantitative data has shown (Olsson, 2006), in a general context where sub-state authorities support European integration, regions dominated by sub-state nationalism do so to a higher degree and particularly if they have distinctive linguistic characteristics²⁶.

To be true, however, the relation between sub-state nationalism and European integration has not always been a bed of roses, nor it will be.

At the beginning, there have been some misperceptions about the objectives and the scope of European integration and some sub-state nationalist movements adopted a negative attitude towards it. The case of the Scottish National Party is particularly instructive in this sense. Departing from a fierce opposition to the European integration and the ideologically loaded refusal to employ the opportunities created by it, as of the mid-80s it has embraced the European cause enthusiastically. This shift in the strategy of the party seems to have been so profound that has also affected the result of the 1997 referendum on self-government (Dardanelli, 2001).

It should be considered, however, that the attitude of sub-state nationalist movements can also be influenced by the direction that the integration might be following. In the Scottish case, for instance, the distrust towards the European project was provoked, among other reasons, by the scarce commitment of European Commission to decentralization and regional empowerment (Paquin, 2000).

²⁶ This can be partly explained by the fact that those kind of minorities might feel particularly vulnerable towards the majority within the state and therefore tend to appreciate more than average the protection of a supranational institution.

The political drive that inspires European integration seems to be crucial to determine the orientation of sub-state nationalism towards it – either with or against. The support provided by sub-state nationalism to European integration is not unconditional. There is undoubtedly something instrumental in it. The increased participation especially in the once forbidden international arena and the weakening of the states were positively related to its empowerment. Should European integration head to something different, it would be a mistake to take the supportive attitude of sub-state nationalism for granted.

If European integration is to move towards a mere alliance of states and in case the supranational characteristics that have raised the enthusiasms of sub-state nationalism were to be progressively minimized, sub-state nationalist movements are very likely to turn hostile towards it and, in order to defend their prerogatives against the reinforcement of the states, they would try to put an halt to a further integration.

In given circumstances, a stall in the process of integration is not the only challenging reaction that could emerge. This hypothesis also suggests that sub-state nationalism, in turn, could start looking at the self-determination in Europe strategy as leading nowhere and could re-consider more traditional (and radical) political projects. There are sensitive concepts, in politics, that either loses significance for all or for no-one. If sovereignty and boundaries matter again, this could heavily influence the behaviour and the perspective of sub-state nationalism, that, in a world of states, could not see other way out to assert their distinctiveness but by attempting to change the map of Europe.

European Democracy in Distress?

The multi-level structure of the European Union has both solicited and sustained the intermingling of sub-state actors with supranational institutions. When hierarchical structures of power and competences are replaced by diversified, overlapping and fluid interactions and more institutional and non-institutional actors are included into the variegated levels of policy planning and decision-making, the result can be well interpreted as a democratization of the political space. However, Peters and Pierre (Bache, 2004) rightly observe that there is also a dark side of the moon. By favouring non conflictive, bargained and accommodative solutions, the political process is likely to get more and more obscure. In trading off accountability and transparency off for effectiveness, inclusiveness and consensus, a poor favour is rendered to genuine democratization. In the same line of reasoning, Papadopoulos (2007) criticizes the network governance, for its weak presence of citizens' representatives, the lack of visibility of the political processes carried out in the networks, the multi-tiered aspects and the prevalence of peer forms of accountability. The accountability of politics makers is strictly related to the transparency of

the political processes. Both accountability and transparency are not only imperatives for any democratic system, but are also its main source of legitimization.

While this criticisms attains to European governance in general as a consequence of the dispersion of authority across variegated layers of government and kinds of actors, it seems to call to the fore the responsibilities of non state actors in affecting the quality of European democracy, by rendering particularly hard to identify accountability, legitimacy and transparency in a context where decision-making is reallocated in less easily traceable routes. Following to the dissolution of a neat boundary between internal and external affairs, sub-state authorities in particular gained an increasing central role in the European and international arenas whereas states have progressively withdrawn from the monopole on foreign policy. The atomization of interest representation seriously affects the stability and the functioning of the world order by enabling the promotion of centrifugal forces to the detriment of comprehensive and broad interests and by involving in the decision-making actors that are not primarily charged with this responsibility and are eventually not accountable for it.

While mobilization is a phenomenon related to the regional dimension in general, this criticism seems to be particularly suitable to sub-state nationalism in particular. Reasonably, the objective of sub-state nationalism is to deprive the state not only from the representation of its regional interests, but from the very capacity of acting on its behalf. By claiming for itself the right of representing the nation, sub-state nationalism wounds the state sovereignty at the core of its symbolic prerogatives. The more the self-government is wide and articulated, the less sub-state nationalism is subject to the state in forging its own agenda. In multinational states, active sub-state nationalisms may generate conflict by reducing the possibilities of aggregating a common interest at a broader level. Albeit not always (Keating, 1997), the nature of the motivation behind sub-state nationalist activism is identitarian and therefore is not negotiable in economic and cost-benefit terms. It follows that the effectiveness and the coherence of the position of the state in certain issues of domestic and foreign policy can be seriously affected (Dehousse, 1989, 1991). The state that is the ultimate accountable actor for the exercise of the decision-making in certain issue may be deprived from the full exercise of its mandate.

In the framework of competences and authoritative power distribution over the last decades, sub-state engagement has actually been complementary and sometimes determinant to the formation of the state interests, as some scholars have highlighted (Michelmann and Soldatos, 1990). As a matter of fact, charging sub-state actors with a full-fledged responsibility of their own competences might be instead beneficial for the state. Freed from ordinary business, central administration could eventually focus on high politics. As far as sub-state nationalist regions are concerned, accepting their claims on direct representation and inclusion in the decisions that affects their competences but that are taken in intergovernmental contexts can

foster a cooperative environment with the central authority. As it has been shown earlier, identitarian paradiplomacy is a way for sub-nationalism to acquire power and legitimacy to the detriment of the state. Nonetheless, as Paquin observes (2004), it is not *per se* a precondition for conflict and instability. By involving 'disloyal minorities' into high profile business, states would try to create a sort of post-modern loyalty pact where responsibility is shared while respect for the hierarchy is still due. Keating (1997) rightly argues that sub-state nationalist claims are sometimes negotiable. Their claims, when reasonable, can be accepted by states without great losses and sometimes with great benefit for their internal stability and international credibility.

Accountability is still a burning issue, though. Whereas states might have a good reason not to hinder pluralism in international representation and may actually wish to encourage the involvement of sub-state actors, and of sub-state nationalism, in it both for instrumental and for ethical motivations, the solutions currently in place are inhomogeneous both in their formulation and in their effectiveness. Again, the quality of intragovernmental dynamics as well as their institutionalization might be very important to put an end to political processes short of accountable decision makers. A similar effort at the European level, aiming at creating more official channels for sub-state authorities to intervene in the decision-making process in an effective way, is also highly desirable. Linking network governance as much as possible to an institutional dimension, as neo-institutionalism inspires, can be a valid alternative to conciliate atomization of interests with accountability, thereby reducing the enormous room currently reserved to lobbying and other informal and untraceable activities.

Undoubtedly, the lack of transparency and political accountability affects the quality of European democracy. By definition, network governance strongly nuances the importance of hierarchy and broadens the pools of potential actors. Sub-state authorities have been particularly favoured by this state of affairs, as they could easily have the better of the situation thanks to their institutional role and their optimum dimension from an economic point of view. Territorially organized sub-state nationalism has coupled these encouraging circumstances with a strong determination to go beyond the state and therefore has provoked more striking results. However, relating sub-state nationalism with the bad quality of European democracy in a cause-relation cause would be highly misleading. Sub-state nationalism advances legitimate political claims in a very sophisticated and dispersive authority framework, by which, sometimes, it is affected negatively (*supra*). Therefore, not only can it hardly be considered the guilty, but actually it looks like another victim of European low-quality democracy.

THE EUROPEAN RESCUE OF SUB-STATE NATIONALISM

Multi-level governance is the theoretical account that best addresses the emergence of sub-state mobilization in the context of European integration. Thanks to its restrictive effects on state sovereignty, it has set the basis for a growing involvement on non-state actors in the political scene and at the same time offered concrete incentive to pursue direct representation.

By eroding the scope where state authority could be lawfully exercised, European integration has also had a considerable influence on the process of delegitimization suffered from the nation-state formula during the last decades and has strongly interfered in the transformations in the feelings of identity and territorial attachment of European citizens. For these reasons, it has been a particular supportive partner to sub-state nationalism, which has had two major obstacles to its political projects removed: monolithic sovereignty and monolithic national identity. As we mentioned earlier, sovereignty has never been the solid block that has been often depicted by the state-building rhetoric, nor has national identity always been the overarching self-definition feeling for everyone, as the nation-building discourse has attempted to instil. European integration, however, gave a fundamental contribution in magnifying and amplifying those phenomena and, contemporarily, in legitimizing them.

Contemporary sub-state nationalist movements, therefore, are strongly indebted to European integration: their claims have been made more legitimate whereas its fierce enemy has been weakened. However, this improvement in sub-state nationalism capacity has been associated to threatening paradoxes: far from contributing to the building and consolidation of a supranational polity, sub-state nationalism actually aims at the fragmentation of the political space by constituting independent micro-entities. It may endanger European values of tolerance, diversity and solidarity by restricting the physical domain of its exercise. Sub-state nationalism can end up opposing European integration as not to suffer from further restrictions in their competences, putting the very future of Europe at risk. Intrinsically prone to pursue self-representation and to seek an interaction with the international community in view of its recognition, it serves as an element of disturbance to the effort of conglomerating broad interests in multinational states and contributes in a significant way to make of the European democracy one of low-quality.

European integration seems to have given birth to the same pathology that will lead to its own disintegration. In the previous sections, however, there has been the attempt to downsize the alleged detrimental effects of sub-state nationalism to European well-being, basing on reasoned counter-arguments supported both by literature and empirical evidence. Whereas the very idea that European integration has worked as a propeller for sub-state nationalist claims has been embraced, it has been implied that at the same time the antibodies to protect the system from undesirable effects have also been produced. European integration has both stimulated greater

minority demands but has also provided greater tools for managing those demands, such that the net effect is not destabilizing.

However, the role played by European integration is not limited to accommodate sub-state nationalist claims in a way that is not threatening to stability. It also exerts an influence directly on sub-state nationalist movements and on the content of their claims, by moderating them, both in the objectives and in the discourse, and by making them fully compatible with its own principles.

The argument according to which European integration has been an important contributor to the moderation of sub-state nationalism is theoretically grounded in that strand of the broader literature on the politics of change that ascribes a great role to international organizations in fostering democracy. The mainstream literature has always tended to explain democratic transitions as a result of a complex set of factors mutually interacting whose common denominator is to have been generated internally. The domestic dimension has been fundamental to give an account of regime change and little or no interest has been dedicated to the international dimension. At most, the international community and international organizations have been considered as supporting such processes externally, but have not been determinant in provoking them. Rudimental causal mechanism linking international organization and democratization have been provided by new institutionalism through the concept of 'commitment enhancement', where international organization works as a hindrance to the free will of the state (Putnam, 1988). Sociological institutionalism also helped make a step forward in the consolidation of the link between the two. Finnemore (1996) highlights that domestic preference is the product of the interaction of international norms and institutions. The latter is not anymore seen as a constraint of the former, but seems to work in a more pervasive and comprehensive way in conjunction with other domestic factors.

A more sophisticated theoretical account has been recently provided by Pevehouse (2002; 2005), that identifies three main causal mechanisms as potentially determining regime change. International pressures – both of economic and political nature – is one of them, together with assuages of fears and finally socialization of political elites. Pevehouse rightly recognizes that not all international organizations can be associated to democratic consolidation and are likely to supply the above mentioned mechanisms. It seems that those where the democratic density is higher can perform more forcefully in this direction (2002: 529). European Union is a clear example of such international organizations. The importance attached to democracy within the European Union is patent from the outset. One of the sine-qua-non conditions for a state to be

eligible as member of the EU is to have reached the stability of its political institutions that should guarantee democracy, rule of law and democracy²⁷.

Mutata mutandis, Pevehouse's argument may well serve as a valid theoretical reference to provide the positive relation between European integration and the moderation of sub-state nationalist claims and discourse with a fair cause-effect fashion. Of course, as far as sub-state nationalism is concerned, its democratization can be ascribed only indirectly to European integration. As part of a broader political dynamic that has mainly taken place within the state boundaries, sub-state nationalism has been embracing democratic principles in parallel to state institutions and civil society in general, that, in the case of Western Europe, preceded the establishment of European institutions but that were highly enhanced by them. The argument here is that, however, the moderation of sub-state nationalism, with respect to its values, claims and political discourse, has been determined by a set of favourable circumstances created by European integration. The casual mechanisms identified by Pevehouse seem to have worked simultaneously in this case. The pressure exerted by European integration on sub-state nationalism, albeit not *strictu sensu* in economic and political terms, has been directed to align its mindset, political strategies and political practice towards firm democratic values – tolerance, inclusiveness, respect for diversity, solidarity – and stability. By establishing a sort of implicit admission criteria to participate in the public life of European institutions, sub-state nationalistic movements had to reframe their convictions and objectives to make sure that they could pass the “European test”. At the same time, they have been inducted to see the supranationalization of the decision-making process as an added value to their own political agenda (fears assuages) and the advantage to take active part in this effort (elite socialization). European integration has provided sub-state elites with an alluring context to raise their political profile, both from an electoral and personal international projection viewpoint (Guibernau, 2007).

There is also an empirical argument that suggests that with the advent of European integration the trend has been towards a moderation of sub-state nationalist positions and it is about the sensitive issue of identity. As it has been noted, European integration has officialized and legitimized the separation between the state and national identity for the first time since the establishment of the nation-state formula. However, this has not translated into an atomization and encroachment of particularistic identities, as some scholars suggested, and not even in a deterritorialization of identities, as others argued (Waldron in Kymlicka, 1995 b).

²⁷ The conditions that define the eligibility of a European country as a EU member are known by the name of Copenhagen criteria, adopted in the June 1993 European Council in Copenhagen, Denmark, and include, a part from the above mentioned requirement, respect for the rights of the minorities, a well functioning market economy and the ability to adhere to the EU aquis.

From a broad European perspective, a complex pattern emerges: whereas territorial identity is still relevant to European citizens, self-identification has not taken shape around a zero-sum competition. Loyalty is not reallocated from one source of allegiance to another, say from the national to the European level or to sub-state authorities all of a sudden; on the contrary, attachment seems to be multi-layered and mutually inclusive, whereby the state-based exclusive affiliation has been replaced by above (European) and below (regional) loyalties (Garcia and Wallace, 1993). The reorganization of the identity pattern is largely overlapping with the multi-layered restructuring of governance in the European polity. The dispersion of sensitive political rights – such as voting rights – across different layers of government has challenged the traditional understanding of exclusive membership in a political community, and, as a consequence, identity has taken the same direction. In virtue of the non-exclusiveness and complementarity of those rights, concentric loyalties have made that multiple, nested identities could coexist. Quantitative data based on Eurobarometer surveys seem to confirm this trend (Marks and Hooghe, 2001: 53-58).

This general assumption is also confirmed by several data that address stateless minorities, including those dominated by sub-state nationalist parties. This is the case, to quote some significant examples, of Euskadi and Catalonia (Linz: 1986; Marks and Hooghe, 2001: 59), where multiple identities have been consolidating as the process of European integration deepens. Although in a less evident way, identity in exclusive terms has also shrunk in the Scottish case (McCrone, 2002). Although none of the sources consulted has explicitly introduced the 'European factor' as the independent variable, it is deductable that, by providing a broader political realm and increased symbolic resources, European integration has added a further sophistication in identities negotiation and has rarely been neutral to this dialectic. While the extent and the modality through which such influence has developed vary on a case by case basis, the enthusiastic adherence of many nationalist movements in stateless nations to the European project and their strong pro-European vocation witness that European identity has contributed to legitimize their identity claims in a renewed context and, at the same time, to make them fully compatible with European values and objectives.

PART 2.

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION, MINORITIES AND DEMOCRACY

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

There are few nations in the European continent in which there exists no groups of the population that possess an ethnic identity that is different from that of the majority, Wolff (2003) notes. Wolff describes an ethnic group as defined “by a number of features, among them shared myths of religion and cultural characteristics, like language, religion, customs and traditions, which distinguish them from others” (Wolff 2003: 1).

As Wolff (2003) notes, a member of an ethnic minority possesses some of the above features that are unique to his group, and the other members of the community recognize his membership to the minority group from these features. He further notes that the membership of an individual to a minority group is personal and is not a matter for the State to determine, though this does not mean that this recognition is automatic for every group that decides to regard itself as a minority (Wolff 2003: 1).

The majority of European nation-states have minority populations of a size below one-fifth of their total population. 11 of them fall out of this category; Ukraine, Georgia, Spain, Estonia, Moldova, Macedonia, Switzerland, Serbia, Montenegro, Belgium, Latvia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the order of increasing size of minority population (Wolff 2003: 3).

Four main classifications of minority populations can be identified in Europe. First, there are the “national minorities”, which he defines as the “ethnic groups who live on the territory of one state, the host, but are simultaneously the ethnic kin of the titular nation of another, often neighboring, state” (Wolff 2003: 3).

Wolff gives the example of the Germans, whom he says live in various parts of Europe, like Belgium and France, besides Germany, and the Greek and Turkish populations in Cyprus. The second group is the “transnational minorities”, those ethnic groups who live on land that stretches over more than one state, but do not make up the biggest part of the population in any of them. These include, Wolff says, the Frisian ethnic group found in Netherlands and Germany (Wolff 2003: 3).

The third group is the “indigenous minorities”, that is, the ethnic groups whose residence is in one state, their “ancestral home”, but which do not constitute the majority of the population in that state. The Welsh and Scottish populations in the U.K. provide a good example. The last group is that of minority ethnic populations in the continent that result from immigration. The case of the large immigrant population from North Africa in France gives a good example of this group (Wolff 2003: 3).

The “Declaration on a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the Twenty-First Century” in the Lisbon document of 1996 signed by members of the European Union states:

“As an important contribution to security, we reaffirm our determination to fully respect and implement all our commitments relating to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. We reaffirm our will to cooperate fully with the High Commissioner on National Minorities. We are ready to respond to a request by any participating state seeking solutions to minority issues on its territory. The protection and promotion of the rights of individual members of national minorities are essential factors in the struggle for democracy, peace, justice and stability; both within and among the participating states”.

The above declaration served to reflect the commitment that the European states had realized was necessary to respond to the growing significance that these minorities were becoming in the economies, Ekeus & Davis (2008: 30) note. This was necessary because of the growing awareness among the minority groups that they needed to rise against the discriminatory policies the European governments were implementing against them. They recommended pre-emptive action and accountability in their policies towards the groups aimed at incorporating them into the national economic and social fabric in their countries (Ekeus & Davis 2008: 37).

Several principles were intended to guide the policy formulation of these European states in order to ensure that minorities were effectively involved in their economies. The countries recognized the fact that the minorities’ active participation in the economies and the society was a major precondition for peaceful and democratic co-existence. Governments therefore needed to make arrangements for the promotion of such participation (Ekeus & Davis 2008: 77).

It was also observed that such action had to have a strong legal basis in their countries, and that human rights had to be respected. The states also agreed that it was the prerogative of the individuals to determine whether they belonged to a minority group, and that no such individual would suffer negative consequences as a result of such a decision (Ekeus & Davis 2008: 77).

In the creation of the necessary procedures and institutions for the above recommendations, the components of accountability, inclusivity and transparency were necessary to build an environment of confidence. The European governments were also to provide effective platforms for the minority groups in the government to enable them to address the issues they had. This was to be implemented through special, formal and informal arrangements (Ekeus & Davis 2008: 78).

The European governments were to ensure that the rights of individuals belonging to minority groups to participate in electoral politics for decision-making positions were guaranteed. Another

principle was that the governments needed to put in place a framework to enable a dialogue channel between the minority groups and themselves to facilitate the knowledge of the issues they faced, including those on education and housing (Ekeus & Davis: 79).

THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT IN THE EU AND A FOCUS ON REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION

Various arguments have been put forward by analysts, which insist on the existence of a “democratic deficit” in the European Union. This argument stems from the dilemma that the EU can neither be democratically legitimized solely through the Member States nor be defined correctly as a State per se. After a history stretching over half a century, which has been marked by integration and evolutionary trends, Milev argues that the EU should seek to fortify its “democratic character” if it is to make progress (Milev 2005: 1).

The EU has undergone the process of evolution “as a unique system”. It has in fact achieved heights of integration that supersede the merit of the term “international organization”, for the reason that some of its institutions have been observed to take precedence over those of the individual countries, “including their Constitutions” (Milev 2005: 1).

This renders the constituent Member States unable to “democratically legitimize” the Union through their participation in its operations, which he argues is the hallmark of an international organization. On the other hand, the EU’s definition as a State cannot be validated, he argues, since it lacks some of the competencies that a normal state in the world boasts of; a national army and policies for education, social engagements and taxation (Milev 2005: 2).

The widespread nature of the “EU democratic deficit” debate, Milev (2005) argues, can be partly attributed to the fact that the concept has no clear definition. Various academicians have been assigning different meanings to the concept in their arguments over time, thereby extending the debate’s scope each time. After the direct election of members of the European Parliament was passed in 1979, concerns about the ‘deficit’ continued, largely as a result of the perceived “increase in the political stance of the EU Parliament as the only directly elected institution at the EU level” (Milev 2005: 2).

Rather than lessening the scope and intensity of the debate, Milev (2005) observes, the strengthening of the European Union through the enforcement of the “Single European Act”, which established the ‘consultation procedure’ and the time frame for the internal European market, expanded it even further (Milev 2005: 3).

From the political point of view, Milev observes, the term is widely used by many stakeholders in the European domain, mainly the politicians and the economists. Milev identifies three basic

kinds of stakeholders who use the term to their advantage in the European domain. First, there are the “Eurosceptics”, including members of political parties around the countries of the EU who are opposed to membership. These find the concept of ‘democratic deficit’ in the EU convenient in their criticism of the body’s framework of institutions (Milev 2005: 3).

The “convinced Europeans”, the section of the continent’s population that is pro-EU, Milev observes, use the concept in their attempts to depict the complicated structure of the body as one that mirrors the body’s transparency, democracy and efficiency. The MEPs themselves use the term in the process of validating their argument that the European Parliament requires a greater mandate in the making of decisions concerning the European continent from the member countries and the electorate (Milev 2005: 3).

A good understanding of the concept “democratic deficit”, is premised on that of the concept ‘democracy’. According to Gorski (2006), since democracy “is a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system”, the concept “democratic deficit” in the European continent would be defined as “the partial or absolute lack of the vesting of power in the European people – the European Union citizens – resulting from the transfer of powers from the national legislatures to the Community decision-making apparatus, composed of the representatives of the national executives.” Gorski nevertheless argues that it is not necessarily the case that the people always directly exercise the powers in a democracy (Gorski 2006: 1).

Gorski highlights several arguments to provide evidence of the existence of a democratic deficit in the EU (Gorski 2006: 2).

There is, on the one hand, the perceived “unresponsiveness” of the EU to pressure by the people for democracy. The citizens in the EU are unable to change the EU government comprehensively since the only power they have affects only its parliamentary body.

Despite the advancements made in furthering the competences of the European Parliament, there is a dominance of the executive arm in the EU system at the expense of the other arms. The capacity of the European Commission to influence the European policy agenda is still very extensive, thereby lessening the influence of the citizens on the daily operations of the EU.

In addition, “Comitology” – the widespread practice to delegate the preparation and the debate of decisions and legislative proposals to Committees – is leading to the erosion of power and influence from the European Parliament to the European Commission. Gorski refers to this as “the by-passing of democracy”.

EU citizens therefore feel as though they are losing grip of the issues that concern them as a result of “the transfer of competence.” The fact that most of the EU’s policy making processes are carried out “behind closed doors” makes it difficult for the normal citizens to understand the body and its decision-making processes, thus making them feel alienated. Gorski calls this the “transparency-complexity issue.”

Finally, the liberalization and enforcement of a customs union in the EU market has led to an “imbalance” between labour and capital as factors of production. This has negatively affected the citizens of the Union who make up the job market, making them feel alienated.

CAUSES AND FOUNDATIONS OF THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT

Moravcsik (2007) observes that the perception that there exists a “democratic deficit” in the EU is the fact that only one arm of the Union, the European Parliament, is subjected to a direct electoral process. This is compounded by the fact that it is one of three bodies involved in the EU procedure of legislation. Further, the electoral process for the EU legislature is not centralized for organization and transparency purposes. He also observes that in the elections,

There is little if any discussion of the issues that concern the European continent during the election process. “A relatively big number of voters select among national parties on the basis of national issues” (Moravcsik 2007: 2). On the other hand, the executive body of the EU, the European Commission, “is widely perceived as a technocracy” by analysts and the citizens of the EU in general (Moravcsik 2007: 2).

The European Court of Justice has exceptional powers, Moravcsik further observes, while the Council of Ministers make their deliberations in secrecy. He observes that although the U. is answerable to the voters in an indirect manner, the interactions between the two parties are extremely diplomatic. Moravcsik continues: “These procedural qualms might have been tolerable if it were not for the perceived bias in the output of European policy-making. Many view the EU as a throw-back to the 19th century – a fiscally weak, neo-liberal state.” He adds that most of the directives issued from the EU are perceived by the citizenship as prescribing “wider and deeper markets”, and offering scant compensation in the form of policies based on protective regulation and provision of society welfare (Moravcsik 2007: 3).

The presence of a “democratic deficit” in the EU relations with the electorate (Cini, 2007), is “a negative side effect” of the body’s process of integration. It represents the gap between the expectations and needs of democratic governance and reality of the circumstances in which the European Union operates. Cini quotes: “The idea behind the notion of a democratic deficit is

that decisions in the EU are in some ways insufficiently representative of, or accountable to, the nations and people of Europe.” (Cini 2007: 360).

The fact of the EU suffering a democratic deficit implies the presence of several deficiencies in its contact with the European electorate. These deficiencies include those in the areas of representation, facilitation and support, and accountability and transparency. The matter here is not just that an extra level of government has been introduced, but also that the government has become “further removed” from the people themselves. In other words, the gap between the top and the grassroots has been further enlarged. The problem is also that the establishment of the European Union effectively puts the claim of each of the members to “be the source of its own legitimacy” in doubt in the eyes of the electorate and the observers (Cini 2007: 360).

The democratic deficit in the EU is also a consequence of the perceived limitation in the ability of the European citizenry to significantly impact on the tasks of the main European Union institutions. The democratic deficit in the EU is the a result of the interplay of two phenomena: the perceived transfer of influence and effective power from the nation to the Community, and the exercise of those powers at the Community level by institutions other than the European Parliament.

As the process of European integration was commencing in the 50s, little regard had been accorded to the democracy part of the deal. The then European Community was built and sustained on a “permissive consensus”, an agreement between Member States with the implicit approval of the citizens. Cini argues that the EC’s source of legitimacy did not emanate from the citizens, but from the “peace and prosperity that integration would bring to the countries in Western Europe.” She notes that the legitimacy from that early stage of integration did not come from the “aspirations to become a democracy” (Cini 2007: 360).

After 1990 and the crisis over the “Maastricht treaty”, however, the questions started to be asked. Rather than the consensus that had prevailed since the organization’s inception, debates with conflicting solutions arose, with the object being the issue of how the European Union could be democratized (Cini 2007: 360).

The term “democracy” is the method of organization of the lives of the public/citizens such that what affects and is of interest and concern to them is communicated to, discussed and addressed by the government. The defining characteristics of democracy include amicable resolution of disputes, “institutional controls”, adequate representation in the process of making laws, participation in the governing and government process and inclusion of the civil society in public issues (Cini 2007: 361).

The desired end product for most of the participants in the EU debate was “a fully fledged political system.” This has spurred the interest of many analysts, with many analyzing whether the European body might in future become a democracy. She however observes that while the general agreement abounds that the European institution requires improvements on the aspect of democracy, the same cannot be said about the means by which this is to be achieved (Cini 2007: 361).

There exist two unique understandings of the “democratic deficit”, according to Cini (2007). First, there is the democratic deficit in regard to “its institutional characteristics.” Here, the argument is that democracy in the European Union is hinged on the “flawed inter-institutional relationships that characterize it.” In this case, the suggestions in favor of change argue against what they term the “institutional imbalance” in the European body. They also argue that the transparency and representativeness of the makers of policy in the European Union need to be enhanced (Cini 2007: 361).

The second concept of the democratic deficit concentrates on “socio-psychological factors”. The argument here is that the democratic deficit is present due to the lack of “a European demos.”²⁸ Consequently, this second concept of the democratic deficit in the EU concentrates more on the identity of the citizens of Europe and “the extent to which there is a feeling of community amongst Europeans.” (Cini 2007: 361).

Given that the second concept identifies the lack of a demos as the hurdle for the democratization of the European Union, Cini (2007) observes, the suggestions in favour of change that subscribe to this school of thought tend to recommend its formation as the way out of the deficit (Cini 2007: 361).

The traditional view of the democratic deficit in the EU is that the removal of the authorities pertaining to the legislature from the parliaments of individual EU members has not been fairly compensated with a high level of transparency and legislative innovation on the part of the European Union’s legislative arm. This view is compounded by the fact that the European Parliament is the single institution in the EU that undergoes a direct electoral process (Cini 2007: 361).

One of the basic cornerstones of democracy, Newman (1997) observes, is the ability of non-governmental views to impact on governmental decisions, reveal cases of injustice and offer potential solutions for the present problems with policy. Newman observes that this is however at best practically difficult. He argues that this mechanism is particularly difficult in the case of

²⁸ Demos, Cini quotes, “Refer tos to more than simply people, as it also represents the idea of a political community of shared values and identities. (Cini 2007: 361).

the European Union. Newman observes that while the presence of a democratic deficit in the EU is indisputable for many analysts, the exact location of the problem is a controversial issue (Newman 1997: 173).

One view is that the European body is a “polity”. This means that the ideal EU should be an institution akin to “a liberal-democratic political system.” As a result, the proponents of this argument say, the diagnosis of the problem becomes that the level of democracy at the European body’s level is inadequate.²⁹ The solutions that are offered by different analysts and observers may be of a wide variety, Newman argues, but all are of similar substance: the democratic system in the EU needs to be reviewed (Newman 1997: 173).

The second perspective is opposed to the above view and argues that “the primary locations for decision-making and accountability remain within the nation-state.” The suggestions for the way forward in this case also vary widely, but are founded on the idea that more significant power in the member nation’s institutions over the European Union’s is necessary (Newman 1997: 173).

According to Follesdal and Hix (2005), there is no one definite meaning of the concept “democratic deficit”. They argue that definitions of the term “are as varied as nationality.” Follesdal and Hix argue that five main ‘claims’ make up the European deficit (Follesdal & Hix (2005: 4) :

First, the process of integration in the continent of Europe has had the effect of an enhancement of executive power and a concurrent reduction in the power and influence of the legislative bodies of the member countries. At the national level, the parliaments are held responsible by the voters in that they are put under daily “supervision” by the electorate with the help of the media. In the EU’s case, however, Follesdal and Hix note, “the actions of executive agents are beyond the control of national parliaments.” (Follesdal & Hix 2005: 5).

Secondly, analysts agree that the European legislative arm is “too weak.” Follesdal and Hix argue that “some observers say there was a direct trade-off between the powers of the European parliament and the powers of national parliaments, where any increase in the powers of the European parliament would mean a concomitant decrease in the powers of national parliaments.” (Follesdal & Hix 2005: 5).

This view however slightly changed after the 1990s, they report, as the process of integration in the continent began to be viewed as “a decline in the power of parliamentary institutions” in the

²⁹ More specifically, they argue, the European Parliament should be stronger, the European Commission subjected to an electoral process and the Council of Ministers held more answerable (Newman 1997: 173).

member nations as compared to those institutions with executive power (Follesdal & Hix 2005: 5).

Thirdly, Follesdal and Hix (2005) maintain that in spite of the increase in the influence and authority of the European Parliament, “European elections” are inexistent. They argue that the citizens in the continent elect their respective countries’ governments, who in turn take up seats in the Council and, Follesdal and Hix say, select Commissioners. Though the citizens participate in the “elections” of European Members of Parliament, Follesdal and Hix observe, “neither the national elections nor European Parliament elections are really ‘European’ elections: about the personalities and parties at the European level, or the direction of the EU policy agenda.” (Follesdal & Hix 2005: 5).

The elections at the national level, Follesdal and Hix (2005) note, are contested on the basis of issues that affect the nation on an individual capacity, and not on the basis of the European continental issues. They also note that the parties at the national level of politics “collude to keep the issue of Europe off the domestic agenda.” Follesdal and Hix also observe that the “European elections are also not about Europe, since the parties and the media treat them as mid-term national contests.” They note that some analysts have in the past described the European elections as “second-order national elections.” (Follesdal & Hix 2005: 6).

The lack of the element of Europe in both these elections, note Follesdal and Hix (2005), renders the preferences of the citizens of the European continent on the issues incorporated in the policy framework of the European Union only indirectly influential, to the optimist. They argue that were the EU a body that incorporated the idea of effective electoral contests into its system to ensure a clearly mandated EU government, the elections would then have a direct impact on the activities and policy formulations of the elected representatives and the EU in general (Follesdal & Hix 2005: 6).

Fourthly, Follesdal and Hix (2005) observe, the problem of the European Union being “too distant” from the electorate would persist even if the level of influence and power of the European Parliament were boosted by the holding of genuinely legitimate elections. Two perspectives are contained in this view; the institutional view and the psychological view. The institutional perspective is the view that, as discussed above, the citizenry in the continent feel far removed from the operations of the EU bodies (Follesdal & Hix 2005: 6).

The psychological perspective, Follesdal and Hix (2005) note, holds the view that the EU is in a huge way distinct from the domestic institutions that the European electorate is used to at the national level. This makes it hard for the electorate to understand the EU with the result that they “will never be able to assess and regard it as a democratic system in the normal way, nor to identify with it.” (Follesdal & Hix 2005: 6).

The following example is given by Follesdal and Hix as a demonstration of the complexity of the EU operations that the electorate finds hard to comprehend: “The Commission is neither a government nor a bureaucracy, and is appointed through an obscure procedure rather than elected by one electorate directly or indirectly. The Council is part legislature and part executive, and when acting as a legislature makes most of its decisions in secret. The European Parliament cannot be a properly deliberative assembly because of the multi-lingual nature of debates in committees and the plenary without a common political backdrop culture. The policy process is fundamentally technocratic rather than political.” (Follesdal and Hix 2005: 6).

Fifthly and lastly, Follesdal and Hix (2005) argue, the process of integration among the countries in Europe effects a “policy drift” from what the electorate considers ideal policy. This is partly a consequence of the interplay of the above four factors. The EU may begin to formulate policies that are hardly supported by the majority of the electorate, given that it is not under any direct pressure from the electorate and the member nations (Follesdal & Hix 2005: 6).

They also observe that “governments are able to undertake policies at the European level that they cannot pursue at the domestic level, where they face constraints from parliaments, courts and corporatist interest group structures.” Such actions have included the enforcement of monetary policies, the subsidization of farmers under the “Common Agricultural Policy” and the enforcement of a customs union (Follesdal & Hix 2005: 6).

Some efforts have been observed that are aimed at addressing the major effects of the “democratic deficit”, according to Follesdal and Hix (2005). For one, the European legislative body has been granted more authority with its acquired veto-power. This power is mainly aimed at the institution of the Commission, where the Parliament “is increasingly willing to use this power against heavy lobbying from national governments.” Follesdal and Hix say that this power was used by the Parliament to disapprove the initial membership of “the Barroso Commission” in 2004 (Follesdal & Hix 2005: 9).

Another manifestation, Follesdal and Hix note, is that “the reform of the co-decision procedure in the Amsterdam Treaty means that legislation cannot be passed under the co-decision procedure without majority support in both the Council and the European Parliament.” (Follesdal & Hix 2005: 9).

REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION OF EUROPEAN CITIZENS IN THE EU

Political participatio, is an important component of citizenship in the European Union. It refers to “the various ways in which individuals take part in the management of the collective affairs of a given political community.” This is however not limited to the casting of votes and vying of posts in elections. Other non-conventional forms of participation could include marches and many other forms of protest against the establishment, like strikes and boycotts. Another vital aspect of political participation, Martiniello observes, is the fact that most of the “less conventional and extra-parliamentary forms of political participation are often most relevant when they are collective.” (Martiniello 2005: 5).

Political representation has two dimensions. First, power is normally put to use by a group of individuals who are “legitimized to govern by the process of free elections, by which citizens mandate those persons to govern on their behalf.” Martiniello notes that it is this process of granting the representatives and actions by the government legitimacy that is referred to as “political representation.” The second aspect of this representation refers to the result of the grant of the mandate and legitimacy, that is, the body of individuals whose task is to represent the citizens (Martiniello 2005: 6).

Traditionally, Fossum and Schlesinger (2007) observe, the model of representation in elective politics depends on a relationship called “delegation and aggregation.” This relationship involves the induction of preferences by the voters in their representatives. Fossum and Schlesinger observe that through the act of voting, the citizens effect the delegation of power to the representative who appears to be worthy of their trust and offers the promise to abide by his/her (party’s) agenda during the political tenure for whose mandate he/she has acquired (Fossum & Schlesinger 2007: 269).

Representation as a concept, Fossum and Schlesinger (2007) observe, is thought of as “communicative interaction between the representative and the represented. They identify two basic types of representation: promissory and anticipatory representation. Promissory representation is based on “coercive power”, which the voters delegate to their representative through the act of voting for him/her, and the moral obligation that is placed on the representative to obey the voter (Fossum & Schlesinger 2007: 270).

Anticipatory representation presupposes a high level of communication between the electorate and the representatives. The electorate can be educated or informed by the representative, the parties, the media, candidates of the opposing view and the rest of the electorate too (Fossum & Schlesinger 2007: 270).

The level of participation by the European citizenry in the EU elections, notes Malkopoulou (2009) has been on a steady decline since the 1979 elections. Malkopoulou observes that the participation has dropped by an average of 3% every time an election has been held. He identifies two reasons why the turnout in the European elections is important. First, lack of huge numbers in the polls significantly reduces the “legitimacy of the electoral process, the European Parliament itself and the European Union as a whole.” Malkopoulou observes that this leads to disillusionment as far as the vision of forming a body founded on the values of democracy is concerned (Malkopoulou 2009: 3).

Secondly, the EU requires to display the image of credibility if its programs aimed at the promotion of democracy around the world are to run smoothly. Malkopoulou notes that in comparison to other donor organizations, the EU applies a strict code in which the respect for human rights and the values of democracy are used as the criteria in the granting of aid. He observes, “Participation and political inclusion are part and parcel of the democratic package and if the EU wants to support that package worldwide, it must adhere to these values itself” (Malkopoulou 2009: 4).

The reasons for low voter turnout in these elections include the “ill-timing” of the elections and their “less lively” nature. The most significant reason for the low turnout, Malkopoulou observes, is the fact that the citizens of Europe feel disillusioned that their vote will not result in any significant change in the European body’s operations and policies. Most of the electorate has the impression that the European legislative body “plays a secondary role” in the process of making policies in the European continent, behind the European Commission (Malkopoulou 2009: 5).

General ignorance about the European legislative body’s institutions, Malkopoulou notes, has also alienated the European voters and caused them to take its elective process less seriously. They feel less connected to the EU body in their daily activities, which take precedence even on the designated election days. Malkopoulou also notes that the European electorate feels that the European body is usurping the roles of the national governments. The small number of members in the European assembly also makes the citizens to feel “under-represented” (Malkopoulou 2009: 6).

One of the measures taken by governments in a bid to address the problem of low voter turnout at the European elections has been “compulsory voting”, Malkopoulou (2009) observes.³⁰

³⁰ This is where the governments exact some fines from the members of the electorate who have no “good” reasons for failing to vote (Malkopoulou 2009: 6).

Malkopoulou observes that Greece, Cyprus and Belgium use this method, which has been observed to effectively raise the level of participation by their citizens in the European elections.

“The EU’s compound system of representation consists predominantly of authoritative representation executed indirectly by trustees through descriptive representation. This is necessitated by the EU’s confederal structure, coupled with substantive representation executed by delegates directly through consultative representation, necessitated by the EU’s federal mode of operation.” Kincaid 1999: 1).

Kincaid (1999) observes that the chief institutions of the European Union address the issues that are brought before them by the leaders of the member countries or their representatives. He notes that the interests of other stakeholders like regions and individuals are only addressed in “a consultative fashion.” Kincaid says: “Individuals achieve authoritative representation primarily, but indirectly, through their nation-state government; they achieve consultative representation mainly through direct and indirect interest-group pressure on EU institutions.” The main risk involved in both these kinds of representation in the EU is that of domination by groups of the elite in the continent (Kincaid 1999: 10).

To be able to influence the policies of the European Union in the consultative manner mentioned above, citizens have the option of joining or forming “interest-group organizations” at the national level or at the international level to cover the whole of the EU. Kincaid notes that since these organizations address more specific issues than do the national governments and parties, they are more likely to adopt a united front in the pursuit of the goals that they set. This would make them more effective in their bid to exert more influence in the policies that the EU enforces (Kincaid 1999: 9).

A lot of effort is being applied, Ziolonka (2006) observes, in the encouragement of the European citizens to take part in the elections to choose their representatives in the European Parliament. It has been observed that a large percentage of the electorate lack interest in the European elections. Ziolonka observes that the European elections have sometimes been used as a platform for “populism” rather than real participation (Ziolonka 2006: 12).

Martiniello (2005) observes that the migrant population in the EU is one of the significant components of the political process. Several issues are of great importance when the issue of representation in the context of immigrants is focused on. Such issues include the way in which the immigrants are to be persuaded to take part in the political process of the European body and the determination of how intense the willingness of the migrant populations in the EU nations is to participate in the political process. (Martiniello 2005: 7).

Others include how the participation of the immigrant population in the European political process is to be explained by the authorities to the nationals in order to avoid political tensions and misinterpretations, and the issue of how the immigrants who decide to take up posts in the EU body should be handled by the member nations and the European citizens (Martiniello 2005: 7).

In the case of the European Parliament, which is subjected to an electoral process, Thomassen and Schmitt (2007) observe that “the assumption of supranational decision-making is the only legitimization” possible. Research on the degree to which the mode of supranationality in the European Union meets the qualities of legitimacy is valid where it adopts this mode in its operation, they observe. Another question in the research that becomes validated by such adoption is that of the degree to which it abides by the principles of the “normative democratic theory.” (Thomassen and Schmitt 2007: 6).

It is necessary, Thomassen and Schmitt (2007) argue, to consider the state of the relations between the various states in the EU and the European Union itself, and the operations of the governments at the domestic level if the issue of representation in the European body of the citizens is to be effectively evaluated. They argue that it is for this reason that the issue of representation of citizens in the EU, rather than the EU’s representation of the European citizens, is the relevant one. It also mirrors the belief of some analysts that the issue of representation of the European citizens in the EU is synonymous with the issue of the relations between the countries and the body, and that of the government processes vis-à-vis contact with the citizens at the domestic level. In other words, Thomassen and Schmitt propose that representation at the EU level is only an extension of that at the regional and national levels. (Thomassen & Schmitt 2007: 6).

The evaluation of the quality of representation in the EU is complicated for two basic reasons, according to Thomassen and Schmitt (2007).

First, such an evaluation requires the setting up of certain criteria to be used for the process. Thomassen and Schmitt argue that these criteria can be derived from “the normative theories of political representation” and more generally, “of representative democracy.” To add to this basic problem, it is naturally hard to come up with criteria that are indisputable and non-controversial, since, in the politics of representation, none of the normative theories have been free of controversy. (Thomassen & Schmitt 2007: 12).

Secondly, all the theories of representation in politics that exist have been set up with the one nation-state in mind; none ascribes to the situation where several states in a union are involved. Thomassen and Schmitt therefore argue that it is a complicated issue to determine to what degree these theories can be applied in such circumstances. Such a debate would also

necessitate the revisiting of “classic issues in the literature on political representation.” (Thomassen & Schmitt 2007: 14).

The “classic questions” in the second point above are “whom the members of Parliament should represent and how they should do this.” Thomassen and Schmitt observe:

“Both these questions go back to a debate on these issues in the eighteenth century England, and more particularly to Edmund Burke’s famous speech to the electors of Bristol in 1774. In this speech, Burke argued that it was the task of a Member of Parliament to defend national rather than local interests, and that he should follow his own mature judgment rather than the instructions of his constituents. In the literature, the two questions of whom and how to represent became known as the questions about the focus and style of political representation.” (Thomassen & Schmitt 2007: 14).

The establishment of this difference was the main issue subjected to research aimed at revealing how the representatives viewed the roles they played. The argument was also advanced that the higher the scientific interest in the debate about freedom from the authority accorded by voters, the less its relevance in modern democratic countries, especially in the Western end of Europe. Burke, Thomassen and Schmitt argue, had voiced his opinions in a relevant debate in the process of change from “a pre-modern government based on the struggle between a parliament, consisting of representatives of the grievances of estates and communities, and the king, to a modern system of government based on the sovereignty of Parliament.” (Thomassen & Schmitt 2007: 14).

As the Parliament became more and more the institution where power and authority were centered, it displayed greater levels of responsibility towards the interests of the nation and its people, and “pure geographical interests” were accorded less priority. This became the trend in most of Western Europe and most of the national Constitutions in Europe, especially after the revolution in France, mandated MPs to serve the interests of the nation-state and the general public rather than their constituencies, and not to obey anyone’s instructions. (Thomassen & Schmitt 2007: 14).

The replacement of “the liberal revolution” of the 19th century by the “democratic revolution” in the 20th century saw the “introduction of general suffrage”, in a process in which the system of government that was based on political parties was observed to gradually emerge. This is the system that developed into a doctrine on which modern electorate representation is based, though it has had its fair share of criticism from analysts and politicians. (Thomassen & Schmitt 2007: 15).

Radical philosophy, Thomassen and Schmitt (2007) observe, views democracy as follows: “If Parliament or its majority conforms to the electorate, or its majority, and the government is formed and controlled by the parliament, or the majority in it, government policy will be consistent with the will of the electorate, or the majority of it.” In this way, the people will be impacting on the actions of the government through the Parliament, in which case the Parliament will be effectively reflecting the will of the electorate, and their views well represented in the government actions and policies. Thomassen and Schmitt argue that this perspective is the foundation of the “responsible party model” in the representation of the electorate. (Thomassen & Schmitt 2007: 15).

This model holds that the preferences of the majority of the electorate will be mirrored in the policies adopted by the government in the process of meeting three basic requirements. First, there is the need for the existence of various parties that propose various distinct programs.³¹ Secondly, there is the need for unity and cohesive discipline in the parties so as to enable the implementation of the set party agenda. The third requirement, Thomassen and Schmitt point out, is the one that presupposes that the electorate will select the party and the candidates whose policy positions and programs stand closest to the positions they themselves hold. (Thomassen & Schmitt: 16).

This third requirement has two basic implications, Thomassen and Schmitt observe. The first is that the electorate holds certain preferences in regard to government policies and actions, both on the individual and the national levels, while the second presupposes that members of the electorate can make distinctions between the policy and program stances of the various parties or representatives. (Thomassen & Schmitt 2007: 16).

This model faces several critique observations, in line with the earlier argument that such models are never without controversy. Normative analysts view the model as a “populist theory of democracy”. They argue that the model overlooks certain core values of democracy, including protection of the interests of minority groups in the rule of the majority. Some analysts also point to the model’s lack of regard to the reality. The model’s advantage, however, is that it aids in the examination of the roles played by different agents in orderly political representation. (Thomassen & Schmitt: 2007: 16).

In the case of the European Union, however, Thomassen and Schmitt argue that in the examination of the nature of representation, one issue is of great relevance: “what kind of a political entity the EU is and wants to become.” Two opposing views exist on this issue. Some observers and citizens prefer that the European body should become “a pure intergovernmental

³¹ The voters thereby have a field of party policies to choose from for the ones that best fit their preferences. (Thomassen & Schmitt: 16).

cooperation between sovereign states”, while others prefer a “federal entity that would take the form of a supranational sovereign European State.” (Thomassen & Schmitt 2007: 16).

In the first case, “there would be no European people to be represented, but only European peoples.” In other words, the states would remain in their own right with different nationalities and policies.³² The representation of the electorate would be effective at the domestic level. In the second case, the “European State” would be considered in terms of a normal nation-state “in which all the caveats applicable to a state would apply and be used as a benchmark.” (Thomassen & Schmitt 2007: 17).

Of relevance in the present time, Thomassen and Schmitt (2007) argue, is the issue of the degree to which “there is an effective system of linkage at the national level with respect to issues of the EU government.” In the supranational mode, an entirely new method of representation is applied. This is where the European electorate would impact on the policies and actions of the “European government” through the European Parliament, whose members would include those of the European political parties who have been directly elected by them. (Thomassen & Schmitt 2007: 18).

In the EU however, this is clearly not the case. First, there is no “European government’ in regard to one that is answerable to a Parliament. Secondly, there is no clear “European people whose sovereignty is embodied in the European Parliament.” As a result, Thomassen and Schmitt observe, it is not clear exactly whose interests, views and preferences the MEPs need to represent (Thomassen & Schmitt 2007: 18).

ACCOMMODATION OF MINORITIES IN THE EU: THE RISE OF THE ISSUES OF EU MINORITIES

According to Kymlicka (2001), the issue of rights for the minority ethnic and cultural groups in the European continent has emerged from a long period of being ignored to take a place at the top of political theories focused on the continent. Several theories have contributed to this. First, the fall of Communism in the late 80s was a major factor. This caused a “wave of ethnic nationalism” in the Eastern end of the continent, which made a great impact on the democratization process in Europe. He further notes that the earlier hopes at that time that free democratic nations would be the end result of the political activity were dashed by “ethnicity and nationalism” in the early stages. (Kymlicka 2001: 17).

³² They observe that “at the European level, they would be represented by their governments who would behave as a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests.” (Thomassen & Schmitt 2007: 17).

Many factors in established democracies led to the outstanding nature of this minority ethnic feeling in Europe. First, the discriminative policies employed by governments against these groups, including immigrants and refugees, led them to want to rise up against the European governments as a sign of resistance. Secondly, there were concerted efforts by leaders of these communities to mobilize their communities and demand for political and other rights in these nations.³³ Another reason, Kymlicka reports, was the influence from the secessionist intentions of minority groups in other western democracies, like the Scottish in the U.K. and the Catalans in Spain (Kymlicka 2001: 18). As mentioned in Part 1, the very European integration process, by blurring the traditional conception of sovereignty, has contributed to such revival.

These events, Kymlicka (2001) notes, reflected the fact that the European states had not effectively addressed the problems that had been presented by the ethnic and cultural variety within their boundaries. The increase in literature by analysts and scholars about such issues that affect or involve these groups as immigration policies, multicultural issues, the rights of native/indigenous populations, nationalistic feeling and secessionist intentions is evidence of the growth in significance of minority group issues in the continent.

In the period before 1990, the debate had been based on the assumption that the issue of the rights of the minority was synonymous with the 'debate between "liberals" and "communitarians"', which Kymlicka describes as a mere analogous debate. (Kymlicka 2001: 18).

The debate between liberals and communitarians is old and takes various forms. The debate, Kymlicka (2001) notes, basically concerns the "priority of individual freedom." The Liberals argue that individuals should be accorded the freedom to make decisions based on their own judgment of what a desirable life is, and support the setting free of persons and communities from any inherited positions or circumstances in the society. They also propose that "the individual is morally prior to the community: the community matters only because it contributes to the well-being of the individuals who compose it. (Kymlicka 2001: 18).

It is worth noting that there are a few groups in the continent who voluntarily alienate themselves from others, notes Kymlicka (2001): the Hasidic Jews are a good example. Kymlicka notes the following about minority rights in respect to the liberal debate:

"The majority of debates about minority rights are not debates between a liberal majority and communitarian minorities, but debates amongst liberals about the meaning of liberalism. They are debates between individuals and groups which endorse the basic liberal-democratic consensus, but who disagree about the interpretation of these principles in multiethnic societies

³³ This was so effective, Kymlicka notes, that the United Nations sought to influence the European countries to provide for the rights of these groups through a Declaration (Kymlicka 2001: 18).

– in particular, they disagree about the proper role of language, nationality, and ethnic identities within liberal-democratic societies and institutions. Groups claiming minority rights insist that at least certain forms of public recognition and support for their language, practices and identities are not only consistent with basic liberal-democratic principles, including the importance of the individual anatomy, but may indeed be required by them.” (Kymlicka 2001: 21).

This analysis, Kymlicka (2001) notes, leads to the issue of what areas the rights of the minority should cover under the provisions of the liberal theory. Kymlicka observes that the rights of the minorities under the liberal theory are very emotive. He notes that there has been a debate about whether the minority groups which adopt liberal principles still deserve to be granted their rights as a minority. In other words, the debate exists why groups which are liberal demand the minority rights of their members while they still enjoy the “traditional common rights of citizenship.” (Kymlicka 2001: 21).

The freedom of individuals in making choices in their lives, Kymlicka (2001) observes, is closely related to the “access and prosperity of their culture, and with the respect that other people display towards it.” They argue that the rights of the minority help in ensuring mutual respect. Kymlicka observes that “there are compelling interests related to culture and identity which are fully consistent with liberal principles of freedom and equality, and which justify granting special rights to minorities.” Kymlicka says that this is called “the liberal culturalist” stand (Kymlicka 2001: 21).

There exist two types of rights which members of a minority community could claim, observes Kymlicka (2001). The first group of rights consists of those applicable to its own individual members. Such rights are demanded by the minority groups in an attempt to prevent disunity within the group that is caused by internal conflicts. Kymlicka gives the example of such instances of disunity being brought about by the disobedience of some members who fail to abide by certain group customs. (Kymlicka 2001: 21)

The second kind is that which involves rights regarding the external society. Such rights, observes Kymlicka, are “designed to protect the group from the impact of ‘external’ pressures.” Such pressures may include decisions in the political and economic fields of the society. The liberal culturalists are opposed to the idea that minorities could validly restrain foundational rights, including civil and political rights, in their own group for the sake of ensuring that the traditions and cultural background of the group are kept intact: pure and authentic. (Kymlicka 2001: 22).

Kymlicka however notes that “a liberal conception of multiculturalism can accord groups various rights against the larger society, in order to reduce the group’s vulnerability to the economic or political power of the majority.” (Kymlicka 2001: 22).

These protective rights are in line with the principles of the liberals, Kymlicka observes, but they could fall to illegitimacy if, instead of acting to limit the group's vulnerability to the majority's influence, they empower it to lord it over another smaller minority group, in terms of either politics or social issues. Kymlicka summarizes that the fulfillment of two conditions by the rights of the minority make them in line with the principles of liberal-culturalism. (Kymlicka 2001: 23).

The first condition to fulfill is to safeguard the individual freedom in the minority group, and the second involves the promotion of the value of equality among groups in the continent, without any of them being in a position to dominate another. (Kymlicka 2001: 23).

As far as the minority groups in the EU, there are three main options. The first option involves integration with the rest of the population in the European nations, adopting their languages, cultures and general way of life. This might involve a loss of identity and the forfeiture of a considerable number of the rights for their group. It could also lead to long term marginalization by the national governments. (Kymlicka 2001: 28).

The second option, notes Kymlicka, involves the demand for their rights, in a violent manner, demanding autonomy: the right to form their own government and to sustain their unique culture. The realization of such rights, Kymlicka observes, could enable them to form their own political, learning and economic institutions and adopt their own language as the national language. Thirdly, they could opt to demand their rights to achieve parity with the majority of the population without demanding the right to form their own government, opting to remain obedient citizens of the host nation. (Kymlicka 2001: 28).

Several groups in the European continent can be identified that fall into each of the categories above, notes Kymlicka (2001). Some "immigrant ethno-religious sects" have been observed to opt for long term alienation from the societies of the host nations. Kymlicka notes that almost all other cultural and ethnic minority groupings in the continent opt to take part in the society's activities and rituals. This, notes Kymlicka, requires them to opt for integration into the host nation's culture and political space or to secede and develop their own socioeconomic institutions. (Kymlicka 2001: 28).

National Minorities in the European Union, observes Kymlicka (2001), "have typically responded to majority nation-building by fighting to maintain their own societal culture, by engaging in their own competing nation-building." He observes that the national minorities in the EU have utilized the same means as the majority population in the host nation in this process. Such tools have included the adoption of language, unique school curriculum, immigration regulations, naturalization of immigrants into citizens and the demarcation of "internal boundaries". (Kymlicka 2001: 28).nBy intuition, such a method seems fair. It is only fair to the national minority groupings to use the above tools in their attempts to feel accommodated in the host

state society, since the majority has used them on a large scale. Kymlicka notes that liberal principles have restricted the methods that the national minorities can put to use in the process of nation-building. This is because such methods as the abuse of human rights and civil violence are not permissible under liberal values. These values also propose that “any national group engaged in a project of nation-building must respect the right of other nations within its jurisdiction to protect and build their own national institutions.” (Kymlicka 2001: 29). Such restrictions, observes Kymlicka, while vital, still allow for actions by the national minority groupings in the European continent to display some nationalistic feeling and activate it in some actions. Kymlicka observes that these minorities deserve to possess the same tools and instruments as the majority population in the host nations and be subjected to similar hindrances (Kymlicka 2001: 29).

The national minorities had in the past been continuously pressured by European host states to “accept linguistic and institutional integration“, just like the immigrant populations. In the modern times, however, the new trend in the European continent, notes Kymlicka, has been to grant the national minorities the powers of self-governance and semi-autonomy, “which enable them to live and work in their own educational, economic and political institutions, and operating in their own language.” A good example of this is the Scottish political system (Kymlicka 2001: 51).

There have been many conflicts in the European continent in the last few decades involving minorities – in terms of ethnic groups, race, language and religion, Cumper and Wheatley (1999) observe. Accusations of “mistreatment, persecution and aggression” have been leveled by minority groups on the governments of the European continent. Examples, they note, include the Bosnian war, the Kosovo conflict, Adolph Hitler’s aggression against the Jews prior to the Second World War, and the war in the Balkans (Cumper & Wheatley 1999: 15).

In the early 90s, it was hoped that such events would never happen again in Europe. Cumper and Wheatley (1999) observe that “the New World Order”, heralded by the destruction of the Berlin Wall, had taken root in the continent after the collapse of the Soviet. There was a general collapse of authoritarian regimes in the continent, and “new efforts were made in this ‘new’ Europe to resolve the issue of minorities”, observe Cumper and Wheatley. They note that this issue had in the past hampered the efforts of the European continent to unite in peace and stability (Cumper & Wheatley 1999: 15).

There was new urgency in the need for the integration of minorities in the continent, Cumper and Wheatley observe, with analysts and politicians discussing the issue with the same breath as that of human rights. The accommodation of minority groups was seen by many as “a prerequisite for international legitimacy, internal stability and economic success” in the European Union (Cumper & Wheatley 1999: 15).

Several policies and trends were seen as going against these goals in the continent: racial discrimination, discrimination on the grounds of religion and differences in ideology and xenophobia. Calls were made by politicians, religious leaders and others for the European citizens to respect others' rights and differences and "to be tolerant of diversity" in the continent (Cumper & Wheatley 1999: 15).

Perhaps as a result of the past history of conflict that the continent has suffered, Cumper and Wheatley observe, these hopes were rendered unfounded. There was observed to emerge new incidents of nationalism and discrimination. Cumper and Wheatley observe: "Most notably, in those states in Central and Eastern Europe which have, in the past, witnessed tensions between minorities and other groups, the re-awakening of national consciousness has meant that individuals have associated themselves with the group to which they and their families have traditionally belonged, thereby rejecting notions of civic identity derived from citizenship of the state" (Cumper & Wheatley 1999: 15).

The assertions of identity by these minority groups in the continent, Cumper and Wheatley note, prompted the national governments to enact measures aimed at repressing such feelings in an attempt to "preserve peace" and end secessionist desires, especially in the Eastern and Central parts of the continent. This trend set up the governments for clashes with the minority groups, which in some cases spilt over into neighboring states with similar population composition. They note: "The clearest failings of the new Europe occurred where a political elite, in many instances former Communist rulers, sought to retain power by adopting nationalistic policies, promoting the interests of the majority populations at the expense of those of the minority" (Cumper & Wheatley 1999: 16).

One of the observations made in this section of the history of Europe, Cumper and Wheatley observe, is that the denial of the rights of the minority groups in a nation may more often than not be synonymous with the disrespect of human rights. They note that a state in which the human rights of the whole citizenry are disregarded is also unlikely to grant the minority populations their rights. Cumper and Wheatley note that whereas most of the states in Europe recognize the need to grant their minority populations their rights, the real picture on the ground is that of "less than perfect compliance" (Cumper & Wheatley 1999: 16).

In the majority of the states in the Eastern side of Europe, Cumper and Wheatley note, the leaderships have been observed to be "much more willing to promote the creation of a clear and visible identity for the State –notably in the drive to replace Russian as the official language – than in the adoption of measures to protect and guarantee the rights of what may be seen as 'troublesome' and 'irredentist' minorities." This, Cumper and Wheatley observe, has been rendered some validity by the fact that the cultures of these minority nationalities had been

suppressed in the former Soviet Union in favour of the Russian language and culture (Cumper & Wheatley 1999: 17).

They however note that such an excuse cannot be accepted as a legitimate reason for subjecting the citizens of these former Soviet States to discrimination and denial of their rights. Cumper and Wheatley observe that specifically, the denial of the right to citizenship for individuals belonging to these minority groups in such nations is a cause of great concern. Such actions, they observe, “have created large numbers of stateless peoples and disenfranchised the Russian minority populations from the political process” (Cumper & Wheatley 1999: 17).

One of the biggest challenges of the European Union countries, observe Cumper and Wheatley (1999), is how to achieve a majority-minority rights balance in an equal and fair manner to all the parties involved. Following glaring failures in the accommodation of minority groups in the past history of Europe, they observe, the U.N. and the Council of Europe had recommended in the period after the second World War that the rights of the minority groups in the Continent and the world in general should be granted by the national governments through the guaranteeing of human rights (Cumper & Wheatley 1999: 17).

In other words, the governments were to halt their sole focus on the provision of minority rights, which the bodies said had led to massive failures in the past, and instead concentrate on the improvements in human rights situations in their countries. In so doing, the U.N. and the Council of Europe had argued, the provision of rights for the minority groups in these nations will have been taken care of (Cumper & Wheatley 1999: 17).

Indeed, Cumper and Wheatley (1999) observe, “any specific or explicit reference to minority rights was absent from the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948) and from the provisions of the Council of Europe’s Convention on Human Rights (1950).” They note that it was only in 1966 that the rights of the minority were mentioned in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ICCPR. The Covenant said in part: “In those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language” (Cumper & Wheatley 1999: 17).

Whereas the provision of such rights to the minority groupings is of great symbolic meaning to its members, Cumper and Wheatley observe that they may not themselves be adequate in ensuring that the minority group’s identity, values and culture are safeguarded. They say that the groups need additional funding from the host governments to set up their own learning institutions, organize cultural festivals and establish cultural organizations (Cumper & Wheatley 1999: 18).

They further note that “the international mechanisms grant a wide discretion to the state in its adoption and application of minority rights provisions, with the consequence that the extent to which minority rights are recognized remains, in most cases, a legitimate and exclusive aspect of state policy” (Cumper & Wheatley 1999: 18).

Two major ambiguities in the method employed by the EU in its accommodation of minorities in the continent are clear. First, whereas the main trend has been the provision of group rights, as recommended in the “Treaty on the European Union”, the actions of European states in terms of the policies adopted in the last several years suggest that they are not serious in the promises they made. Secondly, “there has been a much clearer approach to the recognition of minority nations outside the EU than to those within its borders” (Cumper & Wheatley 1999: 90).

A report by the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia – currently European Agency for Fundamental Rights – observes that the particular standards of the larger and smaller populations in European countries have impacted on the absorption of immigrants into the society and the preservation of their cultures, languages and other differences (DASE 2003: 13).

Three groups of states are identified by the report in regard to immigration and minority groupings. First, there is the group of states in which policies aimed at fighting discrimination are viewed as policies whose target is to enforce racial equality. In other words, the discrimination against minorities is synonymous with racial discrimination in these states (DASE 2003: 13).

The second group comprises those states that regard their minority communities as “purely foreigners”, the report argues.³⁴ The third group of states includes those that have not had a long history with immigration. These states have only recently faced the issue of immigration and hence have not had the issues of equality, integration and discrimination to grapple with until recently (DASE 2003: 13).

In the first group of states above, the report observes, there is the employment of concepts in their relations with the minority populations that do not refer to their nationalities. A good example of this is the case of the Scottish people in Britain, who are assigned no nationalities in the minds of the rest of the British people, apart from Scottish or British. These states have put in place laws that outlaw any discrimination in the job market on the basis of race and colour (DASE 2003: 14).

³⁴ In other words, the nations apply the term ‘minority’ only in the case of new immigrants and do not include the naturalized citizens in the definition of the minority. (DASE 2003: 13).

In the Netherlands, “*allochtonen*” is used to refer to individuals who were not born in the country or whose one parent was not born in the country. This category therefore includes all persons of an origin other than Dutch. There is however a second definition of ethnic minority in the state which includes all individuals of “non-Western” origin. The journal reports that this second definition is what the government of Netherlands uses in its policies aimed at integration of the minority populations into the society (DASE 2003: 14).

In France, there has been a big controversy about how the “long-standing” immigrants are to be treated. The naturalized citizens are included in the definition of the minority in this country. The report observes that the French government has for a long time only made the distinction between the French citizens and the foreign ones, but after the 1990 census, a new category was introduced; those citizens that had been born abroad. This has been made necessary by the fact that France had been a colonial master in several countries in the world and the political and economic links have persisted, which makes immigration into the European state from these nations significant (DASE 2003: 14).

In the second group, the report says, states employ the concepts of minorities and immigration which are founded on “a pure foreigner concept.” In Denmark, for example, the report says, “an immigrant is a person whose parents either are foreign citizens or were born outside Denmark, and a descendant is an individual born in Denmark by parents of whom none is a Danish citizen born in Denmark” (DASE 2003: 15).

The journal further notes that Sweden employs the concepts of “foreign-born” and “foreign-origin” to refer to individuals born outside the country and individuals who have immigrated into Sweden or who have a parent or parents who have done so, respectively (DASE 2003: 15).

For the third group of countries, the concept employed is that of “non-nationals” or “foreigners.” This concept includes a large percentage of the minority and immigrant population. The report notes that a common feature in the states that use this concept is that a huge percentage of their immigrant population is in the country on an illegal basis. This fact exposes the immigrant minority population in such countries to a lot of exploitation, discrimination and alienation from the other society members. Such states in the European continent include Spain and Portugal (DASE 2003: 15).

The report observes that certain objectives initiated by the EU have influenced the Member States to adopt policies whose goals include a broader inclusion of minorities among their populations. These groups are targeted by virtue of their social characteristics, like single motherhood and old age, and certain ascribed criteria, like the race or ethnic grouping to which they belong (DASE 2003: 15).

Three groups of legislation and policies aimed at the inclusion and integration of minorities in the EU states are notable, according to the report. These include immigration, integration and ethnic minority policies. In the case of immigration policies, it is to be noted that they only regulate the entry into the states, employment, residence and access of third countries rather than those of the EU (DASE 2003: 18).

The report however observes that a considerable proportion of these “aliens” come from EU member countries. These are largely labour migrants from specific parts of Europe, and have similar experiences to those of third-state members in regard to their integration into the host nation’s social and economic culture (DASE 2003: 18).

One of the important objectives of immigration policy in the EU is to regularize immigration that has been irregular, the report also argues. This regularization benefits the irregular immigrants by granting them the right to enjoy certain rights in the society. These include civic, employment and social rights, besides insurance, health, the regulation of working hours, et cetera. The legal foundation, motives and scope of this regularization however differ among different nations. The results are also not guaranteed to any particular extent, since it has been observed that migrants who get regularized often revert to being irregular (DASE 2003: 20).

The ability of a member of a minority group to access citizenship in the host state represents “the most comprehensive legal and symbolic expression of full integration”, the report observes. In this area, the policies of different countries in the EU vary a lot, although they have been reconciling in the last few decades. The report observes that certain states in the European continent regard the grant of citizenship as an instrument of policies aimed at integration of the minorities in a country (DASE 2003: 20)

Although the periods of waiting for the immigrant before being granted citizenship by the EU nations vary, the report notes, there has been a tendency to lower them. It also notes that there has been relaxation of laws that prohibited dual citizenship. Also notable is the fact that most nations show a degree of favour towards the immigrants whose nation or culture the EU nation has ties with, especially if those ties are rooted in the past (DASE 2003: 20).

Minority nations are present in most of Europe, Cumper and Wheatley (1999) observe. Spain has three major ones, the U.K has three and two are found in France. This means that any efforts targeted at integration in the European Union cannot succeed without the recognition and careful handling of the problem of minority nations.

Among the preconditions that the EU sets for the states aspiring to join the Community include good governance, Vachudova (2006) observes, which encompasses the respect for human rights, respect for the rule of law, democratic changes of government and free economies (Vachudova 2006: 2).

In most Eastern European states after the fall of Communism, however, most of these tenets were against what most of the aspiring leaders in these nations had in mind. Vachudova observes that any progress towards membership of the European Union was slow³⁵ (Vachudova 2006: 2).

The national opinion that was in favour of liberalized economies in these countries were however too powerful to ignore, Vachudova (2006) observes. This opinion impacted in a big way on the local politics of these states until the leaders found it impossible to ignore the bid to join the EU (Vachudova 2006: 2).

The European Union has been successful in exerting influence on the countries aspiring to become members, Vermeersch (2004) observes. This can be partly attributed to the fact that the support of policies that serve the minority in the European states boosts the symbolism, especially after the collapse of the Soviet. Vermeersch gives the example of Hungary to show how the accommodation of the minority groups in the EU has led to democratization ((Vermeersch 2004: 6).

One of the biggest challenges in the integration of minority communities in the European continent today, Riedel (2008) observes, is that of the prevalence of violence in the communities that feel alienated from the main sociopolitical fabric of the state. Minority communities sometimes register their demand for rights - including secessionist claims - in ways that prove costly to the security of the nation. Such methods might include terrorism. Examples of this are to be found all over Europe, but notably in the U.K. and Spain. (Riedel 2008: 4).

³⁵ The EU's attempt to reverse this trend by introducing the "pre-accession process" had little success in regard to influencing the countries to shift the directions of their policies. Instead, the governments ignored the benefits of joining the European body and concentrated on perpetuating their power (Vachudova 2006: 2).

The increase in sub-state nationalism in European countries, which has been fanned by the opportunity structure offered by the European integration has led to the increase in the frequency and intensity of tensions and conflict between states whose minority populations have close relationships over their borders. These rows have had the effect of straining the relations between members of the EU, with the threat of dividing the continent's main players along ethnic and political lines. Riedel observes: "Although rooted in specific historical and cultural contexts, these conflicts share the same definition of nation as a social group by common ethnic, cultural or religious criteria" (Riedel 2008: 4).

Some states have enforced certain Constitutional laws to tackle the issue of diversity in their countries in order to preempt cases where such sub-state nationalism makes it necessary for the borders to be redefined, or secessionist demands arise. Such measures have included the formation of ethnicity-based parties, various power-sharing systems or certain forms of territorial autonomy." In Spain, Riedel notes, "regional parties with an ethnic or nationalist orientation are pressing for more collective rights, such as their own educational institutions and an official language for the Catalan or the Basque region (Riedel 2008: 5).

Most countries in Europe, observes Guibernau (2007), are not made up of one nation that is as big as the state. Whereas some of these populations are regarded as nations, "some of them have strong memories of a time when they were independent political units." In the European Union, Guibernau observes that a significant number of national minorities have formed "social movements and political parties to defend their cultural specificity and their right to self-determination." This self determination is often used to refer to semi- or full independence from the host nation. It is to be noted however that some minority nations have voluntarily chosen to remain in the host state and integrate with the majority (Guibernau 2007: 104).

Further, Guibernau (2007) notes that one of the issues that influences the European citizens towards democracy and the tolerance of diversity in culture in their nations is "the memories of the two world wars and the cold war era." The European Union countries bore the blunt of the effects of these eras in the history of the world, and the citizens would not like to undergo such experiences again. In the Second World War and the Cold War eras, the European continent had been divided into two huge spheres of power and influence, the Western and the Eastern, due to the Capitalist and the Communist poles in the world. This had been symbolized by the Berlin Wall which had divided the nation of Germany into the West and the East (Guibernau 2007: 107).

To avoid these experiences again, the European Union and her citizens, points out Guibernau (2007), need to tolerate each other, suppress their differences in terms of culture, religion, race, language and political awareness. He observes that the events of these eras had a

psychological effect on the citizens that is powerful enough to be exploited by the European Union in an attempt to forge a united democratic union (Guibernau 2007: 108).

Most analysts expected the process of regaining democracy in the Eastern part of Europe to be difficult and long-drawn, as it was, Berglund, Aerebrot and Vogt (2001) observe. The problems encountered in the nations' democratization processes mainly included "extreme multipartyism, right-wing radicalism, legal arbitrariness and weak civil society organizations. They however observe that none of the problems above had been strong enough to derail the process of democracy in Eastern Europe (Berglund, Aerebrot and Vogt 2001: 1).

Four main hurdles existed in the path that the nations of Eastern Europe were taking to democracy. Berglund, Aerebrot and Vogt (2001) identify these hurdles as "party and political fragmentation, xenophobia and nationalism, absence of legal and bureaucratic traditions sustaining human rights and weak civil society organizations. They note that while these are not the only hurdles that the nations faced in the match towards democratization, they are regarded as "detrimental to the functioning of a democratic system" (Berglund, Aerebrot and Vogt 2001: 2).

Berglund, Aerebrot and Vogt (2001) observe that the lack of unity in and between parties is a problem with the system in so far as it hampers the establishment of firm governments supported by the majority of the electorate. Such a problem, they note, "presupposes a complex structure encouraging voters to spread their ballots among a number of parties" (Berglund, Aerebrot and Vogt 2001: 2).

Nationalism and xenophobia provide good ground for exploitation by the political leaders in their ambitions for government offices, but Berglund, Aerebrot and Vogt (2001) note that "they would be futile as instruments of mobilization if it were not for firmly embedded belief structures among substantial parts of the public" (Berglund, Aerebrot and Vogt 2001: 2).

In the path towards democratization, Berglund, Aerebrot and Vogt (2001) note, the nations in Eastern Europe had to overcome many concurrent problems. In Russia, for example, problems for the government included legal hurdles, bureaucratic problems and political disunity. For the ordinary public, several problems lie before them in their struggle to demand their rights. These include loose frameworks in national law and the absence of strong organizations to cater for their interests (Berglund, Aerebrot and Vogt 2001: 2).

The ability of a government and national system to overcome the above challenges, Berglund, Aerebrot and Vogt (2001) note, differs in various regions. This depends on such factors as the institutions available, how democratic and efficient they are, and the differences among regimes.

The electorate in states treading the path of change from command economies towards liberalization and democracy, notes Vachudova (2005), is susceptible to the influence of “ethnic nationalism.” Vachudova notes that these nationalistic tendencies “warp the individual and group preferences that would develop in a liberal democracy by creating a stark division along ethnic lines on all politically salient issues.” This causes divisions among the electorate (Vachudova 2005: 17).

One of the issues recognized as being an incentive to seek European Union membership, Vachudova (2005) notes, was that of accommodation of minority groups in the countries’ national agendas. Participants expressed the view that the need to cater for the rights of the minority nations in these nations made joining the EU attractive to them for the reason that its policies, institutions and diplomatic power would enable them to deal with the problem in a positive way. Quotes Vachudova: “Stable and harmonious relations among ethnic groups are a priority for the European Union, and states seeking to join the body must address these issues” (Vachudova 2005: 179).

This attractiveness of the European Union to the states of the former Soviet Union, notes Vachudova, has been enhanced by several of its policies that relate to the handling of minority group issues for any members planning to join the EU. Though the perceptions of these recommendations vary from one state candidate to another, the states that were bent on the adoption of democratic principles, the respect for human rights and liberalized markets saw them as a recipe for stability and civilized cohabitation between and among the minority nations in their countries. This provided great incentives for such states, their leaders and institutions to join the rest of Europe in the march towards democracy, higher standards of living and national stability (Vachudova 2005: 179).

RISKS AND BENEFITS OF EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY

The late 1990s had been a period of “trial, error and uncertainty” in the process of European integration, Cowles and Smith (2000) observe. They argue, however, that this has been more or less the case for the last half a century. A closer look at the occurrences in this period reveals that it was crucial to the European Union and the continent in general in regard to integration and the process of democratization. This is evidenced in a number of issues (Cowles and Smith 2000: 3).

First, more sincere emphasis was put on “institutional assets and liabilities of the European integration project. A Treaty signed by members of the European continent in the Netherlands in 1997 was targeted at reforming the institutions of the European Union to make them more suitable to the changing demands in world politics and in the EU, and in the issues posed by its expansion. The Treaty was however subjected to widespread criticism for ignoring the issues that the EU faced in the attempts to reform its institutions (Cowles and Smith 2000: 3).

In 1999, “the credentials and legitimacy of the EU institutions themselves, and particularly of the European Commission, were at the center of a kind of ‘Constitutional crisis.’” (Cowles and Smith 2000: 3). The consequent replacement of the “Santer Commission” with the “Prodi Commission” will be regarded for a long time to come as the genesis of change in the ways of operation in the European Union (Cowles & Smith 2000: 3).

The process of integration in the EU faced several hurdles in the negotiations held to enable ascension into the Union. The ascensions of Finland and Austria had long been anticipated and the process of their ascension had undergone comprehensive negotiations. However, the huge number of anticipatory candidates for EU membership posed a new set of challenges for the body. These challenges were political and institutional. The main institutional problem was the issue of whether the European body could handle the process of negotiations for over ten potential members simultaneously with “its own internal needs and the challenges of European and world order” (Cowles & Smith 2000: 4).

Political challenges included the doubt that the EU could be in a position to negotiate effectively in the background of a multitude of demands and anticipations from the EU citizenry. Another challenge was that of “identity and legitimacy”, that is, was it possible for the EU to go ahead with the expansion without the risk of losing its status in the world as a haven of democracy, unity and human rights? These issues were also highlighted in the bid by the European Union countries to enter a Union in monetary and economic policy (Cowles & Smith 2000: 4).

The European Union had to find ways of solving the problem that only 11 of the 15 Member States were willing to join the Economic union, which Cowles and Smith saw as an indication

that “the advantages of uniform, monetary management had been diluted.” (Cowles & Smith 2000: 4). On the world scene, the EU had to tackle the additional problems presented by the prevailing economic crisis, whose effects were evident in international trade. Alongside these problems in the 1990s, there was also that presented by the conflicts in the European continent, notably those in Yugoslavia and Kosovo. The latter conflict especially disclosed the authority of the NATO organisation in intervening in conflicts in the continent ahead of the EU. The conflict “underlined the limits of the EU security policy.” However, note Cowles & Smith, the role of the European body was again enhanced by the role it played in the time after the conflict, when it led efforts aimed at the return to peace and stability (Cowles & Smith 2000: 4).

Four terms are important in the examination of the risks and benefits of democracy in the European Union, Cowles and Smith (2000) observe. These are “risk”, “reform”, “resistance” and “revival”. The risks faced by the European states can be viewed from several perspectives, and are basically of two kinds; internal risks and external ones, that is, risks that emanate from within the member countries and those whose roots exist outside the EU (Cowles & Smith 2000: 5).

The risks and problems are also perceived in different ways by different stakeholders with various interests in the expansion process of the European Union. Accordingly, the states already in the EU are presumed to view these problems from a different stand-point from those nations that are potential candidates, and large economies will view them differently from smaller ones. The same case applies to the various institutions under the auspices of the European Union (Cowles & Smith 2000: 5).

Further, different viewpoints would be employed by the same institutions and states at different periods in time and “between different issue areas in which European integration is at stake” (Cowles & Smith 2000: 5). They further note that these differences in viewpoints are important in the determination by different member nations whether to offer their commitment or decline candidacy for the European Union membership. A demonstration of this, Cowles and Smith observe, was the situation at the initial proposal of the Economic and Monetary Union, when most of the governments and other groups considered the idea in terms of “the allocation of costs and benefits in an uncertain world economy” (Cowles & Smith 2000: 5).

The concept of reforms in the process of democratization in the European Union can also be interpreted in various ways, Cowles and Smith (2000) observe. They note that reforms are basically conceptualized as “an attempt to shape and reshape the European integration process in the pursuit of a number of aims: efficiency, effectiveness, and the avoidance of the risks of non-reform” (Cowles & Smith 2000: 5).

Like in the case of risks, various governments and groups will view the need for reforms in the democratic processes in various ways and to different degrees. Another important issue in this case is whether “the process of reforms could be imposed from above, by grand bargains between Member States and institutions, or is it more likely to emerge from the bottom up, through the evolution of activities and the tackling of practical problems?” (Cowles & Smith 2000: 6).

The third term that is important in the examination of risks and benefits in the European continent is that of “resistance”, Cowles and Smith (2000) note. This concept is interpreted by many analysts as the opposite of the willingness to carry out reforms in a state in the process of democratization. Cowles and Smith argue that the presence of resistance in a democratization process is not surprising since it is “normal” for any progress to be faced with certain forces acting to counter progress. They note that any policy tool that is added to the process of reform has, as a matter of principle, both proponents and opponents (Cowles & Smith 2000: 6).

Cowles and Smith (2000) also note that the concept of reforms is founded on that of risk, since the notion of resistance is based on the idea that “the risks of reform outweigh the potential benefits.” (Cowles & Smith 2000: 6). They note that there is a significant number of opponents to reforms inside the European Union, but that there is no foolproof method of identifying them from the rest of the electorate. Resistance to reform “can also arise from social forces or groupings at the non-governmental level, or from outside the EU altogether” (Cowles & Smith 2000: 6). They note that “the process of expansion has engendered a complex set of coalitions and tactics both within the EU and between the EU and potential new members, many of them prompted by resistance to anticipated institutional or policy changes: for example in the distribution of regional aid or finance in the European Union” (Cowles & Smith 2000: 6).

The final term is “revival”. Cowles and Smith (2000) observe the following in regard to the term:

“The combination of risk, reform and resistance can at times lead to a stalemate, and to the phenomenon sometimes described as “Euro-sclerosis”, in which the project almost literally seizes up because of the balance between the forces of movement and the forces of conservatism. It can, though, also lead to breakthroughs, “relaunchings”, or other forms of revival, precipitated by shifts in the balance between risk, reform and resistance. Perceptions of risk can change, sometimes dramatically; processes of reform previously stalled can be revitalized; the forces of resistance can be reduced by political change or by shifts within or between institutions. In these circumstances, the catalyst for change can come from within the European Union or from the wider world, and sometimes it can be largely unrecognized as the decisive element in the process of revival” (Cowles & Smith 2000: 6).

The above four elements are so intertwined that the analysis of the risks and benefits in the European Union cannot focus on one of them alone without the involvement of the others (Cowles & Smith 2000: 6).

A feeling of ‘Europhoria’, in which a high level of confidence was displayed by leaders and analysts in the European Union was prevalent in the early and mid 1990s. This feeling was spurred by the happenings in Eastern Europe, which Cowles and Smith say “seemed to imply a new role for the European Union as a ‘pacifier’” (Cowles & Smith 2000: 8). The prospect of the establishment of a customs union in Europe also seemed to herald an era in which the EU was “moving further towards the acquisition of ‘state powers’” (Cowles & Smith 2000: 8).

This feeling never persisted, however, even though Cowles and Smith observe that it led to the Maastricht Treaty. Rather, it was first mixed with and then nearly overshadowed by that of “resistance and by a perception of enhanced risk.” (Cowles & Smith 2000: 8). The feelings of resistance were most clear, they say, in the crisis during the negotiations on the “Treaty on European Union” and also in the fact that the Danish population had rejected the Treaty at first (Cowles & Smith 2000: 8).

The feeling in the European continent that risks had been enhanced was apparent, Cowles and Smith (2000) observe, in the “European Union’s uncertainty in the light of post cold-war crises, especially in Yugoslavia, and in respect of the halting of progress towards the Economic and Monetary Union.” (Cowles & Smith 2000: 8). This appeared to show that the “balance between the risk, reforms, resistance and revival had shifted decisively away from the reform/revival end of the spectrum and towards the risk/resistance end” (Cowles & Smith 2000: 8).

They however note that European integration has never had extremes in regard to the four elements above. Even when the elements of reform/revival appear to have more power, the risk/resistance axis still displays some power. Likewise, “when risk/resistance seems to have won the day, when fragmentation rather than integration seems to be the prime political and economic motif, there is still a role for reform/revival.” (Cowles & Smith 2000: 8). This is the reason why the Economic and Monetary Union was realized despite initial resistance, they observe.

UNCOMPLETED DEMOCRACIES

The main criteria for the ascension into the European Union have been mentioned earlier in this paper, but they essentially include the establishment of institutions that ensure and perpetuate democracy, the promotion of human rights, the inclusion of minority populations in the social, political and economic spheres of the nation, the enthronement of 'the rule of law', a vibrant market economic system, and the willingness to fellowship with the rest of the nations in the EU in the projects undertaken by the body (EOR 2000: 165).

In the process of candidature to ascension, the European nations are required to conform to certain stipulations, in regard to the liberalization of the markets. The "Maastricht Treaty" of the early 1990s set certain criteria "for the participation in the third stage of the Economic and Monetary Union." (EOR 2000: 266). Among these criteria were that the yearly inflation in the prices at the consumer level of production were to be maintained at the minimum, "the general government deficit should be no more than 3% of the Gross Domestic Product", "the general government debt to GDP ratio should be no more than 60%", and that "the currency must be stable, trading with normal fluctuation bands against other European Union currencies for at least two years" (EOR 2000: 266).

One of the major risks in the journey to ascension of the European nations is that "the process could stall"(EOR 2000: 266). The report notes:

"At Copenhagen, the EU leaders stipulated that EU enlargement could not jeopardize the pace of integration. However, the European Union has failed to seriously address the institutional and budgetary challenges of expansion – most notably at the Berlin summit of March 1999 – inevitably delaying the ascension process. Popular support for enlargement has waned in the EU Member States, and even within the candidate countries there is some sense of disillusionment with the reform process. Much of the capital that flows into the candidate nations is predicated on the assumption that they will join the European Union. If that assumption proves false, there could be a sharp reversal of capital flows – including of foreign direct investment. It is worth noting that the vulnerability of the candidate nations stems not primarily from their own reform programs, but from a potential lack of political will within the existing members of the European Union" (EOR 2000: 266-7).

The financial crisis in the mid-1990s that had begun in the Asian continent and spread throughout the world, the World Bank and European Commission report argues, cast doubts on the "balance between the risks and the benefits" of permitting unrestricted movement of capital the world over, but especially in and out of those nations on transition, such as the candidate countries for EU membership.

Nevertheless, a majority of observers and analysts seem to be united in the view that “the risks lie in the inappropriate timing and sequencing of reforms, rather than the end goal of open financial markets” (EOR 2000: 267). In other words, the leaders in candidate countries implement either improper reforms or formulate proper ones but implement them wrongly. Several measures can be used by the governments of candidate countries to rectify such situations, the report notes. There should be an effective method enforced by the government of ensuring that transparency and integrity in the process of formulation of the policies to be employed in the candidature period are incorporated into the process (EOR 2000: 267).

The report recommends that “there must be adequate depth and liquidity in capital markets, in addition to an effective and credible system of financial market regulation and supervision” (EOR 2000: 267). Properly skilled, qualified and experienced personnel need to be employed by the government and other authorities in the formulation and implementation of the policies that are to shift the economies and politics of the candidate countries closer to conformation to the EU stipulations at the stage of candidature (EOR 2000: 267).

In the long term, the report by the World Bank and the European Commission notes, the above criteria affects the candidate nations in a positive way. This is because the criteria lead the economies in these nations to enable smoother and easier trade both within the country and internationally, and make investors from other nations to feel comfortable trading and investing in the local economy “based on a stable and established system, with which they are already familiar.” (EOR 2000: 267). Nevertheless, the report observes, these positives might be partially drowned if there is considerable rigidity and regulation, as is “inherent in many European Union policies.” Such rigidity and regulation is especially common in the policies concerning the use of labour in production, the market operations themselves and in the business and industry sector (EOR 2000: 267).

The rigidity and inflexibility in these policies, says the report, have the capability to derail the prospects of advancement and development in the economies of the candidate nations in the European continent. The report notes that “there could also be potential conflict – at least in the short term – between the nominal criteria of the Economic and Monetary Union and the process of real convergence.” (EOR 2000: 267). “Real convergence” involves the closing of the gap between “real per capita incomes” of the European Union and those of the nations in candidate status for EU ascension (EOR 2000: 267).

The “convergence criteria” set out by the Maastricht Treaty, the report notes, calls for strict policies in taxation, money supply and government expenditure in the candidate nations. These policies “may not be appropriate for developing nations”, the report notes, since they have serious repercussions on the economy: they may cause decreases in the rate of growth, which

is not advisable. The report observes that “governments must judiciously balance the nominal and real targets, or risk unsettling international investors – and potentially risk undermining domestic support for European Union membership” (EOR 2000: 267).

EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY AND THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

In the European Union, observe Andersen and Eliassen (1998), democracy is related to two vital components of governance, “effectiveness and sovereignty.” The component of effectiveness constitutes a key reference point for “increased supranational authority”, in which the European organisation gives leaders the capacity to handle issues that transcend national European boundaries. Andersen and Eliassen note that in this regard, the hurdle is that the European body “may not be international enough” (Andersen & Eliassen 1998: 1).

Another dimension of European governance relates to the legitimate authority it possesses in the carrying out the duties for which it was established. Andersen and Eliassen note that “in the European nation states, there are historically constructed polities, manifested in parliamentary institutions to which sovereignty has been entrusted. Even a strong European Parliament does not recreate the kind of sovereignty associated with the nation state, because there is no encompassing European polity” (Andersen & Eliassen 1998: 1).

One of the most important issues in contention for many analysts and observers focused on the European Union is that of how to tackle the demands of the process of democracy, a tough issue in the EU’s case because of the conception among many that it is “neither federal nor intergovernmental.” Andersen and Eliassen note that the European Union is largely considered as a strange kind of parliament-based democracy. They further note that “a major challenge for the EU is institutional design, that is, how to establish democratic institutions and procedures for supranational policy-making which take account of the roles of formal and informal actors, associations, citizens and societal interests in the decision-making process” (Andersen & Eliassen 1998: 2). The substance of the challenge of democracy in the EU consists of the issue of the extent to which the European body can make and implement decisions of authority “within the framework of effectiveness and sovereignty” (Andersen & Eliassen 1998: 2).

The foundation of the European countries’ model of governance is the formal Constitution, with the sole exception of the United Kingdom. The Constitution outlines the obligations of each member of the country’s citizenry and institutions in the democratic context. The Constitutions also spell out the various rights and freedoms that each of the individuals, ethnic groups, the

government, and all other components of the society in the nation are entitled to. It also spells out the various limits for each of these components in the society, as a group and individually, and the “rules of engagement” for any interaction between any of the components in the society. (Andersen & Eliassen 2000: 6).

It is this Constitution that provides the basis of almost all the activities that the individuals, groups and governments engage in towards or with each other. It also sometimes forms the foundation of the disadvantages, alienation, discrimination and other social ills that the minority groups in some of the nations suffer and seek to end through various kinds of struggles according to the resources they own or have access to. Such resources could include government or non- governmental platforms, the global civil society or their life (Andersen & Eliassen 1998: 6).

The European Union as an organization of European states does not have a Constitution, Andersen and Eliassen (1998) observe. Rather, its “Constitutional basis is defined in treaties between the member nations which have been severally revised” to reflect the constantly changing European and global environment in regard to such issues as security, politics economics, social issues and technology. Andersen and Eliassen observe that “there is an international agreement giving the right of the European Union to make supranational decisions. Institutions are well defined, but no single, formal center of power in the system is defined” (Andersen & Eliassen 1998: 6).

Other differences between the European Union and its member nations’ Constitutions are that the European parliament is not the legislative arm of the EU and that “citizenship rights were only recently introduced in the EU treaty and they remain weakly defined” (Andersen & Eliassen 1998: 6), although significant improvements have been made over time.

An enviable state of political and relative economic stability has characterized the typical modern European state. Both these elements have tended to continuously supplement each other, to the benefit of the citizens and the global society in general. This has been the case since the Second World War. On the other hand, the European states “increasingly need to open their markets and thus the frontiers of state action in order to sustain the levels of economic growth that they have enjoyed since the 1940s, with only short breaks” (Andersen & Eliassen 1998: 60). It is for this reason that the European Union needs to find comprehensive solutions to the challenges outlined. The issues of the “democratic deficit”, minorities and their rights, and the challenges posed by the democratization process need proper planning and implementation of effective policies to solve (Andersen & Eliassen 1998: 60).

PART 3.

BASQUE NATIONALISM AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

In the above sections, it has been argued that European integration, far from debilitating nationalistic demands, has actually fostered them, albeit in the renewed and inclusive European political space. The peculiar configuration of patterns of political power designed by the integration process has made that such nationalistic revival not only fits in the broader European project and is legitimated by it, but also contributes to legitimize European institutions and values.

In order to provide a comprehensive account of the validity of the theoretical assumptions previously outlined, this section has the main objective to check them against reality, by testing them on a real case study.

In Europe, there are about fifteen asserting nationalistic movements and almost all of them are pre-existent to European integration. Several attempts have been made, also from a comparative perspective, to study the interrelation between European integration and different aspects of sub-state nationalism, ranging from its electoral fortune, its shift from an anti-European to a pro-European stance, and its comprehensive moderation of self-determination claims.

The Basque is one of the most researched sub-state nationalism in Western Europe and, at the same time, one of the less interlinked with the phenomenon of European integration. Of course, many studies have addressed either the Basque conflict in the European framework (Bourne, 2009) or the long-standing European discourse of the mainstream nationalist political party (PNV) and its electoral results with the deepening of European Union. However, very few scholars (among them, Keating and Bray, 2006) have addressed the moderation effect exerted by European integration on Basque nationalism as a whole and its adaptation to the changed political circumstances. Basque nationalism has demonstrated a special ability – not common in sub-state nationalistic parties – to modernize both its political ideology and its political objectives. This is particularly striking especially if the traditionalist nature of the Basque nationalism of the origin is taken into account and the negative campaigns which has been surrounding it.

A distinction, however, is due when talking about Basque nationalism. To a higher degree than other sub-state nationalist movements, Basque nationalism is inhomogeneous, both in terms of orientation and objectives and cannot be dealt with as though it was a monolith. Currently, at least three souls can be identified in the nationalist spectrum. There are those who are firmly autonomists and aim to protect, consolidate and extend the competences assigned to Euskadi by the Statute of Gernika (1979); those who consider that the Statute is an outdated framework

to regulate the relations between Euskadi and the Spanish state and support more ambitious institutional formulas, short of independence, but still rooted in the principle of self-determination; those who, basing on the previous assumption, promote solutions based on the fulfilment of self-determination until its extreme consequences, including independence. Due to the ambiguity purposely pursued by the Basque Nationalist Party between the autonomist and independentist stance, it is impossible to set a clear-cut correspondence between a concrete political party and a given political objective. Nevertheless, a situation can be depicted whereby the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV)'s lust for independence is the less strong, followed by Eusko Alkartasuna (EA) and Aralar, where independentism is ideologically and programmatically more defined.

The political orientation around the right-left cleavage is also a factor of further fragmentation of Basque nationalism, although it does not seem to acquire the dramatic traits that have taken in Catalonia opposing CiU and Ezquerra Republicana. PNV is by tradition a right-center conservative party, whereas EA has adopted more leftist clothing. Aralar is definitely a left party. Although the class cleavage is relevant in the formation of electoral preference of Basque electors, this has encountered full expression in the juxtaposition between PNV and Popular Party with the Socialist Party, rather than within the nationalist arena. This does not rule out completely the political orientation of nationalist formation as a significant element of the electoral preference formation; however, their stance with regard to the nationalistic question – more or less intensely endorsing self-determination and statehood – seems to have played an even more crucial role.

The nationalist spectrum would not be complete without mentioning a significant strand – both in terms of electoral support and political weight – of Basque nationalism that is commonly referred to as *izquierda abertzale* and expresses its most radical version as far as the political objective is concerned, the pursuance of political independence as a result of Basque self-determination, and the means to achieve it. Until very recently, the use of violence has not been only tolerated but actually accepted as a necessary evil to pursue a just cause. This political stance is largely inspired by the ideology and activism of the terrorist organization *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* (ETA), active since 1959 and never integrated into the democratic realm nor defeated. Since the advent of the democracy and throughout 2009, ETA has had an indirect political voice in the Basque institutions, primarily in the Basque Parliament and in many Basque municipalities of the hinterland, through ideologically related political movements – Herri Batasuna (HB) - that were also charged with government responsibilities. The political and social affiliations that proved to have a connection or simply an ideological affinity with ETA have been shut off and illegalized per judicial order and confirmed by the Spanish Supreme Court. Radical nationalism today does not count on any political representation in the Basque Parliament and the forecast

for the future are not too optimistic. Also the European Court of Human Rights, the supreme judicial organ devoted to ensure the compliance of the adhering states to the provisions of the Convention, has rejected the appeal presented by the *izquierda abertzale* against the illegalization of their political and social aggregations.

Although the electoral support has been shrinking to a great degree throughout the years, falling from a 23% in to 7% in, and the popular support decreased accordingly, the *izquierda abertzale* still retains an important share of nationalist preferences that do not tend to be redistributed among the other nationalistic forces.

Another important element of differentiation in the claims advanced by nationalism is about the territory that is object of their attention. Whereas PNV has settled the question by limiting it to the current Basque Autonomous Community, with no prejudice of a potential and voluntary association of other portions of other *euskaldun* territories embedded in the Spanish state (such as Navarre) and a special relations with the French Basque Country, EA, more mildly, and Aralar and the *izquierda abertzale*, more assertively, refer to Euskal Herria – made up of the Basque Autonomous Community, Navarre and French Basque Country – both as their fatherland and long-term political objective.

The heterogeneous character of Basque nationalism, both in the objectives and in the political orientations, its long-standing permanence as majority political preference of Basque electors, its assertive territorial and identity claims make of it an interesting case study to check the hypothesis, outlined earlier in this work, that European integration has had a two-fold and only apparently contrasting impact on nationalism, fostering it by providing a favourable context for its blooming, on the one hand, and depriving it from the threatening anti-system elements, by anchoring it firmly to the European project, on the other.

Besides being interesting, the analysis of Basque nationalism under this lens is undoubtedly challenging, too. The recent attempts of moderate Basque nationalism to conclude a new pact with the Spanish state based on the concept of shared sovereignty and popular consultation based on the Ibarretxe Plan were vetoed both by the Basque branches of center parties as sectarian, exclusive and illegal and by the Spanish Parliament.

In addition, and more importantly, the presence of the only significant proactive terrorist group left in Europe that aims to change radically the borders of two European states in view of the establishment of an independent Euskal Herria through considerable violent actions seems to go patently against the above-mentioned argument.

Given the high degree of ideological heterogeneity in Basque nationalism, drawing a neat line between moderate and radical strands can result into an oversimplification.

So far, the most relevant dividing line within Basque nationalism is the use of violence and its justification as a means to achieve political objectives, or, alternatively, its rejection. The impact exerted on Basque nationalism by Spanish democratization in the first place and its participation to the broader European project in the second has strongly contributed to absorbing the violent fringe into a legitimate political debate.

With the advent of European integration, in particular, both the theoretical references and political practice of Basque nationalism needed to readjust in line with the international changing circumstances and to take a more clear-cut stance with democratic values.

My analysis will primarily address the ideology and objectives pursued by PNV. This focus is justified by the fact that PNV has been the main strand from which other political formations have departed. In addition, the ambiguous nature of its political objectives (moderation/radicalism-autonomy/independence) has made that PNV served as an overarching political project whereby any nationalist option could find its place. Last but not least, it managed to gain the large majority of the electoral preferences of the nationalist area and is the political formation that held primary responsibilities in the autonomous government between 1980 and 2009.

Despite PNV will be the main reference where the fostering and moderating effects of European integration have taken place, an explanation of the trajectory of other nationalist political formations is due and necessary for the picture to be complete. Again, it will be highlighted the influence exerted by European integration in delimitating the empowerment of radical options in favour of more moderate stances and, at the same time, in progressively lowering their legitimacy.

A brief account on the premises that made possible the insurgence of peripheral nationalisms in Spain will provide the context for a more throughout analysis of the birth and origins of Basque nationalism in general and PNV in particular and its long-standing and steady support for European integration. Further to that, the impact of European integration both on the ideology and political discourse and ambitions of PNV will be investigated and what theoretical and empirical implications have been brought along.

With this analysis, it is expected to verify the two-fold role of propeller and container played by European integration in relation to sub-state nationalism, whereby the final result is stability and more democracy. To be long-lasting, European integration should keep on the track of supranationality. As mentioned earlier, should it take an intergovernmental track, sub-state nationalism could turn against it and resort to more traditional political projects and discourse. This could also be the trend of Basque nationalism, should the dissatisfaction towards the process of integration take further steps.

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH: BIRTH AND ORIGINS OF BASQUE NATIONALISM

Drawing an historical account, albeit short, of Basque nationalism is a fundamental step to undertake for a full understanding of its developments and the implications exerted by European integration.

The trajectory that will be outlined here is far from being exhaustive, but will insist on those aspects that are still relevant in the political discourse of contemporary Basque nationalism.

The premises for the birth and the flourishing of peripheral nationalisms in Spain, in general, and in Euskadi, in particular, have often been associated to the incapability of the Spanish state to carry forward a successful state and nation-building (Keating, 2000). As known, the mechanisms of assimilation and aggregation provided by the rudimentary state structure during the XVII and XIX centuries have played a vital role in view of establishing the nation-state upon solid basis. The different trajectory drawn by the French state and Spanish one in this respect fairly illustrates this (Elorza, 2001). Both France and Spain are the by-product of a centralizing attempt put in place by their respective crowns between the XVI and XVII centuries, aiming at erasing any local administrative peculiarities. In France, however, the 1789 Revolution legitimized cultural, legislative and economic homogenization under the vessel of men's equality before the law, paving the way to the consolidation of a well-rounded and solid French identity.

Differently from the results achieved by the French crown, in Spain centralization has not been a priority until the XVII century. The embryonic Spanish state was composed by the reigns of Castile and Aragon, in a form of confederation, where Catalonia enjoyed substantive self-government. The Reign of Navarre was annexed in 1512, whereas the Basque Provinces – namely Biscay and Guipuscoa – were historically and culturally linked to Castile, but their subjection was ruled by historic *fueros*, which allowed for a substantial political autonomy (albeit not in the modern sense).

Charles V inherited a diverse and sprawling polity, based on overlapping authorities. In the Iberian Peninsula as a whole the chronic economic underdevelopment and the cultural backwardness of the élites prevented the formation and the consolidation of an illuminated national project. The colonial expansion throughout South America did not function as a propeller for the development of a coherent national market, which was largely predominated by a farming economy. The disastrous defeat of the *Invencible Armada* operated by the British navy in 1588 marked the unrelenting decline of the Spanish Empire. From the economic viewpoint, the most dynamic areas were those peripheral regions where development was favoured by contacts with the outer world, namely Euskadi and Catalonia.

The prestige of the Spanish state was also affected by a number of military occurrences, such as the French occupation during the Revolution, the war of successions and the two Carlist insurgences in 1840 and 1876, and the progressive loss of the American Empire, that was completed in 1898 with the Cuba war. These failures suffered by the Spanish state turned to be highly counterproductive for a solid national consciousness to be developed. This symbolic weakness was also accompanied by a scarcely efficient public administration, linked to local *caudillos*, an overwhelming number of military officers and an illiberal *guardia civil*. School and army never functioned as harmonizing factors and tended to exacerbate the fracture between the central state and provinces, especially those where cultural and institutional peculiarities were present. A weak, unreliable, corrupt, often illiberal state could hardly inspire a profound 'we feeling' and carry forward a centralizing project that could meet an unchallenged acceptance.

Therefore, self-governing institutions and local specificities had been the rule in Spain until the advent of the liberal state, when Catalonia's *Generalitat* was suppressed and Basque *Fueros* were first severely restricted and then eliminated and replaced by the *Concierto Económico* in 1876. However, the central state did not have either the authority or the prestige or the instruments to implement a successful centralization reform.

Catalonia and the Basque Provinces have never been proper nation-states, as they never enjoyed absolute sovereignty as contemporary nation-states did. In addition to that, differently from Catalonia, Basque Provinces never formed a homogeneous institutional unity either, but were related to the Castilian crown through a complex structure of privileges and agreements. Nevertheless, the relations of Catalonia and the Basque Provinces with the Spanish state were organized around a complicated set of overlapping authorities and shared sovereignty.

Catalans were very successful in trading and making businesses in the Mediterranean area in a fairly independent way from the state. They were often reluctant to participate actively in the administration and the operations of the Spanish state. On the contrary, Basques were integrated in it to a higher and considerable degree, and their interests, in particular under the Habsburg crown, were largely coinciding with those of the Spanish state. At the same time, the institutional peculiarity of the Basque Provinces was maintained much longer than Catalonia's.

Although Basques participated both in the procurement and the enjoyment of the fortune of the Spanish crown during its Golden Age, they had some distinctive characteristics that somehow favoured the consolidation of a particularistic consciousness. *Euskera*, the Basque primordial language whose origins are as mysterious as its survival in such an intensely Latinized territory, is one of these. The question of the origin of the Basque language has been largely debated by anthropologists and linguists and no agreement has been reached so far, apart from its non-

Indo-European roots. Although a clear-cut distinctiveness from a racial viewpoint cannot be ascertained, certain physical characteristics are however mentioned as typical Basque traits³⁶.

There are however more genuine reasons that have fostered such a distinct *in nuce* identity. The institutional principle around which the relations between the Basques and the Spanish crown were organized is extremely important. Whereas the trend in Western Europe was towards the consolidation of nation-states, the Basque Provinces retained most of their peculiar juridical and administrative provisions, known as *Fueros*. The foral system was organized around juridical and administrative attributions that had been codified since the XIV century upon which policy and administration were run in the Basque Provinces and Navarre. Such attributions were not homogeneous for all: Biscay, Guipuscoa, Alava and Navarre enjoyed specific provisions, which, in the course of time, were modified and readapted to the changing circumstances and in accordance to the parallel Spanish legislation, which covered the competences that *Fueros* did not. The *Fueros* worked as a restriction to the full sovereignty of the crown. Upon taking over the royal duties, the sovereign had to swear to uphold the pluralistic structure of the Spanish system. Some nationalist scholars and the nationalist rhetoric in general have interpreted this peculiarity as a demonstration of the original sovereignty of the Basque Provinces. The mainstream literature has however tended to downsize this statement, by highlighting the fact the very existence of the *Fueros* entailed the recognition of the existence of the crown and the subjection to it.

In the early XIX century Spain, the Basque *Fueros* were the only institutional exceptions that survived to the fierce centralist attempts of the Bourbon dynasty. However, they suffered systematic reductions and were subordinated to the “unity, order and royal rights of the crown”. Following the death of Ferdinand VII and the struggle for the succession to the throne, the main concern of Basques was to preserve their local rights and privileges and decided to stand for Don Carlos, being the pretender that was offering more guarantees for these to be protected and kept unaltered, against the liberals, headed by Doña Isabel. At the end of the first Carlist War, on October 25, 1839 the *Cortes Generales* in Madrid passed a law that confirmed the *Fueros* in the Basque Provinces and Navarre as long as the unity of the Spanish crown was respected and with no prejudice of future modifications and adaptations in their own interests and in the broader interest of the state. Whereas Biscay, Guipuscoa and Alava decided to maintain this ambiguity, exposing themselves to controversial interpretations of this law, Navarre reached an agreement with the state through the *Ley Pactada* in 1841, making of the

³⁶ Stanley Payne reports a blood-type study published by Dr. J.L. Goiti entitled “Los grupos sanguíneos en los vascos”, published in *La Gran Enciclopedia Vasca*, according to which 28,8% of the Basques sampled were found to be Rh negative, versus a standard norm of 19,6%.

old kingdom one of the 49 Spanish provinces. It however managed to retain some privileges, including its civil and penal law and a broad administrative self-government.

Further to the definitive defeat of the Carlist band, the liberals under Doña Isabel eliminated completely the foral system. A law dated July 21st, 1876, levelled the Basques to the rest of the Spanish subjects. As a compensation for the elimination of the old privileges, the *Concierto Económico* was introduced, and the Basque provincial representative assemblies gained fiscal autonomy.

The disappearance of the *Fueros* was a momentum event that functioned as a significant marker of collective identity for Basques. The reaction was however not homogeneous: two bands arose, the former more conciliating with the new status quo - “*transigentes*” - and the latter rejecting it - “*intransigentes*”. A protonationalist consciousness seemed by then to have emerged, in particular in Biscay. The literature rightly indicates Carlism and Foralism as the antecedents of Basque nationalism and, in particular, the cultural circles arising within the intransigent band – the *Sociedad Euskalerría*, led by Fidel de Sagarmínaga, and the *Asociación Euskara de Navarra*, led by Arturo Campeón. The Spanish character of the Basque Provinces was however never questioned³⁷. In spite of this, the theoretical premises of Basque nationalism were set, although no sophisticated political claims were yet developed³⁸.

With the establishment of the *Concierto Económico* in 1878, the Basque provincial representative assemblies – known as *Diputaciones* – were entitled to collect taxes and invest public revenues directly in Basque territories, and then remitting their receipts to the central government. Whereas the objective beyond this measure was to create a model that would conciliate more fluidly Basque peculiarity with the liberal state, only big industrialists were significantly advantaged by it, bringing to the Foralist band a growing consensus (Conversi, 1995).

Modernization and industrialization played a crucial role in that they triggered the transformation of Basque peculiarity based on Foralism into a full-fledged nationalist ideology. Save Catalonia, that had long been in the forefront in Spain with regard to economic development, industrialization was particularly remarkable in Biscay and Guipuscoa compared to the rest of Spain (Payne, 1975: 105) and such a fast modernization and its effects were perceived as a brutal shock. Ancient lifestyles and the landscape were destroyed and brought about a massive

³⁷ As an example of this two-sided patriotism, the Manifesto of Sociedad Euskalerría still sticks with the Spanish nation, but highlights the need to distinguish between unity and uniformity, see “Nuestra misión”, Euskalerría, I, 1880, pag. 1 in J. Juaristi, op. cit., pag. 42

³⁸ The ultimate objective of the foral associations did not go beyond the restoration of the *status quo ex ante* the law 1876 and the full reintegration of the *Fueros*.

displacement of workers from the countryside to the cities, provoking a profound impact at any level of the society. In addition to that, the local supply did not suffice the needs of such an extensive industrialization. Therefore, a consistent immigration from neighbouring and underdeveloped of Spain flooded into the Basque Provinces, altering the demographic balance and the traditional habits of the natives and endangered some of their cultural peculiarities, including the language.

As Payne puts it (1975: 64), Basque nationalism was the by-product of the intersection of traditionalism and modernization aimed at pursuing the latter while preserving the former. As shown, the premises for the consolidation of a nationalist ideology in the Basque Provinces were many and increased even more in the late XIX century. Both the resistance to the reforms envisaged by the liberal state and the process of industrialization was particularly intense in Biscay. Therefore, the fact that Basque nationalism was primarily a Biscayan phenomenon is not surprising. Differently from most nationalist movements, that are often the product of a collective cultural and ideological effort of a given society, Basque nationalism is an exception. Its systematization into a coherent and comprehensive political ideology was mainly the outcome of the work of its founder, Sabino Arana Goiri. Indeed, Arana's personal biography and personality is fundamental to understand Basque nationalism.

Sabino Arana descended from a wealthy family from Abando (Bilbao), which had been strenuously supporting Carlism and Catholicism. The abolition of the *Fueros* was a brutal shock – both from an economic (Arana's father went bankrupted) and a psychological viewpoint –. After spending some time studying the Basque language and history, and influenced by the Catalan *renaixancia*, he eventually bridged cultural nationalism with political nationalism and proposed a preliminary political manifesto in 1892, with the publication of the short essay "*Bizkaia por su independencia*", where he replaced the interpretation, proper of the foral tradition, of the bargained nature of the association of Biscay with the Spanish state with an independentist one. Basing on historically shaky and biased sources, Arana aimed to demonstrate that Biscay was originally an independent political entity that had been untiringly fighting to keep independent from the various attempt of colonization and domination in the ancient and recent history. A renewed impetus was then needed to react against the assimilating policies of the liberal state and the corruption of Basque culture and traditions as a consequence of a consistent immigration from outside the Basque Provinces. In addition to that, he coined the name of *Euskadi* to designate the Basque Provinces, created its flag, *Ikurriña*, its hymn, the Basque National Holiday, *Aberri Eguna*, and defined its geographical extension through the motto '*Zazpiak-Bat*' (seven-in-one), referring to the four Basque Provinces comprised within the Spanish state: Biscay, Guipuscoa, Alava and Navarre - *Hegoalde*:

Southern Euskadi - and the three Basque speaking territories in France, Labourd, Soule and Basse Navarre - *Iparralde: Northern Euskadi*.

The Larrazabal luncheon in 1893 is often indicated as the date of birth of Basque nationalism (Elorza, 1978: 148). On this occasion, Arana presented its historical arguments on Basque independence in political terms in front of a selected audience, where also moderate elements – such as Ramón de la Sota, founding member of *Euskalerrria* – started being seduced by nationalism, also as a consequence of the economic losses suffered in the aftermath of the abolition of *Fueros*. In 1895, Arana gave birth to the first nucleus, the *Euzkeldun Batzokija*, which would eventually turn into a well rounded political party, the Basque Nationalist Party (Partido Nacionalista Vasco).

According to Fusi (1990: 94), Arana's political ideology was shaped around five main cornerstones, including race, language, God and old laws - from which the motto "*Jaungoikua eta Lagi-Zaharra*" follows - and historical specificity.

The exaltation of the Basque race was based on its purity and nobility, in contrast to the lascivious, lazy, adulterous non-Basques - *maketos*, who were flooding into Biscay and were accused to be corrupting the Basque character. Arana, however, never espoused any sophisticated theory of racial superiority and seemed to make an instrumental use of stereotypes, aiming at reinforcing with immediate, primordial elements a cultural distinction (Conversi, 1997: 62).

There are two main concerns behind the controversial stance taken by the founder of Basque nationalism.

Firstly, Arana was pessimistic about the possibility to integrate new-comers into the Basque culture. The major obstacle was the language, unintelligible also to most Basque natives, that was supposed to be bound to succumb once for all with the immigration from the rest of Spain.

Euskera was a very complex language, which was widely non codified and divided into local dialects – often very different from each other and not mutually understandable – and its relatively low prestige of the Basque language among higher classes of Basque society³⁹. It was therefore very little appealing to new-comers, also because of the total absence of a capillary public schooling in *Euskera*.

³⁹ *Euskera* and Catalan played a very different role in the definition of the national community, which led to divergent outcomes. Both because of its relatively high affinity with the Castilian of the wide daily usage, also by the élites, made that Catalan was quite simple and highly desirable to learn by the mass of the new-comers (Payne, 1975)

Secondly, there were no other truly distinctive national symbols that could be identified. There was however the need to gain the support of autochthonous leading classes. Race was the only option of cultural distinctiveness to be waged. As a consequence, the criteria to accede to any nationalist organizations were particularly strict in this sense, in that either four Basque surnames or a native Basque grandparent was necessary in order to be eligible (Elorza, 1978: 148). Speaking *Euskera* was not, instead, a compulsory requirement.

Arana worked untiringly towards the unification and purification of the autochthonous language with the objective to facilitate and encourage natives to recuperate their ancestral origins. At the same time, however, he emphasized the necessity to keep non-Basques away from it, in order to prevent the corruption of the Basque culture. Therefore, *Euskera* mainly worked a barrier between natives and immigrants.

The attachment to Christian values and Catholicism is a peculiarity of early Basque nationalism and has remained a fundamental characteristic of PNV up to the present day. There are environment-related and instrumental reasons for that. Not differently from Spanish society as a whole, Basque society of the late XVIII and early XIX centuries was a profoundly religious one and was far less secularized than Catalonia. The convinced support provided to the Carlist band was a clear expression of such a religiosity. The presence of such strong religious feelings somewhat hindered the development of new radical ideologies, which could have hardly flourished at the margins of Catholicism. Arana, who had received a strict Catholic education and was himself a fervent believer, coupled the nationalist doctrine with the religious dogmas, and, in doing so, embedded it firmly into the immanent and unfalsifiable stance of true religion. With the motto "*Gu Euzkadirentzat ta Euzkadi Jaungoikoarentzat*" (We for Euskadi and Euskadi for God), the Basques, not differently from the Jews in the Old Testament, resulted into God's chosen people, subject to God's willingness, but proactive to reach their promised land.

As it was mentioned earlier, the reintegration of the *Fueros* was the war horse of the Foral movement and created the basis for the development of Arana's nationalist doctrine. While basing on traditional claims, however, Arana went much further in envisaging the need for Basque independence.

Despite its traditional taints and religious orthodoxy, however, Arana's doctrine should not be considered as a simple return to the past. Like in any other nationalist discourse, together with ancestral and pre-modern elements, there is also a projection towards modernity. As a matter of fact, the logic behind Arana's argument seems to follow the concept of 'nationalist triad', as it has been theorized by Levinger (2002). Arana provides a historicist interpretation of the history of Euskadi, hinting to a status of primitive independence, a sort of 'golden age', to which a state of degeneration followed – represented by the increasing dependence from Spain – primarily

imputable to a specific historical occurrence, i.e., the abolition of the *Fueros*, which led the country to its reputedly miserable, wrecked condition. The promise envisaged by the nationalistic rhetoric implies not simply the recuperation of the lost dignity, but also the acquirement of a new consciousness. In the case of Basque nationalism, industrialization – in conjunction with the modernization of the state – was the element of novelty that clothed the nationalist objective with new meanings. Arana's approach to industrialization was ambiguous. On the one hand, he rejected those effects that went against the traditional Basque values and other dangerous aspects, including immigration. On the other, he tried to retain the benefits whose enjoyment was assigned to the nationalist élite, although it is conceived to be shared with the broader society. Elorza (2001:404) makes an attempt to compare early Basque nationalism and the ayatollah revolution in Iran: they both looked at the idealized past as an objective to pursue, but at the same time they did not mean to eliminate modernity from scratch. What they wished to eradicate were its degenerated by-products with the aim of imposing their own political and religious imprinting on the future. Albeit of doubtful pertinence, such comparison is useful to highlight the revolution operated by Basque nationalism in its attempt to create something beyond tradition and its striking diversity from other earlier phenomena, such as Carlism and Foralism.

During the last years of his life, and following to a period of harsh repression which culminated with his imprisonment in 1902, Arana operated a controversial ideological change of direction and replaced the fierce claim of independence from Spain with a more accommodating and moderated version of it, autonomy within the state⁴⁰. Although the hard core of his followers have reluctantly accepted such a shift and tended to blame Arana's poor state of health for it, it seems that a sense of political realism and the pressure exerted by the wealthy moderate elements of the nationalist movement, headed by Ramón de la Sota, were determinant. The influence of Arana's own charismatic personality on the nationalist formation and his capability to agglutinate divergent stances were made even more patent in the aftermath of his premature death in 1903. At that time, an agreement was reached by the independentist and autonomist strands on the basis of the commitment to fight for the full reintegration of the *Fueros*, but the debate between the two factions has been characterizing the political struggle within PNV up to the present times.

⁴⁰ This 'conversion' is reported in Sabino Arana's letter to his brother Luis, 1902.

THE IDEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION OF BASQUE NATIONALISM

Following de la Granja's hypothesis (2003: 27) and as outlined in more details in the above section, the birth of Basque nationalism was due to the intersection of three sets of factors, including cultural, political and socio-economic ones.

The cultural premises were given by the presence, throughout the second half of the XIX century, of an intense research and analysis on the *Fueros* and their institutional peculiarities, that produced a significant amount of specialized literature, which also served as a response from the cultural viewpoint to the contemporary centralizing attempts of the liberal state.

The political incentive was, to a great extent, provided by the Carlist Wars, which led to the abolition of the *Fueros*.

At the socio-economic level, the massive industrialization and consequent immigration of non-Basques into the Basque Provinces triggered a reaction that eventually led to the formation and consolidation of an incipient nationalist consciousness.

Although Spain was a low performer per se in agglutinating the diverse Iberian peoples into a overarching Spanish nation, the concurrence of these three elements was however crucial for a vague regionalist and particularistic feeling to become a full-fledged nationalist ideology.

Also the evolution of Basque nationalism as an ideology is strictly connected with the historical events that characterized the Basque Provinces throughout the XX century. In drawing the trajectory of its ideological trajectory, a constant reference to history is therefore necessary, in order to provide a contextualization of the political thought and practice of Basque nationalism as well as a framework for its analysis.

After Sabino Arana's Death

Basque nationalism, it has been argued, is the by-product of Sabino Arana's beliefs and personality. The ideological trajectory followed during his short life has been object of a polemic and controversial debate after his death.

However, the tight connection that Arana made between the nationalist doctrine and Catholicism, the generous use of religious terminology and symbols in the political discourse, the reinterpretation of the parabola of Basque history in quasi-sacral terms made that the ideological hardcore of Basque nationalism did not suffer but slight modifications until the advent of the Civil War. The internal disagreements between those that were supportive of Arana's early formulations – independence – and those that have adopted a more moderate stance – autonomy – largely contributed to such an ideological stagnation.

The traditional motto “*JEL*” – dated 1906 – was maintained and its right-wing traditionalist stance was confirmed by the political alliances – Catholics and monarchists – concluded before 1936.

Nevertheless, the cohabitation of independentists and autonomists was not a bed of roses, and several attempts were put in place in order to find an acceptable compromise to conciliate the two positions. Such accommodation was temporarily found by Luis Elizalde and Kizkitza from the columns of the journal *Euzkadi*, where independence as political objective was subordinated to the real aim of Basque nationalism, the survival of Basque nation, which should have been primarily pursued by effective cultural and social actions.

This conciliating phase coincided with a particularly favourable situation for Basque nationalism: in the aftermath of the World War I, both the economic – especially the naval sector and iron mines – and the political circumstances – the application of the nationality principle as supreme organizing criteria for statehood in Europe – were providing indirect support to its objectives. It is right in this historical period when the *Comunion Nacionalista Vasca-CNV* (the new denomination of PNV since 1910) started capitalizing important electoral results, especially in Biscay: it gained control of Bilbao’s municipality and of *Diputación de Bizkaia*, and six members were elected to represent the party at the *Cortes Generales*, advancing some concrete proposals to establish an autonomist institutional framework for the Basque Provinces, including a draft Statute.

However, with the post-war recession, the fortune enjoyed by CNV was downsized especially at the state level. This also exacerbated the internal chronic disagreements, opposing in particular the juvenile section of the party against the executive committee, which led to a split of the party in 1921. The re-emerging party, by which also Luis Arana, Sabino’s brother, decided to stand, was named under the original label of the party, PNV, and took back its radical and independentist stance under the ideological direction of Gallastegi, one of the most important contributors of the journal *Aberri*. Inspired by Arana’s paternalistic concern for the working class, this trend progressively developed into a more articulated anti-capitalist ideology. This was crucial for the evolution of a strand within Basque nationalism toward a full-fledged Marxist-Leninist ideology, which will set the basis for the birth of ETA.

The growingly weak Spanish parliamentary system led to the proclamation of the dictatorship by the general Primo de Rivera, which compelled Basque nationalism as a whole – both its moderate version (CNV) and its more radical one (PNV) – to adopt a relatively low profile. In this delicate phase, most efforts were directed towards social and cultural activities, which were only partially tolerated by the regime –. While moderate nationalism was allowed to continue its work around the journal *Euzkadi*, *Aberri* was closed – and the frontline political action was stalled.

The repression suffered during the dictatorship, however, was helpful to the nationalist band in that it allowed merging back the two factions under PNV's banner. Only a residual part of CNV rejected it and founded a new party, named *Acción Nacionalista Vasca* (ANV), left-wing oriented and religiously non-aligned. Although its political trajectory was quite short, it paved the way towards the establishment of a different kind of nationalism, disconnected from the foral and aranist tradition and genuinely sensitive to the needs of the working class (La Granja, 2003: 42).

The fall of Primo de Rivera led to a very favourable period to Basque nationalism under the Republic. In 1933 parliamentary election, PNV, which had withdrawn from its alliance with the Carlists, became the first party in Euskadi, although the consensus was not homogeneously distributed from a territorial viewpoint. The ideological core, again, did not undergo any dramatic evolution, whereas a sort of ambiguity between the independentist and autonomist options was always maintained just to keep riots under control. However, the racist and ultracatholic components were downsized in favour of a more social-oriented stance of Catholic imprinting.

What was notable was its political evolution in the left-wing spectrum. Traditionally close to the right wing and Spanish conservative parties, PNV turned to support the left when the anti-nationalist right got to the power, after standing for election *solo* in 1933 and 1936. Such change of direction, however, responded more to tactical considerations than to an accurate internal ideological debate. What became truly relevant to Basque nationalism at this stage was to obtain autonomy for Euskadi within Spain, was this either the ultimate goal (autonomist strand) or the minimum programme (independentist strand). This explains the relatively fluid interchange of political alliances, first with the clerical and anti-republican right, that resulted into the drafting of Statute of Estella in 1931, and, as of 1934, with the Popular Front in view of the negotiations for the Statute of 1936.

The 30s were also years of an unprecedented expansion of PNV's electoral support. The outreach and organizational capacity of PNV resulted significantly upgraded, which led to a capillary rooting of the party in Euskadi, in particular in Biscay and Guipuscoa. The nationalist efforts, moreover, moved well beyond the mere political realm and successfully embraced other sectors, such as cultural and sport activities, envisaging a sort of nationalist socialization through cultural and sport events. This phase was handled with political *savoir faire* by a new nationalist generation, headed by José Antonio Aguirre (1904-1960) and Manuel Irujo (1891-1981), among others. Nevertheless, the ideological heterogeneity and the tactic-based approach were again responsible for another split in 1934, again operated by Gallastegui and his group, who agglutinated around the journal *Jagi-Jagi*, advocating for a fierce anti-Spanish and anti-capitalistic stance. Again, this attempt could count on the prestigious support of Luis Arana.

Notwithstanding its growth in political salience and electoral support, PNV – and Basque nationalism in general – was far from being majoritarian in Euskadi. It detained approximately one third of Basque electorate, sharing the rest of the cake with monarchists, other conservatives and socialists (La Granja, 2003: 46).

Under the Dictatorship

The most characteristic tract of Basque nationalism in the late republican years is its tireless effort to have the Statute of Autonomy approved by the *Cortes Generales*. PNV adopted a cautious political strategy, aimed at procuring a certain degree of autonomy to Euskadi. This entailed that other ideological implications were subordinated to the achievement of autonomy within Spain.

As mentioned, various attempts were made, through a great heterogeneity of political alliances: firstly, with right-wing political forces (1931, Estella Statute), secondly with the center (1933-1934, Gestora Statute) and thirdly, with the left (1936). This third attempt culminated with the formalization of a proper alliance with the Popular Front.

With the advent of the military uprising – that both Navarre and Alava supported –, it was about time to stand on firmly, either on one side or the other. The complex alliances plot carried out by PNV right before the Civil War shows that it was not the ideological affinity to inspire them, rather the considerations of the benefits – mainly in terms of autonomy – that Euskadi could have gained. Therefore, the support provided by Basque nationalism was loyal, although not enthusiastic⁴¹, as far as PNV is concerned; absolute as far as ANV; and inexistent from the *Jagi-Jagi* group, whose only objective was the independence of Euskadi.

After a limited operational support offered to the troops of the Popular Front, the attitude of PNV significantly changed when the Statute of Autonomy entered into force on December 1935. PNV gained a clear hegemonic position within the first Basque Government, headed by José Antonio Aguirre, in coalition with the Popular Front, and, as the Civil War was devastating the rest of Spain, the Basque Provinces were *'the most orderly, least revolutionary part of Republican Spain'* (Cortada, 1982: 78).

Although the autonomy lasted just nine months, the political hegemony of PNV coupled with the relative isolation of Northern Spain during the war made that the Basque government

⁴¹ PNV made patent its support in a note published in the review *Euzkadi* on July 19, 1936: "The Basque Nationalist Party declares (...) that, in the fight between citizenship and fascism, Republic and Monarchy, its principles stand on the side of citizenship and Republic".

progressively expanded the autonomy and was very close to establish a semi-independent Biscay-based state. Aguirre had the supreme command over the Basque troops, *Euzko Gudarostea*, which did not merge into the army of the Popular Front and was mainly charged with the responsibility of defending Basque territories – Biscay in particular – against the fascist troops. The flexible strategy adopted by PNV seemed to have succeeded in making the maximum programme of Basque nationalism closer to reality than ever.

During the II Republic and the Civil War, PNV underwent an important evolution. As shown earlier, from a clear-cut right wing stance, it progressively moved to the left, passing through the center. Such dramatic change in the alliances also brought about significant consequences to other aspects, such as the religious one. From a totalizing attachment to the Catholic religion and a messianic conception of Basque people, PNV eventually adopted a more modern and progressive approach to politics and religion.

PNV's leading class in the 30s belonged to a far less traditionalist generation than the previous one. The outstanding personality of some of its key leaders during this period greatly contributed to its evolution. José Antonio Aguirre and Martín de Irujo, to quote a few, were very determinate in intertwining the nationalist political project with the democratic forces and with the defence against the dictatorship. The influence exerted by the non-confessional party ANV should also be mentioned (La Granja Sanz, 2002: 153).

Some external factors also contributed to this change in PNV's political trajectory. The influence of the Catalan parties – to great extent, moderate and non-confessional – should not be disregarded. Moreover, the high level of political mobilization during the II Republic and the participation to the political dynamics of the democracy definitely affected its *Weltanschauung* of the party and made it benefit from the political advantages that democracy brings about. In addition, from the international perspective, the rise of the Italian and German Fascist regimes, ideologically akin to the National Front and prone to cultural subjugation of cultural diversity under a superior Italian and German cultures, urged PNV to take an ideologically more similar and politically more advantageous stance.

However, the victory of the reactionary forces, headed by the general Francisco Franco, assisted by German and Italian contingents, compelled leftists and nationalists to leave behind active politics and to pursue covered and clandestine political activities in the exile. The hard experience of the exile, the dramatic socio-economic changes under the dictatorship and a rapidly increasing development progressively changed the monolithic Aranian conception of Basque identity.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, the repression in the Basque Provinces was fierce, namely in Biscay and Guipuscoa, the “traitor provinces”, and a vindictive campaign against any sign of

Basque identity was initiated (the flag, the popular festivals, the language). In this initial phase, innumerable people were accused of promoting separatism and were either exiled⁴², or imprisoned or executed. Basque clergy was also an objective of such a repression, as it had stood to large extent on the nationalists' side.

At the end Civil War, many Basque nationalist leaders followed the same destiny and paid a particularly high cost. In addition, PNV had to take up the challenge to rebuild its identity as main reference for Basque nationalists. The party had undergone more a political than an ideological evolution. Whereas its capacity to conclude alliances and to participate actively in the political debate of the II Republic had led to an upgrade of its political leverage, from an ideological standpoint the situation was at a gridlock.

This ideological stagnation did not prevent PNV's young generation led by Aguirre to adopt liberal-democratic stances and to make a serious attempt to detach from the origins. Under his leadership, the Basque government continued to remain operative in the exile, although its effort was mainly devoted to establish diplomatic contacts with the Allies. The objective was to negotiate agreements that would guarantee an accommodation in line with the nationalists' expectations, should the Franco regime was overthrown. In 1939, President Aguirre announced from Paris his determination to keep on chairing the Basque government and asked the non-nationalist elements that were part of it to break their ties with their Spanish counterparts and follow the so-called "Basque national trajectory".

When Aguirre needed to flee from Europe as the Nazis were approaching Belgium and France, the direction of the Basque government was entrusted to Manuel Irujo and his *Consejo Nacional Vasco* (Basque National Committee) in London. Here, between 1940 and 1942, he intensified the relations with the *France Libre* headed by General de Gaulle, and advocated for a draft Constitution of the forthcoming Basque state. His leadership, however, was controversial and very much opposed both by socialists and non-nationalists and within nationalist circles. When Aguirre took over again his duties as President of the Basque government in exile in New York, he made the attempt to internationalize as much as possible the Basque question, trying to exert international pressure on the dictatorial regime in Spain. To this purpose, Aguirre bid the Basque secrete services to show full collaboration with the Allies' in providing significant information regarding both about the fascist and the communist band.

Aguirre's dedication to the Basque cause was immense and genuine, but, nevertheless, exerted a limited impact on the flow of the events.

⁴² Legarreta (1984) reports that approximately 100,000 – 150,000 people were forced to the exile, including 20,000 children, who mainly left to other Western European countries, especially France, Latin America and United States.

In Euskadi the repression imposed from Madrid was more and more intense. The response to any attempt of organized protests – being it inspired or not by nationalists – was fierce and the network of secrete cells was progressively dismantled.

Contemporarily, the Allies were withdrawing their mild support little by little, while Franco was gaining credits as a reliable partner to the United States thanks to his anti-communist crusade as the Cold War was gaining salience from 1947 onwards. Spain progressively became member of all those international organizations it was previously banned from: World Health Organization (1951), UNESCO (1952) and eventually the United Nation (1955).

The ultimate objective of Basque nationalism, since the end of the Civil War and the defeat of the Popular Front and during and right in the aftermath of World War II, was to overthrow Franco's regime with the determinant support of the Allies' troops and diplomatic instruments, and to set the basis for an independent Euskadi, having autonomy become an unattainable goal. This stance was soon relinquished as evidence showed quite an uncomfortable political environment to keep fighting for it. However, also the attempt to perpetuate the isolation of Spain from the international system was not fruitful, as the global political circumstances changed in a direction favourable to Franco.

By 1955, the defeat of the ambitions of Basque nationalism was patent. However, this dramatic phase coincided with a further turn towards a well-rounded Christian-Democrat position. As it will be explained in more details later, PNV enthusiastically embraced Europeanism, participating since an early stage to the European Movement and supporting the establishment of a federal Europe, where the role of the states should have been subordinated to the central role that the peoples constituting them should have played in it.

Aguirre's premature death in 1960 marked the end of PNV's monopole on Basque nationalism. His successor, Jesus Maria Leizaola, kept on leading the Basque coalition government in Paris for sake of continuity, but without any significant ideological and political advancement. The fight against the dictatorship was taken over by new radical organizations from within Euskadi.

An Ideological Rupture? The Birth of ETA

Given the fierce polarization with the central government and the impossibility for institutionalized nationalism to resort to democratic tools to challenge Franco's regime, the *gaztedi berria* - patriotic youth – started emerging as the main reference for the fight against the dictatorship.

Whereas the hindrances posed by the dictatorship contributed to the radicalization of the nationalist ideology in the Euskadi, it should also be noted this phenomenon did not emerge in a

political *vacuum*. Many scholars, Elorza *in primis*, rightly insist on the ideological affinity between traditional Basque nationalism and the *izquierda aberztale*. Despite some objective divergences, it cannot be detected a macroscopic distance between the two, but, rather a sort of ideological continuity.

Much of the cultural and theoretical background of traditional Basque nationalism remained, with the exception of religious ‘fundamentalism’. Radical nationalism is rooted from the very outset of the first Basque nationalism and is a foundational component of Arana’s doctrine. As a matter of fact, its historical precedents can be identified with the pre-war juvenile leftist sectors active under the aegis of PNV, such as *Aberri* and *Jagi-Jagi*.

Euskadi ta Askatasuna (Euskadi and Freedom), known as ETA, was born within *Ekin*, a juvenile group active within clandestine post-war Basque nationalism. Among the endogenous factors that favoured the birth of ETA, there is undoubtedly the conjunction of the most radical stance of traditional Basque nationalism – independence from Spain – and the repression exerted by Franco’s dictatorship.

There are, however, important exogenous causes that can contribute to explain the difference in the perspective from which the Basque issue was analyzed. The swift change in the historical and political context and the effect exerted by the international circumstances made that the key cornerstones of Basque nationalism were reinterpreted through a radically different lens. In this sense, the role played by the international circumstances on the birth and consolidation of ETA can be envisaged as a practical example of Pevehouse’s theory regarding the impact exerted by international relation on internal politics/ideology.

The process of decolonization in Africa and Asia starting at the end of World War II and culminating with the Algerian war in the late 60s introduced a dynamic and modernizing element in the theoretical re-elaboration of Basque nationalism. Euskadi was depicted as a colony oppressed by Spain and France and Basque nationalism as a national liberation movement whose claims were based on the principle of self-determination that was being debated and codified by the recently born international organizations.

Whereas the juxtaposition Euskadi-Spain inherited by Arana remained intact, the theoretical framework changed dramatically. The catholic radicalism, the arguments about the Basque race, the crusades against migrant workers’ flows into the Basque Provinces – whose number and political relevance was steadily increasing⁴³ – had lost justification and appeal at the aftermath of World War II and the Jews’ massacre perpetrated by Hitler on the basis of his

theories of racial superiority⁴⁴. As shown, traditional Basque nationalism had undergone a significant ideological revolution before and during the Civil War and had progressively taken distance from the early conceptualizations. However, there was nor a firm rejection nor an overarching revision of the first theoretical assumptions.

This new approach was well reflected in the work of the Basque-German linguist Friederik Krutwig, 'Vasconia' (1963), whereby the main historical occurrences in the Basque Provinces were interpreted as an attempt from Spain and France to subject Euskadi to their cultural supremacy and economic priorities, to the detriment of Basque cultural and economic intrinsic rights. Krutwig's work had a profound impact on the emerging ideology. While providing a relatively smooth transition from tradition to modernity by supplying the basic intellectual and cultural interlinks, it managed to adapt Basque nationalism to the new circumstances. In particular, it operated a sort of Copernican revolution in the very conception of Basque identity. The purity of Basque race was Arana's main concern and it is on this premises that the Basque identity had been based. On the contrary, Krutwig replaced the central role played by race in building and reproducing Basque identity with language, which would from then on taken as the most recognizable symptom of 'Basqueness'.

Vasconia served as the foundational manifesto of the newly founded organization. Replacing language with race was the first of a considerable list of the ideological transformations that Basque nationalism underwent. Secularism is another relevant novelty that was introduced in this phase. The alignment of the Spanish clergy's hierarchy with Franco's regime was perceived as a betrayal by many Basque nationalists, which caused a deep feeling of resentment. However, the messianic representation of the Basques as a chosen people remained and was and re-elaborated in secular terms. In addition, the role of the Basque clergy in supporting Basque nationalism, as recalled, should not be underestimated⁴⁵.

The colonial argument brought about by Krutwig was corroborated by contemporary international instances. The fight against the colonial dominance in Africa and Asia had started gaining increasing recognition from both USSR and USA for ideological and geopolitical reasons. Quite surprisingly, the thirdworldist movement exerted a great influence on ETA, which started to define itself as the 'Socialist National Liberation Movement of Euskadi'.

On the one hand, the Basque Provinces in Spain were indeed subject to a process of belated cultural assimilation due by and large to the failure of the Spanish modern state to deliver a

⁴⁴ A. Elorza, *op. cit.*, pag. 405

⁴⁵ The *Escrito presentado a los excmos obispos de Vitoria, San Sebastian, Bilbao y Pamplona, con las firmas de 399 sacerdotes de dichas diocesis, el día 30 de Mayo de 1960* is a clear example of the activism of lower clergy trying to move up to Agenda of the establishment the oppression of the Basque people under Franco's regime (Conversi: 95).

governance model to encompass the institutional, cultural and linguistic differences of such a diverse area. During the dictatorship, the imposition of a centripetal cultural and institutional model in a phase where institutional and cultural differences were already perceived as a *de facto* situation and the repression mechanisms adopted for its enforcement were perceived, quite understandably, as an intolerable burden to bear.

On the other hand, the economic argument sounds shakier than the cultural one. In a broader context of low rate of economic development at the state level between 1955 and 1975, the Basque Provinces had achieved the highest GDP in Spain (García de Cortázar, González Vesga, 1994: 485). In spite of the post-war economic standstill, many Basques, including many PNV affiliates, started taking benefits from the regime's policies and nationalism entered an opaque phase. The nationalist option started being looked at as difficult, risky and overall neither beneficial nor appealing (Conversi, 1995:83).

The disenchantment with PNV coupled with favourable international circumstances made that an ideological revolution was started off. Between 1964 and 1966, ETA endorsed Krutwig's approach. As a consequence of that, ETA was defined as an anti-imperialistic and anti-capitalistic organization working for the liberation of Euskadi and the emancipation of the working class.

This thirdworldist approach became a more systemic and overarching theory. Such operation culminated in 1967, when ETA took up the Marxist-Leninist postulates and associated them with nationalist claims aimed at achieving independence for *Euskal Herria* (the totality of the Basque Provinces in Spain and in France)⁴⁶. The ideological framework was, however, quite fuzzy. The ideological affiliations and affinities have always reached high degrees of complexity in ETA. There was, however, the impending need to rely at least on a common theoretical framework. As Conversi rightly observes (1997: 98), this responded to the need to identify a common minimum denominator which could provide enough motivation to ETA conscripts to carry out risky operations and to provide convincing answers to their questions.

While the distance from traditional Basque nationalism was already significant, the ideological and political rupture was ratified once for all further to the stance taken by ETA with regard to the armed struggle. By recognizing the legitimacy of political independence as the supreme

⁴⁶ “[...] What is a human community made of? Of social classes. The development of productive forces leads to social stratification: dominant classes, who take control of the production and the oppressed classes. Dominant classes use state institutions as instruments to keep the status quo and to repress oppressed classes. In Euskal Herria, the dominant class has been using the power of the Spanish and French states to defend its capitalistic interests and therefore it is objectively foreign and as such it oppresses Basque people”, from Conclusiones de la V Asamblea de ETA (1967) in Antonio Elorza, José María Garmendia, Gurutz Jaregui, Florencio Dominguez, *La historia de ETA*, Temas de Hoy, Madrid, 2002.

political objective of oppressed people, the right to self-determination had led to admit, to a certain extent, the right to resort to force⁴⁷.

It was in 1965, during the Fourth Assembly, that a firm position in favour of the armed struggle was adopted, basing on Krutwig's tenet 'action-repression-action'. According to it, where popular protests would legitimize an action to attack the oppressor and the oppressor would retaliate against the population, another action should take place to initiate a spiral of increasing resistance to the dictatorship.

It should be noted, however, that such ideological and political rupture entailed neither a sudden interruption of any dialogue between traditional nationalism and ETA nor the elimination of every ideological affinity. As known, ETA's main political objective was to gain political independence passing through the socialist revolution. Although there might well not be an agreement on the means, the aim coincided, at least with the one of the independentist strand of traditional nationalism.

The lack of a common position on the relation with ETA is reflected by the statements made by two PNV leaders, Martín de Irujo and Telésforo Monzón almost simultaneously (1962 and 1964 respectively). Irujo claimed that "*ETA is a cancer and, if we don't eradicate it, it will end up invading the whole political body*". On the contrary, Monzón insisted that ETA members are '(...) *sons of PNV's ideas*' who '*moved away from home*' (Moran⁴⁸, 2004). As Moran rightly observes throughout her book, PNV's ambiguity in assessing ETA's activity has been a *leit motiv* of Basque politics up to nowadays. Such ambiguity greatly reflects the diverse nature and political objectives that have been living together within the same party since its foundation.

The quality leap in ETA's activism dates back to 1968, when the theorized 'armed struggle' was translated into action: a *guardia civil* and the head of the national police in San Sebastián (the capital of Guipuscoa) were killed. The reaction from the regime was very tough and the repression on ETA and its supporters became even more intense. Biscay and Guipuscoa, in particular, were subject to a special regime, which entailed an even more severe restriction of civil rights.

The operations and attacks perpetrated by ETA to the regime until the early 70s often relied on an extended - although not unanimous - support not only from Basque nationalists and the democratic opposition but also from many democrats well beyond Spanish boundaries. The

⁴⁷ The principle of self-determination as it is outlined in the UN Charter and in the International Covenant for Political and Civil Rights.

⁴⁸ Sagrario Morán Blanco, PNV-ETA: historia de una relación imposible, Ed. Tecnos, 2004

climax of this support was reached during the Burgos trial in 1970⁴⁹, an event that managed to mobilize the variegated oppositions for a common cause and embarrassed the regime in front of the international partners, strongly impacting European public opinion.

In 1973, the killing of Admiral Carrero Blanco, Franco's right hand and designated successor, was probably the action of ETA which had the most politically relevant consequences. ETA's activism was progressively gaining legitimization vis-à-vis the larger society and the credibility of the regime before the national and international public opinion was very low. The idea was that a new Basque nationalism, keen on acting on the battlefield rather than helplessly begging for support in European Chancelleries, had taken over the heritage of the traditional nationalism and the Basque opposition altogether.

Meanwhile, the ideological differences within ETA started becoming more evident and the comprehensive theoretical framework began to fail. The ideological debate, that such an action-oriented strategy had so far prevented, eventually arose. In the aftermath of the Sixth Assembly, held in 1974, the dichotomy between those who were enthusiastically supporting armed struggle and those who wanted to subordinate it to a more sophisticated political project. Following the terrorist attack that targeted civil population in Calle Correio in Madrid, the organization split into ETA militar (the former) and ETA politico-militar (the latter).

The generalized repression undertaken by the government of Arias Navarro in Euskadi was very fierce and also affected the Basque clergy. The bishop of Bilbao, Antonio Anoveros, was urged to leave Spain as a consequence of the order given to Basque priests to read a homely that was calling for the cultural and linguistic peculiarities of the Basque people to be recognized, which reflects the proximity between the Basque clergy and the nationalistic instances. After the execution of ETA and FRAP members on September 1975, another wave of protests followed.

With over 500.000 ETA members imprisoned, Franco died on 20th November of the same year.

During the Transition and Democracy

Throughout Spain, democratic forces were pushing for the democratization process to take place. Basque and Catalan nationalists, in particular, took active part in the mass mobilizations aimed at claiming the establishment of decentralized democratic institutions.

⁴⁹ The trial was instructed against 15 *etarras* that were accused of preparing and carry over a deathly attack against a Police Commissioner. The regime had planned to react with a very harsh punishment (death penalty), which could not be fulfilled because of the national and international protests that it generated.

In 1977, PNV celebrated the first assembly after the dictatorship. This was an opportunity to set up the pillars of PNV's ideology in the recently born democracy. The leadership of the party was entrusted to Carlos Goikoetxea, who was appointed as President of the *Euskadi Buru Bazar*, while the ideological evolution was introduced. While the Aranian motto "JEL" remained, PNV revised significantly its approach on a number of issues: there was a radical change in the reluctant attitude to extend the membership of the Basque community to immigrants, who were now invited to join the new national project as full-right members and the confessional nature of the party was relinquished.

From the political program viewpoint, the main political objective identified was the establishment of an autonomous Basque Country within Spain, which entailed the continuity with the autonomist stance, the majoritarian position within the party since Arana's *evolución españolista*.

In the aftermath of Franco's death, nationalism was spreading enthusiastically all around Euskadi. The first democratic elections for the Constituent held in Euskadi in 1977 showed an overwhelming support to the nationalist option: 70% of the electorate chose a nationalist party and PNV resulted to be the most voted one. With the advent of democracy, PNV seemed to grow in moderation when it rejected the offer to establish a Basque National Front proposed by the *izquierda abertzale* and moved closer to PSE-PSOE and took part in the Autonomous Front.

Although any relevant ideological activity had ceased by the early 70s, ETA has been remaining fully operative.

The dissension within the *izquierda abertzale* led to the foundation of *Euskadiko Eskerra*, close to ETA-pm and, in 1978, of Herri Batasuna, close to ETA-m, whose violence reached its peak between 1978 and 1980. 239 people died as a consequence of the terrorist attacks perpetrated by the organization.

The new democratic Constitution, approved in 1978, granted the right to autonomy to the three historical nationalities – Basque, Catalans and Galicians – while, however, reaffirming the indissoluble unity of the Spanish nation⁵⁰. In addition, Annex 1 provided that the historical rights of the foral territories would be protected under the Constitution and that such they would have to be exercised in the framework of the Constitution and the Statute of Autonomy.

However, Title VIII extended the devolution process to the rest of the country, also where the absence of any cultural and/or linguistic affinity was patent. This was to downsize the

⁵⁰ Article 2 of the Preliminary Title of the Spanish Constitution says that 'La Constitución se fundamenta en la indisoluble de la Nación española, patria común e indivisible de todos los españoles y reconoce y garantiza el derecho a la autonomía de las nacionalidades y regiones que la integran y la solidaridad entre ellas'.

significance of the autonomy granted to nationalities and to diminish the symbolic impact. This approach was harshly criticized and renamed 'café para todos' to indicate the intention to denaturalize the rationale behind decentralization. Moreover, the explicit prohibition for *Comunidades Autónomas* to federate was a step further in limiting its potentially disruptive effects.

Radical Basque nationalist forces voted against the Constitution, whereas PNV abstained. The reasons that led to PNV's abstention were several and all concerned the ambiguous formula inserted in Annex 1 to the Constitution regarding the extent and the exercise of Basque historical rights. Once approved by the *Cortes Generales* and submitted to popular referendum for its ratification, PNV campaigned for abstention. In Biscay and Guipuscoa, abstention indeed reached 56%.

Despite its inflexibility with regard to the principles, PNV accepted the substance of the Constitution and strongly supported the restructuring of state institution towards regional decentralization and self-government.

The Basque Statute of Autonomous was approved shortly after the Catalan one and was submitted to popular referendum on October 25th, 1979. 61% of the Basque population expressed their preference voted and the vast majority – 89% - supported it.

The Gernika Statute – which took this name from the Basque town, living symbol of the institutional specificity of Euskadi, where it was adopted – provided the recently established Basque institutions with a very comprehensive set of competences, including fiscal autonomy⁵¹. In addition, the foral institutions, *Juntas Generales and Diputaciones Forales* – that had been suppressed in 1937 by Franco as revenge to the position taken by the Basque government during the Civil War in favour of the Republic – were restored.

In the meantime, in Navarre, UCD and PSOE, together with *Unidad del Pueblo Navarro*, decided not to incorporate into the Basque Autonomous Community, also called Euskadi. The nationalist community – albeit always in minority in Navarre – gained a particular relevance in the areas close to the border with Alava and Guipuscoa and took a radical stance. Up to nowadays, radical nationalist parties have always scored the best results to the detriment of any other moderate nationalist option.

PNV resulted to be the most voted party in the first elections to the Basque Parliament celebrated in 1980 (38,5%). The electoral support to radical Basque nationalist forces such as Herri Batasuna (16,5%) and Euskadiko Eskerra (9,82%) arose to the detriment of state parties.

⁵¹ Insert here foral law and fiscal autonomy for Euskadi (cupo)

In the same year, Carlos Goikoetxea became the first *Lehendakari* (President of the Basque government) under the democratic Constitution. The monopole held by nationalist forces on Basque institution was to be long-lasting. The consensus around the nationalist project was very high and reached the peak of 70% in 1984 and has been by and large in majority until the last Parliamentary elections in 2009.

The advent of democracy and the consolidation of Basque institutions, however, did not prevent ETA from carrying its disturbing and destabilizing political project ahead. ETA's terror campaign against Spanish and Basque institutions caused an average of 30-40 victims per year in the 80s, whereas the dirty war carried out by *Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación* (GAL) during the first Socialist government led by Felipe González dramatically damaged the reputation of the recently born Spanish democracy.

THE IDEA OF EUROPE IN BASQUE NATIONALISM

Basque nationalism goes beyond the theoretical assumption on which PNV is based and the political objectives that it has set and achieved in the course of its history. However, PNV has always had a privileged position in the Basque nationalist panorama. The nationalist options that have emerged from Basque nationalism can be related, in a way or in another, to PNV.

The underlying argument of this work is that European integration has had both a propulsion effect and a moderating effect on sub-state nationalism. This hypothesis will be checked against the ideological evolution and political trajectory taken by PNV in light of European integration. This approach, of course, will not underestimate the importance that other nationalist tendencies have had in the fragmented panorama of Basque nationalism. By taking PNV as the primary reference for the analysis, it is intended to highlight the successful effort made to disassociate itself from radicalism – which, as shown, is one of its traditional components – to the benefit of stability and compatibility with European values.

There is also a practical reason behind the choice of this rationale. Most of the literature identified sheds a light on the relation between Basque nationalism and Europe on the basis of the analysis made within the very PNV – namely, the political circumstances dictated by European integration and to the need for PNV to readjust its strategy accordingly.

In addition, the almost political monopole exerted by PNV on Basque institutions for over 30 years, made that the programmatic guidelines of the party were, after some adjustments, translated into political prescriptions ready to use for the Basque government. Similarly, the

independent academic work carried out in this regard is by and large a chronicle of the activity carried out by the Basque government in the indicated timeframe.

An overview on a selection of the political discourse of PNV within a wide time span (from its origin to nowadays) has shown that Europe and Europeanism are very much present and that political projects are often analyzed from a European perspective.

However, the staunch attachment of PNV to the European ideals is apparently at odds with the intergovernmental approach that has characterized European integration from its outset.

Such a discrepancy between ideals and practice may lead to doubt about the genuineness of this attachment and to consider the adoption of this stance as instrumental for electoral purposes. However, there is little evidence supporting this criticism among nationalist parties in Europe: on the contrary, while they seem to seek a European coverage for their claims and tend to tie their political evolution firmly with the European project, their electorate seems to be more reluctant to hail this approach (De Winter, Gomez-Reino, 2002).

The idea that Basque nationalism is a self-referring and introvert political project is very common among its detractors. Contrarily to this diffuse perception, there has been a constant attention to internationalizing it since from the very beginning, although a full-fledged foreign action was established not until the end of World War II.

Early Nationalism

Some relevant traces of PNV's early Europeanism can be found in the effort aimed at internationalizing the Basque national question. The political viability of the nationalist aspirations was entrusted to the foreign relations that, at the time, were mainly European-based.

Contrarily to other contemporary nationalist movements, PNV did not address the nationalities question from a broader perspective and, where references were made to other European cases, these were only functional to confirm and verify Aranian early ideology. Although this issue was more carefully addressed in other nationalist non-PNV circles, such as by the *euskalerriacos*⁵², early Basque nationalism invested neither much energy nor much resources in planning a proper strategy aimed at establishing a solid net of international relations.

A dramatic change in this attitude took place between the first and the second decade of the XX century, World War I being the turning point. Following the victory of the allied forces and the promising declarations by US President Woodrow Wilson about make of the nationality the lead

⁵² Among others, Luis de Eleizalde (1878-1923) played a crucial role in bridging Carlism with Basque nationalism and collaborated closely with Arana, enhancing a moderate stance.

principle for drawing state boundaries, Basque nationalism realized that an effort had to be made to gain an international recognition. An increased attention was then dedicated to the demands of national minorities in Europe, which helped contextualizing the Basque question in a broader framework.

As an example of this incipient activism, it could be recalled the fact that a PNV delegation, composed by Luis de Eleizalde, Isaac Lopez Mendizabal and José Eizaguirre took part in the III Congress of the Union of Nationalities in Lausanne in 1916. The international commitment was kept between 1925 and 1938 under the umbrella of the European Nationalities Congress – the organization that represented the stateless nations in Europe.

Although a well rounded European strategy was still far from being elaborated, there was a genuine attempt to represent the Basque question as a part of a broader context. Not surprisingly, in 1933 the second *Aberri Eguna* (Basque fatherland's day) was celebrated under the motto '*Euskadi-Europa*': it was a momentum event whereby the strategy of Basque nationalism gained an unprecedented international projection.

Under the dictatorship

At the aftermath of the Civil War, political parties were illegalized and many PNV militants were sent to exile. In this context, turning towards an external dimension was a more a contingent necessity rather than the product of a true political evolution. The European discourse of this period can be interpreted as a sort of escape for reality and European integration as a sort of golden age whereby a genuine integration of stateless peoples could be envisaged.

However, apart from the historical conjuncture, it is also the very nature of these international contacts that changed – from a partisan perspective to an institutional one. As mentioned, PNV upheld the majority of the government responsibilities during the Civil War and throughout the period of the exile, and, by doing so, projected the party strategy of into a more consolidated national project.

During this period, several activities were carried out by the Basque government in the exile with the view of broaden the audience of the conflict that was taking place in the Iberian peninsula. Conferences, seminars, brochures and other publications were mainly focusing British conservatives and were complemented by official visits abroad of PNV delegates and of the national football team Euskadi. Within the same timeframe, the Basque government negotiated an exit strategy from the war with Fascist Italy (Pact of Santoña), developed semi-diplomatic contacts primarily with France and UK as well as Ireland and Portugal and some South-American republics. As a complement to this 'good neighbourhood' strategy, the Basque government put at the Allies' disposal a thick web of intelligence services active in Euskadi and

in Spain. Such international liaisons were mainly aimed at seeking support for the Republican band, but there were more ambitious political projects envisaged behind this, such as various attempts to design the future of Euskadi after the war, from full-fledged independence to autonomy within a federal Spain.

Among others, there was the proposal handed over by the Basque delegation in London to the British Government, the Free France Government and the US Embassy during the II World War, in 1941, aimed at establishing, once the war would be over, a European Federation.

Another aspect which is worth mentioning with regard to future developments related to European integration is the intensification of the relations with Christian-Democratic parties and movements – such as the Italian *Democrazia Cristiana*, founded by Father Luigi Sturzo and the French *Parti Démocrate Populaire*, which followed a very intense relationship initiated with the Vatican.

With the advent of Franco's regime, the Basque government did not dissolve, but continued to operate in exile until the 70s. The period between 1945 and 1950 has been crucial for the development and the evolution of the ideology and the political practice of PNV. To a great extent, the survival of the Basque government was due to the international European connections and, in its capacity as stateless nation, could benefit from a certain extent of international recognition not only for the institution in itself, but for the very Basque national question.

The victory of the allies instilled many hopes in Basque nationalism and, with the defeat of Franco's peers – Mussolini and Hitler – democracy was believed to be re-established in Spain as well. The excited activism of this hectic period was sustained by the hope that the international isolation of Franco would eventually lead to the re-establishment of democracy in Spain.

Following the defeat of the Republican faction and the end of the II World War, the priorities of the Basque government were two-fold: on the one hand, a fierce resistance on the ground had to be organized and, on the other, an intense international propaganda had to be put in place to gain international support and recognition. As a component of the international strategy of PNV, the Basque delegations abroad were established. The establishment of the Basque Government in New York under the leadership of *Lehendakari* Aguirre as of 1942 was believed to be a necessary investment to keep the Basque national question as much as possible on the top of the international agenda.

As the abovementioned facts show, PNV's international strategy was much more action-oriented than theory-inspired and, as a consequence, there has always been a discrepancy between the leadership and the acting hand of the party (Arrieta Alberdi: 2007: 80).

It is in this context that the European political discourse of PNV began to take shape. The texts that have served as the basis of PNV's Europeanism were the 1949 Political Declaration and the document entitled *'The Basque Nationalist Party in 1949'*, whereby Europe is depicted as the broad framework where the question of the Basque people could be eventually settled. In particular, it was suggested that Europe – united and organized into federation of nations – was the ideal platform for Euskadi to set itself free. This approach – known as 'Aguirre doctrine' – was based on the assumption that the traditional nation-state was unable to deliver the desirable governability outputs that could go in accordance with nations. Therefore, the solution of the Basque national question had to be sought in a broader framework, that is, a suprastate federal continental organization, which would recognize, respect and enhance sub-state autonomy and the right to act internationally. The ultimate objective of this proposal was two-fold: downsizing the role of the state as the primary holder of legitimate power and, on the other, to justify the right of stateless minorities to participate actively at the European (and international) level⁵³.

As anticipated, the Europeanist strategy in general, and the Aguirre doctrine in particular, may be rightly interpreted as the result of a sort of 'catch it all' approach followed by PNV to exploit any opportunity of recognition and visibility at hand – and the participation to the incipient European movements was indeed a perfect one. As a matter of fact, an intrinsic 'Europeanist vocation' cannot be detected at the origin of Basque nationalism, which, as shown, was rather inner-looking. In addition to it, from the perspective of the timing, the European discourse of PNV grew more convinced as the disillusion about the lack of support from the US increased.

Whereas a certain degree of political expediency was present in the enthusiasm with which the European cause was welcomed, it would be, however, incorrect to look at it as a mere instrument aimed at the fulfilment of the nationalist claims and their legitimization, as Elorza suggests (1992: 221).

The participation of PNV in the European movements since their establishment was significant and respected, and for many years it was the Spanish political party with more presence in Europe and with the most advanced European vocation.

⁵³ Aguirre y Lecube, José Antonio, "El problema de las Nacionalidades ante la Federacion Europea", *Obras Completas*, Donostia, Senda. 1981, vol. II, pp. 791-793.

At that time, to PNV, federalism was a by-product of Europeanism, a sort of 'Europeanism in practice', which was perfectly functional to the aspirations of stateless nations and to the well-being and stability of the continent. Coupling Europeanism, federalism and Basque national question resulted into a clever manoeuvre to locate PNV at the vanguard of contemporary political movements, and, at the same time, contributed to polish up the stale Aranian ideology.

There was a sort of 'official' European political strategy that was supported by the majority of the party members and whose minimum common denominator could easily fit into the ideological divergences within PNV: positive assessment of the post-war European framework, perceived as a advantageous platform to isolate Franco first and to insert the Basque national cause in Europe; establishment of fruitful relationships with akin Christian Democratic parties in other European countries; the acceptance of integral federalism as the supreme political principle that should have inspired the organization of the new map of Europe.

At the beginning, the European discourse and the support to the federal Europe cause was not a common feeling within the nationalist community. Within the very PNV, indeed, it was a reduced albeit influential minority that took onboard this approach: as mentioned, José Antonio Aguirre was a prominent supporter, together with Manuel Irujo, Francisco Javier Landaburu, Jesus Galíndez and José Maria Lasarte. The rest of the party was sceptical about the internationalist stance adopted by the leadership of the party, as no direct cause-effect mechanism in terms of benefits was envisaged (Villanueva: 2004:199).

Not surprisingly, any attempt to elaborate the federal principle further – whether this should be applied to the Spain-Euskadi relationship, for instance – would result into a neat separation between those who defended the Aranian orthodoxy and were willing to perpetuate the institutional clash 'Euskadi vs. Spain' and those that were more flexible – the new generation lead by the *Lehendakari* Aguirre – and open to consider autonomy as a way to articulate the future relation of Euskadi with the Spanish state. This variety in the ideological premises and in the political objectives has been, as shown, one of the most outstanding characteristics of PNV since its origins.

In spite of the tireless efforts of the democratic opposition, the consolidation of Franco's regime was unrelenting and international circumstances were of little or any help. As the Communist threat started being perceived as a concrete danger in the US, the attitude towards Spain was heavily reconsidered. In 1950, Spain was admitted in the Unesco and in 1953, economic and military agreements were concluded between the US and the Spanish government and, as a result, Franco's regime was *de facto* legitimized. From now on, Franco was to be seen as the paladin of anticommunism in Europe, and, therefore, an ally to take good care of. The attitude of the Spanish government to Europe was also changing although Europeanism was still strictly

functional to the needs of the regime. Contemporarily, the Basque government in exile was evicted from its seat located in Avenue Marecau, 11 in Paris and in 1954 Radio Euzkadi – operating out of the French Basque Country with the tacit agreement of the French authorities – was bid to shut down.

The unfavourable international circumstances seemed to have contributed to the failure of the European strategy of Basque nationalism. In addition, PNV was severely affected by an ideological and financial crisis, which culminated with the birth of ETA in 1959 and the death of *Lehendakari* Aguirre in 1960. It should be noted, anyhow, that the European anchorage was never left aside and has kept a primary role in shaping PNV's ideology until today.

PNV's Europeanism was well systemized thanks to the work Francisco Javier Landaburu, in 1957, entitled '*La Causa del Pueblo Vasco*'. While harshly criticizing the international rehabilitation of Franco's regime, he elaborates on the changing concept of the state at the time of European integration and highlights the decentralization process that it has engendered and the openings that such decentralization entails for the Basque national cause. Landaburu insists that the strengthening on European institutions is fundamental to further the oppressed nationalities' claims. With his book, he succeeds in conciliating sub-state nationalism with Europeanism, reiterating the long lasting pro-European, federalist and internationalist tradition of the Basque people.

The willingness to provide visibility to the national question made that, in the 50s, the participation of PNV in all the federalist and Christian democratic *fora* was a steady practice, which, of course, produced a profound ideological osmosis.

As of the 60s, the regime kept adopting an open attitude to the international and particularly European developments, which made that Franco reached an even higher level of legitimization in Europe. Although the democratic principle was one of the basic premise to participate in the process of integration, economic interests were determining a further approaching between Europe and the regime.

On February 9th 1962, the Spanish government officially requested the opening of a negotiation process with the European Community. By means of such request, the regime was slowly and unrelentingly approaching Europe. However, after the finalization of a favourable trade agreement between Spain and the European Community, the negotiations stopped shortly before Franco's death as a response to the harsh repression exerted on the democratic opposition, including on Basque nationalists. Spain would not adhere to the European Community any earlier than 1986.

The idea of Europe was finally finding a favourable ground in Spain and had a unique influence on the democratization process of the country. Europe worked as a *super partes* political platform that allowed for the confrontation between the historical nationalities and the rooted conception of monolithic unity of the Spanish nation to be smoothed through the *Estado de las Autonomías*. The integration of Spain into the European Community and the access to self-government of historical nationalities are two intertwined processes in the broader framework of democratization.

Europeanism started to be a common denominator of opposition parties. This spurred PNV to adopt a moderate strategy. While sticking to their own wish to see, one day, a Europe of the Peoples as a result of European integration, Basque nationalists engaged into a collaborative relation with the national parties at the opposition. De Pablo, Mees and Rodríguez Sanz define this attitude as '*a mixture of realpolitik and utopia*' (258). Although the Europe of the Peoples was not a foreseeable objective at that moment, still Europe was the appropriate scenario to project externally the Basque question and prevent Franco's regime from being fully legitimized.

Between 1960 and 1977, there is none or little documentation wherein the strategy of the European politics of PNV is spelled out in such a way as to allow for analysis (Arrieta Alberdi: 2007: 269). This is mainly due to the decrease in the complexity of the internal organization of the party, its loss of power in France and the diminished emphasis on Europe in this phase.

In the period between the 60s and the 70s, Europe had a quite different appearance from 1945, when all options had seemed available. A Europe integrated by nations and ruled by a federal principle was quite an unrealistic picture. As a matter of fact, Europe had been consolidating as an intergovernmental mechanism wherein sub-state entities had no opportunity to participate. This does not entail that Europe lost its privileged position among PNV's political priorities⁵⁴, but, however, there was less optimism on the fact that it could be determinant in supplying the Basque question with an appropriate status in the international scenario.

Although the wish of Basque nationalism, 'Europe of the Peoples', became an utopia, a number of authors started revitalizing integral federalist theories and emphasized the concept of 'region' as the natural unit on which European integration should base to further the principles of cooperation, participation and subsidiarity. The concept of 'Europe of the Regions', first coined by Denis de Rougemont and then further elaborated by Guy Heraud, replaced the old-fashioned nationalist motto, but became not only fully compatible, but also very functional to sub-state nationalists' aspirations. Regionalism and federalism, while complementing each other,

⁵⁴ In a declaration dated 1966, PNV declares itself as a nationalist, democratic and pro-european party.

managed to hook up the autonomist claims proceeding from sub-state territorial entities – not only nationalist communities – to the European project.

These theoretical evolutions were followed with interest by Basque nationalists and many articles aiming at circulating these new ideas were published in the nationalist press. A Europe made of states, it was argued, was not the solution to the linguistic, ethnic, cultural issues that were still pending and that, in the long term, would put at stake the process of integration. Manuel de Irujo, for instance, enthusiastically embraced the notion of Euskadi, a region in Europe: “(...) *Catalonia and Euskadi could well be regions in Europe without ceasing to be part of the Spanish state*”⁵⁵. The relation between regions and Europe was growing and Europe was expected to take over increasing competences to the detriment of the state. This was envisaged as a favourable trend for stateless nationalities, which could fulfil their national aspiration, even if not *de jure*, at least *de facto*. In an article published in 1970, Irujo added that, in light of this, “(...) *Europe was the best gendarme of Basque national independence*”⁵⁶.

Irujo’s position, albeit instrumental to the nationalist cause, demonstrated a genuine commitment to European integration. It clearly supported self-determination for the Basque people, but rejected separatism alike. In preparation to a PNV manifesto dated 1971⁵⁷, he stated: “(...) *How can we be support separatism in Spain if it is our wish that Spain will be part of Europe?*”, envisaging a direct participation of Euskadi in the integration process.

The notion of Europe of the Regions supported by Irujo was clearly functional to the nationalist discourse. Despite this, however, the organs of PNV always preferred to keep using Europe of the Peoples as the official motto, probably to highlight the artificiality of the States versus the natural condition of peoples. As reported in the 1966 Declaration ‘*Al Pueblo Vasco*’, the Europe of the Peoples was described as a community of nations wherein laws and institutions were aimed at protecting both individual and collective rights. In addition, the most radical fringe of Basque nationalism – the young generations within PNV (EGI), among others – was supporting the idea of Europe as a political space where to fulfil Euskadi’s aspiration to a full self-determination. Under no circumstances, was this group envisaging the participation in Europe through the Spanish state: “(...) *we are against of inserting Basque people into Europe through the Spanish state (...). ‘Europeization’ requires a vigorous despainization*”⁵⁸.

⁵⁵ Letter from Manuel de Irujo to Inaki Unceta, 03/11/1961, AHNV, Fondo EBB, 66-6.

⁵⁶ Manuel Irujo, “La Italia de los Pueblos”, *ALderdi* n. 258 – 259 mayo-julio 1970, pages 13-14.

⁵⁷ Manuel Irujo, “La oposicion al regimen”, *Euzko Deya* (México), n° 371, mayo de 1971, pp. 24-26

⁵⁸ “Euzkadi-Europa: Sil”, *Gudari*, n° 13, 1962, p. 4

The party, however, avoided to commit to a predefined position with regard to the involvement of Euskadi in the future of European integration. It rather based its action on a more pragmatic and flexible approach and started a limited collaboration with the other democratic forces in Spain in European matters. As a trade-off to the collaboration provided to the restructuring of the state, Basque nationalists were requesting support to the Spanish democratic parties on their vision of Europe and on the relationships with Basques from the French Basque Provinces.

As the dictatorship ended and the transition to democracy entered the most sensitive phase, PNV could eventually return from the exile, which allowed for more extensive objectives in European affairs to be set. In a programmatic document endorsed by PNV's National Assembly in 1977⁵⁹, the guidelines for the European policy clearly based on the premises that earlier in time Aguirre had set and Irujo had strongly supported and further elaborated. Although the possibility for stateless nations to accede to independence was not crossed out, the state-like structure was not seen as the optimal option for Euskadi in the new Europe. The empowerment of such a suprastate institution, coupled with an efficient decentralization and autonomy at the state level, would weaken the traditional nation-states and, at the same time, could well satisfy the quest for Basque self-determination.

The adoption of this stance was not a significant advancement to the ideological debate around the idea of the relation between Euskadi-Europe in PNV. However, the clear support to the autonomist option was quite a novelty in the political trajectory of the previous 20 years and would heavily influence the ideological evolution of the years to come.

The European Politics of Contemporary Basque Nationalism

As shown, the traditional arguments of Basque nationalism on the side effects of European integration on the center-periphery dynamics – the so-called 'Aguirre Doctrine' – were: the debilitation of states and thereby opportunity for stateless nations to be encompassed in a broader, more inclusive political project.

Despite the passing of the time, the 'Aguirre Doctrine' has worked as the main ideological reference for Basque nationalism in the XX and XIX centuries.

Since the early 80s, PNV's European discourse has focused on the need to ensure a democratic orientation and functioning of European institutions on the one hand, and, on the other, the need to create mechanisms of direct representation of sub-state interests at the European level.

⁵⁹ EAJ-PNV, Plantamiento político, socio-económico y cultural. Documento de la Asamblea Nacional, Bilbao, 1977.

Such discourse has been articulated around two levels: the support provided to the advancement of European integration – mainly from the institutional viewpoint as reflected in the Treaties; and the electoral discourse.

With the admission of Spain to the European Community, the opportunity to put these wishes into practice became even more concrete.

Per effect of the deepening of the Common Market due to the Single European Act in 1986, the competences assigned to the Community were increasing to the detriment of state competences. At the same time, the competences assigned to the decentralized units within the state got affected. From this moment onwards, Basque nationalism – mainly via the Basque government – struggled for the recognition of the right of Euskadi to have a direct access to the European institutions instead of going through the Spanish government.

Some years later, it came as no surprise that PNV leadership enthusiastically supported the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty. This Treaty was to contribute even more heavily to the debilitation of nation-states as it strongly advanced the economic and political integration in Europe. The room for manoeuvre of sub-state authorities was to be then positively affected.

In the shade of the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty, PNV organized a series of conferences entitled *'The EU Treaty's Days'*, wherein the attractive prospective envisaged by the new Treaty were acknowledged. On this occasion, Juan Joxé Ibarretxe, at the time Head of the Treasury Department in the Basque Government, declared: *"Although Maastricht is not and should not be considered as an end in itself, we should however recognize that it is a considerable step forward"* (1992)⁶⁰.

Xavier Arzallutz, at the time President of PNV, auspicated that this new Treaty was the launch pad for the development of a federal Europe.

The EU Treaty introduced some important novelties – at the institutional and economic level – that met PNV leadership's approval and satisfaction. At the institutional level, it recognized the sub-state dimension as a key component of European integration and institutionalized it via the establishment of an *ad hoc* body, the Committee of the Region. PNV was particularly keen on this initiative as it was interpreted as a clear flip in the integration process⁶¹.

At the economic level another significant measure adopted by the Treaty was the forthcoming introduction of the single currency – the Euro. Beside its intrinsic economic importance for the

⁶⁰ PNV-EAJ, *Report on 'The EU Treaty's Days'*, Donostia, 1992, page 25

⁶¹ Cfr. *supra*, page 16

integration process, this initiative greatly contributed to further debilitate the nation-state in its capacity as rights/goods granter. PNV understood this and highlighted its revolutionary capacity against the pre-defined conceptions of statehood. The single currency abolished one of the most tangible symbols of state sovereignty and led to a further levelling of state competences and sub-state authorities⁶².

The need of involving peoples in the process European integration, as shown, has been one of the *leit motiv* of PNV's European policy since José Antonio Aguirre. Despite not specifically addressing the stateless condition of some European nations, the Maastricht Treaty had created a number of new opportunities for sub-state authorities to improve their participation in the European policy making. The Basque government, whose leadership was tightly in the hands of PNV, tried to take the best advantage possible out of these openings.

The determination to seek a direct representation in Europe found a favourable ground in the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty. The Basque delegation at the Committee of the Regions, headed by José Maria Muñoa between 1992 - 2007, was extremely active and achieved some sensitive and politically important results, including the approval of the report on '*Promotion and protection of minority languages*' during the plenary session n. 39 held on June 13th-14th, 2001.

However, the lust for participation in the European policy and decision making was far from being fully satisfied.

The ideological rationale behind this ambition is two-fold. On the one hand, there is the wish to be recognized as much as possible on an equal footing with the states and, on the other, the need to ensure the full exercise of the competences assigned to Euskadi as per the Autonomy Statute. As shown in Part 1, with the European integration, an increasing number of competences assigned to the sub-state level get 'communized'.

Despite the determination of PNV and the objective need to reflect the internal allocation of competences also at the European level, Euskadi found it very difficult to make its way to European institutions.

The Spanish Constitution bids clearly that the international relations are an exclusive competence of the State (article 149.1). The juridical argument that excluded Spanish *Comunidades Autónomas* to take an active role in European policy making was mainly based on this instance. Some early sentences of the Supreme Court seconded this stance.

⁶² Refer to *supra*, page 41

However, with the intensification of the process of integration, this comprehensive conception of international relations was significantly affecting the competences of the *Comunidades Autónomas*. In fact, the state had made up for its loss of power via the extensive participation in the European policy and decision making, whereas *Comunidades Autónomas* were losing theirs without any further compensation. This was, ultimately, altering the distribution of the competences between the state and the sub-state authorities (de Castro Ruano, Zubiri: 2004, 143).

The Spanish government put in place limited and ineffective measures to favour the participation of sub-state authorities without much prejudice of the role of the state. The inexistence, in the Spanish institutional system, of a territorial chamber made it difficult for sub-state authorities and for stateless nationalities in particular, to make a real impact on the state interest formation.

A worth mentioning initiative was the institutionalization of the Conference for European Affairs (CARCE) in 1992, which, however, did not prove to be effective either. This is the institutional seat where the Spanish government commits to listen to the opinion of the *Comunidades Autónomas* on those competences that fall under their exclusive responsibilities,

However, for such opinions to be listened to, *Comunidades Autónomas* have to agree on a 'common position'. This is very difficult, given that there is a great heterogeneity with regard to the competences.

In addition, the Spanish government is not compelled to follow them (de Castro Ruano, Zubiri: 2004, 151). Therefore, should the negotiations in the Council require so, the central government is free to detach from the common position, if any, hardly achieved by the totality of the *Comunidades Autónomas*.

Since 1989, the Basque government has been requesting the establishment of a bilateral mechanism to engage into discussions about European related issues by virtue of the special nature of Basque autonomy. This claim was grounded on the very structure of the Spanish state – asymmetric federalism. The establishment of such bilateral conference, in 1994, was the condition set by the Basque government to endorse officially the CARCE system and take an active role in it. In spite of the efforts, such bilateral conference has had little relevance.

Still in 1994, things started to change. As part of its broader European strategy, the Basque government established a European Affairs liaison office in Brussels under the responsibility of the Office of the Presidency of the Basque government. The Spanish government had challenged this initiative in light of article 149.1. This time, however, the Supreme Court rejected

the instance posed by the Spanish government⁶³ and clarified that Spanish *Comunidades Autónomas* were allowed to carry out foreign relations as long as their activity affects an issue that falls under their exclusive competence; does not entail *ius contraendi*; does not generate immediate obligations towards foreign public entities; does not generate any responsibility for the state, does not conflict with the state foreign policy.

This breakthrough sentence therefore allowed Euskadi to put in place a more incisive foreign action.

Since 1997, the Spanish government also allowed some representatives from the *Comunidades Autónomas* to take part in some of the Committees within the European Commission. Most of them, however, are not related to those issues on which *Comunidades Autónomas* have an exclusive competence and therefore absenteeism is quite high.

There were, however, other important channels that were still precluded to the *Comunidades Autónomas*. In particular, the Basque government claimed the right for its representatives to participate in the meetings of the Council whereby competences of their exclusive competences were discussed, in line with article 146 of the Maastricht Treaty. To this purpose, on February 1998, the Basque Parliament – by and large dominated by the nationalists – passed a resolution requesting the immediate implementation of such measure.

It should be noted that this quest was fully legitimate as it fully complied with the provisions of the Treaty. The aim was not enhancing the ‘individual’ representation of the Basque interests, but incorporating Basque representatives into the state delegation at the Council. As *Lehendakari* Ibarretxe clarified, “*We support the idea that there should be only one delegation, one vote and one negotiating position. (...) The representation of the Comunidades Autónomas cannot be but as a full member of the state delegation, loyal to the negotiating position of the state. (...)*” (de Castro Ruano, Zubiri: 2004, 177).

Many sub-state authorities in other European countries with a federal or regional structure – such as Germany and Belgium – had advanced similar claims and these had been, to a considerable extent, satisfactorily accommodated.

2004 was a crucial year for Basque nationalism. Important conjectural changes were to have a significant impact on its European strategy: the change in the political orientation of the central government, the signature of the European Constitution and the approval by the Basque Parliament of the proposal of a new Statute for Euskadi, better known as ‘Ibarretxe Plan’, which will be analyzed separately.

⁶³ Refer to Sentence of the Spanish Supreme Court n.165/1994 (May 26th).

With the advent of a Socialist government – headed by José Luis Zapatero –, a great improvement in the relation between central state and sub-state authorities was envisaged. In particular, the concept of *‘España plural’* promoted by Zapatero was promising for the future of the relations with the riotous historical nationalities, namely Catalonia and Euskadi.

Indeed, the conflict between the state and the *Comunidades Autónomas* regarding their participation in the Council meetings via the state delegation was eventually overcome. The agreement was reached within the CARCE on December 9th, 2004 and was based on the principles of the ‘oneness of Spanish representation within the European Union’; ‘oneness of Spanish foreign policy’; ‘safeguard of Spanish negotiating capacity’. The representative of the *Comunidades Autónomas* had to be at the ministerial level in line with the provisions of the Treaty and should be representing the totality of the sub-state authorities.

A regional representation was mainly allowed in those meeting of the Council where exclusive competences of the *Comunidades Autónomas* were discussed (employment, social policy, public health; agriculture and fishery; environment; education, youth and culture). Other Council meetings of great interest for Euskadi by virtue of the *Concierto Económico* – such as the Ecofin – remained however precluded.

In 2005, the elaboration and approval of the *‘Estrategia de Acción Exterior de Euskadi’* (Euskadi Foreign Action Strategy) revealed once again the importance continuously attached to the international and particularly so to the European dimension. In this document, Basque foreign relations were eventually coordinated and enhanced and clear objectives and broad guidelines for their implementation were set. The critical approach to the European integration a state-based process remained. In the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty, the no vote was extremely high (33, 6% versus 38, 74% voters), which should be interpreted as a rejection of the proposed model of integration.

A major achievement of the Basque government, particularly from the symbolic viewpoint, was to get the Council allow to employ *Euskera* in the communication with European institutions and European public administration, together with the other co-official languages in Spain.

Most recently, the Lisbon Treaty introduced a number of new features that have met some of PNV’s concerns. The stabilization of the Presidency of the European Council coupled with the broadening of the competences transferred under the European umbrella confers a federal flavour to the Europe to come.

The new Treaty also attributed a certain relevance to the subsidiarity principle; promoted the juridical recognition of cross-border cooperation (a practice largely enhanced by the Basque

government in the last 30 years); and imposed the consultation of the regions with legislative power on EU legislation issues.

There are considerable margins for further improvement of the regional performance in the integration process. Whether the current Basque government will keep going on the same track as its predecessors can hardly be assessed in this moment of time. Away from its government responsibilities, PNV is quite optimistic in that European policy making is “*more democratic, effective and transparent*” and is a step forward to a full-fledged inclusion of the regional dimension, according to its spokesman at the Spanish Parliament, Josu Erkoreka⁶⁴.

The ultimate aspiration of the European politics of PNV is the consolidation of a federal Europe, where sub-state authorities and stateless nation would have the same say as traditional states. As recalled earlier, the genuineness of Basque nationalism’ Europeanism has been questioned (Elorza). According to its detractors, the enthusiastic support to the progress of European integration was simply functional to the ambition to replace the hindrances posed by the state with a looser framework of governance. In this opinion, PNV’s Europeanism was opportunistic and only oriented to develop Basque self-government as much as possible.

Although there is a certain degree of opportunism in PNV’s approach, this criticism is based on state-biased assumptions. When the first 5 European states decided to join their efforts and kick off the European project had their good (not necessarily idealistic) reasons. The states that decided to join later also did so after a careful calculation of costs and benefits. Some even reserved the right not to lose their sovereign prerogatives in some areas that were considered as supreme national interest, or, anyway, as not convenient (such as the UK and the Euro).

On the contrary, aspiring to achieve self-determination for the Basque people in the European framework and non in state-like, traditional terms demonstrates PNV’s genuine European vocation.

⁶⁴ Refer to the speech uttered by Josu Erkoreka during the debate on the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in the Spanish Parliament on June 28th, 2008.

THE STRANGE CASE OF THE IBARRETXE PLAN

The Ibarretxe Plan is quite an example of the attempt made by sub-state nationalist movements to overcome the traditional paradigm of statehood.

With the view of capturing the dramatic changes suffered by state sovereignty and turn them into a benefit to the nationalist cause, PNV – with the support of Eusko Askatasuna, and Ezker Batua – came up with a proposal for the so-called “alignment” of the Gernika statute to the emerging needs of the Basque society. Such proposal, named after the then *Lehendakari* Juan José Ibarretxe, put forward indeed an innovative, sophisticated formula of governance.

The story of the Ibarretxe Plan is a short and unfortunate one. It is however worth telling, in that it helps demonstrate the anchorage of some sub-state nationalist movements with the European project.

There have been several attempts to put an end to the Basque conflict, some of them modelled around the Northern Ireland Good Friday's Agreements (Keating, 2001). The Ibarretxe Plan was however the first comprehensive attempt to offer a concrete proposal to set the basis of a negotiation with Spain.

The draft of the ‘New Political Statute’ for Euskadi was approved by the Basque Parliament in 2004 and entailed the creation of a Basque state freely associated with Spain. Whereas secession was never directly invoked, the Plan challenged the very basis of Spanish sovereignty as outlined in the 1978 Constitution and claimed the right of Basques (Euskadi residents) to vote on the nature of their relations with Spain.

The Plan based on the historical claim of the right to self-determination for Euskadi, whereby the three provinces composing Euskadi were first called to express their opinion, whereas Navarre and the French Basque provinces were invited to come to a decision at their own time. It provided for a status of freely associated region to the Spanish state, vaguely recalling the proposal put forward by MEP Alain Lamassoure for the White Paper on European Governance.

The community would be bilingual, with no discrimination between Spanish and Basque languages, would count on its own court system and a specific section of the Spanish Constitutional Court would be devoted to resolve disputes and facilitate the bilateral relations between Spain and the Basque community. The Basque nationality would be granted to all Basque residents with no prejudice of the Spanish nationality. Also non-Spanish Basque ancestry people living outside Euskadi would be entitled to it.

The distribution of the administrative powers was quite confusing but however not too different from how they are outlined in the Spanish Constitution.

Such Plan clearly represented a proposal short of secession, which still retained Euskadi tightly within the Spanish framework but with some significant advancement in Basque autonomy. The symbolic dimension was particularly relevant. It still allowed different interpretations and was presented as a basis for negotiation rather than a final settlement.

Keating and Bray (2006: 355) rightly observed that the debate on the Plan reflected the complexity of the identification processes in Euskadi. In order to gain the support from the radical left-wing nationalist stance, PNV used an increasingly sharp nationalist discourse and therefore exposed to the sharp criticism of the Spanish unionists, who accused the Plan to be exclusivist and sectarian.

Whereas at the beginning the Plan was presented as framed within the European context, and the European dimension was part of the debate about the Plan, positions progressively crystallized into static and traditional conceptions of Basque – Spanish identities, where self-determination was presented as the key to the solution of the conflict on the one hand, whereas, on the other, as the ante-chamber of secession.

The Plan was eventually rejected by the *Cortes Generales* on April 2005, after being publically dismissed by the two major state parties as unconstitutional and partisan.

Following the failure of the proposal, Ibarretxe called a two-question non-binding referendum in Euskadi on October 25th, 2008. The vote call was however appealed by the Spanish government and eventually overturned by the Supreme Court on September 11th, 2008. Right after, PNV appealed against this sentence before the European Court of Human Rights, which eventually upheld the position expressed by the Spanish Supreme Court on February 2010.

Although PNV turned to be the first party in the autonomous elections in Euskadi, totalling up 38,56% of the preferences, the Socialist Party formed a minority government with the external support of the Popular Party, putting an end to the nationalist hegemony for the first time since the democracy. As PNV was deprived from any government responsibility, the Plan was also relinquished, also because a unanimous consensus was far from being reached even within the party.

As Keating and Bray (2006) rightly observe, however, the Plan, in line with other contemporary post-sovereignty proposals⁶⁵, put forward a very pragmatic compromise, somewhere in-between classic statehood as per effect of a secessionist process and classical devolution within a state. This formula also seems to allow for greater pluralism and inclusiveness and is grounded on a more complex understanding of the dynamics of political power at the time of globalization.

⁶⁵ See the proposals of the *Parti Quebecois* in Canada and of the Scottish National Party in the UK.

The context, however, was overall more important than the content. There was in fact very little debate on the suggestions outlined in the Plan, whereas the different parties exploited it in such a way as to reinforce their biased and ideologically oriented interpretations. The state parties, in particular, were by nature suspicious of a nationalist proposal and tended to entrench in their traditional understanding of the Basque conflict rather than overcome differences.

The European context could have, however, saved the Ibarretxe Plan. The unlucky destiny of the European Constitution did not help. Such as the debate in France and in The Netherlands, any effort made to formulate innovative conceptions of sovereignty was followed by an outburst of traditional discourses.

THE EUROPEANIZATION OF BASQUE NATIONALISM

The new conception of sovereignty that inspires sub-state nationalist proposals such as the Ibarretxe Plan struggles with the traditional understanding of ultimate authority.

Political authority is instead perceived as something beyond the formal distribution of power, where also actual powers gain relevance. This strand of thought seems to align with the identification patterns of European citizens. As shown earlier in this work, as the European integration process has intensified, citizens have been developing multiple political identifications (with the nation, with the state, with Europe) that are not necessarily conflicting with each other. Nationalists will privilege the identification with the nation, but other identities do not get automatically suppressed. In some cases, they mutually reinforce each other. Minority nationalism is in fact functional to legitimize the European project, as it helps bringing Europe closer to citizens more than what states can ever do at the time of globalization. Europeanism is often an integral part of the ideology of many minority nationalist movements, McCrone (1998) and Guibernau (1999) observed.

Whereas nationalism has been traditionally about setting boundaries, their loosening within the European context has created new and alluring opportunities, which, far from statehood, suggest innovative approaches towards the configuration of the state. The 'asymmetrical state' is one of these formulas, which goes well beyond the traditional conception of multinational state. It does not simply mean that the state hosts several national groups, but that nationality may differ from one region to another.

A flexible interpretation of nationality – and of national identity – would allow these apparently conflicting conceptions to coexist and to reinforce mutually.

In the case of Spain, there is not much flexibility in this sense. The modalities of the evolution of the Spanish identity have much to do with this approach. Further to the end of the dictatorship and with the advent of a democratic regime, there was a radical renewal of the basic rules of the together-livingness from the political viewpoint. The identity issue, however, was not equally addressed. This has generated a misalignment between the theory (the principles of subsidiarity, decentralization and inclusiveness on which the Spanish state grounds today) and the practice (how such principles are implemented).

The obstinate refusal to dignify sub-state cultures and language and level them all to the status of regional phenomena has undoubtedly contributed to the outburst of minority nationalist claims. The Constitution already takes a very ideological oriented stance, in that it recognizes the uniqueness of the Spanish nationality as the only legitimate one. This position has been repeatedly enforced by the Supreme Court and in general by the state parties, with the relevant exception of the Catalan Socialist Party.

Europe has however provided a favourable context for minority nationalism to overcome the hindrances posed by the central governments, as the Basque and the Catalan cases demonstrate. On the one hand, the European framework has fuelled them with new opportunities and indulged their wishes, but, on the other, it has set the premises for depriving them from their adverse effects on stability. While loosening boundaries, it has set them forever.

In the case of Basque nationalism, the Europeization has had a twofold effect: the onset of a more inclusive national identity, on the one hand, and the displacement from a radical to a more moderate stance.

As far as the former aspect, identity is an intangible concept and as such quite difficult to assess from a mere statistical viewpoint. However, a comparative analysis of the data related to the Basque subjective national identity can be a useful way to assess its evolution as the European integration process advances.

Earlier in this work, it has been mentioned how self-identification in Europe has progressively become more and more multi-layered and inclusive. The Basque case follows the rule. Available statistical data (Universidad del Pais Vasco, Euskobarometro series 1981-2010) show that in the course of time there has been a steady increase in the percentage of those who self-identify with the Basque identity more than with the Spanish identity and both with the Spanish and the Basque identity, to the detriment of clear-cut, unidirectional identities (only Basque or only Spanish).

The European framework has provided an enlarged context to negotiate identity and, to certain extent, to relativize them.

With regard to the latter aspect, the decrease in the electoral support of radical and pro-ETA Basque nationalist movements is a clear indicator.

In addition to it, the long and controversial process that would hopefully cling violent nationalist fringes to the democratic rules of the game culminated into the presentation of a declaration on June 21st, 2010, named '*Euskal Herria zurekin*'. In this document, the *izquierda abertzale* and Eusko Alkartasuna committed to work towards the creation of an independent Basque state on the basis of the 'Mitchell Principles' – the six ground rules agreed by the Irish and British governments and the political parties in Northern Ireland regarding the talks about the future of the region – which, among others, include acceptance of democratic and exclusively peaceful means of resolving political issues and the total disarmament of paramilitary organization⁶⁶.

The moderating effect has also affected traditional Basque nationalism, whose analysis has been the main focus of this work. PNV has indeed contributed to a great extent to the European concept of 'shared sovereignty'. The principle that the right to decide by oneself (*Euskadi*) should be closely intertwined with the need to pact with the other (The Spanish state) has inspired the latest strategic guidelines of PNV, including the Ibarretxe Plan. Bi-laterality, voluntary agreement, pact is what allow for a multiplicity of political subjects to coexist and to commit to a common solution to the political conflict without any imposition from any part. Josu Jon Imaz, former President of the *Euskadi Buru Batzar*, used a lively metaphor to express this concept: such political formula should work as a 'double-key system'. The chest can only be opened if both keys are inserted in the latch⁶⁷. Beneath this idea, there is a conception of sovereignty very much linked to the importance of having access to power rather than having a full possession of it.

In spite of many criticisms, also within the party, this idea has been tightly associated with the political discourse of PNV, whereas the concepts of independence and statehood have practically disappeared. This position was also supported by comparative politics arguments – the acceptance, in the case of the Northern Ireland agreement, to resort to other principles than the one of majority rule to find a broad consensus within a concerned community – and juridical – the right to decide and the obligation to pact, as outlined in the sentence of the Supreme Court

⁶⁶ Other principles include: to agree that paramilitary disarmament must be verifiable to the satisfaction of an independent commission; to renounce for themselves, and to oppose to any efforts by others, to use force or threaten to sue force, to influence the course or outcome of all-party negotiations; to agree to abide by the terms of any agreement reached in all party negotiations and to resort to democratic and exclusively peaceful methods in trying to alter any aspect of that outcome with which they may disagree; to urge that punishment killings and beatings stop and take effective steps to prevent such actions.

⁶⁷ Refer to Imaz' s keynote speech uttered at Forum Europa held in Bilbao on February 2nd, 2006.

of Canada in 1998 – and historical ones – the principles of negotiation and non imposition inherited from the foral tradition⁶⁸.

The Plan has been inspired by these concepts and represents one of the more advanced, innovative and post-sovereign proposals ever produced in Europe so far. It has been already recognized that the debate could have been more inclusive, but the core ideas seem to be the only possible to achieve a far-reaching, fair and equilibrate solution.

The concept of shared sovereignty could be the basis on which the accommodation of the Basque nation could be arranged within the Spanish state. The European integration would play a key role in that.

A number of obstacles are of course to be expected. The resistance to any compromise of the weakened but still resilient radical nationalism, not to mention ETA, is of course a major one. How the relations with the French Basque country would be envisaged is another question mark, which could potentially affect the stability of the area.

There is, however, another often underestimated aspect that can be instead decisive to the success or the failure of a solution based on the shared sovereignty principle. This is, namely, the reluctance of the Spanish state to perceive itself as a truly plurinational entity and to accommodate different national feelings within an overarching identity. The perception of the national identity has a clear and strong influence on how sovereignty should be distributed and how such power should be implemented.

Accommodating national minorities is not only a European problem, but it is a structural issue of the nation-state model (Filibu: 2007:176-180). It therefore comes as no surprise that Europe has been a particularly interesting testing ground for post-sovereign proposals. It is in Europe where the most sophisticated proposals have been put forward.

There is a widespread opinion that the traditional approaches to self-determination and sovereignty do not catch the complexity of contemporary political dynamics in Europe. Whereas some minority nationalist movements have attempted – and sometimes surprisingly achieved – to frame their legitimate aspirations within innovative proposals, fully compatible with European values and political organization, central governments and state parties have often entrenched in more (backward) traditional stances.

⁶⁸ Document of *Euskadi Buru Batzar, Ante el final dialogado de la violencia y de la normalización política*, October 24th, 2005

There is the risk that the disillusion with the evolution of the European integration and with the intransigence of the states could lead, in turn, to a roll-back towards more traditional conception of self-determination, including ambitions to statehood.

The challenge ahead for the sake of European stability is to avoid this.

CONCLUSIONS

Traditionally, the concept of the European nation-state has its foundation in the supposition of the existence of harmony between a population bound together by socio-cultural and economic links, and a government whose role is to structure and develop the country. According to this view, the nation is conceived through the definition of its borders, property and population, which provide the background for security in the lives of the population. The nation-state is therefore the highest level at which the population is bound in oneness. It also provides the platform on which national property, characteristics, and symbols, can achieve full appreciation.

Globalization however presents a challenge to the traditional conception of nation-state and an important opportunity for the integration process in the E.U. It represents a merge of previously separate national entities in a fashion far more substantial than the case of interdependence among states. It involves reduction in the significance of national borders and “global reduction” due to advancement in communication and transport technology. Enhancement of linkages and bonds beyond international borders, more migration, greater dependency of national economies and culture on the world economy and culture, and faster international information transfer, constitute the “de-nationalization” of the globe. Globalization necessarily results in the “proliferation of international organizations and the expansion of international law” (Bogdandy 5). This serves three purposes, dependent on the point of view of the individual: it further facilitates the spread of globalization, it “institutionalizes,” and it modifies the features and characteristics of globalization to fit the welfare of the world population.

The European Union attempts to unite the European states and nations in a new way and it is a remarkably unique attempt at international unity, different from all other unity attempts for the international community in the past.

The E.U. founds its attempt on “a contractual and rule-based co-operation among independent Member States,” with an integrated justice system and government-style contact with the Member States. The E.U. enables members to reap the benefits of integration, including the common market, unity in problem-solving, freedom in movement of the factors of production, greater variety in the availability of consumer products, and greater prosperity for the European population (Tassinari 16).

The European continent faces a bright future after the inception of the European Union as it represents a great opportunity for its members to make progress on a number of fronts.

The level of socio-economic and political advancement in Europe enabled by integration into the Union predisposes the continent in general, and the individual states in particular, to a level of economic growth and high social status similar to that in the most developed nations in the world.

It also presents a channel for a more radical democratization of identity demands by opening the political space to the claims advanced by sub-state minorities. At the same time, it has moderated national secessionist and “regional devolution” forces in the European continent.

First, the EU has put into motion a process of transition in the common European state, in terms of its functions and operations.

Secondly, it has facilitated a change in nationalistic feeling and activity towards the attitudes of “shared sovereignty,” and promoted the spread of democracy, respect for human rights, freedom, and inclusivity in policy-formulation and decision-making processes. This change in the operations of nationalities in the European continent has initiated a new concept of “regionalism,” in which the capabilities and functions of the state are transferred. It also makes the sub-state and international minority nations to host facilitative environments for socioeconomic and political transformation.

Thirdly, the EU has facilitated the set-up of structures in the continent, which sub-state minorities’ aspirations could exploit for a variety of opportunities. The effects of these reforms on nationalistic feeling and activity, and their willingness and ability to use them to their advantage, vary. The EU system and structure offer the opportunity to neutralize the impacts of ethnic identity, establish a civilized, wider territory identity, reduce the negative effects of secessionist attitudes, and incorporate various groups into the European political space in which several levels of governments are available (Michael 2). Whereas some sub-state nationalistic groupings have not welcomed these opportunities, states have often taken an even less enthusiastic approach and they have kept reiterating traditional discourses about statehood and sovereign prerogatives.

The European Union’s first method of changing the European state involves reforming the long existent identities of the states based on sovereignty, the national land, its nationality, and service to the public. This is a very significant development since these features form the core of the European state in traditional concept. First, the E.U. dilutes the state’s functionalities in financial and market issues, through European market regulation, introduction of a common currency, and a common external security authority. This greatly lowers the need for individual state institutions, and promotes the inception of new kinds of tools for use in public policy, and of new concepts of territorial sovereignty. Michael (2007) observes; “To the degree that

functions requiring a common regime are taken up to the European level, it also weakens arguments against Constitutional asymmetry within states” (Michael 3).

Secondly, the European integration process dilutes the traditional view of “exclusive sovereignty” through the establishment of a new order promoting “legal and Constitutional pluralism,” in which different patterns of norms exist in harmony. The dilution of sovereignty on the E.U. stage has precipitated a loss of superiority in ideas in the continent. It has also led to a more open discussion about “shared sovereignty and Constitutional pluralism,” both domestically and internationally in the continent (Michael 3).

Thirdly, the integration process has led to the falsification of the long-held view that democratic processes are applicable only in a nationally uniform landscapes, in which identity and intra-community security are available. The argument is therefore set that if the different ethnic and community compositions could exist so harmoniously, so could the intra-national communities, despite their differences in languages and culture.

Fourthly, the European Union falsifies the belief that the national governments are the only competent institutions and apparatus to create and implement comprehensive rights. The achievement of this has been through the institution of a European rights body, the “European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights,” ECPHR, which distinguishes between establishment and implementation of human rights, and the qualities of citizenship and nationality.

Fifthly, the E.U. has provided an opportunity for nationalistic feeling to exploit, especially in collaboration with other world regions (Michael 3-4). These facilities provided by the European Union are key components of a challenge to the continent’s minority nations to review their ideological patterns and principles in their European existence. They provide the basis for a rethink in the movements’ strategies, and lay the ground for incorporation of their mindsets into the European community.

Further opportunities in European Integration exist. While some minority groups in the continent have been insistent on secession, the E.U. has no provision in its law for secession. The continental body, in line with international attitudes and provisions, is opposed to secessionist attitudes in minority nationality groupings. In compromise-style circumstances, the body has offered new space and opportunities for the national minorities to direct their nationalistic feeling and effort. This is through the desertion of traditional identity as a “sovereign statehood,” to the “post-sovereign” attitude, which features “shared sovereignty and authority.” In this new concept, sovereignty is “no longer monopolized by the state, but becomes a claim to original authority, which can be advanced by various actors and institutions, and is intrinsically divisible” (Michael 4).

This line of discussion and argument is increasingly common among pro-European Union activists (Michael 4). This development urges the European national minorities to embark on the growth of their country within the borders of their nations with the background knowledge of their identity as members of the European community.

In various communities in the East and centre of the continent, a considerable number of minority communities has subscribed to this European view in substitution for the earlier hard-line rebellious attitudes against European integration in general and accommodation into domestic communities in particular. Michael (2007) notes:

“Silesian autonomists, long torn between Polish and German identities, and with a history of irredentism and expulsions, now stress the Europe of the Regions theme and autonomy within a reconfigured Polish state. Hungarians in the Banat region of Romania emphasize their essentially European character. The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, a centre-right party linked to the Democratic movement and European People’s Party, E.P.P., also emphasizes its European mission, which allows it to claim that Hungarians are both a constituent element of the Romanian state and part of a wider Hungarian nation. The Party of Hungarian Coalition in Slovakia, also linked to the E.P.P., dreams of a Europe of the “natural” Regions, reflecting culture and identity. Regionalists and minorities in eastern Europe have also drawn on the examples of mobilization in the West” (Michael 5).

Europe under the European Union offers the opportunity for minority communities whose homelands are far apart to interact and coordinate, especially where they have representatives in the European organization’s institutions. The European Union community also holds a huge and potentially effective opportunity in the dissolution of borders. Borders in the European Union are vital in the expression of sovereignty, but in the current European set-up, they face a huge threat in their symbolic value. The integration process in the E.U. has presented the continent with the phenomenon of considerably unrestricted migration across the borders of their member nations. Co-operation among the countries in the continent under the European Union has reduced the borders in the continent to insignificance. In addition, the identities of some communities along the borders of nations in the continent enjoy close links. The permeability of borders in the continent under the common market rules has added to this insignificance. The E.U. has overseen a loss of the absoluteness of state power and control, through the transfer of key functions of the state to the European Union. Opportunities however exist in the retention of the national governance structure, since it remains in a strategic position in the operations of the organization. The nation-state is an important player in the contact between the European Union and the nationalities and citizens (Michael 13-16).

In the last section of this work, it has been attempted to demonstrate the influence exerted by the European integration onto a concrete example of sub-state nationalist quest, the Basque one.

Approaching such national demands from the broader European perspective rather than the narrower national one gives access to inclusive and innovative formulas aimed at their accommodation without putting in jeopardy European stability, as they firmly reject the division of a country into minority-nations.

This work has examined in length the phenomenon of sub-state nationalism and European Integration, and their features, circumstances, benefits, and challenges.

Part 1 examined the various ways in which the process of European integration has been affecting the traditional conceptions of sovereignty in Europe and its consequences on sub-state minority demands.

Part 2 has examined the manner in which and the reasons why the sub-state and national interests and their representation at the European level have been beneficial to European unity and prosperity. It has achieved this through assessing the reasons for dissatisfaction of Europeans with the EU, how the organization handles the issue of minority nationalities in the continent, and the various benefits and dangers European unity faces.

Finally, Part 3 assessed the dynamics of Basque nationalism in Spain, as a demonstration of the challenges that European unity faces.

Through this modest attempt, I also tried to debunk the myth that sub-state nationalisms are necessarily reactionary and backwards looking. On the contrary, they have provided the more daring and comprehensive understandings of the contemporary political patterns, well beyond the traditional stances taken by the states.

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