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**“The Impact of Government  
Policies on Territorially  
Based Ethnic or Nationalist  
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## **The Impact of Government Policies on Territorially Based Ethnic or Nationalist Movements**

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MATTHIAS KOENIG, Editorial	1
JUAN DíEZ MEDRANO, "Thematic Introduction: Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict"	3
ENRIC MARTÍNEZ-HERRERA, "Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001"	16
STEFAN WOLFF, "Conflict Management in Northern Ireland"	41
FRANÇOIS ROCHE, "The Evolving Parameters of Quebec Nationalism"	74
GUILLERMO TREJO, "Redefining the Territorial Bases of Power: Peasants, Indians and Guerilla Warfare in Chiapas, Mexico"	97
MATTHEW KOCHER, "The Decline of PKK and the Viability of a One-state Solution in Turkey"	128

# Editorial

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This thematic issue of UNESCO's *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* (IJMS) explores the question of how governments address the issue of territorially based ethnic or nationalist movements. Whereas previous issues of the IJMS focused on religion and language as factors for social cleavages in democratic societies and explored the social, political and legal conditions for public policies which recognise diversity and, at the same time, sustain social cohesion, this thematic issue addresses a particularly important challenge of public policy-making: violence and movements towards secession in plurinational and multi-ethnic states.

While the classical model of the nation-state, until recently the dominant form of political organisation in the modern world, has sought to establish a perfect correspondence between the cultural and/or ethnic unit and the political unit, such a correspondence has historically rarely been the case. The population of most states has, in fact, been culturally and ethnically heterogeneous. The classical model of the nation-state has, therefore, often responded to de facto diversity by policies of assimilation and homogenisation. And, in turn, the claims of minorities have been a permanent source of conflict threatening social cohesion and the stability of the state. However, accelerated processes of globalisation have called into question the classical model of the nation-state. The end of the Cold War has brought a resurgence and intensification of ethno-regional nationalist movements. And, finally, there has been a trend in international human rights of recognising the individual and collective rights of ethnic or national, linguistic and religious minorities. As a consequence, interest has been renewed in the general problem of maintaining social cohesion in multi-ethnic societies.

A particular challenge to social cohesion is constituted by territorially based ethnic or national movements. The present issue, edited by Juan Díez-Medrano, approaches this challenge from the viewpoint of states by analysing the nature and degree of the impact of government policies on territorially based ethnic or nationalist movements. Can the state successively conduct policies that contribute to a decline in support for secession while simultaneously respecting the rights of ethnic or national minorities? To answer this question, this issue adopts a comparative perspective on public-policy effects in the course of ethnic/national conflict since the 1970s in five rather different contexts: the Basque conflict in Spain, Québécois conflict in Canada, the Northern Irish conflict in the United

Kingdom, the Zapatista conflict in Chiapas and the Kurdish conflict in Turkey. The results of these in-depth case studies, if interpreted within the analytical framework of structural and process factors for support of ethnic or national violence and secessionism as laid out in the Thematic Introduction, suggest that non-indiscriminate public-order policies as well as responsive policies have a clear effect on reducing levels of violence, to the extent that they also secure the individual and collective rights of ethnic minorities in plural societies. The present thematic issue thus also provides examples of how social science research can fruitfully address problems of public policy-making.

In an up-coming issue, the *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* will pursue this line of policy-related social science research, by returning to a previously established thematic thread. Following up Vol. 3, No. 2, it will address the impact of language policies on the use of endangered languages in different regional and national contexts. As always, readers are invited to contribute to our debate by sending their comments to the mailing list attached to this Journal.

# Thematic Introduction<sup>1</sup>

JUAN DíEZ-MEDRANO  
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Research on nationalism and ethnic conflict has shown a tendency to focus excessively on aspects that do not directly relate to the problems that triggered the research on these topics in the first place: violence and movements towards secession in plurinational and multi-ethnic states (Díez Medrano 1995). Rather than addressing these specific topics, scholars have given priority to general problems such as the historical emergence of nationalism, the presence/absence of nationalist/ethnic mobilisation, and the intensity of such mobilisation. Whether these lines of inquiry respond to a deliberate effort by social scientists to distance themselves from the mundane and the specific, or to a misled conflation of similar but distinct problems, is an open question. Policy-makers and the general public are concerned, however, by the mundane and specific questions that scholars appear to ignore. The purpose of this issue is to redirect attention to the problems of ethnic/nationalist violence and movements towards secession. More particularly, through the examination of several case studies, it seeks answers to the following questions: What is the effect of state policies on ethnic violence and/or support for secession? Can the state successively mitigate ethnonational violence and conduct policies that contribute to a decline in support for secession while simultaneously securing the individual and collective rights of ethnic and national minorities?

## 1. Theoretical Approaches

One useful approach to addressing the questions above is to examine current explanations for the problems of ethnic/nationalist violence and secessionism and, based on the variables invoked by these explanations, analyse the role that the state can play in changing the values of these variables so as to induce changes in the levels of violence and of support for secessionist solutions. Fearon and Laitin, and Brubaker and Laitin, in their reviews of the literature on these topics, highlight two major approaches to the explanation of ethnic/nationalist conflict in general, which

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to acknowledge the assistance received from Carolina Greer de Miguel Moyer in the early stages of the preparation of this issue.

they label primordialist and social constructivist (Brubaker and Laitin 1998; Fearon and Laitin 2000). Furthermore, Brubaker and Laitin, conscious of the fact that conflict rarely translates into violence, discuss rational choice, international relations, and game theory approaches directly related to the topic of violence. From the reviews of the literature offered by the above authors, one can discern three major propositions, corresponding to the primordialist, social constructivist, and what they summarise as “rational choice approaches”.

### *1.1 Primordialism*

The first proposition is that ethnic/nationalist violence and movements towards secession are inevitable in pluri-ethnic or plurinational states. This proposition follows from an ideo-typical primordialist conception of ethnic and national identities, which posits that people are naturally emotionally attached to the ethnic and national groups to which they belong and that this attachment necessarily implies feelings of antagonism towards other groups that sooner or later express themselves through violence and/or, in plurinational states, in movements towards independence. Of course, this conception is, as Fearon and Laitin point out, a sociologist’s construction, a simplistic perspective found in the public sphere but rarely taken seriously by scholars. Regardless of the descriptive merits it may have, the primordialist approach is clearly insufficient to explain violence and secessionism, for the number of pluri-ethnic or plurinational states with high levels of ethnic/national violence and/or strong support for the creation of independent states is very small relative to the number of such states.

### *1.2 Social Constructivism*

The second proposition is that ethnic/nationalist violence and movements towards secession vary depending on how much antagonism towards other ethnic/national groups characterises an ethnic/national group’s identity. This is the proposition that follows from the ideo-typical social constructivist approach that prevails in the social sciences (e.g. Brass 1997; Prunier 1995; Deng 1995; Kapferer 1988; Woodward 1995). Social constructionists contradict the primordialist thesis that ethnic/national identities necessarily prescribe antagonism towards other groups; instead, they allow for variation across ethnic and national groups and thus potentially account for observed contrasts in levels of ethnic/nationalist violence and support for independence across these groups. Social constructivists fail to discuss the causal mechanisms linking antagonism towards other groups with violence or support for independence; nor can they account for the low frequency with which antagonism translates into actual violence and/or support for secession. Moreover, the dynamic character of ethnic/national identities leads to the expectation that violence/efforts towards secession will move hand in hand with ethnic/national discourses that emphasise antagonism, such that it becomes impossible to demonstrate a causal link between the content of these identities and violence and/or support for secession. Despite these caveats, the factors that social constructivists invoke when explaining the different degree of ethnic/national

antagonism that characterises different ethnic/national identities direct our attention towards areas where state action could be effective.

Social constructionists emphasise three sets of factors when explaining the level of antagonism towards other ethnic/national groups contained in ethnic/national identities:

- (1) Structural variables such as the levels of ethnic segregation and intra-group competition and the stability and non-controversial nature of ethnic/national boundaries. Ethnic segregation models predict that levels of ethnic antagonism increase with levels of ethnic segregation (Hechter 1975; Hechter 1978). In contrast, ethnic competition models predict a sharpening of antagonistic feelings when ethnic segregation breaks down (Hannan 1979). Explanations focused on the role of intra-group competition emphasise that the greater it is, the greater the propensity of competing factions to demonise other ethnic groups (Horowitz 1985; Gagnon 1994–96; Kaufman 1996). Finally, explanations focused on the role of the stability and non-controversial nature of ethnic/national boundaries posit that unstable and controversial boundaries provide a favourable context for the construction of ethnic identities that stress antagonism towards other ethnic groups (Deng 1995).
- (2) Discursive resources available to and deployed by ethnic/national groups against other ethnic/national groups. Ethnic identities emphasise the antagonistic element in ethnic relations when the groups constructing these identities have more resources at their disposal than have their more moderate competitors in their own or other ethnic group. Many factors can determine the level of discursive resources available to different groups and thus create information asymmetries that eventually determine the dominant self-understandings among the population (De Figueiredo and Weingast 1999; Fearon and Laitin 1996). Language differentiation between ethnic groups is one of them. If two ethnic groups speak different languages and cannot understand each other's language, those speaking the same language as the population to which their discourse is addressed will have a greater capacity to make their definitions of ethnic identity prevail than will those who do not master this language. The level of ethnic segregation, whether spatial or socio-economic, also determines the discursive resources available to different groups. Discourse producers have less access to the population of another ethnic or national group when there is a higher degree of ethnic segregation. The level of concentration of the population can also affect the relative discursive resources of different ethnic or national groups. Constructions formulated by members of an ethnic or national group to define another ethnic or national group have a better chance of penetrating the group that they define when this group's population is clustered in large cities than when it is scattered in small villages, in which personal acquaintance and micro-power dynamics play a

more important role in the spreading of ideas than large-scale mechanisms of indoctrination such as control of the media. Finally, one may expect more economically advanced ethnic or national groups to have more discursive resources than their less economically advanced counterparts.

- (3) State responses to ethnonational violence. The main hypothesis advanced by scholars who focus on the dynamics of ethnic relations is that indiscriminate repression against an ethnic/national group generates more antagonism and violence among the members of the groups that are subjected to this violence than does a judicious and targeted use of public-order measures (Díez Medrano 1995). The former creates the impression that the whole ethnic or national group is targeted, whereas the latter makes clear that it is not the ethnic or national group that is targeted but, rather, particular individuals.

### 1.3 *Rational Choice*

Neither the primordialist nor the social constructivist approaches address the problem of the translation of ethnic/national antagonism into violence and/or movements for secession. Since this translation occurs very rarely, explaining it becomes crucial for an adequate understanding of the causes of ethnic/national violence or secessionism. Scholars in the rational choice tradition stand almost alone in having accepted this challenge (for explanations combining structural and rational choice variables, see Horowitz 1985). Their approach has consisted in subsuming the problems of ethnic/national violence and secessionism into the more general themes of violence and exit. Perceived costs and benefits of various courses of action are the causal mechanism that, according to scholars in this tradition, determines the political strategies followed by different ethnic/national groups (Fearon 1995; Hechter 1995). According to these authors, when the problem under examination is violence the utility that individuals try to maximise is their personal security. When the problem under examination is secessionism, the utility on which authors in this tradition have focused is economic well-being. In other words, the main propositions advanced by the rational choice tradition are that members of an ethnic/national group will opt for violence only if it is perceived to bring more security than not relying on violence and that members of an ethnic/national group will opt for secession only if it is perceived to yield a better economic situation than remaining part of the state in which they find themselves.

Relative wealth with respect to other ethnic/national groups in a given state and trade interdependence are some of the variables that are viewed as having an impact on the cost-benefit calculations regarding secession (see Meadwell 1989; Hechter 1992). Confidence in the ability to maintain or even improve the ethnic/national group's economic situation is probably greater among ethnic/national groups that are better off than the rest of the population and/or do not depend on trade with the rest of the state to which they belong than it is among



groups that are poorer than the rest of the population – unless this is caused by demonstrated ethnic discrimination – and/or that depend greatly on trade with the rest of the state to which they belong. The main variables entering the security equation are people's expectations about the penalties that members of the different ethnic/national groups will attempt to impose on them if they side or do not side with violent behaviour and about the relative capacities of these members to make these penalties effective. Citizens of the Basque Country, for example, will act in one way or another guided by more or less conscious estimations about the penalties that the Spanish Government, Basque institutions, and other segments of Basque society will try to impose on them for participating in and/or supporting violent behaviour. As part of this more or less conscious calculus, they will also guess how likely it is that the Spanish Government, Basque institutions, and other segments of Basque society will be able to impose these penalties. Finally, they will be guided by guesses about the penalties associated with not participating and/or not supporting violence and about the likelihood that these penalties will be made effective.

For the security argument to have policy implications, if it is indeed a valid one, one must link people's cost-benefit calculations to variables affecting this calculus. If we follow the social movement literature, we must take into account the relative resources available to the leading groups involved in ethnic or national conflict. These resources play a role in determining people's perceptions about each of the contending group's ability to penalise people who in some form or another support or do not support violence. If the state is one of the contenders, one would expect that under normal conditions, that is, to the extent that the state retains its monopoly over the means of violence, ethnic or national violence will be kept in check. The state's resource superiority will allow it to convince the population about its ability to inflict penalties on those who incur or support violence and about its ability to guarantee the security of those who do not follow the path of violence against retaliation by those advocating violence. Within this general expectation, there may be variation from case to case. Variables that may diminish the state's persuasive power are the mildness of its penalties compared with those of the groups advocating violence, a weak state (Posen 1993), and ethnic/national concentration in particular regions in which violent representatives of the ethnic/national groups in question enjoy what one could call "home advantage". The population's concentration in a particular region makes it easier for an ethnic/national group to counteract the superior resources of the state. If, at the same time, the population in this region is scattered in small villages rather than concentrated in large towns or cities, then the advantages for the local violent ethnic/national group are even greater because in small villages the cost of social control is cheaper and thus the marginal utility of the state's greater economic, repressive and technological resources diminishes (see Laqueur 1998; Laitin 1993).

#### *1.4 State Policy and Ethnonationalism: Theoretical Predictions*

The discussion above provides an analytical framework and various theoretical propositions about the structural and processual factors underlying support for ethnic/national violence and secessionism. Some of the hypotheses developed above invoke factors that are difficult to manipulate in the short term through state policies. Patterns of geographic and/or economic segregation, for example, are difficult to reverse; the same applies to the levels of economic development of a particular ethnic or national group. Other hypotheses invoke factors that are not subject to the state's manipulation, such as the level of its resources or its monopoly over the means of coercion. Other factors, however, are easier to manipulate. For example, here is a list of policies that, based on the above discussion, can contribute to diminish support for ethnic/national violence:

- Increased and more efficient administration of the communication resources invested in shaping a non-antagonistic discourse about the nature of relations between ethnic/national groups.
- Increased and more efficient enforcement of the resources devoted to fighting violent behaviour.
- Increased state penalties attached to participating or supporting violence.
- Avoidance of indiscriminate repression.
- Efforts to diminish competition between moderates and extremists within ethnic/national groups by strengthening the moderates.
- Responsive behaviour towards the non-violent demands of mobilised ethnic/national groups.

## **2. Case Studies**

This issue assembles a series of case studies that examine levels and trends in support for secession and/or violence in different peripheral regions of five different countries and the state policies that have been implemented to address these problems since the 1970s. Their conclusions invoke many of the policies, processes and situations discussed in the preceding pages and/or included in the list presented above. The cases are the Basque conflict in Spain, the Northern Irish conflict in the United Kingdom, the Kurdish conflict in Turkey, the Zapatista conflict in Mexico, and the Québécois conflict in Canada. The selected cases represent different levels and trends in violence and support for secession. The cases vary from the very low level of support for secession among the Chiapas population in Mexico to the very high level among Québécois, from the very low level of nationalist violence observed in Québec to the very high level observed in Chiapas, from the stable levels of violence observed in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country to the increasing levels observed in Chiapas and the decreasing levels observed in the Turkish regions mainly inhabited by Kurds.

## 2.1 *The Basque Country*

In his piece on the Basque Country, Enric Martínez examines the relative roles that public order and responsive policies vis-à-vis minorities have played in mitigating violence, support for independence, and exclusive identification as Basque. The Basque Country is a highly divided community, with intense competition between Basque nationalist groups and statewide parties, which is made even more complex by the high degree of intra-nationalist competition between moderates and extremists. The political context within which the Basque conflict has taken place has been one of democracy and a very high degree of political autonomy for the Basque Country, with Basque moderate nationalists ruling the regional government, alone or in coalition, since the first regional elections in 1981. Since the first democratic elections in 1977, support for political parties that advocate independence has remained stable, while exclusive Basque identification has declined somewhat, and levels of violence have declined significantly from close to 100 deaths around 1980 to averages between 10 and 20 deaths in the late 1990s. Taking advantage of the unusual wealth of quantitative data accumulated since the 1970s, Martínez conducts what is probably the most systematic attempt to date to quantitatively assess the relative effects of public order and responsive state policies. His findings suggest that both types of policy have played a role in affecting levels of violence and of exclusive identification as Basque, while they have had almost no effect on levels of support for separatist political parties.

## 2.2 *Northern Ireland*

In his piece on Northern Ireland, Stefan Wolff examines the theme of this issue using a historical and process-oriented approach. The Northern Irish case is unique in that the state (the British for the most part and also the Irish) has largely played the role of arbiter in the intra-regional conflict between two communities – Unionists, favourable to remaining part of the United Kingdom, and Irish Nationalists, favourable to integration in the Republic of Ireland. As is well known, in Northern Ireland this political cleavage largely overlaps with the Protestant-Catholic divide. The political context in Northern Ireland since the 1970s has been less stable than it has in the Basque Country, with direct rule from Westminster alternating with periods in which somewhat autonomous regional assemblies have participated in the government of Northern Ireland. Another contrast with the Basque Country has been the state's much greater reliance on harsh public-order policies to confront the problem. Finally, levels of violence in Northern Ireland have been significantly higher than in the Basque Country, with a peak around 500 deaths early in the 1970s followed by a decline to an average between 50 and 100 deaths per year until the mid-1990s and a recent decline to around 25 deaths per year in the late 1990s, that coincided with the reaching of the Good Friday Agreement. Wolff's findings suggest again that public-order policies have managed to maintain levels of violence under control and that political negotiation can also bear fruits in terms of a reduction of violence. As in the Basque Country, however, there does not seem to be a connection between state policies and levels

of support for radical nationalist groups, for these have remained relatively stable throughout the period or changed for reasons that are independent of state policies.

### 2.3 *Québec*

The piece by François Rocher on conflict in the Canadian province of Québec provides a useful counterpoint to the other instances of peripheral nationalism examined in this issue because it has taken place mostly through peaceful channels. The Québec conflict opposes the francophone community to the dominant anglophone community and has played out in a very stable political context, with federal arrangements ensuring a great deal of political autonomy for the province of Québec. The only instances of francophone nationalist violence took place in the second half of the 1960s, causing nine victims. Violent groups were heavily repressed by the Canadian Government and rapidly disappeared. The absence of physical violence in Canadian nationalist politics is not indicative of lack of conflict. In fact, Québec nationalism displays the highest levels of support for independence of any of the cases examined here, as well as very high and increasing levels of exclusive ethnic identification. In this sense, the Québec example illustrates the very different factors at play in explaining various dimensions of peripheral nationalism and the need to develop theories tailored to the specific dimension or dimensions being studied.

### 2.4 *Chiapas*

The most violent instances of ethnic/nationalist violence in this issue are the Chiapas conflict in Mexico and the Kurdish conflict in Turkey. Whereas ethnic/nationalist conflict in the cases discussed above has usually involved fewer than 100 victims a year, in the Chiapas and Kurdish conflicts the numbers of victims have been well above the hundred barrier and total many thousands. Guillermo Trejo's piece on Chiapas gives us privileged access to a contemporary instance of constructed ethnic identity. Largely a peasant movement for land and democratic reform, the Chiapas conflict turned ethnic under the leadership of the Zapatista movement in the 1990s. The Chiapas conflict also presents us with an exceptional case in which political (opposition to the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)/support for the PRI), religious (Protestant/Catholic), and ethnic (indigenous/non-indigenous) identities greatly overlap. In his article, Trejo traces the history of the peasant movement for land reform and its transformation into an ethnic movement that has surprisingly shied away from demanding independence. The Chiapas movement, in contrast to those described above, has taken place in a rural society with relatively low levels of economic development and in a political context characterised by federal government and low levels of democracy. The author shows that violence by both the state and the rebels has predominated in this conflict and that levels of violence increased with the emergence of the Zapatista movement. In contrast to the other cases examined in this issue, the insurgents have managed to partially attain their goals by force rather than negotiation and the

conflict has been characterised by a spiral of violence in which state repression and violent protest have fed on each other.

### 2.5 *The Kurdish Question in Turkey*

The comparison between the Chiapas and the Kurdish cases provides useful insights about the role of state policies in determining levels of ethnic/nationalist violence. Matthew Kocher, in a highly provocative piece, suggests that public-order policies alone can successfully suppress ethnic/national violence even when, unlike the Canadian, Basque and Northern Irish cases, the initial level of violence is extremely high. The main cleavage in the Turkish case is the one between the Turkish state and the Kurdish minority. Kocher points out that, in contrast to Chiapas, this cleavage does not overlap with other important cleavages in Turkish society. In fact, it cross-cuts religious divisions in Turkish society. The context for the Kurdish conflict has been that of a rural society with relatively low levels of economic development but, unlike Chiapas, experiencing a rapid process of urbanisation. From a political perspective, the Kurdish conflict presents similarities to the Chiapas conflict in that they have both taken place in societies with a heavy democratic deficit. In contrast to Mexico, however, Turkey is not organised as a federal state. Matthew Kocher eloquently describes how the Turkish state has successfully eradicated Kurdish violence without a single political concession. He explains this success with reference to the Turkish Government's policies of repression and, most significantly, forced rural evacuation. According to Kocher, the expulsion of the Kurdish population from rural areas and its relocation in urban areas made it much easier for the Turkish security forces to control while at the same time drastically reducing the control capacity of Kurdish extremists.

## 3. Case Studies and Theoretical Predictions

It is difficult to draw definite conclusions about the role of state policies in addressing violence and radical ethnonationalist demands with a small and unsystematic sample of cases such as the one examined here. None the less, a careful comparison of these cases in the light of the hypotheses developed above allows for some tentative conclusions. The articles show that in all cases violence has been addressed by strong and non-indiscriminate public-order measures and, consistent with theoretical expectations about the role of state penalties in reducing support for violent behaviour, demonstrate that these policies are indeed effective irrespective of initial levels of violence. Whenever drastic public-order measures have been applied to fight violence, the levels of ethnonational violence have declined. The only exception to this conclusion seems to be the Chiapas conflict where the spiral of violence has remained largely unabated despite very strong state public-order measures. A comparison between the Chiapas and the Kurdish conflicts, similar in that they take place in societies with relatively low levels of economic development, with a strong democratic deficit and high initial levels of violence, invites the conclusion that beyond the resources invested in repressing violence, tactics and the context in which they are deployed – rural/urban – also

count. One could say that the Turkish Government, in implementing a systematic policy of rural evacuation to urban areas that has short-circuited the ethnonational rebels' power to mobilise the population against the state, has displayed a level of tactical sophistication not present among Mexican security forces. This hypothesis deserves further research. One obstacle that the Spanish state has faced in fighting Basque violent groups, for example, has been its difficulty in breaking through the tight networks of social control developed by these organisations in the Basque urban landscape, formed by many small urban centres. Whether the contrast between a rapidly urbanising Kurdish region and a largely rural Chiapas region explains the different rates of success of the Turkish and Mexican governments in eradicating violence remains an open question, however, for there are variables that one cannot control in this comparison. For example, the facts that economic grievances seem to play a more significant role in the Chiapas conflict than in the Kurdish conflict, and that in Chiapas economic, political, religious and ethnic identities overlap whereas they do not in the Kurdish case, could have favoured the development of more antagonistic anti-state identities in Chiapas than among the Kurdish population.

Whereas the role of public-order measures in reducing levels of ethnonational violence seems undisputed, the role of what Martínez calls responsive policies is less evident and certainly more modest. The Kurdish case, in which ethnonationalist violence has been eradicated only through public-order policies, clearly shows that responsive policies play at most the role of sufficient but not necessary causes in curbing violence. None the less, this issue aspires to contribute to policy-making by highlighting state policies that affect both the decline in ethnonational violence and the securing of the individual and collective rights of ethnic minorities in plurinational states. In this sense, the Turkish case, while useful to illustrate the effect of public-order policies, would not seem to be the best example to follow. When we move to the other case studies – with the exception of the Québec case, where there has been hardly any violence – the empirical evidence suggests that when the state succeeds in meeting some of the demands of mobilised ethnonational groups, violence subsides somewhat, even though less than through the implementation of public-order policies. This is the case in the Basque Country after the approval of the Spanish Constitution in 1978 and the Statute of Autonomy in 1981, and in Northern Ireland after the Good Friday agreement in 1995. The Québec case illustrates the same point in a cross-national and thus less conclusive way. It might be argued that the federal structure of the Canadian state grants so much self-government to Québec that many of the francophone population's demands have been to a large extent satisfied. The Chiapas case appears again as an exception, for the Mexican state has made significant efforts over the years to redistribute land and, more recently, to democratise public life. If we follow Trejo's analysis, however, these efforts have taken the form of concessions from above rather than that of negotiated agreements. As Wolff suggests with respect to Northern Ireland, responsive government policies to address ethnonational demands have translated into less violence only when they have been legitimated from below rather than just

imposed from above. Trejo's analysis provides another potential explanation for why reforms have failed in Chiapas, which is that the implementation of these concessions seems to have fallen short of the promises made by successive Mexican governments and run parallel to what appears to be a highly indiscriminate use of violence against insurgents.

The case studies presented in this issue thus lend support to most of the hypotheses developed in the first section of this introduction about the role of state policies in diminishing levels of ethnonational violence through their effects on the antagonistic content of ethnic identities and the population's security calculations. There is also evidence that state policies may have an impact on levels of exclusive ethnonational identity and/or levels of support for political parties representing separatist ethnonational aspirations. The analysis of trends in exclusive ethnic identity in the Basque Country shows some impact of responsive policies such as the approval of the 1978 Spanish Constitution and the reinsertion of former Basque terrorists. Meanwhile, levels of exclusive ethnic identity in Québec have increased over time, partly because of federal attempts to homogenise Québec's constitutional status with that of the rest of the Canadian provinces, which have not taken the Québécois population's interests into account.

The effect of state policies on support for extreme ethnonationalist political formations is less easy to evaluate than those on ethnonational violence and exclusive ethnic identification. Support for ethnonational parties in general in the Basque Country, in Northern Ireland, in Québec and even in Turkey has remained stable through the period analysed by the present authors, despite contrasting policies. In the Basque Country and Northern Ireland, in particular, levels of support for extremist ethnonational parties have in fact shown minor fluctuations that seem to vary independently of state policies. A more optimistic reading of the Basque and Northern Irish cases, however, is that the stability in patterns of support one observes results from the adaptation of extremist ethnonational parties to changing circumstances created by the state's responsive policies. The articles show that in both the Basque Country and Northern Ireland, support for extremist ethnonational parties has rebounded after short periods of decline when they have showed signs of condemning or abandoning support for violence in the context of a delegitimation of this violence resulting from negotiated agreements between the state and moderate nationalists. By moderating their messages, they seem to have cancelled out the effects that the reaching of these agreements would otherwise have had on the support these political parties were able to attract.

In sum, the case studies presented in this issue demonstrate that one can address theoretically relevant questions pertaining to the social sciences while at the same time tailoring them to the practical concerns of the policy-making community. The conclusions reached upon examination of these case studies are good news for those interested in the impact that state policies can have on levels of violence,

ethnic exclusiveness and separatism in plurinational states. Both non-indiscriminate public-order policies and responsive policies are effective in highly diverse cases, while at the same time granting and even strengthening the rights of ethnonational groups in plurinational states. It is certainly encouraging to see that, despite the intensity of conflict in the cases examined here, in all but the Kurdish case attempted or achieved solutions have involved political and institutional recognition of the ethnonational rights of the parties involved. More research is needed, however, to allow for more systematic conclusions than those obtained from the examination of the small sample of cases discussed.

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# Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001<sup>1</sup>

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*Governments regard different policy options to mitigate insurgent nationalist terrorism and extremism. These policies can be tentatively classified according to whether they correspond to either a “public order” frame or a “responsive” frame. This article carries out time-series multivariant analyses aimed at evaluating what efficacy different policies inspired from one or another approach have had with respect to Basque nationalist terrorism and extremism as well as to assess the consistency of a number of well-established hypotheses. The findings suggest that a combination of efficacious, but flexible law-ruled public order policies, together with very substantial doses of responsiveness, explains the ongoing mitigation of these phenomena. However, the results also show that certain specific policy choices have been either inefficacious or counterproductive. There is also the paradox that terrorist violence itself tends to decrease the attitudinal social bases of insurgent nationalist extremism.*

**I**nsurgent nationalist extremism is one of the main concerns of Spanish governments and citizens. In order to diminish it several public policies have been envisaged, the most standing among which being “public order” and “responsive” policies. In this article I aim at exploring what efficacy different policies inspired from on or another approach have had. For this I make use of the unusual abundance of data that this phenomenon has produced.

Since the 1960s, different Spanish governments, first within an autocratic context, and then within a liberal democratic one, have implemented a number of strategies that could be labelled as public order policies and responsive policies. The itinerary of the former goes from a rather indiscriminate repression towards Basque nationalism to the selective incrimination of violent activists. Similarly, as for

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responsiveness, a long-standing rejection of the Basque cultural, social and political differences has changed into a constitutional recognition of Basque nationality, which has provided the Basques with an extraordinary level of political autonomy.

This variation in policy sectors, of policy styles, and even political regimes, as well as its duration, optimises the empirical foundations for exploring the short and medium term effects of public order and responsive policies. Given the many variables and their interrelations, it reduces the risk of spurious causal imputations. It is on this basis that I pursue, with a deliberately chosen empirical orientation, a thorough evaluation, though within its own limits, of the consistency of a number of theoretical hypotheses in the literature. It will be suggested that the mitigation of Basque nationalist extremism is best explained through a combination of efficacious but flexible and democratically inspired public order policies, together with substantial doses of responsiveness.

### **1. Strategies of the State facing Nationalist Insurgent Extremism: Public Order and Responsive Frames**

The study of governmental response to insurgent nationalist extremism tends to confine itself to two areas of study hardly communicating with each other. Mainstream analyses and prescriptions focus either on public-order policies or on responsiveness policies *vis-à-vis* minorities. Nevertheless, here they will be considered as two different but compatible dimensions. The view that authority and force are intrinsic to the nature of the state predominates in the former. By contrast, the latter corresponds to pluralistic views of public power where the authority of the state is viewed as sensitive to social needs and demands, and where communication, attention to the material and cultural bases of conflicts, as well as the search for mutual compromises, are regarded as equally useful or even more useful instruments than force.

Although a comparison of these two frames could be attempted, inquiring into which is the more effective in reducing insurgent nationalist extremism, one might suspect that the correct picture of the problem is not so much of a disjunction than of a more complex dialectic nature. It is plausible that a strategy combining sanctions and rewards, with a reinforcing effect, tends to be the most efficacious. On the other hand, responsiveness does not need to entail a zero-sum game where improvement for some implies harm for others, but it can supply all the involved actors with a general improvement greater than the eventual costs of renouncing maximalist ambitions.

In order to limit the question, it must be specified that only “insurgent nationalist extremism” is under consideration here. The term “extremism” denotes a perception of conflict of a warlike nature, i.e. of those who advocate, or at least accept, the use of violent means. The analysis will only consider insurgent nationalist extremism, which for its social group of reference aims at increasing its self-

government until secession.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, “surveying nationalist extremism”, though it has been also present in Spain, will not be examined here – this kind of nationalist extremism is typical of actors in favour of the status quo, as well as supporters of regression when faced with decentralising or self-determining processes (Reinares 1998; Domínguez 1999).

### 1.1 Public Order Policies and Insurgent Nationalist Extremism

Viewed from an historical and international perspective, more usual policies towards any extremism have been those of public order. These interventions develop an intrinsic attribute of the modern state (democratic or otherwise), namely that its authority is supported by violence (legitimate or not, legal or not, monopolised or not, normative considerations aside). By having the use, or threat, of force as its main resource of power, a hierarchic and coercive logic of imposition of values on the social environment tends to predominate in the state’s policies.

Within the subject under study here, authority and force materialise in coercion and eradication of anti-system extremism, all the more so in its violent expression. Furthermore, another ideal-typical attribute of the framework of public order is the reception of conflict in terms of its symptoms. Either reactive or preventive, the objective of those policies is to combat violent or simply threatening *effects* of conflict rather than to face its deep causes (see Table 1). Although much less expeditious, other customary means – such as political acculturation and indoctrination of a reluctant population by means of the education system, military service, and propagandistic use of mass media – also correspond to this framework of authority (cf. Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Rokkan 1975).

**Table 1:** Some ideal-typical differences between public-order policies and responsive policies towards political extremism

<i>Public order policies</i>	<i>Responsive policies</i>
Attention to violence as a symptom	Attention to social causes of violence
Predominance of the principle of authority, hierarchic	Predominance of the principle of inclusion, egalitarian
Predominance of force	Predominance of compromise

Source: Author’s elaboration.

Apart from that, these policies can show a broad heterogeneity. Their character can be reactive (penalising violent behaviour retrospectively) or preventive (with an emphasis on information and protection, dissuasion, or even prior deactivation). Moreover, the use of force can or cannot be limited by the state and international parameters of legality (e.g. with reference to fundamental rights). Also it can or

<sup>2</sup> In scenarios of irredentism, insurgent nationalism could have as its horizon incorporation into another already existing political system, which also implies a breaking up of the current polity.

cannot be liable to judicial and/or democratic control, and its social legitimacy can vary in scope. The segment on which force is applied can differ widely, ranging from the more selective and careful persecution of those acting violently to the more general application of force to the whole political environment of theirs, or even their whole social group. The policies can also vary in the judicial and penitential treatment of activists, implementation agencies (in their military or police character, and in their degree of specialisation) and the degree of international collaboration (Reinares 1998; Hoffman and Morrison-Taw 1999). Several hypotheses invoking these factors will be regarded in the third section.<sup>3</sup>

### *1.2 Responsive Policies and Insurgent Nationalist Extremism*

The term “responsive policies” alludes here to those policies oriented at reducing the social and political causes that lie in the background of political extremism as well as reducing their effects or symptoms. Unlike public-order policies, which have a more enclosed classification, responsive policies imply much more diverse domains and means – hence my choice of an atypical qualifier. The approach that predominates in them is inclusive, typical for the pluralist democratic approach and, more generally, for sensitive regimes – though this could be in a paternalistic manner – and the need and demands of every social group.

For this reason, its instruments, rather than force, are: (a) the recognition of either material or perceived conflicts; (b) reciprocal communication and compromise; and (c) a disposition to share, to some extent, material resources, prestige positions, and even power. Authority tends to be conceived in a pluralist and consensual manner, sensitive and responsive regarding the various social needs and concerns. In the face of the emergence or risk of extremist behaviour, the authorities pay attention to its social bases, both structural and cultural (see Table 1). The rulers are ready to engage in a dialogue with the dissatisfied groups, ready to listen their demands, and even try to anticipate them. The rulers are also ready to negotiate and cooperate with them in pursuit of mutual benefit.

It should be stressed that responsiveness does not necessarily entail weakness and unilateral concessions as well, therefore, it does not necessarily satisfy any claim. Nor does this approach have to be the result of certain ultimate principles or values, since it can also, for simply instrumental reasons, be developed in a tactical fashion.

As for the sectors, levels, and manners of action, these policies can be extremely heterogeneous. According to the roots of the conflict, responsive policies can involve many different policy fields (e.g. culture, religion, education, etc.) as well

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<sup>3</sup> A good critical review of the literature focusing on the logic of what I call of “public order” can be found in the Fernando Reinares’ book *Terrorismo y antiterrorismo* (1998). Given the markedly empirical intention of the present article, I refer generally to that work for theoretical and comparative considerations. Another merit of the book lies in its numerous references to nationalist violence and anti-terrorist policies in the Basque Country and the whole of Spain.

as the very distribution of public power. As for their juridical rank and degree of institutionalisation, they can be enforced in the form of constitutional engineering policies, as common legislation, or even as simple administrative decisions (cf. Hoffman and Morrison-Taw 1999).

From explanatory political science, the most outstanding example of a responsive approach is the “consociational” model of Arend Lijphart (1984 and 1999). In his works one can find an analysis of institutions that induce the protection, possibility of expression, and possibility of decision of minorities in plural societies. These institutions are also directed towards enabling these groups to participate in power and also towards increasing the integration of political systems that otherwise tend to break up and/or to have a low performance. However, I use the concept of responsiveness instead of “accommodation” because political integration is not always based on an institutionalisation of minorities’ rights and power. Other opportunities rest on pluralist policies (Dahl 1971) and on attempts at co-optation seeking the assimilation of minorities into the majority in exchange for economic and prestige advantages – less theorised but often put into practice (see Bloom 1990; Hoffman and Morrison-Taw 1999).

## **2. Dimensions of Insurgent Nationalist Extremism in the Basque Country**

The inclination to use violence for influencing public power I have called “political extremism”. The most prominent materialisation of the Basque nationalist extremism is terrorism, in which Euskadi ta Askatasuna (Euskadi and Freedom) stands out, almost incomparably. ETA is one of the most long-lived terrorist organisations in the Western world, with more than forty years of existence, more than thirty years of personal attacks, and about a thousand homicides (Reinares 1998; Domínguez 1999). I employ the term “terrorism” here in a simple descriptive and precise sense of the use of violence for intimidating a social group beyond the sub-group of direct victims, without evaluative connotation (Reinares 1998).

Still, manifestations and consequences of extremism do not limit themselves to terrorism, however implacable and persistent it can be. Extremism must be observed from a broader perspective: to begin with, because the extremist repertoire of actions able to destabilise the political system is broader than terrorism; and then because, if one wants to give an account, specifically, of armed struggle, one should try to understand the conditions in which it is formed and sustained.

The destabilising effects of extremism upon the official political system is not confined to terrorism. First of all, not all violence is “terrorist”, in the sense that it intimidates a social group beyond its direct victims. Secondly, there exist varieties of equally destabilising non-conventional, but also non-violent types of political behaviour – e.g. general strike, petty sabotage and civil disobedience. Thirdly, extremism can obstruct institutional performance and destabilise the system from

within the system itself, by means of conduct that is formally legal but is actually contrary to the principles of the political regime. Finally and, more generally, the presence of impenetrable political subcultures, strongly internally structured and antagonistic, makes cooperation and coordination in favour of the whole society exceedingly difficult.

On the other hand, ETA's origin and persistence could not be understood without its exchanges with the broader environment. Like other organisations, its own internal dynamics explain, to a large extent, its persistence and autonomy (organisational culture, opportunity costs for its members, internal incentives and sanctions, etc.) Nevertheless, its interaction with the broader social context becomes crucial. Its obvious aspect is the success or failure of the police in arresting ETA activists and in the protection of ETA targets. However, the inputs that favour ETA are no less important. ETA's reproduction for decades has required, above all, regular international replacement of its commandos. In the same way, the role of the environment in the provision of information, ammunition, infrastructure and moral support cannot be neglected (Reinares 1998).

In this sense, in the Basque case at least, it is possible to consider a system of concentric circles. In the centre, there are the terrorist organisations. In a broader circle, there is a network of interconnected support organisations, including political parties, trade unions, associations (among them, prisoners relatives associations), mass media, even firms, which are often called the Basque National Liberation Movement (MLNV). Next, there are the voters for those parties. The external circle corresponds to those who share ideas of rejection towards Spain, independence for the Basque country, and come to terms with violence as a means. In the case of ETA and the MLNV, this portrait is consistent with a hierarchical relation empirically documented (Domínguez 1999; Reinares 1998). I will now consider three indicators of Basque nationalist extremism that, approximately, correspond to these circles or levels.

### *2.1 Victims of Terrorism*

Violence must be regarded as a dimension of extremism. All the more so when, by acquiring the form of terrorism, the perpetration of homicides results from the desire for public impact, and when terrorist organisations exert an outstanding ascendancy over the whole extremist movement. An annual number of fatalities denotes, to some extent, the operability of the Basque nationalist terrorist organisations and their capability of psychologically influencing great numbers of people. I refer basically to ETA, but also to its several factional splinter groups, such as the ETA-m ("military"), the ETA-pm ("political-military"), and the Anti-capitalist Autonomous Commandos. As a measurement, this turns out somewhat unsatisfactory, since from a propaganda angle, the impact of every victim – a First Minister or an ordinary member of the public – is not identical, and from an operative angle, a massive attack with a car bomb, which is relatively safe, produces many more victims than one directed at a protected public personality,

which is much more risky. However, these are the best available data both for their validity and time scale.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.2 *Herri Batasuna/Euskal Herritarrok Voting*

Extremism can also obstruct institutional performance and destabilise the political system while formally respecting legality. Here the evolution of the voting for the coalition Herri Batasuna (HB), related to the “military ETA”, the only remaining branch of the terrorist organisation, will be considered – For judiciary reasons HB changed its name to Euskal Herritarrok in 1998, and *tout court* to Batasuna in 2001.

The voting for HB provides us with three types of information. For one thing, by being a coalition that advocates the independence of the Basque Country, accepting the use of violence and including many convicted ETA members on its electoral roll, the votes for HB publicly express a disagreement with the fundamental rules of the political system, thus delegitimatising it.

In the second place, these ballots are closely related to attitudes towards terrorism. In 1979 Linz and his team (1986) surveyed the Basques about their perception of ETA members. They observed the rate of voters that considered ETA members as “patriots” (instead of “manipulated” or, even worse, “criminals”, or lack of expressed opinion): at least, six out of ten HB voters, a third of Euzkadiko Ezkerra (EE) voters (related to ETA’s “political-military” branch, self-dissolved in 1982), and one out of ten Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) voters. Applying these percentages to actual voters for every organisation, it came out that about 140,000 people (14 per cent of the active voters and 9 per cent of Basque enfranchised citizens) judged ETA militants favourably. This was the fertile ground for ETA. Nevertheless, in 1989 the perception of ETA members as patriots had decreased from 9 to 5 per cent (Llera 1994).

Finally, these votes give to some convicted terrorists and, more generally, to extremist politicians, access into the European, Spanish and Basque parliaments, Basque city councils, even some mayorships. These representatives and authorities often utilise their positions to challenge constitutional legality, obstruct the political process and/or allocate public resources, both in the symbolic and the material domains.

## 2.3 *Basque Exclusivist Identification*

At the basis of the extremist behaviour under consideration here lies a system of beliefs that constitutes a clear example of a political subculture. It is a consistent and stable system of rejectionist attitudes towards Spanish identity, while adhering

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<sup>4</sup> Apart from that, any attempt at weighting attacks would turn out quite controversial. The data on victims come from police sources.



to a Basque national identification, preferences for secession and an inclination to violence.

A quite reliable expression of Basque extremist subculture lies in the exclusive identification with the Basque Country, expressed on a bipolar scale of identification preferences, rejecting multiple social identifications.<sup>5</sup> As Linz and his collaborators (1986) have shown, these attitudes are closely associated with each other, both in the degree of “sovereignism” and the perception about ETA members. Specifically, the perception of ETA militants as patriots or idealists is much more likely to occur among citizens inclined towards Basque rather than national Spanish identification than among the rest. Moreover, the proportion of acquiescent attitudes towards ETA kept quite stable among the former during the 1980s (Llera 1994). Thus, although a part of these identifiers do not sympathise with terrorism, I will consider the percentage of people feeling themselves to be Basque only.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. Dimensions and Indicators of State Policies in the Basque Case

As stated above, the repertoire of state policies is extremely wide. Nevertheless, within this mixture, public order frameworks and responsive frameworks stand as two relevant dimensions. Let us now look at what the main hypotheses and indicators are.

#### 3.1 Public-order Policies

The public-order approach includes the development of police, military, judiciary and foreign policies. All of these have varied greatly in relation to Basque nationalist extremism. The better quantified ones are: (a) the number of arrests of alleged ETA members; (b) the number of imprisonments; (c) a ratio denoting police “efficiency”, denoting the scope of repression; (c) the number of arrests in France, a consequence of foreign policy and international judicial and police collaboration; and (d) the number of reintegrated terrorists, product of a judicial policy.<sup>7</sup> Even the type of political regime (autocratic or pluralist) can be included in this dimension inasmuch as the former usually have less constrictions

5 Subtle differences aside, the offered answer options and the essential meaning are constant. For example, “Which of the following sentences better express your feelings: ‘I feel Spanish only’; ‘More S. than Basque’; ‘As much S. as B.’; ‘More B. than S.’; or ‘Basque only?’”; DK; NA.

6 I have compiled and treated these data from the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, collecting frequencies in an almost exhaustive way and, often, resorting directly to the original data matrices. In addition, while trying to avoid mixing data from different sources, I have checked in some cases surveys with too reduced samples, and completed the series during deficit periods. Then, in order to clarify the trends, where there is more than one survey per year, I have resumed the series by calculating a monthly and quarterly estimated average for that year. I have also interpolated for some gap periods of up to two years long (Martínez-Herrera 2002).

7 The data on detentions, imprisonments and social reintegration draw from Domínguez (1999 and personal communication for updating), except for detentions in 2001, which are taken from the daily newspaper El País.

administrating force (Reinares 1998). Moreover, I shall consider what effects state terrorism against ETA and its environment has had.

However, there are also other factors that, despite being described qualitatively, cannot be overlooked. These are the increase in the relative strength of the civil police in the anti-terrorist struggle (*vis-à-vis* militarised units), the introduction of a regional police force (both in recruitment and direction) broadly replacing the state corps, as well as direct negotiations with ETA with a disposition to penal concessions.

Two general hypotheses can be postulated about the links between these interventions and extremist behaviour. In the first place, there is the position that the more efficacious – for example, in the number of imprisonments – the repression of violent conduct is, the likelihood of this conduct taking place would be reduced. Throughout history, this hypothesis has often been taken, in practice, as an assumption, from which a prohibition of any expression and organisation, even peaceful, of extremist views has followed. A second consequence of this would be a loss of influence of the core group of extremists over their social environment, and consequently the reduction of extremism among the population.

This proposition, however, can be substantially amended if one considers that the efficaciousness of the whole policy will be greater in so far the violence of the state is considered legitimate in the relevant contexts, such as in the social milieu where force is applied and an international environment where human rights and political freedoms are highly valued. This involves aspects related to the public image of the whole policy, such as accuracy in the application of force, type of agencies implementing it, and the respect of fundamental rights.

### *3.2 Responsive Policies*

Responsive policies appear in a plurality of domains. In relation to Basque extremism and its social background, an historical dynamic of political centralisation and decentralisation synthesises and articulates most of these sectoral policies. After the Spanish Civil War (1936–39), the winning side dismantled most Basque self-government institutions, minimising the responsive framework. Contrary to this, however, the Spanish Constitution of 1978 and the Basque Autonomy Law (with the rank of constitutional law) of 1979 enacted an extraordinary, unprecedented political autonomy.

This juridical frame establishes a Basque parliament and a Basque executive chosen by universal suffrage. The matters over which they have jurisdiction include education, health, culture and social services, as well as the collection of the most important taxes, a share of which is then passed on to the central state, after mutual agreement. Moreover, the Basque Autonomous Community (CAV) has also a regional police force that has largely taken over from that of the state. As

a consequence, its administration has a considerable volume of staff, physical assets and financial resources (Aja 1999).

Responsiveness, however, also stands up in other domains. Accompanying its organisational dispositions, the current Constitution also shows a symbolic intention, since it recognises the existence of “nationalities” within the “nation” (Spain) and establishes, as a doctrinal fundamental principle of *état de droit*, the protection and fostering of minority languages and cultures.

Another factor is the type of political regime. One of the motives that originated nationalist extremism was the dictatorial context, which in the collective *imaginaire* associated the idea of “Spain” with the idea of oligarchic domination (cf. Pérez Díaz 1993). It could thus be possible that the dissolution of such conditions has contributed to the mitigation of the rejection towards the Spanish political community. Even so, the type of regime entails a certain paradox, since in each one of the considered dimensions it would influence in an opposed direction: whereas autocracy has more “operability” in the administration of available force, it tends to provoke a greater rejection. The opposite, in both dimensions, seems to happen in a democracy.

In addition, the established electoral system particularly facilitates the representation of minorities that are territorially concentrated. Hence, during several legislatures, the parties ruling at the Spanish level (both social-democrats and centre-right parties) but lacking the absolute majority in Parliament have reached agreements on investiture, even on legislature, with the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV). There have also been many coalition governments in the CAV between this party and the social-democrats. In turn, both types of inter-partisan agreements have eased multilevel government collaboration (Aja 1999).

Prospects about an association between responsiveness and extremism can be briefly expressed as a negative hypothetical causal relation. It is possible to expect that every government action satisfying a need (articulated or not as a demand) or making up for a motive of reactivity in different domains (culture, self-government, economy) of the social bases of Basque extremism and the extremists themselves, will contribute to the reduction of both rejection towards Spain and support for insurgent nationalist violence.

The search of some Basque nationalist governments of an agreement with the organised extremist movement which could integrate the latter into the political system and thereby reducing its inclination to violence is also noteworthy. There have been dialogue round tables, meetings and certain agreements, including one concerning the investiture of the autonomic president – even if, for this investiture agreement in 2000, other reasons could have had a greater weight, the result of an advance in integration would not have differed greatly.

Finally, in a general manner, it could be possible to reflect on the way in which responsiveness occurs: whether it tends to be impelled from a unilateral cooperative willingness or, on the contrary, it is part of a bilateral exchange (coordination) process that, eventually, leads to a dynamic of reciprocal cooperation. Whereas the first interaction structure could allow for incrementalism and constant claiming from the insurgent movement and related parties, the latter could supply greater stability.

#### **4. Empirical Analysis**

In order to reject spurious causal relations and to unveil hidden relations, after observing graphically the evolution of the main variables, some standard multivariate regression analyses have been produced. In order to reach a relatively broad public technicalities have been reduced to the minimum in the main body of this article.<sup>8</sup>

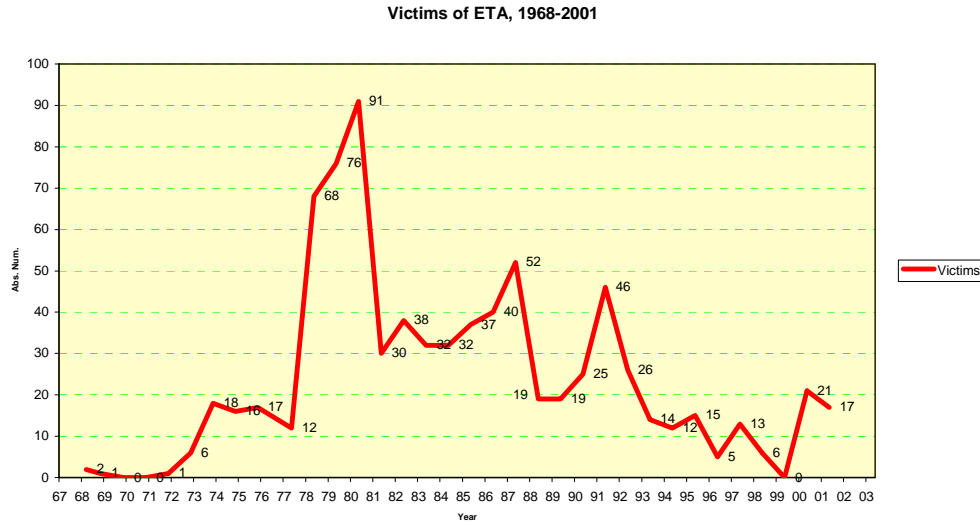
##### *4.1 The Development of Violence*

In this part of the analysis, I aim to explain changes in time-series of the number of physical victims of ETA attacks, including fatalities (deaths and casualties) from 1969 to 2001.<sup>9</sup> The maximum activity took place between 1978 and 1980, coinciding with the delicate period of transition to democracy, and the trend since then has been decreasing (see Fig. 1). The task is to explain this development through attending to the possible impact of the different state policies. In the first place, hypothetical relations between variations in fatalities and several public-order interventions will be examined, then those involving responsiveness. Table 2 summarises the main variables in the analysis and their hypothetical relations to the number of ETA's victims. It is important to note that the analysis only accounts for changes since 1979, due to the lack of prior information about several factors.

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<sup>8</sup> A more detailed report on the statistical procedures followed, including additional tests, and replications can be obtained from the author upon request.

<sup>9</sup> According to former social-democrat Spanish minister Professor Ernest Lluch, the first homicide occurred in 1961, when a baby died in an explosion of a device placed at a train stop. ETA, who disclose the death of an alleged policeman torturer in 1969, has not confirmed that information.

**Figure 1:** Victims of ETA, 1968-2001.

Source: Author's elaboration of police data

The first general hypothesis is that public-order policies should reduce violence directly by removing active actors and indirectly by increasing the subjective cost of those actions. Most prominent aspects of a punitive policy are arrests and imprisonments. Both variables are related to the number of victims. However, given a close correlation between imprisonments and arrests, but more information about the latter, after several trials I have chosen the arrests for statistical analysis.<sup>10</sup>

Understandably, police activity increases when a terrorist attack occurs. However, it would be more interesting to know the reverse impact of arrests on attacks. The foreseen relation should be negative and its effect should have, at least, a delay of one year, since the substitution of commands needs some time. This relation does not show up at the first glance.<sup>11</sup>

10 They are 25 observations against 19. Correlation between arrests and imprisonments in Spain between 1982 and 2000 is 0.93 ( $p=.000$ ). Taking their first differences, 0.85 ( $p=.000$ ).

11 None of the attempted specifications with delays at the bivariant level has given a significant negative coefficient. Apparently, repression could be behind violence much more than being the cause of its reduction. However, non-apparent relations that require a proper control to emerge often exist. Moreover, if first differences of both variables are considered (isolating variations between successive periods in the long-term tendencies of both series), the result is more consistent with the hypothesis:  $\text{VicDf} = -3.90 - 0.04 * \text{ArresDf} (-2)$ ; t-values:  $-1.00$  and  $-1.68$ .  $R^2 = 0.14$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.09$ ;  $N = 20$ .

**Table 2:** Variables Utilised in the Modelling of the Number of Victims

<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Observed period</i>	<i>Expected relationship</i>
No. of victims of ETA	1968–2001	
<i>Public-order variables</i>		
No. of arrested in Spain	1977–2001	Negative
No. of arrested in France	1975–2001	Negative
No. of reinserted	1982–1990	Negative
Algiers negotiations (1989)	Dummy	Negative
No. of victims of GAL and BVE	1978–1987	?
Bidart intervention (1992)	Dummy	Negative
<i>Responsiveness variables</i>		
Constitution	Dummy	Negative
% “Basque only” identifiers	1975–2001	Negative
<i>Exogenous Variables</i>		
Coup d’état (1981)	Dummy	Negative
Olympic Games (1992)	Dummy	Positive
ETA Truce in 1992	Dummy	Negative

However, an effect of the measurement method could influence the results. In an organisation with a hierarchical structure, the arrest of a leader should have a greater impact than, say, the arrest of a militant in charge of logistics. Because of this, a (dummy) variable representing the detention of major ETA leaders in Bidart (French Basque Country) at the beginning of 1992 has also been computed.<sup>12</sup> These arrests were the result of international cooperation, as French judicial police carried them out after an investigation by the Spanish Guardia Civil. Its outcome was a drastic decrease in fatalities, apparently definite, possibly due to the organisational problems this implied for ETA in the short and long run, as well as the information obtained by security agencies. Once its impact controlled, ordinary detentions in Spain show a negative effect with a delay of two years, though more than thirty arrests would have been required to save one victim (see Table 3, especially Model 5).<sup>13</sup>

12 The dummy Bidart scores 0 till 1990 and 1 since 1991, hence modelling an effect of the “abrupt-permanent” type (McClearly and Hay 1980).

13 The proper length of delays has been identified by means of the method of McClearly and Hay (1980). The main step has been to take the strongest cross-correlation between the number of victims and the number of arrests once the series were differentiated, since both of them were non-stationary.

**Table 3:** Regression of the number of victims of ETA

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	Coef.	t	Coef.	t	Coef.	t	Coef.	t	Coef.	t
Constant	111,77 ***	4,75	87,66 ***	21,72	113,26 ***	5,76	87,47 ***	22,09	87,38 ***	22,64
Arrested Spain(-2)	-0,03 **	-2,72	-0,03 ***	-3,33	-0,03 ***	-3,30	-0,03 ***	-3,52	-0,03 ***	-3,57
Constitution(-2)	-41,66 ***	-5,48	-32,81 ***	-5,08	-42,10 ***	-6,48	-33,29 ***	-5,45	-33,66 ***	-5,68
Basque Only(-5)	-0,41	-0,63			-0,45	-0,86				
Reinserted(-6)	-0,94 ***	-3,40	-0,76 ***	-3,62	-0,94 ***	-3,56	-0,63 ***	-2,89	-0,71 ***	-4,36
GAL-BVE(-2)	0,99 .12	1,72	0,91 *	1,92	1,02 *	2,03	0,91 *	1,93	0,93 *	2,02
Arrested France(-2)	0,00	0,06			0,00	0,08				
Coup d'Etat	-13,36 **	-2,28	-13,92 **	-2,32	-13,10 **	-2,49	-13,75 **	-2,33	-13,54 **	-2,36
Ajuria Enea Agreement							-2,38	-0,57		
Alger Negotiations	0,96	0,13	2,90	0,41						
Bidart	-43,16 ***	-5,23	-37,44 ***	-6,08	-43,33 ***	-5,57	-35,35 ***	-5,82	-36,52 ***	-6,56
Olympics	15,88 **	2,87	14,33 **	2,56	16,02 ***	3,08	14,77 **	2,62	14,21 **	2,63
Cease-Fire	-24,40 ***	-3,72	-22,74 ***	-3,10	-24,49 ***	-3,93	-24,65 ***	-3,02	-22,54 ***	-3,17
Sample(adjusted):	80-01		79-01		80-01		79-01		79-01	
N	22		23		22		23		23	
R <sup>2</sup>	0,97		0,97		0,98		0,97		0,97	
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0,95		0,94		0,95		0,94		0,95	

Sign.: \*\*\* .01; \*\* .05; \* .10; other in figures

Thus another relevant factor is international coordination and collaboration. For many years ETA benefited from a de facto sanctuary in France. For this reason Spanish governments have considered as a priority in their foreign policy to persuade the neighbouring country to prosecute the activities of the organisation and to extradite its activists. Even more, as Reinares (1998) and Hoffman and Morrison-Taw (1999) plausibly argue, this could become a key element of an efficacious antiterrorist policy. In 1983/84 a shift in French attitudes occurred that led to increasing anti-terrorist collaboration, in both the police and judicial domains (Domínguez 1999). However, apart from a clear effect of the intervention in Bidart, French ordinary arrests (from 1988) do not show a statistically significant effect (Models 1 and 3).<sup>14</sup>

Another device employed early by democratic rulers was the social reintegration of fighters. By the mid 1980s, Spanish governments thus supplied an outlet for almost 150 activists, most of them from the “political-military” ETA splinter group, which had unilaterally renounced its armed struggle in 1982. 86 amnesties were added between 1982 and 1990 (Domínguez 1999).<sup>15</sup> In this manner sanctions derived from past actions were removed, hence important opportunity costs that could cause them to persist were avoided. This policy could produce, moreover, other three delayed effects: (a) an interruption of active recruitment by this faction; (b) a modification, among “military” ETA members, of the perception of their

14 Correlation between arrests and imprisonments in France between 1988 and 2000 is 0.683. Taking their first differences, 0.677.

15 The handled data series on social reintegration considers 86 reinsertions, plus 10 amnesties conceded in 1990 (I do not have the data for when the remaining reinsertions and amnesties were produced).

opportunities structure; and (c) a lower probability of new recruits, owing to an effect of reduction of the critical mass of armed collective action. The regression analysis gives consistency to this hypothesis. For each reintegration, there seems to be a victim less six years later (Model 5).<sup>16</sup> However, the killing by ETA of a reinserted prominent former leader (“Yoyes”) in 1986 seems to be the main motive to terminate this policy (Domínguez 1999).

Nevertheless, during the democratic period assassinations of ETA members or their sympathisers were carried out or organised from the structures of the state, too. The so-called “dirty war” almost always took place in the French Basque Country and was aimed at eliminating ETA’s refuge there. Two periods can be distinguished. From 1978 to 1980, while the Unión del Centro Democrático, was in power seemingly uncontrolled members of the security forces who gave themselves the names of Batallón Vasco Español (BVE) and Triple A committed ten murders. From 1983 to 1987, under social-democratic rule, the newly arrived Grupos Anti-terroristas de Liberación (GAL) committed 28 homicides more, which caused several policemen and politicians to be imprisoned including one former Minister of the Interior (Domínguez 1999).

On this issue two competing hypotheses exist: on the one hand, the responsible policemen and politicians could have thought that the illegal violent campaign would restrain ETA, forcing it to be much more cautious in its French refuge. On the other hand, Reinares (1998) has argued that this actually provided new arguments to ETA when its social legitimacy was in crisis. The statistical analysis seems to agree with the latter, since every BVE, Triple A or GAL murder seems to produce, two years later, one ETA murder more than could have been expected without the intervention of this factor.

Other factors, albeit more difficult to operationalise, deserve equal consideration. In the political domain, the anti-terrorist pacts of Ajuria Enea (Basque Country) and Madrid were reached in 1988, establishing a broad anti-terrorist front that included all Basque nationalist parties except Herri Batasuna, besides statewide parties. Those agreements aimed at increasing collaboration between regional and Spanish police, and de-legitimising violence. A reduction of violence could hence be expected. However, the impact of this factor is not significant (Model 4).<sup>17</sup>

Another hypothetical factor consists of attempts of communication with ETA to negotiate reintegration of its members, a reduction of their sentences, or the attenuation of other consequences (particularly, transferring convicts to prisons near their social milieu), in exchange for an end to violence. The most important meeting between government and ETA representatives occurred in Algiers in 1989. Although a cease-fire was not reached even during the negotiations, the number of victims that year was relatively low. However, this decrease could also be

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16 The statistical significance of this appears when considering other factors simultaneously.

17 The Ajuria Enea and Madrid agreements are specified through a dummy (score 1 between 1988 and 1998). Both contemporary and delayed effects have been considered.



connected to a period of insurgent weakness, since there was an equal number of victims in 1988. The statistical effect of those talks is not significant (Models 1 and 2).<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, at about the end of 1998 and until the middle of 1999, ETA proclaimed a unilateral cease-fire, represented as being inspired by the Ulster agreement and driven by a will to negotiate.<sup>19</sup> Although the trend could suggest another period of operative weakness, its coefficient predicts far fewer victims than could be expected without the truce.

As seen above, various public order interventions account for a good deal of variation in the number of victims (especially, the arrests in Bidart and social reintegration). Even so, it is also possible to concede plausibility to other factors located in the political, structural and cultural frame. In this sense, an impact of Basque autonomy and democratisation should occur. Their clearer effect could be the above-mentioned self-dissolution of the “political-military” ETA. Along with the judicial facilities for reintegration of their activists, the realisation of a substantial part of their political goals, as much as an induction of incentives for putting into practice confrontational forms far less costly, could contribute to explaining the political integration of these activists and the social segment that supported them. Their subsequent devotion to the Euskadiko Ezkerra party seems to speak for this hypothesis. For this reason, a (dummy) variable considering that the Constitution and the Autonomy Law of 1979 (*vis-à-vis* the dictatorship and the centralised state), which should produce a substantial change in violence levels, has also been included in the displayed regression models. This factor seems to account for a change in level of thirty-four victims from two years later up to the present day.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, the “military” ETA cease-fire is the single variable able to account for the decrease in 1999. Police pressure and massive mobilisation in favour of peace occurring by the end of 1998 must be regarded against the background of that decision, but also some factors of a political nature.<sup>21</sup> Immediately after the cease-fire announcement, important agreements of institutional collaboration between EH, PNV and EA were reached, including the investiture of the President of the Basque government. The persistence of the truce for almost a year seems, to a large extent, to be due to that *rapprochement*.

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18 The dummy variable scores 1 in 1989.

19 The cease-fire in 1998 and 1999 has been operationalised with scores 0.25 and 0.75, respectively.

20 The length of this delay has been identified by the method of McCleary and Hay (1980); see note 11 above.

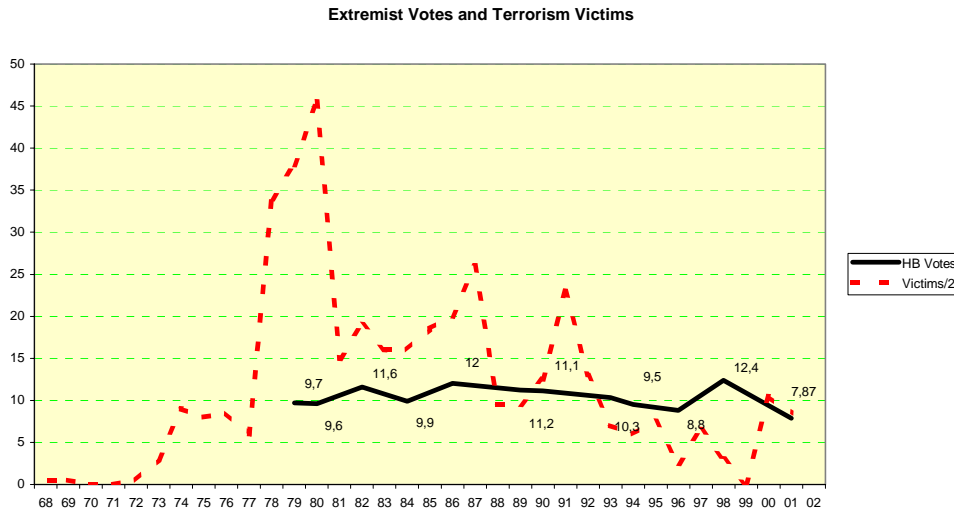
21 Peaceful mobilisation against terrorism tends to be useful in several ways. In some contexts, however, these actions can be useless, or even counterproductive. In a society divided into hermetic blocks, mobilisation of an opposed group can plausibly encourage insistence on and entrenchment of their own positions to counterbalance that mobilisation. Despite this, I agree that collective action increases the costs for those attracted to extremism, while helping to organise the collective action, both coordinative and cooperative, of those harmed by violence and its many other consequences.

Finally, during the process of identification of this model I observed a pronounced temporary reduction in 1981. My ex post interpretation is that this could be due to the failed *coup d'état* attempt of that year. On the one hand, the leadership of “military” ETA precisely sought polarisation, the coup being the most unequivocal expression at that time of its apparent success, and also an occasion for having a rest. On the other hand, many activists, especially those of the “political-military” ETA faction, could take stock of the situation and ask themselves whether a return to dictatorship was what they actually wanted. The important thing is that this factor accounts for a decrease of thirteen victims that year. Secondly, during the second half of 1991 and the first month of 1992 ETA carried out a huge campaign of attacks aimed at achieving negotiations with the government within the horizon of the Olympic games. This implies fourteen murders more than could have been expected in 1992.

It is worth ending this section by summarising its main findings. The number of ETA victims has decreased dramatically since the beginning of the 1980s, putting forward an unequivocal decreasing tendency. According to the statistical multivariate model supplied, this development is the result of a combination of certain responsive and public-order approaches: the twofold political change in establishing democracy and the Basque Autonomous Community (a responsive policy), police efficacy (ordinary arrests, and above all, the intervention in Bidart), and the reintegration of combatants (a flexible but persevering public-order policy). Another factor is ETA's cease-fire, which can either be considered as a consequence of political factors or – in a tautological but plausible manner – as a consequence of those very police actions. In turn, state terrorism seems to have produced more ETA homicides. The failed *coup d'état* in 1981 (as a theoretically exogenous variable) and the campaign of attacks before the Olympics add to these factors.

#### *4.2 Development of Basque Extremist Nationalist Voting*

From the statistical point of view, the vote for HB/EH is distributed along time in a discrete and irregular manner, and only supplies twelve observations, taking regional and general elections together. This deprives us of a regression analysis like the preceding one. Despite that, observing its development in a descriptive manner is still revealing.

**Figure 2:** Extremist Votes and Victims of Terrorism

Source: Author's elaboration of voting data of Diez-Medrano (1995) and [www.eleweb.net](http://www.eleweb.net); for violence, police data.

Observing the number of ballots in favour of this coalition out of the total electorate, a remarkable stability can be noticed, even though there is a certain downward slope from the mid 1980s (see Fig. 2). When compared with the number of victims of ETA (divided by two for a clearer display), there does not seem to be any correlation. No correlation is suggested either with most of the theoretical factors considered above. However, there is an exception of the ETA cease-fire (1998 and 1999) that, along with the agreements between the Basque nationalist parties, which included a campaign in favour of “national self-determination”, certainly improved the results for this organisation in the 1998 elections, and whose finishing relatively accelerated the smooth decreasing trend in HB electoral support.

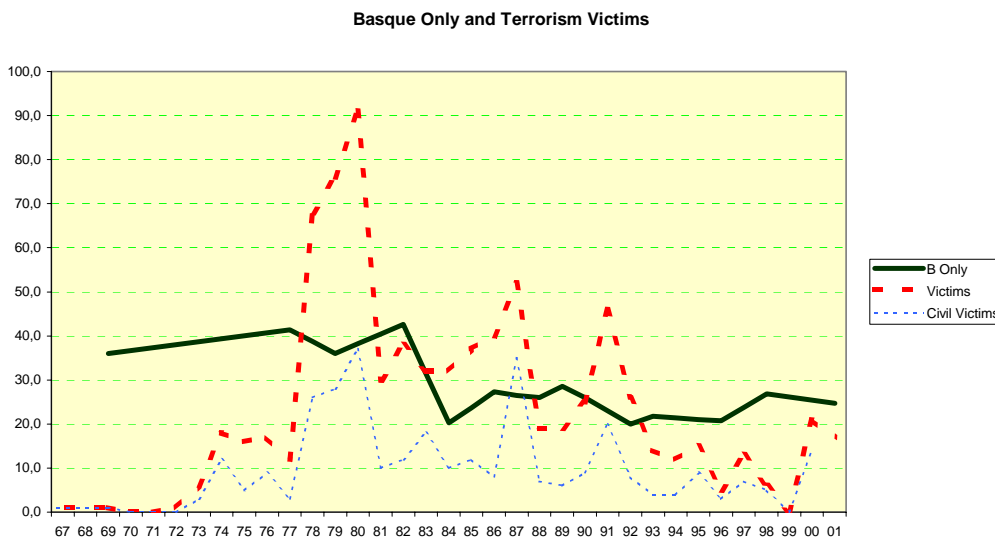
This core of nationalist extremist sympathisers remains quite unaffected in the face of the several factors considered, supporting the thesis of the existence of a strongly autonomous socio-political subculture and substructure autonomous within the social system. However, the frustration of a part of that movement's twofold expectations of peace and self-determination seems to explain that the greatest electoral success of HB/EH (1998) was followed by its worst result (2001) and a split from the coalition (Aralar) (Pallarés 2002).

#### 4.3 Development of Rejection towards Spain

The several policies in the face of extremism, adopted from the angle of both public order and responsiveness, could have an effect on the systems of belief from which behaviour then flows. Given this observation over more than twenty years

and its close correlation to extremism, it has been considered as an indicator of the rejection towards Spain within the personal feelings of belonging.<sup>22</sup> Its trajectory can be observed in Figure 3. Between 1969 and 1982 approximately 40 per cent of Basques expressed this attitude in a number of surveys. However, since 1984 the average of “Basque only” identifiers is around 25 per cent.

**Figure 3:** Basque Only Identifiers and Victims of Terrorism



Source: Author's elaboration of survey and police data.

As summarised in Table 5, it was initially previewed that contemporary arrests could foster the refusal towards Spain, while social reintegration of fighters and the establishing of Basque autonomy and democracy could reduce it. On the other hand, the effect of violence has also been considered, leaving it as an open question. Moreover, the proportions of immigrants and autochthons' children are also included, a necessary control due to the fact that the family geographical origin is the most discriminating variable at the individual level (Martínez-Herrera 2002).<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the analysis will only account for variations since 1979, due to the lack of prior information about most factors.

<sup>22</sup> It is noteworthy that the risk of “ecological fallacy” is very small. In the first place, a study by the present author demonstrates that the trends are practically equal for all generational cohorts. Secondly, immigrants' entries practically ceased by the late 1970s (Martínez Herrera 2002). Thirdly, here the proportions of immigrants and autochthons among interviewees are controlled.

<sup>23</sup> These variables do not project co-linearity, because they are complemented with the ratio of autochthonous children of immigrants and mixed couples. Although this is not the right place to discuss this, the surprising finding that the more immigrants, and fewer autochthons' children there are, the more frequent exclusivism is, seems to be consistent with theories of ethnic competence (see Díez Medrano 1994).

**Table 4:** Variables Utilised in Basque Exclusivism Modelling

<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Observed Period</i>	<i>Expected relationship</i>
per cent of “Basque only” identifiers	1975–2001	
<i>Public-order variables</i>		
No. of Arrested in Spain	1977–2001	Positive
Efficiency	1982–2000	Negative
No. of Reinserted	1982–1990	Negative
No. of Victims of GAL and BVE	1978–1987	Negative
Erzaintza	Dummy	Negative
No. of Victims of ETA	1968–2001	?
<i>Responsiveness variables</i>		
Constitution	Dummy	Negative
<i>Exogenous variables</i>		
% of Immigrants	1979–2000	Negative
% of 2nd Generation Basques	1979–2000	Positive
<i>Coup d'état</i> 1981	Dummy	Positive

Regarding the results of Models 1 and 3 (Table 5), institutional change (“Constitution”) leads to a decrease in the average of ten percentage points with a delay of five years,<sup>24</sup> while reinsertions and amnesties policies implemented between 1982 and 1990 show the predicted impact with a year’s delay. By contrast, the detentions in Spain show an insignificant effect (Model 1).

With regard to detentions it has been argued that their indiscriminate character causes hostility among the population towards authorities (Reinares 1998; Hoffman and Morrison-Taw 1999). For this reason, at the very least, it would be desirable to carry out arrests in a more selective manner, and sticking both to legality and what common people consider legitimate in their own social milieu. In turn, insurgent movements can, precisely because of this, try to increase support for their cause spurring on the state to apply its violence indiscriminately on the whole population. In the case of ETA, its doctrine of “action-reaction-action” is well known. What is significant is that the security agencies acted as if pursued by ETA during the dictatorship and till the mid 1980s. Part of the explanation rests on the bad organisation of the police information services at that time, so that interrogations were their main source of information in that sense (Domínguez 1999).

<sup>24</sup> The length of this delay has been identified by the method of McClearly and Hay (1980); see note 11 above.

**Table 5:** Regression of the percentage of “Basque only” identifiers

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Coef.	t	Coef.	t	Coef.	t
Constant	-34,90	-1,54	5,28	0,52	1,62	0,18
% of Immigrants	2,08 **	2,97	2,19 ***	4,01	2,52 ***	6,36
% of Autochthon Offspring	0,21	0,31	-0,67	-1,74	-0,81 **	-2,45
Constitution(-5)	-10,42 ***	-3,40	-9,59 ***	-5,18	-10,37 ***	-7,99
Arrested in Spain (-1)	0,00	1,40				
Efficiency of Arrests(-1)			-0,03	-0,71		
Victims of ETA (-1)	-0,13 ***	-4,47	-0,13 ***	-3,99	-0,14 ***	-5,23
Reinserted(-1)	-0,37 ***	-5,54	-0,33 ***	-5,95	-0,36 ***	-8,50
GAL-BVE(-2)	0,51 *	1,92	0,37 **	2,19	0,43 **	2,72
Coup d'Etat	4,35 **	2,38			5,14 ***	2,91
Etzaintza1(-1)	0,16	0,76				
Etzaintza1(-2)	-0,01	0,00				
Etzaintza1(-3)	0,51	0,29				
Etzaintza1(-4)	4,16 *	1,86				
Sample(adjusted):	79-00		83-00		79-00	
N	22		18		22	
R <sup>2</sup>	0,98		0,91		0,97	
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0,96		0,85		0,96	

Sign.: \*\*\* .01; \*\* .05; \*.10; other between brackets

Here an annual ratio between the number of detentions and the numbers of those finally processed has been calculated. This indicates not so much police efficacy as its “efficiency”, in the sense of avoiding unintended de-legitimising effects. Fig. 4 shows the improvement of security agencies ‘precision in this task. From this the prospect of an improvement in the legitimacy of the Spanish political system will follow.<sup>25</sup> However, substituting the number of arrests by their accuracy does not seem to have had an effect on Basque exclusivism (Model 2).<sup>26</sup>

There are also expectations that the substitution of the Spanish security forces in common police tasks of by another one called Ertzaintza, run from the Basque government, and generally made up of Basques, should reduce the social de-legitimising of Spain (cf. Aja 1999). For this I have considered the several phases of the deployment of this agency, created in 1981 and completed in 1995.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Arrests are now included in police efficiency.

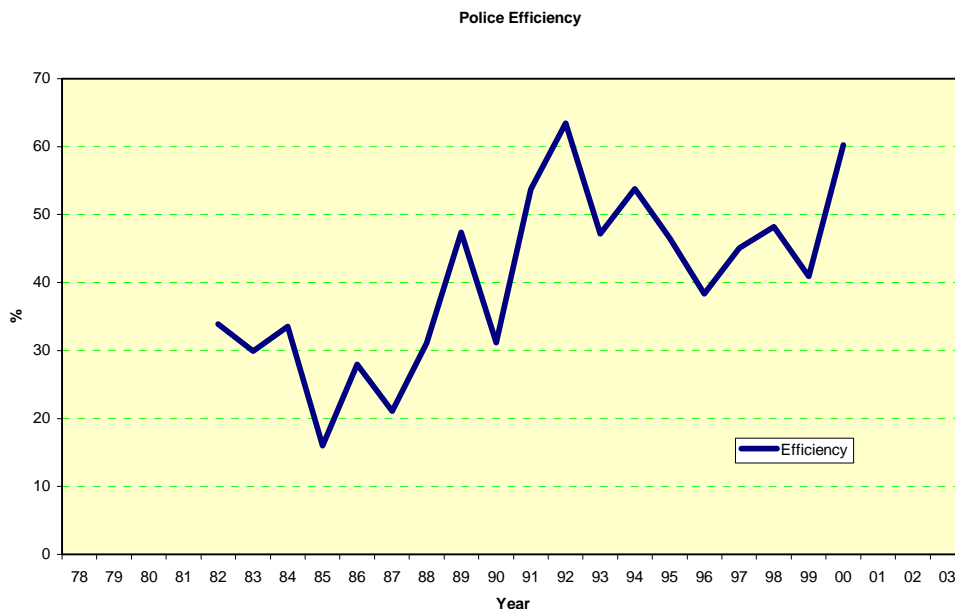
<sup>26</sup> A statistically significant effect is lacking, either contemporaneous or with a yearly delay.

<sup>27</sup> It is a battery of dummies where the baseline is the period when autonomic police did not yet exist; the first dummy encompasses the period from its creation in 1981 onwards; the second, from 1986, when four phases of deployment had been produced and twelve police stations had been created,

However, it does not seem to have had any significant effect (Model 1), though this result is perhaps due to the obvious shortcomings of the available information.

As for the “dirty war”, as it has been often argued (e.g. Reinares 1998), the killing of ETA members by security agents calling themselves BVE, Triple A or GAL supplied the extremist nationalist discourse with new legitimising arguments. The statistical analysis suggests that these murders increased the rejection towards Spain.

**Figure 4:** Police “Efficiency”



Source: Author's elaboration of data in Domínguez Iribarren 1999.

Finally, the impact of the number of victims of violence has been also examined. Paradoxically, this seems to reduce exclusivism (with an annual lag), eroding the bases of the secessionist movement against ETA's political strategy itself. In this sense, it is noteworthy that in the last few years, a growing part of the ETA's social basis questioned the practice of assassination. Pacifist methods might improve

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onwards; the third, from 1989, when this agency formally incorporated to the anti-terrorist struggle, onwards; the last one, from 1995, when the deployment was completed, onwards (Domínguez Iribarren 1999: 238–40).

Basque national pride and the morale of this societal segment, thereby renewing their trust in secessionism, and vice versa.<sup>28</sup>

To summarise, the rejection towards Spanish self-identification has been significantly reduced from the first half of the 1980s to the benefit of some sort of shared identification with Spain. In the light of the data managed here, the explanation seems to rest, above all, on responsive policies, namely, on the twofold process of democratisation of the Spanish political system and its political decentralisation, that provides the Basques with an extraordinary political autonomy. Furthermore, from the domain of public-order policies, the social reintegration of fighters renouncing armed struggle stands out for its effects on the Basques' national identification, while state terrorism became much more counterproductive. It is also worth underlining that the number of arrests since 1977, its "efficiency" since 1982, and the replacement of state-wide security agencies by others that are locally ruled and recruited, seem to be irrelevant in relation to the process of subjective integration of the Basques in Spain. In turn, the number of ETA victims seems to reduce, albeit moderately, the population's attachment to the idea of rejecting Spain.

## **5. Implications for Theory and Policy**

The addressing of Basque nationalist extremism has been based on policies placed in two dimensions: one of public order and one of responsiveness. By relying on available data with a multivariate statistical approach, much of the analysis has focused on the evolution of terrorist violence, and particularly on the efficacy of the struggle against it. The evidence is consistent with a combination of the perspectives of public order and responsiveness. Responsiveness, materialised in the twofold establishment of democracy and a Basque Autonomous Community, and a perseverant law-ruled but flexible order policy, materialised in the detention and the reintegration of fighters, appear as the main means. On the other hand, it is more difficult to attribute the effect of ETA cease-fire in 1998/99 to one or the other policy approach, since it is possible to attribute it to both previous police efficacy (interpreting the truce as a tactical retreat due to ETA deterioration) and the agreements between nationalists parties and ETA during that two-year period. Contrarily, state terrorism seems to have caused even more ETA violence. Therefore, this article backs a responsive policy that does not neglect public order in the sense of police efficacy but gives it more flexibility, allied with some generosity.

The study of voting has been limited by the nature of the data. However, the conclusion is that Basque nationalist extremist voting demonstrates great autonomy with respect to the factors under consideration. The social section closer to the

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<sup>28</sup> I have also tried to observe the effect of the cease-fire in 1998/99. However, in 1999/2000 the CIS did not ask for details of national identity, hence the data for that period are an interpolation, which prevents me from observing a hypothetical immediate effect.



extremist nationalist movement appears entrenched, firmly persistent within a hermetic socio-political subculture (and substructure). However, the twofold disappointment after two failures in pacification and in the widening of the nationalist front that happened around the end of 1999 seems to explain the certain fall-off of this vote in 2001 and some subsequent splits produced in the Euskal Herritarrok coalition.

Finally, the refusal of self-identifying with Spain has significantly decreased over the last twenty years. Analysing the matter within the theoretical frame of this article, the findings suggest that, above all, responsive policies of democratisation of the country and the instauration of the Basque autonomous community and of the flexible order policy of social reintegration of combatants have reduced that rejection. On the contrary, the so-called “dirty war” developed by the state and the failed *coup d'état* intensified it for a time. In turn ETA violence, ironically, has seemed to reduce it as well, against the very objectives of the movement supporting violence. However, although another factor usually considered important, namely the substitution of statewide by regional security agencies with regard to ordinary police functions, does not find support here, perhaps better data could do it. Thus, the combination of a relatively flexible order policy with the satisfaction of demands of the extremist movement's social milieu seems to explain the increase in subjective integration of the Basques in Spain.

In short, the results in this article support the hypothesis that a combination of public order and responsive policies, rather than an exclusive choice of only one of them, accounts for the mitigation of two basic dimensions of the Basque insurgent nationalist extremism. A one-sided public-order approach to public order, especially in the more rigid sense that it had in the past, seems to be counter-productive. In turn, a one-sided approach of satisfying demands without demanding in exchange a commitment to accepting certain rules (including limits) of the game, does not seem theoretically plausible.

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# Conflict Management in Northern Ireland\*

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*This article analyses the different policies employed by the British government to manage the conflict in Northern Ireland between the late 1960s and the conclusion of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. Following an introduction to the nature of the conflict, its conflicting interpretations and their consequences for conflict management strategies, success and failure of individual British strategies to manage the conflict are judged by the objectives sought to be accomplished, and by the responses of paramilitary organisations and of the electorate. Taking account of wider contextual factors with an impact on the development of the conflict, the article presents a comprehensive picture of the success or failure of each strategy examined and of the reasons for such success or failure. A concluding section outlines the major developments since 1998 and assesses the likelihood of success for this latest attempt at resolving the conflict.*

As a result of the partition of a formerly British colonial territory in 1920, Northern Ireland is constitutionally a part of the United Kingdom, yet geographically it is located on the island of Ireland. Consisting of six counties, its population is just over 1.5 million. Since partition, a conflict has existed between one section of Northern Ireland's population, which has sought the restoration of a united Ireland, and another section aiming to secure the status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom. This conflict about fundamentally different political aspirations has been exacerbated by inequalities between the two communities, by the wounds inflicted through violence, but also by increasing intra-communal diversity.

“Nationalist” and “Unionist” are terms that refer very broadly to the political divide in Northern Ireland. This political divide, to some extent, coincides with the religious divide into Catholic and Protestant congregations. Considering the

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conflict in Northern Ireland to be about conflicting notions of national belonging, I will generally refer to political rather than religious communities throughout the following.

Defining the Northern Ireland conflict thus as an ethnonational one has important implications for its analysis and for the assessment of various attempts to resolve it. Thus, causes for failure and success of such attempts need to be sought at more than one level. While the situation in Northern Ireland itself is of great significance, it must not be seen in isolation from the political processes in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. Increasingly over the past two decades, factors in the international context have become more and more important as well – international connections of paramilitary groups, the influence of diasporas, and the consequences of European integration. The complex interplay between these four factors can explain the dynamics of conflict development and the successes and failures of attempts at resolving it.

This article analyses the different policies employed by the British government to manage the conflict in Northern Ireland over a thirty-year period. Following an introduction to the nature of the conflict and its conflicting interpretations (and their consequences for conflict-management strategies), the most significant British policies are analysed in their objectives and assessed in their efficiency: conflict-management approaches aimed at containment (deployment of the army, internment, Diplock courts, intelligence and security policy, criminalisation of politically motivated terrorism, punctual measures aimed at economic and social development) and at resolving the conflict (Sunningdale, the constitutional convention, “rolling” devolution, the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and finally the peace process leading up to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement). Success and failure will be judged by the objectives sought with each policy, and by the response of paramilitary organisations (increase and decrease in conflict-related death tolls) and of the electorate (increase and decrease in votes for moderate and extremist political parties). In addition, the analysis will take account of other contextual factors having an impact on the development of the conflict so that a comprehensive picture emerges as to the success or failure of each strategy examined as well as to the reasons for such success or failure.

## **1. The Conflict about the Conflict and its Solutions<sup>1</sup>**

The conflict in Northern Ireland is primarily caused by incompatible conceptions of national belonging and the means to realise them. These two different conceptions are the goal of a united Ireland, pursued by Nationalists and Republicans, and the goal of continued strong constitutional links between the province and the United Kingdom, desired by Unionists and Loyalists. Historically, these two traditions have been associated with two different religions – Catholicism and

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<sup>1</sup> A more detailed overview of the various interpretations of the Northern Ireland conflict can be found in McGarry and O’Leary (1996).

Protestantism. These labels have played a significant role in the conflict as they have made possible the systematic pursuit of discrimination and segregation. Yet, this has not made the conflict an ethno-religious one. The same holds true for the issue of language. Although less significant, the equality and preservation of Gaelic and Ulster Scots has mobilised some sections of the population in Northern Ireland, yet overall, the conflict is not ethno-linguistic in its nature either. Similar cases could be made for other dimensions of this conflict, such as class or culture. What they all have in common is that they have polarised Northern Irish society for decades, leaving little room for cross-cutting cleavages, and eventually aligning all these various dimensions of the conflict behind two fundamentally different conceptions of national belonging.

Consequently, explanations of the Northern Ireland conflict vary widely between and within the two principal communities in Northern Ireland. Generally, a line can be drawn between external and internal accounts. The two external explanations are the Nationalist, and especially Republican, contention that the involvement of the British state into what is essentially described as internal Irish affairs is the major cause of the conflict; the alternative Unionist and Loyalist version is that the Republic of Ireland, in upholding its constitutional claim to the whole of Ireland in Articles 2 and 3 of its 1937 constitution, unnecessarily fuelled the existing tensions and encouraged the Nationalist/Republican tradition to strive for Irish reunification.<sup>2</sup>

Internal explanations, in contrast, see the roots of the conflict in a variety of factors within Northern Ireland itself by focusing on the implications of economic, religious, and/or cultural conditions in the province. Economically, deprivation and systematic discrimination of Catholics in Northern Ireland is the most common argument to account for the conflict alongside suggestions of economic opportunism of those who actually profit from the ongoing conflict. As an explanatory concept, religion is either seen as a phenomenon that deepens and aligns already existing social divides, making positive intercommunal relationships virtually impossible, or the religious fanaticism of certain sections within each community is interpreted as the driving force behind the conflict policies of each community. Cultural accounts, finally, treat the conflict as either inherited, that is, simply as the tradition of being in conflict with the other community and/or the authorities, or as an ethno-centrist clash of two fundamentally different cultures.

As a consequence of this conflict about the conflict, proposed solutions have differed as well. They range from full integration of Northern Ireland into the United Kingdom, to devolution, independence, repartition, and eventually to Irish unification, with a variety of different models for each of the major proposals.

Integration into the United Kingdom, defined as direct government by Westminster, is an idea mostly supported by various streams within the Unionist

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<sup>2</sup> As part of the Good Friday Agreement, the Irish Constitution has been modified in this respect.

community and based on an understanding of the conflict as caused by the “Irish dimension”. Full integration, in one version, aims at making Northern Ireland part of the United Kingdom such that it would neither be treated any differently from any other part of the country, nor would it have separate, or independent, or different institutions. Supporters of electoral integration propose a slightly different model. According to this model, the main British political parties should expand into Northern Ireland to create a party-political “normality” above sectarian divisions and thus eliminate or at least gradually realign Northern Irish political parties on other issues. Both of these models of integration suggested a modification of the system of direct rule introduced in 1972. However, there is a third group of integrationists who argue that, instead of attempting to change this system, it should simply have been made permanent.

In contrast to the various types of integration, the idea of devolving powers held by the Westminster government, has been favoured, in its various forms, and each of them with different degrees of support, by sections of both communities. While a return to simple majority rule, as it existed between 1921 and 1972, was, and still is, favoured among significant sections of the Unionist community, notably the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and some parts of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), this proposal enjoys no support from within the Nationalist camp. Majority rule with safeguards such as a bill of rights and an election system based on proportional representation is a more moderate approach which tries to take account of the historic concerns of the minority community. However, any significant support for such a solution has always been confined to Unionism. Another proposal for a devolutionist arrangement, supported by the explicitly cross-communal Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI), and to some extent by sections of the UUP, was power sharing, giving political representatives from both communities the opportunity to be involved in the executive and legislative branches of a new system of government in Northern Ireland. While the moderate Nationalist community, primarily the Social Democrat and Labour Party (SDLP), supported the idea of power sharing, they wanted it to be qualified by some sort of executive and legislative involvement of the Republic of Ireland, which was unacceptable to Unionists before the 1990s.

Somewhere between suggestions for integration into the United Kingdom and Irish reunification stand proposals for repartition along the major demographic divides in the west and southwest of the province, the independence of Northern Ireland from both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, and joint authority of both states over Northern Ireland. With the exception of joint authority, which found significant support among Nationalists, none of these proposals was attractive to a majority within either of the two major traditions in Northern Ireland.

In contrast, the idea of a united Ireland has always been very popular as a long-term goal in the Nationalist community. While moderate Nationalists favour its achievement by consent and peaceful, constitutional and democratic means,

Republican paramilitary groups, most notably the Irish Republican Army (IRA), have tried since 1921 to force the issue through violence. While this approach is rejected by large sections of the Nationalist community, a majority of the same community is nevertheless united over the desirability of the goal of Irish unification, which, in turn, is strongly opposed by Unionists and Loyalists.

Overall, this means that the demands made by both Unionists/Loyalists and Nationalists/Republicans stretch across the whole spectrum of output, regime, and community-oriented demands, which implies that government responses need to be similarly “comprehensive” and address these demands at all the levels at which they occur in order to achieve a sustainable settlement. As the following analysis will demonstrate, this is a lesson that has been learned the hard way by successive British governments, which at different times have emphasised different types of responses while sidelining or neglecting others.

## **2. Settling the Conflict? Constitutional Reform, Institutional Change, Security Policy, and Economic and Social Development in their Effectiveness over Time**

Despite a number of relatively far-reaching reforms to combat inefficiency and discrimination introduced under the short-lived premiership of Terence O’Neill in Northern Ireland in the 1960s, community relations deteriorated quite rapidly. Despite these reforms, Unionist control of the entire state apparatus in Northern Ireland continued and meant that the evolving conflict was at the same time one between two communities and between one community and the institutions of the state. The often barely disguised goal congruence between Unionist community and what was essentially a Unionist state, that is, to assure the continued membership of Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom with all means available, clearly limited the possibilities of any successful conflict management within Northern Ireland. The violent escalation of the conflict in the late 1960s was ample evidence of that failure, and it prompted the British government to take a more active interest in the province. As it became clear that local security forces and policy were unable to deal with the increasing violence, in 1969 the British government deployed troops in Northern Ireland. Despite this extraordinary move, violence continued and, in fact, increased. This led to the introduction of internment in August 1971, that is, the mass detention without trial of all terrorist suspects, who happened to be almost exclusively Nationalists. The subsequent alienation of the entire Nationalist community in Northern Ireland provoked a further upsurge in violence and an increasingly heavy-handed police and army response, which culminated in thirteen civilians being shot dead by the army on “Bloody Sunday” in January 1972. When, after this unnecessary escalation, the Stormont government refused to hand over control of security matters to the British government in London, the then Conservative Prime Minister, Edward Heath, suspended the Northern Ireland legislature on 24 March, 1972 temporarily for one

year. This marked the beginning of the British government's formally taking charge of conflict management and resolution policies in Northern Ireland.

### 2.1 *The Failure of the Sunningdale Process*

As direct rule had only been intended as a temporary measure, the government needed to develop an alternative system of government acceptable to both communities. In 1972 and 1973, it published *The Future of Northern Ireland: A Paper for Discussion* and subsequently constitutional proposals for the province. As a consequence, elections to a power-sharing assembly were held on 28 June 1973. Based on an electoral system according to which between five and seven candidates were elected by proportional representation in each of the parliamentary constituencies and on a turnout of 72.5 per cent, the elections returned 78 representatives of eight parties to the new assembly. The official Unionists won 29.3 per cent of the vote and sent twenty-four members to the assembly, followed by the SDLP with 22.1 per cent and nineteen successful candidates. Together with the APNI, which won 9.2 per cent of the vote and eight seats, they formed a coalition government (Northern Ireland executive), initially supported by fifty-two of the seventy-eight members of the assembly. The parties in the executive were generally in favour of both the idea of power-sharing in Northern Ireland and of a Council of Ireland to be established subsequently to address a long-standing demand by Nationalists for the recognition of the "Irish" dimension of the conflict.

Between 6 and 9 December 1973, representatives of the British and Irish governments and of the parties involved in the designated executive met at Sunningdale and discussed and agreed the setting up of the Council of Ireland. The provisions foresaw a Council of Ministers with executive, harmonising, and consultative functions, consisting of an equal number of delegates from the Northern Ireland executive and the Irish government, and a Consultative Assembly of thirty members from each of the parliaments, chosen by proportional representation on the basis of the single transferable vote system within each parliament. The council was to have executive functions, by means of unanimous vote in the Council of Ministers, in the fields of environment, agriculture, cooperation in trade and industry, electricity, tourism, transport, public health, sport, culture, and the arts. The conference also agreed on closer cooperation in security-related matters, on inviting the Council of Ireland to draft a human-rights bill, and on the possibility of a future devolution of powers from the parliament in Westminster to the Northern Ireland assembly and the institutions of the Council of Ireland.

This relative quick success on the constitutional front, however, had not prevented the British government from recognising that it still had a very serious security situation on its hands. Already in November 1972, provisions had been made in the Detention of Terrorists (Northern Ireland) Order to replace and formalise earlier arrangements on internment that had had their basis in the 1922 Special Powers Act. This was followed in 1973 by the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions)



Act and the 1974 Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act (PTA). The 1973 act introduced trial without jury for so called scheduled offences (i.e., terrorist activities), allowed confessions made under psychological pressure as admissible evidence, and banned the IRA, Sinn Féin (SF), and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) as legal organisation in Northern Ireland. Less than a year later, the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Merlyn Rees, announced that he would de-proscribe the UVF and SF (and phase out internment). The further tightening of anti-terrorist legislation in the 1974 PTA was a direct response to the Birmingham pub bombings, which had brought the conflict in Northern Ireland to Britain's doorstep. Under this 1974 act, the IRA was banned in the rest of the United Kingdom, it became possible to ban Northern Ireland residents from travelling to other parts of the United Kingdom, and police powers of search, detention and arrest were extended. Together, both acts provided the foundation of the government's criminalisation policy, that is, the attempt to treat politically motivated violence in Northern Ireland by means of the criminal justice system. In part, this was a recognition of the failure to address the violence-related aspects of the conflict through a wider framework of constitutional reform and institutional change only.

Ironically, the government's approach to security issues was subsequently vindicated, when the initially favourable situation for the implementation of the Sunningdale Agreement began to change dramatically early in 1974. The Westminster elections on 28 February had been turned into a referendum on power sharing and the Council of Ireland. Opponents of any change in the status quo united in a coalition called the United Ulster Unionist Council and won 51 per cent of the vote and eleven of the twelve seats in Northern Ireland, with the remaining seat going to the SDLP. Shortly afterwards, the newly established Ulster Workers' Council (UWC) called for new elections to the Northern Ireland assembly. When a motion against power sharing and the Council of Ireland was defeated in the assembly by forty-four to twenty-eight votes on 14 May 1974, the UWC called for a general strike. The following two weeks of the strike brought Northern Ireland to an almost complete standstill. The failure to break up the strike and the unwillingness to negotiate a settlement with the UWC, eventually, led to the resignation of the Northern Ireland executive on 28 May 1974. The assembly was prorogued two days later.

An analysis of the failure of this first attempt to settle the Northern Ireland conflict by means of constitutional and institutional change shows that the essential conditions for the success of power-sharing and a formal institutional involvement of the Republic of Ireland in the affairs of Northern Ireland had not been there, and even where they had appeared to be present, they were not stable enough to endure the pressures exercised on them (see Table 1). Even though the initial elections to the Northern Ireland assembly seemed to be a clear vote in favour of the new constitutional status, the reality of the situation in the province betrayed this superficial impression. The cooperating élites had a rather secure two-thirds majority *in* the assembly, but their influence and control over their (former)

electorate on the *outside* was far less permanent and stable, in particular as far as Unionists in favour of the new arrangements and the APNI were concerned.<sup>3</sup> Apart from this lack of popular support for the settlement, there was also an essential lack of institutional support and failure of politicians to implement counter-measures.

**Table 1:** Conditions Accounting for the Failure of the Sunningdale Process

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Northern Ireland: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Vulnerability of the pro-Agreement parties to out-flanking by radicals in both communities</li> <li>❑ Traditional mistrust of large sections of the Unionist community towards all issues involving cross-border cooperation</li> <li>❑ Recent high level of violent inter-ethnic conflict</li> <li>❑ Ability of the UWC to mobilise key sections of the Unionist community in a general strike against the agreement</li> <li>❑ Lack of popular and institutional support in defence of the agreement</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In the United Kingdom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Failure to take decisive measures in support of the pro-agreement parties in Northern Ireland and to defeat the general strike in its early stages</li> <li>❑ Public comments by leading government officials that fuelled anger and fear within the Unionist and Loyalist communities</li> <li>❑ Lack of effective responses to the Irish Constitutional Court's ruling on the compatibility of the Sunningdale Agreement with Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In the Republic of Ireland: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Irish Constitutional Court's ruling on the compatibility of the Sunningdale Agreement with Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution</li> <li>❑ Lack of sufficient assurances by the Irish government to respect the constitutional status of Northern Ireland</li> </ul> </li> <li>• International context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Lack of any pressure on, or incentives for, the conflict parties to resolve their differences through compromise</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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While British government policy was not to negotiate with the UWC, there were no decisive steps taken to prevent the breakdown of public life in Northern Ireland, nor was enough done to counter the pressure from UWC activists on members of the Unionist community who were opposed to the strike or undecided about their role in it. Sunningdale was not a treaty between two states, but an agreement reached between two states and a selected number of political parties. In order to work, it would have required substantial support for those partners in the

<sup>3</sup> The votes both received in the 1974 Westminster elections were cut down to one third of the results they had achieved in the 1973 assembly elections. Part of the explanation lies in the different voting systems applied in both elections – PR for the assembly and plurality rule for the Westminster elections.

agreement who were most vulnerable to pressures from within their own communities. The pro-agreement parties in both blocs were vulnerable to outflanking by hard-core radicals. That this support for pro-agreement politicians was not forthcoming was one of the major reasons for the failure of this early attempt to resolve the Northern Ireland conflict.

## 2.2 *The Anglo-Irish Agreement*

After the failure of Sunningdale, the British government on the one hand continued its security policy alongside a number of programmes aimed at economic development and an improvement of community relations in Northern Ireland, such as the creation of a Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights (SACHR) and of the Fair Employment Agency (FEA) in 1975. On the other hand, it also initiated several initiatives aimed at a new constitutional status for Northern Ireland. In the wake of Sunningdale, these initiatives were either strictly limited to Northern Ireland itself, such as the 1974/75 constitutional convention, or, when they had cross-border implications, they did not involve any Northern Irish political parties, as with the Anglo-Irish Inter-Governmental Council set up in 1981. Yet, none of these initiatives were successful.

Between 1982 and 1984, another attempt was made to resolve the conflict by reintroducing devolution. A scheme of “rolling devolution” involving an assembly and a committee-style executive was proposed. The devolution of powers to elected representatives in Northern Ireland was supposed to be gradual and subject to seventy per cent agreement in the assembly to be elected. As, from their point of view, there was no adequate recognition of the Nationalist tradition in Northern Ireland, both Sinn Féin and the SDLP participated in the 1982 elections on an abstentionist platform and subsequently boycotted the assembly, which meant the failure of “rolling devolution”.

In 1983 the Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour parties of the Republic of Ireland met with the Northern Irish SDLP in Dublin at the so-called New Ireland Forum to discuss the future of Northern Ireland from their viewpoint.<sup>4</sup> Until February 1984, eleven public meetings were held. In September 1983 delegates from the Forum visited Northern Ireland and in January 1984 the United Kingdom. In conclusion, the Forum produced a report, in which the members gave their analysis of the problem, examined the situation in Northern Ireland, and presented three potential solutions to the conflict – a unitary Irish state, a federal or confederate Irish state, and joint British-Irish authority over Northern Ireland. While this report represented a determinedly Nationalist interpretation of the conflict and its solutions, it nevertheless signalled to the British government that there was a certain basis for negotiation and compromise.

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<sup>4</sup> Invitations had also been issued to Unionist parties, who decided to boycott the event.

Given this and a British desire to involve the Republic of Ireland in the responsibility of running the province amid the continuously serious security situation, alongside a growing Irish interest to stabilise the situation in the north and to prevent a spill-over of violence and/or Republican influence, a new and joint approach to the conflict seemed possible. Furthermore, the British government realised that it had failed in its campaign to criminalise Republicanism, and both governments faced a growing appeal of Republican ideology within the Nationalist community, in particular after some highly publicised hunger strikes by Republican paramilitary prisoners in the early 1980s. Based on these considerations, both governments decided to enter into negotiations, which resulted in the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985.

The agreement dealt with a variety of issues, including an intergovernmental conference, a human-rights bill for Northern Ireland, security and judicial policies, and cross-border cooperation on economic, social, and cultural matters. The British attempt to address concerns of the Nationalist community was apparent, but as the implementation of the agreement did not effect any dramatic or even particularly noticeable change, the reward for the United Kingdom alienating the Unionist community was not forthcoming as expected. Although the influence of Sinn Féin within the Nationalist camp decreased towards the end of the 1980s, activities of the IRA did not decline. On the contrary, hard-line Republican opposition to the United Kingdom and IRA activity<sup>5</sup> increased. The declining electoral appeal of Sinn Féin in the mid-to-end 1980s set in motion a rethinking process among the leadership of the party. Eventually, the party moved away from its unqualified support for, or at least tolerance of, Republican violence to become one of the participants in the peace process(es) of the 1990s that finally brought about the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

The more severe repercussions, however, originated from within the Unionist community. In a survey of January 1988, 55.1 per cent of those who declared themselves as Protestants voiced their opposition to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, compared with 7.9 per cent of those describing themselves as Catholics. Only 8.7 per cent of Protestants opted more or less in favour of the agreement, as compared with 31.8 per cent of Catholics who did so. Asked in the same survey for the biggest problem in Northern Ireland, only 8.6 per cent of Catholics, but 29.5 per cent of Protestants pointed to the Anglo-Irish Agreement (Hamilton 1990). Strong Unionist opposition failed to secure one of the central objectives of the British government, namely to strengthen moderate Unionism in the form of the UUP and marginalise the radicals of Ian Paisley's DUP. Similarly unsatisfactory were the working of the Inter-Governmental conference, the envisaged cross-border cooperation, and the hoped-for improvement in the security situation.<sup>6</sup> The latter

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<sup>5</sup> This was also facilitated by a shipment of weapons and equipment from Libya.

<sup>6</sup> According to RUC statistics, the three years prior to the Anglo-Irish Agreement produced 195 deaths, 2,342 injuries, 716 shooting incidents, 607 explosions, and 1,708 armed robberies. The respective figures for 1986-1988 are: 247 deaths (+27 per cent), 3,661 injuries (+56 per cent), 1,132 shootings (+58 per cent), 661 explosions (+9 per cent), and 2,253 armed robberies (+31 per cent).

especially prompted a further tightening of security policy on part of the British government. The 1989 revisions to the PTA introduced a variety of measures to enable security forces to combat money-laundering by terrorist organisations. Already in 1988, a broadcast ban had been pronounced against Sinn Féin, and the Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Act of the same year had allowed judges trying terrorist offences without juries to draw, in certain circumstances, inferences from defendants' refusal to answer questions in court. This and the so-called supergrass trials of the early and mid 1980s were meant to make the judicial battle against terrorism in Northern Ireland more effective at a time when the government came under increasing criticism over an alleged "shoot-to-kill" policy by security forces in Northern Ireland.<sup>7</sup>

Although the Anglo-Irish Agreement had by no means failed as badly as Sunningdale, it did also not produce a significant breakthrough in the political stalemate in Northern Ireland (see Table 2). In some respects, such as the increasing alienation of parts of the Unionist community, it even worsened the situation and prevented major progress for years to come. However, although the stalemate continued, it did so on a different level. The agreement had shown that solutions were possible to which the two governments and a significant part of the Nationalist community could agree. This had a positive long-term effect on the opportunities to reduce the level of violent conflict and to increase the chances of achieving an inclusive agreement for the future of Northern Ireland, because it made uncompromising, hard-line Unionism less credible as a strategy to preserve Northern Ireland's link with the United Kingdom and, similarly, indicated that there was overwhelming support for constitutional, non-violent politics within the Nationalist community, the latter finding its expression in the poor electoral performance of Sinn Féin in the late 1980s, early 1990s. The limited success that the Anglo-Irish Agreement had in the short term was mostly a consequence of it being reached and implemented at intergovernmental level.<sup>8</sup> This being a recognition of the situation in the mid 1980s, in which cross-communal agreement was virtually impossible, the British and Irish governments also had to accept that no stable and durable solution would be possible without the involvement and consent of the parties representing the two traditions in Northern Ireland. However, despite continued economic and social-development programmes administered in the province, there is little evidence that the British government made any significant progress throughout the 1980s to facilitate such involvement and consent. On the other hand, the more decisive move towards a bilateral approach in

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This increase was not necessarily a direct effect of the Anglo-Irish Agreement as O'Leary and McGarry (1993, 270-273) have shown.

<sup>7</sup> An inquiry set up to investigate this accusation found evidence that there was a conspiracy within the security forces to pervert the cause of justice, but no charges against anyone were ever brought.

<sup>8</sup> It needs to be mentioned, however, that the Irish government continuously consulted with the SDLP, while the British government had no contact with Unionists during the negotiations. This contributed to the strengthening of Unionist fears and the weakening of moderates. At the same time, this Irish policy was not unanimously embraced in the Republic either – both Ian Gow and Mary Robinson resigned over this issue. (Personal communication from Antony Alcock.)

the 1980s did provide part of the foundation upon which the peace process in the 1990s could be built.

**Table 2:** Conditions Accounting for the Limited Success of the Anglo-Irish Agreement

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the United Kingdom:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Deliberate attempt to address concerns of the Nationalist community, even at the price of alienating sections within the Unionist community</li> <li>❑ Failure to deliver on key aspects of the agreement, such as the Inter-governmental Conference, cross-border cooperation, and an improved security situation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In the Republic of Ireland:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Upholding of the constitutional claim to Northern Ireland and its perception by Unionists as a threat to a non-negotiable aspect of their identity</li> <li>❑ Failure to deliver on key aspects of the agreement, such as the Inter-governmental Conference, cross-border cooperation, and an improved security situation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In Northern Ireland:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Exclusion of the political parties in Northern Ireland from the formal negotiation process</li> <li>❑ No opportunity for the people of Northern Ireland to approve of, or reject, the agreement</li> <li>❑ Disappointment among Nationalists and Republicans about the lack of visible improvements in their situation</li> <li>❑ Increased hard-line Republican resistance against British policy</li> <li>❑ Radicalisation of the Unionist community in opposition to the “Irish” dimension of the agreement</li> <li>❑ Continued high levels of violent inter-ethnic conflict</li> </ul> </li> <li>• International context:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Lack of any pressure on the conflict parties to resolve their differences through compromise</li> <li>❑ Support of the IRA through Libyan arms shipments</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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### 2.3 *From the Joint Declaration to the Good Friday Agreement*

The end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s signalled new opportunities to move towards an inclusive settlement of the Northern Ireland conflict. In 1988, the UUP, the DUP, the APNI, and the SDLP had met in Germany without achieving any breakthrough. Talks had also been held between the SDLP and Sinn Féin in the first half of 1988. More significant than these talks, however, was an announcement by Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams in March 1989 that he sought to establish Sinn Féin as a democratic political movement in pursuit of self-determination. This and the public acknowledgement by the then Northern Ireland secretary Peter Brooke that the IRA could not be defeated militarily, that he would not rule out talks between the government and Sinn Féin should IRA violence

cease, and that the British government had no selfish strategic or economic interests in Northern Ireland paved the way for the Brooke/Mayhew talks, involving the UUP, the DUP, the APNI, and the SDLP. These talks were held between March 1991 and November 1992 during a break in the operation of the Anglo-Irish intergovernmental conference to ensure the participation of the Unionist parties. The arrangements for the talks provided for three different strands – relationships in Northern Ireland, between the province and the Republic, and between the two governments. While talks about the relationships in Northern Ireland came to a standstill in June 1992 because there was little sign of compromise and the gap between the different positions seemed, at the time, impossible to bridge, the parties nevertheless agreed to move on to talks about Strand 2. With no major progress made, and decreasing willingness to cooperate on the part of the DUP, the process eventually collapsed when the resumption of the Maryfield secretariat<sup>9</sup> prompted the Unionists to withdraw from the talks.

In April of the following year it was revealed that Gerry Adams of Sinn Féin and John Hume of the SDLP had held a series of talks for two years discussing the contributions their parties could make to bringing about peace. After their talks had become public, they issued a first joint statement in April and a second one in September, which became known as the Hume/Adams Initiative, and outlined the Nationalist and Republican views of a road to peace. Unionist opposition to the Hume/Adams Initiative coincided with a new series of violent attacks by and against both communities, of which an IRA bomb on the Shankill Road in Belfast was the most costly in human casualties.<sup>10</sup> It was also revealed that there had been secret talks between the British government and Sinn Féin. At the end of the year, following a series of meetings Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds and British Prime Minister John Major issued the Joint Declaration.

The significance of the declaration, and the single most important difference to the Sunningdale and Anglo-Irish Agreements, was the fact that the British government acknowledged that it was “for the people of the island of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively, to exercise their right of self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South, to bring about a united Ireland, if that is their wish”. The explicit reference to the notion of self-determination had a highly symbolic value, positively connotated for the Nationalist community, with more negative implications for the Unionist tradition.

The Joint Declaration and its emphasis on inclusiveness was, to some extent, not an entirely new policy. However, it had been reinvigorated at the beginning of the 1990s with the creation of the Community Relations Council and the inauguration of “Education for Mutual Understanding” and revised curricular guidelines emphasising the cultural heritage of both communities. Also falling in this period

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<sup>9</sup> This was part of the permanent institutional framework set up by the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

<sup>10</sup> On Thursday 21 October 1993, ten people (nine civilians and one IRA member) were killed when a bomb exploded prematurely in a fish shop on the Shankill Road in Belfast.

was the launch of another initiative – Targeting Social Need – which required all departments of the Northern Ireland Office to monitor policy impacts and distribute their funds in a way that, wherever possible, those areas and communities most in need of social and economic development would benefit most. Further confidence-building measures followed early in 1994 when the broadcast ban on Sinn Féin was lifted in the Republic of Ireland, when Gerry Adams was given a visa to enter the USA, and when the Northern Ireland Office issued a statement in which it addressed questions by Sinn Féin concerning the Joint Declaration. Although Sinn Féin remained critical of the Declaration, a secret meeting was held between the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Patrick Mayhew, and a Sinn Féin delegation in August, which was followed by an IRA announcement about a “complete cessation of all military activities” on 30 August.

While relations between the Nationalist community and its representatives, on one side, and the Irish government, on the other, grew closer, the increasing degree of alienation between the DUP, which represented the more radical sections of Unionism and Loyalism, and the British government became apparent when John Major cut short a meeting with DUP leader Ian Paisley on 6 September 1994. Ten days later, the British government lifted the broadcast ban on Sinn Féin. On 13 October 1994, the Combined Loyalist Military Command announced its own ceasefire. At the end of the year, the British government, represented by officials of the Northern Ireland Office, began a series of talks with those political parties of Northern Ireland that had affiliations with paramilitary organisations, namely Sinn Féin (9 December 1994), the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), and the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP) (both on 15 December 1994).

Thus, within a year of the Joint Declaration, ceasefires had been announced by the major paramilitary organisations which did not cover a specified period of time (as they had in the past), but seemed, if not permanent, at least longer-term. In addition, the British government had entered into official and formal talks with representatives of the paramilitary organisations of both communities, and Sinn Féin was heading back into the political process, being recognised as a necessary partner by both governments. Although Unionist opposition to the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the Joint Declaration remained, the conditions to move forward towards a lasting settlement seemed rather good.

Realising that, despite these favourable conditions, the causes of conflict in Northern Ireland had not been removed, the British and Irish governments developed *A New Framework for Agreement*, which proposed structures for North–South (or, Northern Ireland – Republic of Ireland) and East–West (British–Irish) institutions and sought to integrate the earlier suspended three-strand talks with a new effort of peacemaking (O’Leary 1995, 867). Both governments recognised that a settlement would not be possible without significant and substantial compromise from all parties to the conflict and reaffirmed the basic positions of the Joint Declaration – the principles of self-determination and consent, peaceful and democratic means as the only acceptable political strategies and tactics, and the



recognition of the fundamental “rights and identities of both traditions”. In addition, the British government proposed its own ideas for a possible solution of the conflict within Northern Ireland in a document called *A Framework for Accountable Government in Northern Ireland*.

Throughout 1995, contacts and official talks continued between the British government and Sinn Féin, and although no major progress was achieved an eventual settlement seemed to have come closer.<sup>11</sup> However, the end of the IRA ceasefire in February 1996 and the resumption of (Republican) violence throughout the region, primarily targeting the security forces, and in England, proved to be a major setback. Despite this, the British and Irish governments announced the beginning of all-party talks, following elections to them in May, for June 1996. Although Sinn Féin polled a record 15.5 per cent of the vote in these elections, the party was not allowed to take its seats at the negotiation table,<sup>12</sup> because IRA violence continued and the party did not sign up to the Mitchell principles of non-violence.<sup>13</sup> The multi-party talks commenced as planned but did not bring about any significant results in their first year.

The election of a Labour government in the general elections in May 1997, the emphasis Labour put on reaching a settlement in Northern Ireland, and the perception, especially among the Nationalist community, that there was a new approach in Northern Ireland policies opened new possibilities. In July 1997, the IRA renewed its ceasefire. After Sinn Féin had signed up to the Mitchell Principles, the party was allowed into the multi-party talks at Stormont, which, however, resulted in the DUP and the United Kingdom Unionist Party walking out. After more than six months of intensive negotiations with several setbacks, eight political parties in Northern Ireland and the British and Irish governments agreed to what has become known as the Good Friday Agreement.

This agreement established a 108-member legislative assembly elected by popular vote in Northern Ireland according to the Single Transferable Vote system. From within this assembly, an executive is elected according to the d’Hondt principle. A First Minister and a Deputy First Minister, who are also elected by the assembly,

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11 Part of the reason for the lack of progress was the British insistence that the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons had to precede Sinn Féin’s admission to formal multi-party talks. This pre-condition was set by the Tory party after the negative response by Unionists to the Framework Documents. It somehow reflects the wider problems of the Conservative government and its decreasing majority in Westminster (O’Leary 1997, 672).

12 The Conservative Party (by then in office for seventeen years) had suffered for a long time from what O’Leary calls the “talking and not talking to terrorists syndrome”. However, under the government of John Major, parts of the Tory elite became more flexible. While they did not effectively exclude the possibility of negotiations with Sinn Féin (before the 1997 elections were called), their initial over-extensive talks about talks and the burdening of the latter with the decommissioning issue did not have a positive impact on the peace process. (O’Leary 1997, 672f.).

13 Former US Senator George Mitchell played a major role a chair of the negotiation process. In general, American influence (both the Irish-American lobby and the Clinton Administration), and pressure, on all negotiating parties was among the facilitating factors of the Good Friday Agreement.

lead this executive. The assembly has legislative powers in a wide variety of areas, ranging from economic policy and health care to education and tourism. The Northern Ireland Secretary retains a certain measure of power, most crucially in the area of security and justice policy. Within the assembly, qualified majority voting procedures can be invoked on critical issues. The assembly can also veto any proposal by the North–South Ministerial Council that was set up by the Good Friday Agreement to coordinate cross-border cooperation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. A new British-Irish Council operates on a similar premiss and includes delegates from the two national governments and the three regions within the United Kingdom that have devolved powers (Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales). The British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, subsuming both the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council and the Intergovernmental Conference established under the 1985 Agreement, was given the task to promote broad and substantial bilateral cooperation between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the apparent comprehensiveness of the Good Friday Agreement and its endorsement by what, at the time, looked like overwhelming majorities in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, the question remains whether it provides an effective framework for a permanent resolution of the conflict. In order to answer this question, it is useful to compare the Good Friday Agreement to previous settlement attempts both in terms of their content and the context of their implementation.

Starting with the first of these issues, a comparison between the Sunningdale Agreement, the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the Good Friday Agreement reveals that there is a core of issues dealt with by all or some of these agreements in a similar manner (see Table 3). However, there are also a number of differences between the agreements. These relate, in the first place, to the signatories of each of the agreements. While the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland have signed all of them, the prior negotiation process did only on two occasions (Sunningdale and Good Friday Agreements) involve political representatives from the communities in Northern Ireland. Clearly, the participation has been far broader in the 1997/98 talks process and, even more significantly, included representatives of paramilitary organisations alongside the mainstream constitutional parties.

A second difference concerns the comprehensiveness and detail of the arrangements. Here the Good Friday Agreement, as it is based on an inclusive negotiation process, addresses the greatest number of issues and lays down, for most of these issues, in great detail the operational procedures for their implementation.

A third difference is the character of the implementation process. Only the Good Friday Agreement was proposed to the people in the Republic of Ireland and in

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<sup>14</sup> A more detailed discussion of the Good Friday Agreement can be found in O'Leary (1999).

Northern Ireland in a referendum, while all the others were more or less implemented by government decree, thus giving the people a sense of imposition. The majority with which the Good Friday Agreement was endorsed by the population north and south of the border and across the communities in Northern Ireland is so far unprecedented in the history of the conflict. However, it remains to be seen how long this majority will persist under the strains to which the agreement has been, and continues to be, subjected. At present (summer 2001) these pressures seem to have become overwhelming, and the future of the institutions established by the Good Friday Agreement is in serious doubt.

**Table 3:** Agreements on and in Northern Ireland, 1973–98

	Sunningdale Agreement	Anglo-Irish Agreement	Good Friday Agreement
Signatories	United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, UP, SDLP, APNI	United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland	United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, UUP, UDP, PUP, NIWC, L, APNI, Sinn Féin, SDLP
Consent principle	X	X	X
Self-determination	O	O	X
Reform of the policing system	X	X	X
Early release of prisoners	X	(X)	X
Bill of Rights	X	X	X
Abandonment of violence Required	X	X	X
Security cooperation	X	X	X
Cross-border cooperation	X	X	X
Recognition of both identities	O	X	X
Intergovernmental cooperation	X	X	X
Institutional role for the Republic of Ireland	X	X	X
Cooperation between Unionists and Nationalists required	(X)	X	X
Inter-island cooperation	O	(X)	X
	Devolution of powers	X	X

Key: X – issue addressed; (X) – issue implicitly addressed; O – issue not addressed.

Fourth, since the beginning of the final round of the negotiation process in the autumn of 1997, the major paramilitary organisations on both sides have upheld their ceasefires.

Fifth, there is the question of what alternative arrangements would be put in place in case the Good Friday Agreement fails. A comparison with the situation that existed after Sunningdale reveals that the incentives for both communities to find a *modus vivendi* within the agreement structure are more compelling than they were before. The failure of Sunningdale meant the reintroduction of direct rule, an outcome that many in the Unionist community preferred to power sharing. A failure of the Good Friday Agreement, however, will most likely mean that the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland will move towards a form of shared sovereignty over Northern Ireland. Clearly, this is not an outcome that Unionists would prefer. Nationalists, however, would also lose out, as the influence of both communities on the decision-making in Northern Ireland would decrease to a level well below to what they have at present achieved. In particular, Sinn Féin, unless the party substantially increases its representation in the Irish parliament would lose an unprecedented power base.

Finally, the international context, especially the involvement of the United States, has been a critical factor in the success of the Good Friday Agreement to date. In particular, the international mediation of the talks process and the simultaneous and subsequent American pressure on, and incentives for, all parties in the process to come to an agreement and to implement it has played a significant role in the maintenance of the peace process. The vital role of former U.S. Senator George Mitchell in brokering the Belfast Agreement in 1998 and in overcoming the decommissioning impasse in 1999, as well as the support from the European Union must not be underestimated in their importance. The early endorsement of the post-agreement peace process in the form of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to John Hume and David Trimble was similarly significant. It assisted in encouraging the pursuit of a long-term and stable peace in Northern Ireland and in putting the spotlight on the developments in the province in which the major protagonists can less and less afford to fail in their efforts to seek accommodation. The involvement of the European Union since the mid 1990s has made a positive contribution to economic development and, through various development projects, to an improvement of inter-communal relations.

The conflict in Northern Ireland in all its different aspects and dimensions and in its dependence on factors that can be influenced only to a limited degree by the political actors in Belfast, London and Dublin is not certain, but also not unlikely, to be resolved within and by the institutional framework set out in the Good Friday Agreement (see Table 4). The reason for this uncertainty is that the Good Friday Agreement, as any other agreement reached before, is dependent upon the cooperation and compromise of two communities with fundamentally different political aspirations and identities. These, of course, may change over time

provided opportunities and incentives for such change exist, at present, however, there is little indication that such change has in fact taken place.

**Table 4:** Conditions Accounting for the Possibility of the Good Friday Agreement

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Northern Ireland: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Inclusion of all parties in the negotiation process based on a prior election</li> <li>❑ Opportunity for the people of Northern Ireland to approve the agreement</li> <li>❑ Protection mechanisms built into the agreement to address concerns of both communities</li> <li>❑ Ceasefires of all major paramilitary organisations considerably reducing the level of violent inter-ethnic conflict</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In the United Kingdom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Change in government, fresh and more determined approach to achieve an inclusive settlement</li> <li>❑ Pressure on all sections of the communities in Northern Ireland to compromise</li> <li>❑ Greater degree of flexibility on key issues, such as Sinn Féin participation in the negotiation process, decommissioning, early release of prisoners, etc.</li> <li>❑ Negotiation of a new Anglo-Irish Agreement</li> <li>❑ Reiteration that any change in the constitutional future of Northern Ireland was subject to the approval of the people of Northern Ireland</li> <li>❑ Close cooperation with the government of the Republic of Ireland and the international chairmanship of the talks</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In the Republic of Ireland: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Preparedness to withdraw the constitutional claim to Northern Ireland</li> <li>❑ Pressure, particularly on Sinn Féin and the IRA, to appreciate the opportunity presented by the multi-party negotiations in 1997/98</li> <li>❑ Active steps to address concerns of the Unionist community in Northern Ireland</li> <li>❑ Close cooperation with the government of the United Kingdom and the international chairmanship of the talks</li> <li>❑ Opportunity for the citizens of the Republic of Ireland to approve the agreement</li> </ul> </li> <li>• International Context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ International, particularly American, involvement in the talks process, including official and unofficial pressure on both communities to come to a settlement and on the IRA to maintain its ceasefire</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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### **3. Assessing the Success and Failure of British Conflict Management and Resolution Policies in Northern Ireland**

The overwhelming evidence from the previous discussion suggests that conflict management, that is, the containment of the conflict at a low intensity level, has been successful, while at the time of writing this essay (spring 2002) an actual resolution of the conflict seems as far away as ever before. In other words, punctual policy measures in the areas of economic, social and education policies in combination with an increasingly sophisticated and successful, albeit not uncontroversial, security policy has managed to keep levels of violence and civil unrest low. At the same time constitutional reforms and institutional changes have not been able to foster a common vision of Northern Ireland's future acceptable to both communities so that, measured in terms of support for political parties, unification with the Republic of Ireland remains the goal of a majority of people within the Nationalist community. Taken together, punctual policy measures and the failure of constitutional and institutional changes have hardened and deepened the existing divisions in Northern Ireland.

#### *3.1 Reducing the Level of Violent Conflict*

By global standards of death tolls in violent inter-ethnic conflicts, the one in Northern Ireland has not been very intense. Between 1969 and 1994, when the first IRA and Loyalist ceasefires were announced in the current peace process, about 3,200 people had been killed.<sup>15</sup> Yet, these statistics tell only half the story. Apart from killings, paramilitaries have committed many more acts of violence, ranging from beatings, to kneecappings, to intimidation and directed both at the alleged "enemy" and at members of their own communities. These many forms of violence have had a significant impact on community relations in Northern Ireland, whose examination can provide a good understanding of the degree to which the conflict as a whole has affected society, and thus in turn has created the very conditions under which governments had to formulate and implement policies aimed at conflict resolution.

As Figures 1 and 2 in the Appendix indicate, British government policy has largely succeeded in reducing the level of violence, especially of fatalities, in Northern Ireland. Despite some setbacks, this has been the predominant trend since the mid-1970s. Yet, the impact of violence on the conflict cannot only be measured in these terms. Used by the paramilitary groups of both communities to realise their goals as well as by the British state and its institutions to preserve the status quo and prevent further escalation, violence has not only been a symptom of the incompatibility of communal identities in Northern Ireland, but has also intensified existing tensions and kept them at a high level for the past thirty-some years. Violence in Northern Ireland is not only a matter of paramilitary groups, the army and the police. It also occurs in the form of spontaneous and organised rioting and clashes between infuriated mobs and between them and the security forces. While

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<sup>15</sup> According to Fay et al. (1998) the death toll was 3,225.

these are better understood in terms of occasionally deteriorating relationships between sections of the two communities, the campaigns of Loyalist and Republican paramilitary organisations are a valuable source for analysing the reasoning of the radical factions in each community.<sup>16</sup> This will provide a deeper understanding of how the conflict as such is perceived and how the actions of the respective “other” side are interpreted. Such an analysis can then be used as a further element in an informed assessment of the situation in Northern Ireland and the reasons for success and failure of various government policies to find a solution.

### *3.2 Republican Violence*

Violence by Republican paramilitaries has accounted for the greatest number of deaths by far in Northern Ireland as a whole. This overall picture, however, needs to be clarified in a number of important ways. Between 1969 and 1994, the time when the first ceasefires were announced in the recent peace process, Republican paramilitaries were responsible for more than half of all lives lost in the Northern Ireland conflict (58.8 per cent), and killed more than twice as many people as their Loyalist counter-parts, and about six times as many as the security forces. Almost exactly one half of their victims (50.7 per cent) were members of the security forces, about half from within and half from without Northern Ireland, but more than one-third (37.1 per cent) were civilians, including not only innocent bystanders but, for example, also contract workers for the “Crown forces”. Loyalist paramilitaries, apart from the security forces, the other direct adversaries of Republican paramilitaries, accounted for only 1.5 per cent of their victims, while infighting among Republican paramilitary organisations and splinter groups caused significantly more casualties (10.7 per cent).<sup>17</sup>

As regards the religion of Republican paramilitaries’ civilian victims, the greatest number of their victims were Protestants (37.4 per cent), which amounts to almost three-quarters of all Protestant deaths in the conflict. At the same time, they were responsible for most of the deaths among people whose religion could not be established (89.4 per cent) or among people from outside Northern Ireland (94.6 per cent). A quarter of all Catholics killed between 1969 and 1994 died as a direct consequence of Republican paramilitary action.

Even though the status of victims – civilian, Loyalist or Republican paramilitary, security forces – suggests a non-sectarian campaign against selected target groups with a high number of civilian bystanders killed, a look at the religion of these

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16 According to O’Duffy (1995, 741f.), “changes in the intensity and targets of Republican violence can best be explained by three instrumental factors related to political context: strategic objectives, the effects of security policy (upon opportunity structures), and the organisational strength of each paramilitary group.”

17 A part of this high number of self-inflicted casualties has also been caused by prematurely exploded bombs and accidents in the production and handling of explosives.

victims reveals that, in its results, Republican paramilitary warfare had a sectarian outcome.

### 3.3 *Loyalist Violence*

Loyalist paramilitaries have also contributed significantly to the overall death toll in Northern Ireland since 1969. Of all victims killed in the conflict, Loyalist paramilitary violence has accounted for 29 per cent of them, of which 87.5 per cent were civilians. The next highest percentage of victims were from within the Loyalist paramilitary community itself (6.5 per cent), followed by Republican paramilitaries (4.3 per cent), and members of the security forces (1.2 per cent), most of them (91 per cent) from Northern Ireland.

As regards the religion of their victims, Loyalist paramilitaries killed almost half of all Catholic victims in the conflict (49.6 per cent), which equals more than three quarters (75.5 per cent) of all victims of Loyalist paramilitary violence.

These figures qualify the Loyalist campaign “in defence of their ancient rights” as one that has been strongly sectarian and very indiscriminate in the selection of targets and demonstrates the very wide concept of who and what is perceived as threatening.

The three major Loyalist paramilitary organisations are the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), which has also operated under the cover name Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF), and the only recently founded Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF). UDA and UVF have operated under the Combined Loyalist Military Command (CLMC) and generally coordinated their strategy. However, during the final months of the talks process in 1997/98 the joint Loyalist command structure collapsed.<sup>18</sup>

### 3.4 *Violence and Community Relations*

Violence, and its increasing acceptance as a means to achieve political objectives among some sections of both communities, has had an impact on community relations and vice versa at three levels – segregation, polarisation, and alienation.<sup>19</sup> Violence may not be the primary cause for, or result of, any of these three dimensions of community relations, yet there is a strong interrelation between them.

Segregation, although it has been a long-term trend, has increased as a result of inter-communal violence. This was the case especially in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but on a lower level it has continued in subsequent decades. While intimidation from the “other” community and fear of violence have contributed to

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<sup>18</sup> This has also resulted in the emergence of splinter groups that have not called ceasefires, such as the Red Hand Defenders.

<sup>19</sup> For a specific case study on these three aspects of community relations see Hamilton (1990).



increasing residential segregation, peer pressure from within one's own community has also played a role in establishing the largely segregated structure of residence in Northern Ireland today. Segregation has important consequences in societies affected by inter-ethnic conflict because it makes it easier to develop and maintain stereotypes about the other community and its intentions towards one's own community. Because of this, there will be even less understanding for the position of the other community, which, in its rejection, increases homogeneity and solidarity within one's own community. On this basis, violence against this other community becomes more easily acceptable and justifications for its use are more readily available.<sup>20</sup>

This is also the basis upon which polarisation grows. The degree to which both communities differ in their perceptions of the nature of the Northern Ireland conflict and its potential solutions is influenced by more or less informed judgements about the other community and its political agenda. Violence and the interpretation of violent acts is likely to reinforce polarisation. At the same time, the stark polarisation between the two communities over what could be an acceptable and desirable future for Northern Ireland, and the inability to reach an agreement by peaceful means increased the preparedness of some sections within each community to engage in violence to either achieve their goals or, at least, prevent the other community from achieving theirs.

The lack of political progress over almost thirty years of violent conflict and the inability of the security forces to provide protection from acts of terrorist violence has also contributed, though unequally, to an increasing alienation of both communities from the British state and its institutions. While this has always been a feature of the relationship between the Nationalist community and the Stormont and later the British political systems, alienation has also affected the Unionist community, especially after the Anglo-Irish Agreement and after the recent Good Friday Agreement. The sense of being left alone with unresolved problems has triggered processes in both communities in which paramilitary organisations have partly replaced organs of the state. This is more obvious and widespread within sections of the Nationalist community, where paramilitaries not only "protect" their community from sectarian attacks, but also police it and provide a number of community "services". Unionist alienation from the United Kingdom has its origins in the early days of partition in the 1920s when national political parties withdrew from campaigning in Northern Ireland, thus encouraging the build-up of an almost exclusively sectarian party system for decades to come. Likewise, the creation of a parliament in Northern Ireland was not the preferred option of Unionists because it marked Northern Ireland as different from the rest of the United Kingdom,<sup>21</sup> yet having a parliament elected by popular vote was at the same time perceived as a safeguard against a British sell-out, and thus still an option with a fairly positive connotation.

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20 One other feature of segregation in Northern Ireland is the maintenance of a confession-based school system with only few opportunities for integrated schooling.

21 Personal communication from Antony Alcock.

Community relations that are based on the historic experience of inequality, deprivation and discrimination are more likely to form the background against which intercommunal violence can develop and escalate. In general, the acceptability of violence has not only affected inter- but also intracommunity relations. Feuds between rival paramilitary groups in each community, such as the Loyalist turf wars of summer 2000, and punishment beatings, expulsions of individuals and entire families, intimidation, etc., have contributed to a deterioration of social relations, decline in trust in the effectiveness of state institutions to perform essential functions, and widespread disillusionment with the political process in Northern Ireland for several decades. With regard to civil society, Northern Ireland shows levels of social and political participation, cooperation and trust *within* each community that are quite high compared to those *across* the communities, that is, civil society is similarly polarised and organised along the fundamental ethno-nationalist fault line as the rest of society. In fact, one can speak of two separate civil societies in Northern Ireland. This, too, is part of the complicated sociopolitical background against which conflict resolution policies in Northern Ireland must be judged.

The declaration of ceasefires by the major paramilitary organisations on both sides in 1994 and 1997 and their continuation despite opposition to the Good Friday Agreement from sections within both communities indicates that there is a growing understanding that it will not be possible to achieve any stable settlement of the conflict through violence. This, however, does not mean that the structure of community relations in Northern Ireland could not facilitate a renewed violent escalation of the conflict despite the settlement achieved in the Good Friday Agreement. Even though this may not lead to the same degree of guerrilla and sectarian warfare as before 1994, community relations could continue to deteriorate further as a result of, and cause for, violent eruptions. As the Good Friday Agreement is built largely on the assumption of the possibility and desirability of intercommunal cooperation, and as its implementation crucially depends upon the cooperation of both communities, violence has the potential to destroy the agreement, mostly because of the structure of communal interests and the design of the institutional process envisaged by the agreement.

### 3.5 *Establishing the Conditions for an Inclusive Political Process?*

Any durable solution, except for partition and/or resettlement (inasmuch as these can be considered durable), for a conflict such as the one in Northern Ireland requires a minimal, but broad consensus among political leaders and the population at large about the desirability of a common future.

The balance sheet of British government policy in this respect is very mixed, and at the bottom line has not achieved its main goal. Despite managing to achieve fairer representation of both communities at all levels of the political process, government policy over the past thirty-some years failed to create the foundation upon which such a broadly supported political consensus could emerge. On the contrary,

an analysis of the electoral process provides evidence, especially from recent elections, which suggests that the two communities as a whole support more hardline political parties and are politically moving even further apart (see Figures 3 and 4 in the Appendix).

### *3.6 The Balance of Political Power between and within the Communities*<sup>22</sup>

The two most important trends in relation to the balance of political power in Northern Ireland over the past thirty years are that the political influence<sup>23</sup> of Nationalist parties has grown at the expense of the Unionist community and that, at the same time, the diversity of political parties within all the three party blocs – Nationalist, Unionist, and cross-communal – has increased.

The Unionist bloc consists of the UUP, the DUP, and a number of smaller, and over time different, Unionist parties. The two main contenders for the Nationalist vote have been, since 1982, the SDLP and Sinn Féin. Between 1973 and 1982, the SDLP competed with a number of smaller Nationalist parties. Before 1973, the Nationalist Party, the Republican Labour Party, and occasional independent candidates ran in elections. The most persistent element of the cross-communal bloc has been the APNI. Until 1977, its main competitor was the Northern Ireland Labour Party, after 1981, it was the Worker's Party, and more recently the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition. Other parties whose position can not be determined on the confessional/non-confessional scale, such as the Natural Law Party, have also contested elections. The general trend of vote distribution among the three major blocs is exemplified in Graph 3 in the Appendix.

The increasing diversification within each of the blocs has had different effects. In the Unionist bloc, it has meant that the UUP, although it has just managed to retain its leading position (except in European elections, where the DUP has always been the strongest party), has lost votes and seats, mostly to its main contender, the DUP. This split of Unionist votes had the effect that the SDLP, for a brief but significant moment in Northern Ireland's recent history, became the party with highest percentage share of votes in the 1998 assembly elections.

In the Nationalist camp, the SDLP was unquestionably the stronger performer in elections until 2001, and has always, with some exceptions in the 1980s, won more than 20 per cent of the vote. Sinn Féin after a good performance in the early 1980s, lost significant electoral support after the Anglo-Irish Agreement, but could regain most of it and win new voters from the early 1990s onwards when the party managed to establish itself more credibly as a democratic, non-violent political

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22 All data from [http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/United\\_Kingdom/issues/politics/election/elect.htm](http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/United_Kingdom/issues/politics/election/elect.htm). A good overview of party-political developments between 1969 and 1989 is O'Leary and McGarry (1993, 185ff.).

23 Measured in seats won in elections at local, provincial, and parliamentary level.

force.<sup>24</sup> In both the 2001 Westminster and local-government elections, Sinn Féin has out-pollled the SDLP and has become the strongest political force in the Nationalist community.

The APNI has always been the dominant party in the cross-communal sector, yet its electoral performance has only been satisfactory at local and provincial level and after the introduction of the Single Transferable Vote system (STV). The Worker's Party never had a share of more than 3 per cent of the valid vote. The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, however, has managed to win seats both in the 1996 Forum and in the 1998 assembly elections.

In general, the balance of power has been altered at local and provincial levels towards fairer representation of the Nationalist and cross-communal vote with the introduction of STV. In parliamentary elections, the plurality system is still in operation for the eighteen Northern Ireland constituencies, but the overall increase in Nationalist votes has brought about a more balanced representation of the electorate in Westminster as well. On the other hand, the success of Sinn Féin and the DUP at the expense of the more moderate and consensus-oriented SDLP and UUP suggests that attitudes towards the most recent settlement attempt – the Good Friday Agreement – are hardening in both communities. Against this background it is unlikely that the Good Friday Agreement will become the long-term acceptable framework in which the Northern Ireland conflict will finally be resolved for good.

#### **4. Afterword: Northern Ireland since the Beginning of IRA Decommissioning**

Faced with the imminent collapse of the political institutions created by the Good Friday Agreement, and under considerable national and international pressure following the terrorist attacks on the USA and the arrest of three alleged IRA members in Colombia, Sinn Féin publicly called on the IRA in October 2001 to begin decommissioning its weapons, which was followed by a subsequent announcement of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning that a first set of arms and other equipment had been put beyond use. The importance of this development can hardly be overestimated for the future of the peace process in Northern Ireland. While it remains to be seen whether this momentum in decommissioning can be sustained and whether it alone is enough to bring the peace process to a successful conclusion, there is some evidence in other recent developments that strongly suggests so. It is also significant, and indicative of further progress on the decommissioning front in the near future, that the British government proposed an amendment to the current decommissioning legislation, extending the amnesty period from the end of February 2002 initially until 2003, with possible further extensions until 2007. Despite Unionist and Conservative

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<sup>24</sup> Evans and O'Leary (1997, 674) identify two sources of Sinn Féin support – politically the party has benefited from being identified with the “first peace process”, demographically Sinn Féin's strength is that a large number (60 per cent) of voters belong to the 18-34 age cohort.

concerns that this would take the pressure off the paramilitary groups, the Northern Ireland Decommissioning (Amendment) Bill was passed in the House of Commons on 9 January 2002 and sent to the House of Lords.

The overall trend of decreasing violence has been reversed since 2001 with acts of spontaneous and organised mob and paramilitary violence once again becoming a feature of Northern Irish politics. The months-long stand-off and clashes between Catholics and Protestants around the Holy Cross Girls' Primary School in the Ardoyne area of North Belfast, the murder of a Catholic postal worker and the, subsequently withdrawn, UDA threat against Catholic schoolteachers and postal workers, as well as the threat by the Republican paramilitary group INLA against the Protestant staff at a Marks & Spencer distribution centre testify to the persistence of sectarian divisions and mindsets in Northern Ireland. However, what is equally, if not more significant, is that the murder of the Catholic postal worker was not only widely condemned by representatives from all major political parties in Northern Ireland, but also led to thousands of people from both communities participating in rallies against hatred and sectarianism. By the same token, it is interesting to observe that the clashes around the Holy Cross Girls' Primary School did not spread across Northern Ireland or even led to wider rioting in Belfast itself, as similar events did over the past years. What this indicates is a decreasing acceptance of violence as a useful means to achieve political aims, and as such points to a change in the overall political climate in Northern Ireland over the past several years that must not be underestimated in its significance for conflict resolution.

In terms of party politics, one of the smaller Unionist parties, the Ulster Democratic Party, which functioned as the political arm of the Ulster Defence Association was dissolved in late 2001, because its strategy of support for the Good Friday Agreement was at odds with the withdrawal of support for the peace process by the UDA. The significance of this development lies in the implication that opponents of the peace process become increasingly marginalised even within their own communities, but that they at the same time become more radicalised, too.

Finally, the decreasing confidence of Unionists that the Good Friday Agreement provides a workable framework within which the Northern Ireland conflict cannot only be managed but eventually also be resolved can be assumed to have driven UUP leader David Trimble to ask the British government to call a referendum on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland (i.e. on Irish reunification) to coincide with the next Northern Ireland Assembly elections due in May 2003. If the referendum is called, it is relatively unlikely that a majority of people will vote for Irish reunification. The real issue, therefore, is how much the referendum campaign and result will polarise and radicalise the two communities. From this perspective, the toughest test for the success or failure of conflict resolution in Northern Ireland is yet to come.

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Appendix

Figure 1: Conflict-related Deaths in Northern Ireland 1969-1998  
[Source: Sutton Index of Deaths]

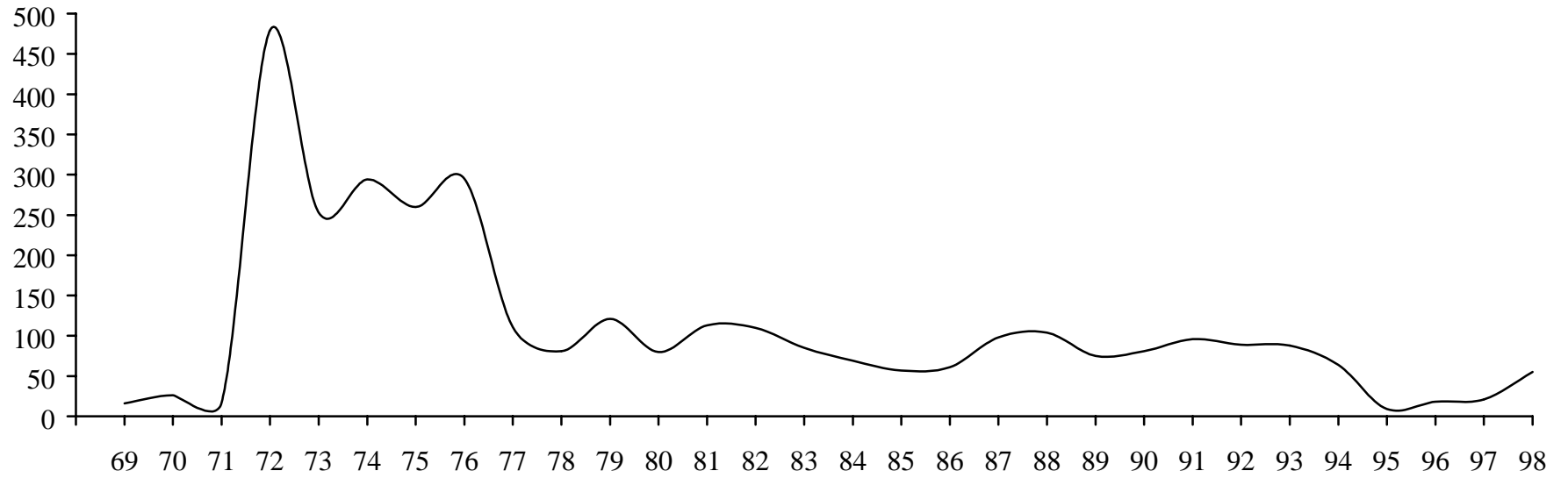
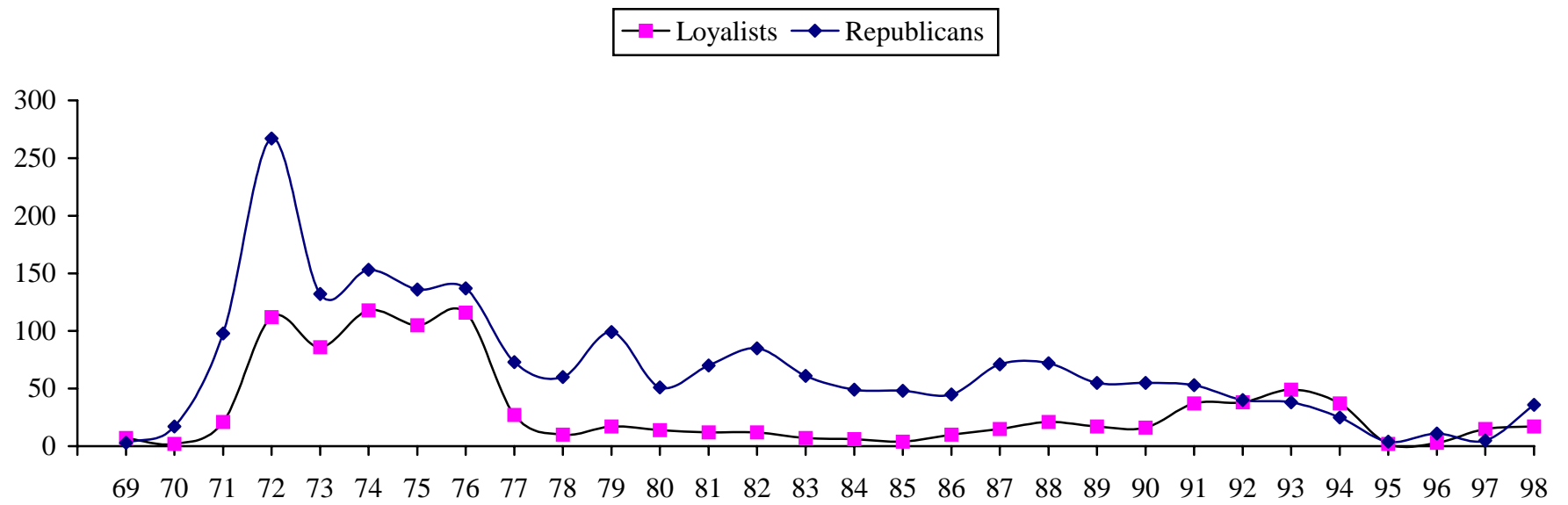




Figure 2: Conflict-related Deaths in Northern Ireland 1969-1998 by Paramilitaries  
[Source: Sutton Index of Deaths]



**Figure 3: Performance of the Three Major Party Blocs in Northern Ireland 1973-2001**

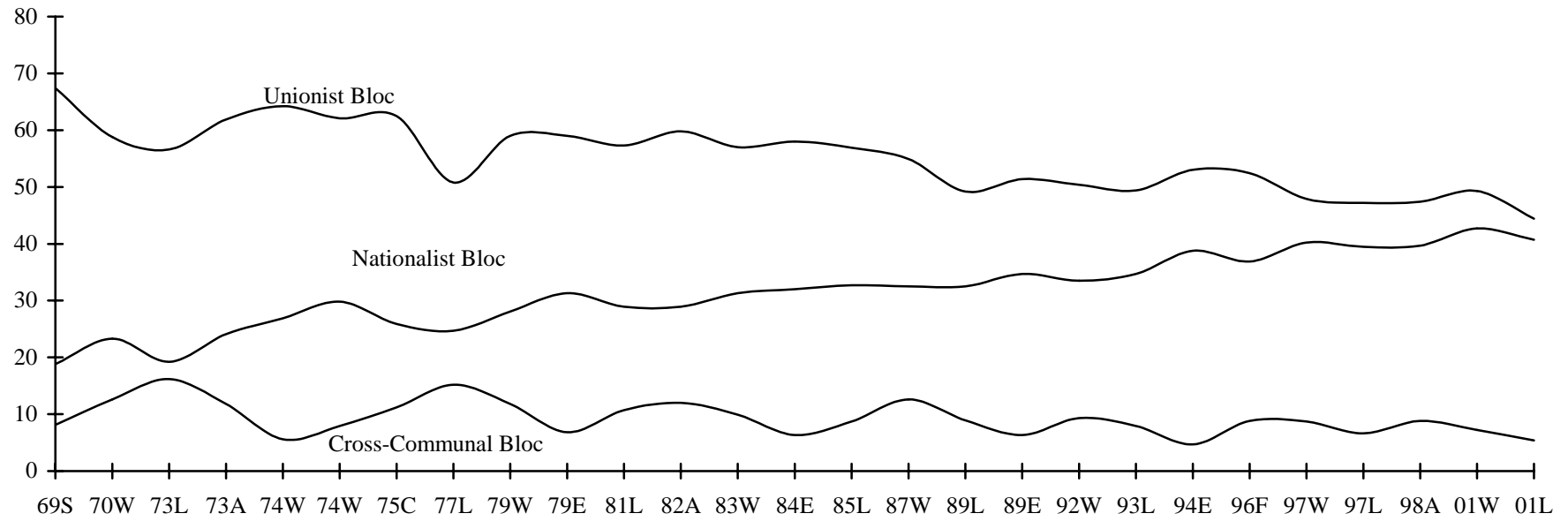
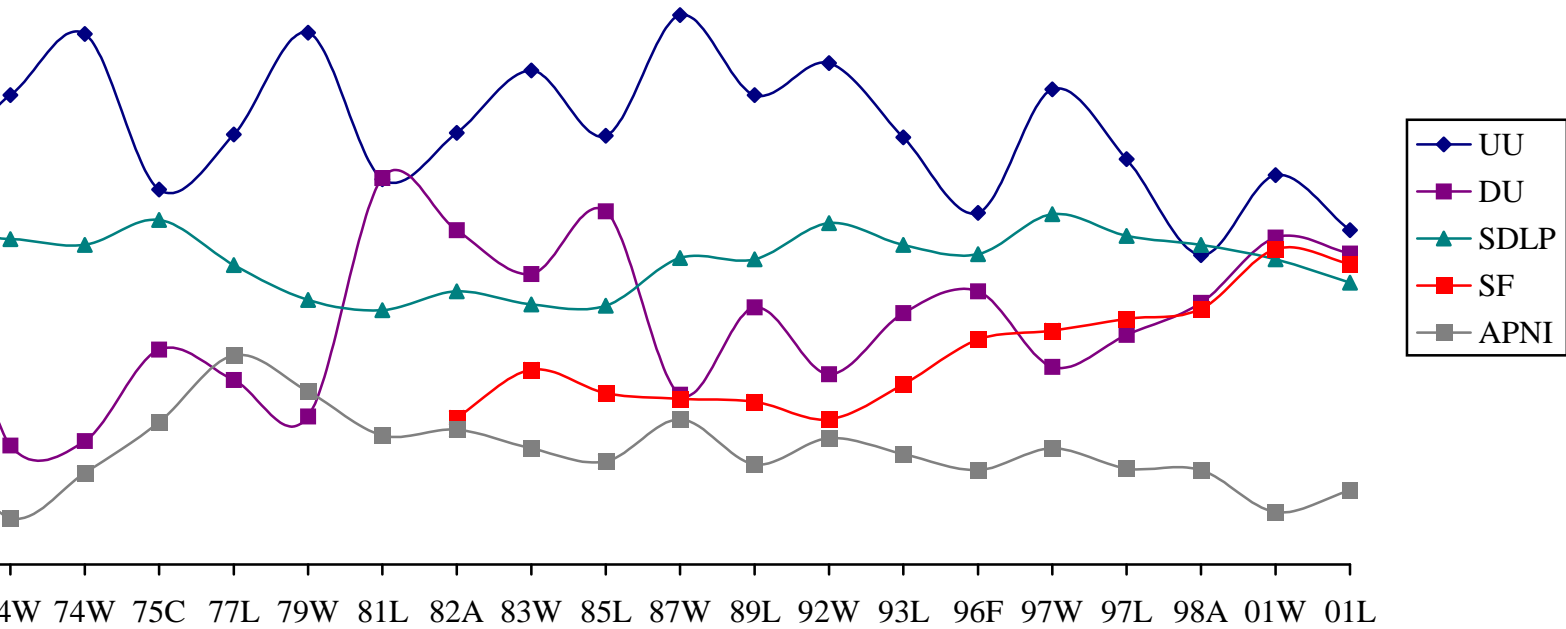


Figure 4: Performance of Major Political Parties in Northern Ireland 1973-2001



Key for Figures 3 and 4:  
 S – Stormont  
 W – Westminster  
 L – Local  
 A – Northern Ireland Assembly  
 C – Constitutional Convention  
 E – European  
 F – Peace Forum

# The Evolving Parameters of Quebec Nationalism

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*This article focuses on how Canada's French minority in Quebec developed a nationalist discourse and used its provincial state to strengthen its economic and political status within the federation. It presents the parameters that define contemporary Quebec nationalism and its evolution over the past four decades. The first part of the article deals with nationalism during the 'Quiet Revolution' (1960-1966). The second part discusses the thesis that Quebec nationalism was in decline during the 1980s. This 'retreat' was explained by a reduced role for government and greater North American economic integration. The last part addresses the new role of the Quebec state that emerged in the 1990s, which favored the growth of the private sector and a reconfiguration of nationalism. The failure of two major constitutional negotiations (in 1990 and 1992) gave new life to the independence movement, which culminated with a second referendum on Quebec sovereignty in 1995. Overall, this article discusses the political forms of Quebec nationalism, the societal and political projects advanced by the Quebec government, and the federal government's responses to Quebec nationalism.*

Tensions between Quebec and Canada have not produced violence over the past few decades, despite the political rhetoric that often stresses the divergent interests between the two. In this sense, disagreements have not led to calls for violence over issues of power (detention, execution or assassination of opponents and enemies, electoral fraud, armed occupation) or violence towards minorities (sedition, electoral intimidation, electoral fraud, terrorism, or overthrowing of governments) – except for the assassination of a provincial minister in 1970 by a cell of terrorists. The nature of Quebec nationalism and its promotion by political élites largely explains this phenomenon.

We will see in this article that the dominant ideology in Quebec is nationalism, and that partisan activism has been the means for promoting knowledge of Quebec's uniqueness within Canada. Change was gradual. The creation of sovereignist parties in Quebec (the formation of the provincial *Parti Québécois* in the late 1960s and the federal *Bloc Québécois* in the 1990s) was enough to channel dissatisfaction

with federal policy proposals. Moreover, numerous initiatives of the Quebec government over the past four decades improved significantly the socio-economic conditions of Francophones (who historically were subject to economic, cultural and social discrimination), which eased tensions considerably. The federal government noticed the growing dissatisfaction of many Québécois, responding with policies and programmes that in part addressed this dissatisfaction (notably the Official Languages Act of 1969). Partisan political activity was therefore the primary means used by the sovereignist forces to promote their cause.

The aim of this article is to present the parameters that define contemporary Quebec nationalism. Three general statements inform this analysis. The first postulates that the nationalist current has continually influenced Quebec. The forms adopted by these movements have, of course, varied significantly over time. Nevertheless, it has affected every social, economic, and political current that touch Quebec society. The second deals with the complex nature of Quebec nationalism. Indeed, like all societies, Quebec society is not monolithic. Many identifiable trends conveyed often-contradictory visions of the future and the routes advocated for achieving them. Quebec nationalism, like the society it supports, is characterised by trends of varying importance. Social forces displaying different degrees of organisational variables carry them along. The nationalist discourse can be more or less pronounced. Finally, despite the heterogeneous character of nationalism, it nevertheless presents a relatively coherent and ordered vision of society. Nationalist ideology, as with all ideologies, is the result of a conflict between the visions of groups promoting their own interests. The nationalist ideology thus presents the dominant vision of society, leaving aside views held by marginalised groups. In other words, only an analysis of the links between various groups within society explains the nationalist ideology that emerges in each period of Quebec's political history. An established vision of "nation" and its destiny translates into particular configurations, and the economic and political means that must be in place for them to develop.

The following analysis will present the principal movements that have marked Quebec nationalism over the past four decades. It will also highlight the principal tendencies that mark contemporary Quebec nationalism. The first part of the text deals with the nationalism of the period of the "Quiet Revolution". The second part deals with the thesis that a decline in nationalism characterised the 1980s. Many see the failure of the 1980 referendum on sovereignty, the "partial" retreat of the state and the liberalisation of continental trade as factors that contributed to this decline. The third part seeks to identify the new parameters of Quebec nationalism. I argue that those who provide an analysis in terms of the decline of nationalism present a truncated vision of the current reality. Quebec nationalism at the turn of the century is in a period of transition, marked by the consolidation of the francophone economic élite that has evolved in the context of the continental economy. This transformation has redefined the Quebec state's role in the economy. In the same manner, Canadian federalism is no longer understood in the same terms.

## **1. State Nationalism of the Quiet Revolution**

The Liberal Party's victory in the 1960 provincial elections marked the beginning of what many call the Quiet Revolution. Opposition to the conservative-oriented Duplessis regime manifested itself throughout the 1950s, but without success on the political scene. The political discourse of the period centred on certain themes: the role of the state, the conduct of federal-provincial relations and the modernisation of institutions. On all of these issues, the opposition proposed a vision that shattered the conservative vision of the Duplessis period.

The ideology of Maurice Duplessis reflected a traditional and rural vision of Quebec. The survival of French Canadians was only possible through a fierce attachment to their only real "capital", namely language and religion (Dion 1978). "Nation" was defined in religious and linguistic terms. The French-Canadian nation was not limited to the territory of Quebec. The social institutions that supported these "sacred" traditions (the family, the parish and the Church) were considered indispensable to the maintenance of French-Canadian culture. This social conservatism thus served as a rampart against the threat to the established social order emanating from federal economic and political institutions, dominated as they were by English Canadians. French Canadians were both underrepresented and relegated to inferior echelons of the bureaucratic hierarchy during this period. Traditions could only be preserved in a physical and social environment controlled by French Canadians, which explains the emphasis on agriculture. Agriculture was seen as the means of protecting Quebec culture against the damaging influences of the Anglo-Saxon world, thus justifying a constant struggle against the industrialisation and urbanisation carried out by the traditional élite. The nationalist conservative discourse did not stop Quebec, however, from modernising at the same pace as other provinces. At the beginning of the 1950s, two-thirds of the Quebec population already lived in urban centres, while the agricultural population made up only one-fifth of the population, decreasing to 11 per cent at the beginning of the 1960s.

On the political level, a great respect for established political institutions characterised conservative nationalism. In dealings between Quebec and Canada, Duplessis was an advocate of provincial autonomy. He believed in the virtues of federalism inasmuch as they clearly defined the limits of intervention at each level of government. The fact that this was the only means of protecting the culture and maintaining the existing social order in the province explains the will to maintain Quebec's political autonomy. Duplessis's social and political conservatism, however, profoundly tainted his sense of autonomy. He opposed federal initiatives in the area of fiscal and social legislation on the grounds of preserving the rights of Quebec (Bourque, Duchastel, Beauchemin 1994).

No one anticipated the depth and rapidity of the changes that were to affect Quebec society. The Quiet Revolution put an end to the traditional nationalism's grip on the ensemble of political and social institutions. Many viewed the end of this nationalism as the entry of Quebec into the age of modernity. Observers were

therefore surprised to note shortly thereafter the rise of a new nationalism, or more accurately a neo-nationalism, incorporating the antinomical themes of democracy, statism, and modernity. This new nationalism proposed a revised definition of the Quebec state. Responsibilities allotted to institutions of civil society would now be granted to the state. The valorisation of statist functions was rendered indispensable by the necessity to adjust the social and economic structures of Quebec to contemporary realities.

The multiple interventions by the state in all spheres of Quebec society needed ideological justification. This was imposed through a new discourse with a nationalist theme, but in a largely revised form: the State of Quebec was presented as the only institutional framework able to promote the well-being of French Canadians. Thus Jean Lesage, who led the Québec Liberal Party to electoral victory in 1960 and 1962 (see Table 1 for all electoral results from 1956 to 1998), liked to present Quebec as the "political expression of French Canada" and even indicated that it should play the role of "mother country" for francophones outside Quebec. The French-Canadian identity was not only found in the homeland, but also in the political climate that enabled them to promote their interests. (Comeau 1989)

Daniel Johnson, who won the election of 1966 as head of the Union Nationale, pursued the same steps as those of the Lesage government while expressing them in different terms. In this manner, he prepared the way, albeit timidly, for the elimination of the preferential reference to ethnicity as the principal element in the definition of nationalism. Referring to the definition of the term "nation" given in a French dictionary, Johnson took the sociological dimension of the definition (that of human community manifesting a historical, linguistic, religious, and economic unity animated by a common will to live) to affirm that two nations did incontestably exist in Canada. This national duality did not depend upon the ethnic origin of the citizens, but on their culture. The existence of a nation, according to normal evolution, must be driven by the creation of a nation-state. (Johnson 1965) This phenomenon is common in English-Canadian provinces, where they accept the loss of their liberty of jurisdiction because they know that the norms established by Ottawa function in favour of the majority. Since English Canadians have a national state, conforming to the rights of the people it serves, the French-Canadian nation can follow the same principal. Johnson's nationalism thus marks an important change: from a definition essentially based on ethnicity, Quebec nationalism was now based on territoriality.

The emancipation of the French-Canadian nation was made possible through the appropriation of the only instrument that could act on behalf of the collectivity, namely, the state. Throughout the 1960s, statist initiatives were numerous, with few areas excluded. However, interventions in five important sectors marked the Quiet Revolution: the democratisation of society, the pursuit for a greater equality in the access to education and to health, the control of major economic structures (the most important being the nationalisation of hydro-electricity companies), the

modernisation of the Quebec public service, and the emergence of a sovereignist political movement. (Rocher 2001b) This catching up was not possible without the accompanying massive growth of the state apparatus, which provided necessary support to implement these reforms.

However, labour strife marked Quebec society in this era, as did the rise of a sovereignist movement – of which some currents, albeit admittedly marginal, privileged violent actions. Even though such violent acts were the product of a marginal group, they still affected the collective imagination/outlook and led to a forceful response from the state. In the 1960s, Quebec had a terrorist movement whose actions culminated in the kidnapping of Quebec's Labour Minister and a British diplomat. The former was killed while the latter was later released. The self-proclaimed Quebec Liberation Front (FLQ – Front de Libération du Québec), created in 1963, instigated numerous terrorist acts, such as using Molotov cocktails to damage symbols of political power (military installations, mailboxes, government offices). In all, nine people were killed, including the Labour Minister Pierre Laporte in 1970.

This movement linked the fight against oppression caused by Anglo-Saxon economic and political institutions to the struggle for national liberation. Even though it was later shown that the FLQ had but a handful of members (35 is often given as the number), the federal government still exploited the 1970 "October Crisis". Citing a suspected insurrection, it used the War Measures Act to grant the police exceptional powers of detention and arrest, even though all elements of the political and social classes denounced the kidnapping and assassination of Pierre Laporte. We now know that the FLQ did not have a structured organisation, that its actions were largely improvised, and that it never constituted a political threat. Nevertheless, its existence allowed those holding political power to mount a campaign of disinformation suggesting that a real threat existed, in order to delegitimise the nascent sovereignist movement (Laurendeau 1990; Fournier 1998).

Among the principal achievements of the Quiet Revolution, one should note the reform of the education system and health insurance plan. However, the nationalist character of state intervention was most visible in the area of the economy. In effect, the avowed goal of the government was to permit French Canadians to allocate resources in their favour to counter the economic domination to which they were subjected. To improve the representation of French Canadians in the upper echelons of the entrepreneurial hierarchy, state interventionism looked less at modifying the hiring practices of enterprises held by non-francophone capital than at enlarging the economic base of existing French-Canadian businesses or creating francophone business in areas where it did not exist. (McRoberts 1988) To do this, Quebec Francophones could only depend on the state, the only important institution that could compete with large Anglo-Saxon companies, not only on its own territory, but also on a national and international scale. Two complementary strategies were adopted, the creation of public enterprises in the key sectors of the economy, and support of companies held by French Canadians.



This new role played by the state did not develop without having an important impact on the public service in Quebec. Its size increased in a remarkable fashion. In 1955, about 28,000 people were working in the Quebec public service, and this number rose to 70,000 by the end of the 1960s. (Bernier, Boily 1986, 357) The control of the new activities of the state was guided by the ideals of planning, consultation, rationalisation, and professionalism ending the political favouritism that had characterised the preceding period.

The emergence of Quebec neo-nationalism affected the provincial government's relations with the central government. The constitutional debate that permeated Quebec political life for three decades reflected the political will of successive governments to revise the division of powers by way of transferring to Quebec the powers claimed under the Constitution of 1867, or those exercised by the federal government under the spending power. This is not a new issue. The desire to preserve areas of provincial competence existed well before the Quiet Revolution. Thus, Duplessis had established in 1953 a royal commission of inquiry into constitutional problems (the Tremblay Commission), whose mandate was to remind Quebec of the need to preserve its provincial prerogatives enumerated under the BNA Act, and to provide a response to the declared intention of Ottawa to proceed with a greater centralisation of powers. (Quebec, 1956, Vols. I-IV) The report of the Tremblay Commission reiterated the dogma of provincial autonomy.

The attitude of the Lesage government concerning the constitutional dossier was marked by a profound change in perception and strategy. Provincial autonomy was presented not as a means of limiting the pernicious influence of Ottawa, but rather as a means of political, economic, and social restoration of the French-Canadian "people". (Lesage 1959, 26) The autonomist discourse thus took on a new orientation: the need to preserve the traditional character of French Canada giving precedence to the need for national affirmation that required the defence of power conferred upon the provinces, powers judged as indispensable to the task of modernisation towards which Quebec was striving. This could also be realised through administrative arrangements. However, the debates centred on the federal position to repatriate the Canadian Constitution that was to be accompanied by an amending formula, and this contributed to Jean Lesage's decision to adopt a different constitutional line. This is why the discussion addressing a new division of powers and their extension to Quebec prevailed over the constitutional mechanics such as the issues of repatriation and the amending formula. The Fulton-Favreau amending formula proposed by Ottawa was perceived as a straitjacket and closed the door on any future extension of powers to Quebec. The constitutional question took a new turn within the framework of the parliamentary committee on the constitution, which sat from 1963 to 1968. The various witnesses who appeared before the committee recommended not merely a series of amendments to the Constitution but rather a rewriting based on a recognition of the two-founding-nations thesis.

If the state nationalism of the Quiet Revolution led a growing number of Québécois to reconsider the division of powers, it also witnessed the emergence of a political movement that increasingly advocated the sovereignty of Quebec. Daniel Johnson had already evoked this possibility without ever concluding in favour of this option. (Rocher 2001a) Thus, he proposed the renewal of the equality of the two founding peoples. The logical consequence of this was a constitution that would be an instrument of equality for French and English Canadians, the two ethnic groups on which Canada had been built. It also meant an equality of the two groups on a national scale. However, it is well known that the French Canadians comprised a majority only within the territory of Quebec. It is normal that every cultural community that wants to attain a certain maturity looks for a state. The traditional ethnic nationalism transformed gradually to a nationalism based on territory. Thus, French/English equality was not possible but for a growth in the constitutional powers of Quebec, notably in the areas of social security, international relations, education and culture. Nevertheless, it seemed to Johnson to be impossible to preserve the original constitution because it no longer reflected the political reality. This is why a more radical step was recommended, consistent with the writing of a new constitution. In the absence of a satisfactory agreement, Johnson felt that Quebec would have no other choice than to opt for independence. However, the ultimatum of independence referred sometimes to the French-Canadian national and sometimes uniquely to the Quebec territory. It was not Johnson who broke this ambiguity, but René Lévesque, an influential member of the cabinet, who opted clearly for the adoption of a new political status for Quebec.

However, this step adopted by René Lévesque within the Liberal Party of Quebec led him to found the *Mouvement Souveraineté-Association*, which later became the *Parti Québécois*. The thesis advanced by Lévesque in 1967 has remained unchanged over the years. In basing his beliefs, as did many of his contemporaries, on the recognition of two majorities in Canada, he nonetheless believed in the view that the constitutional negotiations would only end in an impasse. In a very significant way, the needs of the two communities were going in two different directions: English Canada looked to rationalise, simplify and centralise powers to the central government, while the demands of Quebec went in the opposite direction. (Lévesque 1991) This is why Lévesque recommended sovereignty-association, which he respectfully judged as the appropriate step for the two majorities to best ensure the necessary conditions for economic stability and to maintain an economic, monetary and customs union.

In sum, the nationalism that characterised the period of the Quiet Revolution was based on a dynamism of state action. The Quebec state looked to take into its own hands the economic and social development of Quebec through numerous policies that sought to confer a new status on French Canadians, who had been relegated for a long time to the inferior echelons of a society where they comprised a majority. In this context, it is not surprising that the growth of state interventionism and the awareness of the power of the state as a tool of socio-economic promotion has led governments since 1960 to call for powers that further the interests of Quebeckers,

and more specifically, francophones. It is no longer surprising that among the competing options, some defended the idea of a complete rebuilding of Canadian federalism, while others opted for the idea of sovereignty with an economic association with the rest of Canada. These two options emanated from the same dynamic, though they presented divergent readings of the routes to follow to consolidate the economic, political, and social foundations of Quebec society.

On a global level, two elements warrant further attention. First, to describe the period of the Quiet Revolution only in terms of modernisation results in the impression that Quebec society in the preceding period was characterised simply by conservatism and traditionalism. One should note that despite the dominant nationalist ideology that placed an emphasis on these elements, the “real” Quebec was already in a period of modernity. In order to be convincing, it is sufficient to consider that the province of Quebec was characterised by a rate of urbanisation and industrialisation among the highest in Canada. In other regards, Quebec society was for many decades open to American influences in the area of culture. (Lamonde, Trépanier 1986) and francophones participated for a long time in the economic system dominated by capitalist logic. (Bélanger, Fournier 1987) In other words, one should not consider conservative nationalism as an exact reflection of the true nature of socio-economic relationships that were in place in Quebec before 1960.

The nationalist ideology of the Quiet Revolution was essentially articulated around the necessity for Quebec francophone society to have recourse to state tools to promote their interests. The new definition of collective identity is thus structured around the state, viewed as an important instrument of emancipation for the French-Canadian nation. It is in this context that the constitutional debate and the necessity for Quebec to obtain new areas of intervention to respond more effectively to its social, economic and cultural specificity must be understood. Even if the principal political parties presented divergent strategies to Ottawa, the Liberal Party and the Union Nationale favouring a recasting of federalism while the *Parti Québécois*, by bringing together the more nationalist elements of society, recommending instead the route to Quebec's accession via sovereignty, the end result was a growth in the interventionist capacity of the State and a larger control of more sectors. Finally, the period of the Quiet Revolution permitted the realisation of a juncture between the growth of statist activity and the consolidation of collective identity. This state nationalism was not only the spearhead of the reforms put into place throughout the 1960s, but also left an indelible image on nationalism of the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, the calling into question of the providence-state and the statist project that supported this phenomenon, one that was seen in other Western countries, including Quebec, throughout the last decade, was perceived by many observers as a manifestation of the decline of nationalism.

## **2. The 1980s: Towards a Decline of Nationalism?**

Many factors that marked the end of the 1970s and the start of the 1980s contributed to the transformation of the Québécois nationalist ideology as articulated around the statist project. The election in 1976 of a political party that was the standard-bearer of integral nationalism paradoxically participated in its gradual revision. One can say that their power declined, and because much of their power was based on nationalism, this declined as well. In other words, the *Parti Québécois* had raised expectations that it could only partially satisfy. The policy that followed engaged multiple deceptions involving the groups that had supported the party when it was in opposition. The difficult economic context in which the *Parti Québécois* tried to manoeuvre did not aid in the implementation of progressive policies in Quebec. On the contrary, the Quebec government had to face an important budgetary crisis that forced it to adopt unpopular measures. One should add to this that the referendum defeat had contributed to demobilising those who supported the sovereignist option. After the defeat of the 1980 referendum, the sovereignists were in retreat and were preoccupied by other concerns. The large coup of repatriating the Canadian Constitution extinguished the hopes that had persisted until then. Finally, the neo-liberal turn of the state throughout Quebec society, expressed by the will of many to privatise a large number of activities and demonstrated by their support of the continentalisation of the economy, indicated to many that Quebec nationalism was out of breath. In sum, the redefinition of interventionism limiting the scope of the model developed throughout the preceding decades contributed to mitigating the hold of the nationalist ideology on Quebec society.

The political discourse of the *Parti Québécois*, pushed by the nationalist credo in the 1960s, made the state the pivotal force in the improvement of the socio-economic status of French Canadians. However, the policies adopted by the *Parti Québécois* did not involve a marked expansion of state interventionism. It is not the intention here to reveal all of the measures taken by the *Parti Québécois* administration. However, some did carry a real symbolic importance. The adoption in 1977 of the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101) made French the official language of Quebec. More than simply pursuing the bold objectives of previous language legislation, such as encouraging the *francisation* of public institutions and businesses in making French the language of work, and the insertion of immigrant children in French-language public schools, Bill 101 clearly confirmed the determination of the Quebec government to make the Quebec territory the principal seat of North American francophony. Even if the legislation wanted to increase the *francisation* of Quebec society, it did not accord specific advantages to francophones. It essentially looked to strengthen the social environment in which the French language could evolve within Quebec. Despite this, Bill 101 took on a symbolic value of primary importance for the Québécois collectivity. This explains the great prudence that Quebec politicians exercised in modifying the law to any extent for fear of the social backlash that any such move would inevitably engender. The discontent brought on by Bill 178, adopted in 1988, which modified the

relative layout of public signage in French, based on a judgement from the Supreme Court of Canada, is the clearest example of this.

Paradoxically, Bill 101 contributed in reassuring Quebec francophones against the real or imaginary threats that perennially endangered their language and that represents the determining element of their collective identity. In fact, it had the effect of reassuring francophone Quebecers about their general linguistic environment. By doing this, it reduced one of the great francophone fears, one that has constantly sustained nationalism, namely, the fear of linguistic assimilation.

Two electoral promises by the *Parti Québécois* helped them gain power in 1976: on the level of public administration, to act as a “good government”, and on the constitutional side, to hold a referendum on the question of national sovereignty. Bound by this promise, the *Péquistes* government was thus obliged to hold this popular consultation before the end of its first mandate. To group together the nationalist forces in the best way to ensure victory, the *Péquistes* strategists opted for a question written along the lines of traditional claims of Quebec concerning constitutional reform. This is why they asked Quebecers to give the provincial government the mandate to negotiate a new agreement with Canada based on the principle of the recognition of equality of two founding peoples. They would thus postpone for a second referendum the approval of the newly negotiated package. The respective *Oui* and *Non* camps essentially mirrored partisan cleavages. Those who supported the first option were virtually all *Parti Québécois* supporters.

The hope held by the government strategists was that those who supported the growth of state powers would support the government's position and would defeat the strategy of their opponents. Thus, while the question referred to the subsequent negotiations that would be held on an “equal-to-equal” basis with the rest of Canada, the provincial Liberals, supported by Ottawa, focused the debate on the independence of Quebec. This was essentially the position put forth by the leader of the *Non* forces, Mr. Claude Ryan, who took his inspiration from a working document published by his party in light of the pending referendum. Following the tune heralded by Ottawa and led by the federal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, the federal Liberals guarded against taking a firm position in this regard, playing on the ambiguity created by the political circumstances. It is in this context that the two camps furthered the nationalist ideology. It was thus possible to be both nationalist and a federalist, without favouring a large centralisation of powers to Ottawa.

Following the results of the 1980 referendum, one witnessed a tremendous reinterpretation of the results of the *Non* vote. Mr Trudeau immediately claimed that Quebec had chosen Canada. The support for a strong Quebec was reduced to the 40 per cent who had voted *oui*. It was quickly forgotten that close to 60 per cent had voted in favour of a rearranging of powers in favour of Quebec. (Balthazar 1986, 177–81)

The referendum defeat had significant consequences. At the symbolic level, nationalist rhetoric lost its credibility. At the political level, the federal government exploited the referendum result and at the same time discredited the Quebec claims issued over the preceding twenty years in order to carry out its centralisation plan. At the social level, the defeat of the *Péquist*e project translated into an important demobilisation of the nationalists. Even though 40 per cent of Quebecers had voted *oui*, the result was a searing defeat for the nationalist cause. This caused serious damage to nationalist ideology and to the intellectuals who were its principal spokespersons. The Quebec intellectuals were thus silenced. The construction of a modern Quebec throughout the period of the Quiet Revolution rested on three pillars (science, language and the state). There had been a tight interweaving of sociopolitical development and the development of the institutions dominated by workers whose language was their indispensable tool of work, the basis of their intellectual function. The taking over of many important activities of the state by this new social group was based on a power founded on their rationality and competence which had been facilitated both by the expansion of state interventionism and the promotion of nationalist ideology. These élites voluntarily acted on the political stage, playing a dual role in enlightening members of the collectivity and advising politicians who were in charge of direction and management.

The repatriation of the Canadian Constitution that followed the referendum was realised after intense federal–provincial negotiations which took place under difficult conditions. The process was achieved through the isolation of Quebec, notably in the area of linguistic matters, without the province's consent. The contract that linked Quebec with the rest of Canada, negotiated over a century previously, was the object of revision without the prior accord of one of the provinces. Furthermore, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms entrenched within the 1982 document looked to redefine the individual identity of citizens modelled on a new political culture for all Canadians. These latter reforms were founded on the allegiance of Canada to federal institutions, guardians of the Charter, which granted and protected the collective rights. Now the Charter undermined provincial legislation and attempted to reduce the social differences between them. This is contradictory to the project that promotes Quebec national identity in so far as it does not permit asymmetry in the treatment of individuals or provinces. In sum, concerning the contents, the Charter is considered by a large number of Québécois as a document that limits their aspirations. Yet the reactions to the federal initiatives from the Quebec perspective did not occasion more than verbal protests. Certainly the Quebec National Assembly, by an all-party unanimous vote, condemned the Ottawa gesture, but apart from that it did not raise the same passions among Quebecers as had been done with the Conscriptio Crisis of 1942. Yet the new Canadian Constitution was nowhere near what the Québécois population expected following the referendum, with respect to renewed federalism.

One can take into account the relative decline of nationalism by considering the constitutional strategy the Bourassa administration put in place in 1985. Taking

note of Ottawa's new climate of openness towards Quebec, the Liberal government proposed five conditions to bring Quebec back into the Canadian Constitution: (a) recognition of Quebec's distinctiveness; (b) a Quebec veto on future constitutional change; (c) control of federal spending power; (d) power over matters of immigration; and (e) participation in the naming of Supreme Court justices coming from Quebec. The "Quebec Round" attempted to respond, *inter alia*, to the demands put forward by Quebec. This represented an important change in strategy from the previous lines of negotiation. One should state that the repatriation in 1982 changed the relations of power, Quebec no longer having any trump cards in its deck. Nevertheless, Quebec had never demanded so little within the framework of constitutional negotiations.

Among the factors that work in favour of the thesis of the decline of nationalism, was the movement of partial disengagement of the state. This tendency was not unique to Quebec. The financial crisis of the state and the global revision of the welfare state were phenomena that affected many Western countries. However, this phenomenon took on a particular salience in Quebec where state interventionism had been perceived as indispensable to the progression of Québécois within their own economy.

In the same manner, the support accorded by the political and economic élites to the federal initiative of free trade was perceived as being in opposition to state nationalism. Acknowledging the implications of free trade for the political sovereignty of Canada, and thus on Quebec, apart from the changes in all likelihood to state interventionism, this continental economic strategy posed a contradiction to the nationalist theses based on the recourse of the state. (Brunelle, Deblock, 1989, 131–2) This change was explained by some as the defeat of the state interventionism that had been in place since the Quiet Revolution. It can thus be said that the continental option translated into reconfiguration of the nationalism of the 1960s and 1970s that rested on public measures of intervention in the economy, society, and culture.

Many explanations have been advanced to understand this phenomenon. The relative decline of state nationalism is explained by its own success. By improving the position of francophone Quebecers within the economy and the raising of their social status, the Quiet Revolution and what followed had in part fulfilled the wishes expressed by the new middle class. These aspirations found their ideological foundation in a new nationalism. With social conditions having changed, the necessity of the state was reduced, relegating the nationalist ideology to a level of support increasingly based on personal initiative. For McRoberts (1988, 435), the decline of nationalism throughout the 1980s is interpreted "as the reflection of a desire to use the state to accentuate Quebec's economic and social development, and to overcome the conditions that frustrated or 'distorted' this development". As these elements of distortion became less prevalent, the presence of the state became less pressing, undermining the bases of the nationalism of the two preceding decades.

Can one conclude that this was an irreversible decline of nationalism? If the departure point is accurate, one must expect a reformulation of Quebec nationalism in new terms that better correspond to contemporary challenges. The principal problem with the decline of the thesis of nationalism is that it attempts to understand the actual reality in reproducing a model that corresponds to previous decades. It is not nationalism itself that is in decline, but the form of expression that has been in place since the Quiet Revolution. Quebec nationalism is thus going through a phase of transition comparable to that which it went through at the start of the Quiet Revolution.

### **3. Towards a New Form of Nationalism**

Globally, the 1980s were a decade of political vacuum. Québécois were forced to choose *a contrario*. They said *non* to the referendum on the issue of political sovereignty and they said *non* to renewed federalism centred on the repatriation of the Constitution by the rest of Canada, and they have pronounced themselves against an increased role of the state in the context of economic crisis. In the 1990s, the members of the economic élite became the tenors of the collective identity. In a context of repeated defeat where the political leaders enjoy less and less popular confidence, the business class and its overseeing organisations have become the new spokespersons for the interests of the Québécois collectivity. Not that they have been absent from the political debates that Quebec has continually experienced, but the new political, economic, and social circumstances (comprised of repeated defeats) have furnished the necessary conditions permitting this group to impose itself over others as a credible spokesperson. This pretence continues to be contested by other groups (trade unions, nationalist movements, etc.), without which the latter would be able to dominate the terms of the debate.

Certain observers of Quebec society had already noted a change in the pre-occupations of the population and, more specifically, the political élite. For economist Thomas Courchene the referendum defeat was the occasion to place the emphasis on the economic dimensions of nationalism to the detriment of political aspects. He described the phenomenon as “market nationalism”. Thus, “this new political economy is decidedly nationalist in nature, since it represents an integrated strategy for economic development and for the control of economic institutions by Québécois and from a location within Quebec, namely Montreal” (Courchene 1986, 7). These economic orientations illustrate the new role played by the state, which favoured the growth of the Quebec private sector. As the promotion of the socio-economic status of francophone Quebecers can no longer be uniquely fulfilled by the state, it is now the private sector that is looked to in order to fulfil this role. The presence of francophones in key sectors of the economy is essential. However, the consolidation of their presence still necessitates that the state plays a supplementary role during periods of crisis.

On an ideological level, the business milieu led the continentalist discussion that did not, however, annul the necessity to obtain state support. This was posed as



necessary for the competitive progression of business and the improvement of its competitive capacity. It would thus be wrong to consider the free-trade movement as simply a form of neo-liberalism. Moreover, the state must play a role of primary importance in the support of Quebec business which is looking to penetrate the American market and in the protection of the economy and society in facing the internal adjustments that will follow from the opening of the Quebec market to American firms.

In sum, it was thus possible to speak of business nationalism to understand the position of the business class concerning the continentalist option. The continental integration process was perceived as a means of full-term reinforcement for the bases of francophone capital. Little matter that it consists primarily of small and medium size businesses, many of which develop subsidiary activities. Although one should note the success enjoyed by some large Québécois businesses controlled by francophones (such as Bombardier, SNC-Lavalin, Cascades, Unigesco, Power Corp, etc.) one should not forget that the majority of francophone capital was found in small- and medium-size businesses. Finally, one can attribute the success enjoyed by free trade in Quebec to the *garde montante* which joined with the dominant elements of the Canadian business class in the debate and who converted the political agents, both Canadian and Québécois to their way of thinking.

On the whole, the business class preferred political stability to important changes which are inevitable carriers of economic instability. One will still find this discourse in Quebec regardless of the political circumstances. Investors preferred to know the actual rules of the game before taking risks. This strong simple equation also applies to Quebec businesspersons. This is why they overwhelmingly supported the Meech Lake Accord, which allowed for a response to certain Quebec demands without substantially modifying the general economy of Canadian federalism. The position taken in this regard assumed very few words: finish with the long constitutional discussions and pass on to more pressing concerns, namely the economy. The preoccupations of the business class did not involve constitutional details. The only clause deemed as significant, and considered as non-negotiable, was that of the distinct society. Moreover, for the spokespersons of this group, it was important to resolve the constitutional debt, a source of uncertainty, which could only discourage certain investment in Quebec and Canada.

However, the rejection of this accord in June 1990 put back into question the unconditional *parti pris* of the Quebec economic élite to the federal political structures. For the majority of Québécois, including the business class, the refusal to ratify the Meech Lake Accord was interpreted as a rejection of Quebec as a distinct community. More than that, this brought out the contradictory visions between an English Canada fiercely attached to its new symbol of pan-Canadian unity, that is, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms addressed to the citizens and the favouring of the central government, and a Quebec more desirous than ever before to reaffirm its collective rights, notably the right to a French environment. In sum,

the events of June 1990 have come to confirm that which was clearly established in 1982: the dualist vision of Canada has ceded its place to one that places emphasis on the equality of provinces and citizens, conferring to Ottawa the status of senior government in opposition to provincial government considered as junior. (Webber 1994; McRoberts 1997) Between 1990 and 1992, intense constitutional negotiations took place. Many elements of the Meech Lake Accord were included but watered down in a broader constitutional document agreed upon in Charlottetown, the provincial capital of Prince Edward Island. The document contained a "distinct society clause" for Quebec, but many of its elements were perceived negatively by the Quebec population, namely the lack of recognition of Quebec and absence of a substantial clarification of the powers between the two orders of government. In a pan-Canadian referendum held in October 1992, a majority of Canadians (54.3 per cent), including a majority of Quebecers (56.6 per cent), rejected this agreement. The most profound obstacle to a constitutional resolution is ideological: English Canada and Quebec are now firmly attached to notions of political community that are mutually exclusive. Inevitably, future constitutional proposals will be assessed in these terms. On that basis, what is acceptable to one party is highly likely to be unacceptable to the other.

Quebec nationalism in the 1990s was evolving in a different context than in previous decades. The rejection of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords profoundly modified the perception that comprised the possibilities of constitutional arrangements that could be made to the satisfaction of Quebec. The large majority of submissions to the Commission on the constitutional future of Quebec (better known as the Bélanger-Campeau Commission) underlined the unacceptable character of existing constitutional arrangements and the necessity to proceed to an extensive decentralisation of powers. In the case of a rejection of negotiations, the hypothesis of sovereignty could become the only acceptable alternative. The business class was not impervious to the debates that held the attention of the population throughout the autumn of 1990.

Finally, it should be remembered that around the controversy surrounding the Meech Lake Agreement, popular support for sovereignty as indicated by public opinion polls reached the unprecedented level of as high as 70 per cent of respondents. (Cloutier, Guay, Latouche 1992) The support of sovereignty was in part linked to the Québécois perception of English Canada's unwelcomed response to Quebec's constitutional demands. The symbolic character of the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society must not be underestimated. The inaccuracy of the federal proposals, the lack of response by the Liberal government in Quebec to the federal position, and the crises encountered by the Quebec economy and its impact on the population, were key factors in the development of Quebec nationalism by the mid 1990s.

In September 1994, the *Parti Québécois* won the provincial election. The Throne Speech revealed the Premier's intentions to submit to the National Assembly a document that would serve as the basis for popular participation in the pre-

referendum debate. On 6 December he announced his plans for an extensive consultation process to be held between January and March 1995. The government intended to create 15 regional consultative commissions, made up of parliamentarians and citizens from each region. It invited all Quebecers to debate the contents of a proposed bill (*Avant-projet de loi*) and to participate in the writing of a declaration of sovereignty. Quebec premier Pariseau invited the population as well as all political parties, including the Liberal Party of Canada and the Progressive Conservative Party, to reveal their views on this proposal for the independence of Quebec. Following this consultation, the document would become a bill, be passed by the National Assembly, and then be submitted for approval by Quebecers in a referendum.

The proposed bill on Quebec's sovereignty has 17 clauses. It declares in Clause 1, the shortest clause of all, that "Quebec is an independent country". The second clause deals with economic association and authorises "the government to reach an agreement for maintaining the economic association between Quebec and the rest of Canada". The other clauses take up, in order, the following issues: the elaboration of a new Quebec constitution; territorial integrity; citizenship; currency; participation in international treaties and alliances; the continuation of legislation; the division of assets and debts and, finally; details concerning the introduction of the law, one year following a referendum unless the National Assembly decides otherwise. Clause 3 on the new constitution states that it "must guarantee to the anglophone community the preservation of its identity and its institutions. It must also recognise the right of aboriginal nations to govern themselves over the lands they control. This guarantee and this recognition is exercised within the respect of the integrity of Quebec's territory." Apart from the regional commissions, the *Parti Québécois*'s strategy relied on the work of experts, many of whom were recruited from abroad, in order to demonstrate the feasibility of sovereignty and the inconveniences of federalism (Turp 1995).

The weakness of the sovereignty option among the Quebec electorate in opinion polls encouraged the federal government to maintain the "strict silence" strategy it had adopted after *Parti Québécois*'s election victory. This strategy was premised on two considerations. First, the apparent lack of public enthusiasm for sovereignty indicated that there was no need to develop counter-proposals for constitutional change that would appeal to Quebec voters. The recent history of two failures (Meech Lake and Charlottetown) to secure agreement on constitutional revision suggested that such proposals could well backfire and reinvigorate separatist sentiments. Moreover, given the new Canadian Prime minister's prominent role in 1982, many Quebecers might not trust his offers of yet another variant of "renewed federalism" like the Liberals had promised before the 1980 referendum. Second, although former Prime Minister Trudeau had enjoyed widespread popularity in Quebec in 1980, the large francophone majority was decidedly lukewarm about Canadian Prime Minister Chrétien in 1995.

An important element in the PQ strategy was to craft a referendum proposal that would allay fears about possible negative consequences of sovereignty. The proposal's wording of the question implied that a sovereign Quebec might be able to maintain economic and political ties with Canada. The question was the following: "Do you agree that Quebec should become sovereign, after having made a formal offer to Canada for a new Economic and Political Partnership, within the scope of the Bill respecting the Future of Quebec and of the agreement signed on June 12, 1995?" The date for a referendum on this question was set for 30 October 1995. Polls conducted during the summer showed support for sovereignty among those citing a preference moving upward into the mid-to-high 40-per-cent range.

On 30 October, the turn-out level was 93.5 per cent, 18 per cent more than those who voted in the Charlottetown Accord referendum three years earlier. The result was a razor-thin victory for the No side, with 50.6 per cent of the valid votes being Nos and 49.4 per cent, Yeses. However, in terms of total votes cast, neither side won: the gap was merely 52,000 votes, some 34,000 less than the number of spoiled ballot papers. The narrow defeat of the sovereignist option forced the federal government to review its national unity strategy. The federal government opted to bring forth a reference case to the Supreme Court, thereby judicialising the political conflict. The federal government asked the Supreme Court whether a unilateral declaration of independence by Quebec, as proposed by sovereignists in the case of failed negotiations on renewed partnership, would be legal. At the end of August 1998, the Supreme Court answered negatively, yet it qualified its answer by adding that if the population of Quebec indicated clearly that it no longer wanted to be part of Canada, Canada was constitutionally obligated to negotiate in good faith the terms of secession. The rift between Quebec and the rest of Canada was made wider when the federal government made it clear in November 1999 that it would not negotiate the terms of secession if it judged that the question asked in a referendum was not clear, or if the sovereignists only won by an absolute majority of the votes (50 per cent plus one). In doing so, the federal government introduced the principle of a qualified majority, fearing that the rules accepted for the 1980 and 1995 referenda would not go in its favour next time round. This new federal legislation makes it impossible, in practical terms, for Quebec to accede to independence while conforming to the Canadian constitution. The Canadian constitution imposes an amending formula that is so rigid that all negotiations towards secession are most likely to end unsuccessfully.

This initiative undertaken by the federal government has further crystallised the conflict with Quebec. Because of the federal government's refusal to negotiate with Quebec in the event of secession, the First Nations, and the demands voiced by western Canadians, Canada is now trapped in a constitutional status quo. For some, this confirms that Quebec is not free within the Canadian federation. That is to say that a member of the federation that wishes to be perceived as a nation can only succeed in doing so through discussion, negotiations, and amendments not blocked by arbitrary constraints. (Tully 1999) The fact that the constitutional changes of 1982 were imposed upon Quebec without its consent, that the amending formula

was modified to prevent the recognition of Quebec as a nation, and that, finally, secession should have been addressed within the framework of the amending formula but was not, brings Tully to conclude that Canada will remain a state in which liberty, justice and stability will always be partially absent, contributing to the increasing identification by the people of Quebec with their own society without developing equivalent bonds of belonging to Canada.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Nationalism is a constant of Quebec history. It has been sustained by the will to preserve and affirm the membership of a collectivity (a people and a nation) and its ties to its given territory. It has, however, adopted forms and put into place societal projects that have varied over time. Despite this evolution, the new forms of the nationalist ideology continue to borrow from previous expressions. The nationalist ideology has thus been gradually transformed not necessarily resulting in a radical rupture with the past.

Since the Quiet Revolution, Quebec nationalism has undergone two important transformations. On the one hand, it has developed a nationalist ideology making the state of Quebec one of the principal elements of identification of economic, social, and political promotion of francophones. The growth of statism in Quebec society was obviously not the only constitutive aspect of this new form of expression of this sentiment of membership but it occupied a dominant position. This dynamic, among others, is translated by a will of political affirmation without precedence since the defeat of the Patriot Rebellion in 1837. Politically, a number of increasingly important Quebec francophones have questioned the political form of organisation represented by the Canadian political system. Economically, francophones have been able to improve their position and to implement a network of industrial, financial and service businesses with the support of the state. Socially, they have started to consider themselves a majority. This new dynamic was not possible without placing emphasis on the fact that they cannot occupy a dominant place except within Quebec territory, mitigating the definition of the collectivity formulated simply around cultural dimensions. The beacons of this state nationalism were principally defined by the new middle class, which largely developed during this period. The question is not to find out if this social group effectively dominated Quebec society throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Rather the driving point is to recognise if it was this group that articulated the nationalist state discourse.

A second possible transformation was perceivable in the 1980s. Many factors contributed to the redefinition of the parameters of nationalism: economic crisis, the defeat of the sovereignist political project, and the redefinition of the role of the state. These elements contributed to mitigate the reach of the statist nationalist discourse. Many have spoken of the decline of nationalism to describe the political and social dynamic of this period. It appears however, that the 1980s was the occasion to review the parameters of nationalism. These economic aspects have

taken on greater importance to the detriment of the project searching to create a national state. This reconfiguration of nationalist ideology was accompanied by the rise in the symbolic status of the business class. At the political level, they favoured accommodations within the framework of Canadian federalism rather than its profound transformation. The necessity of decentralisation of powers from Ottawa to Quebec was still present, but in a gradual manner and often by means of administrative agreements. However, the rejection of the Meech Lake Accord in 1990 and the Charlottetown Agreement in 1992 hardened this new climate, and contributed to keeping the sovereignist project alive. Not that it corresponds to a growing willingness to the necessity of a larger degree of interventionism on the part of the Quebec state, but it translates into a disillusionment with the economic viability of Canadian federalism and the possibility that the interests of Quebec will one day be recognised by the majority of people in Canada.

The federal government's response to Quebec nationalism was one of accommodation under the federal Conservative government, but one of confrontation with the federal Liberals in power. The most recent development, that is, the adoption of the Clarity Act in 1999, marked a rupture with how the federal government has dealt with this issue. The real irony, unfortunately is that the bill focuses not on how to reconcile unity through diversity, but how to deal with Quebec if the results of a future referendum indicate that its people wish to separate, providing that all the criteria set out by the federal government are met. This ignores the root of the problem, that of linguistic duality and the diversity of Canada. As Claude Ryan, a former leader of the Quebec Liberal Party argued, since the Secession Reference, the public is concerned with two issues: clarity of the question and what a clear majority means; these two issues are reinforced by the Clarity Act. (Ryan 2000, 29) Consequently, this narrow focus misses and, more importantly, ignores the crux of the conflict between Quebec and the rest of Canada. Instead, one should focus on the more important questions: Why does a sovereignist movement exist in Quebec? Why has this movement been so significant over the past quarter-century? What is the best strategy to counter the idea of Quebec sovereignty? (Ibid.)

I do not wish to invoke the moral superiority of Canadians and Québécois in explaining the peaceful management of their historic tensions. An explanation of the lack of violence in Quebec–Canada relations can be found elsewhere. Nevertheless, the outcomes of the Quiet Revolution – educational reform, the rise of a new business class and its growing dominance over the provincial economy, the creation of an effective, state-supported social safety net, reform of the labour code – surely played an important role in the creation of a social climate that did not lend itself to the explosion of conflict. Few societies can claim that, in the space of one generation, they eliminated such a wide and entrenched gap between incomes earned by anglophones and francophones. To be sure, discrimination has not totally disappeared from the landscape, but it is less of a factor for most francophones. Discrimination continues to be experienced by racial minorities, a situation which Quebec must tackle with great energy.

The Charter of the French Language undoubtedly helped stabilise a society in which its language remains marginal within the grander scale of North America. Without the growing *francisation* of immigrants (due largely to Bill 101, which obliges children of immigrants to attend French schools), it is easy to speculate that social tensions would otherwise have been greater and probably would have resulted in more violence.

The creation of a sovereignist party and the recognition of its legitimacy by the rest of Canada channelled the aspirations of many Québécois into a movement based on dialogue and the respect for democratic principles. The debate on the political status of Quebec did not prevent many Québécois of all origins from adopting a dual identity incorporating its Quebec and Canadian roots (see Figs. 1–3), with one or the other being more emphasised, depending on how society and its political debates evolved.

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Appendix

**Table 1:** Provincial Electoral Results from 1956 to 1998 (percentage and number of seats)

Year	Union Nationale	Liberal Party	Parti Québécois	Social Credit	Others	Number of seats	Participation rate %
1956	52 % ( <b>72</b> )	45 % (20)			3 % (1)	93	77
1960	47% (43)	51 % ( <b>51</b> )			2 % (1)	95	82
1962	42% (31)	56 % ( <b>63</b> )			2 % (1)	95	80
1966	41% ( <b>56</b> )	47 % (50)			12 % (2)	108	74
1970	20% (17)	45 % ( <b>72</b> )	23 % (7)	11% (12)	11 % (12)	108	84
1973	5 % (0)	55 % ( <b>102</b> )	30 % (6)	10 % (2)	2 % (1)	110	80
1976	18% (11)	34 % (26)	41% ( <b>71</b> )	5 % (1)	2 % (1)	110	85
1981	4% (0)	46 % (42)	49% ( <b>80</b> )		1 % (0)	122	83
1985		56 % ( <b>99</b> )	39% (23)		5 % (0)	122	76
1989		50 % ( <b>92</b> )	40% (29)		10 % (4)	125	75
1994		44 % (47)	45% ( <b>77</b> )		6 % (1)	125	82
1998		44 % (48)	43% ( <b>76</b> )		12 % (1)	125	78

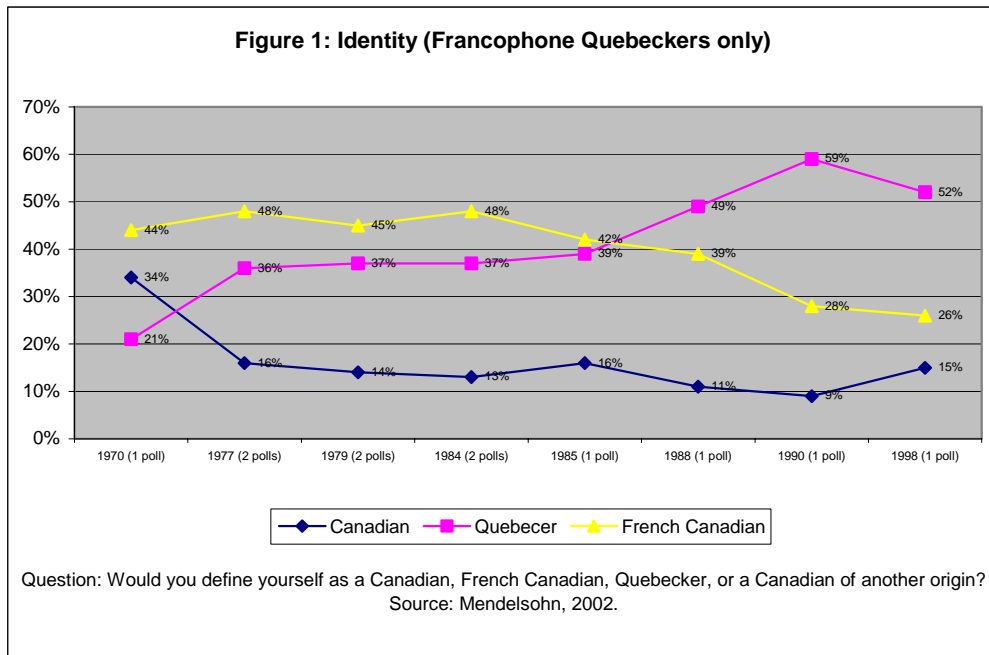
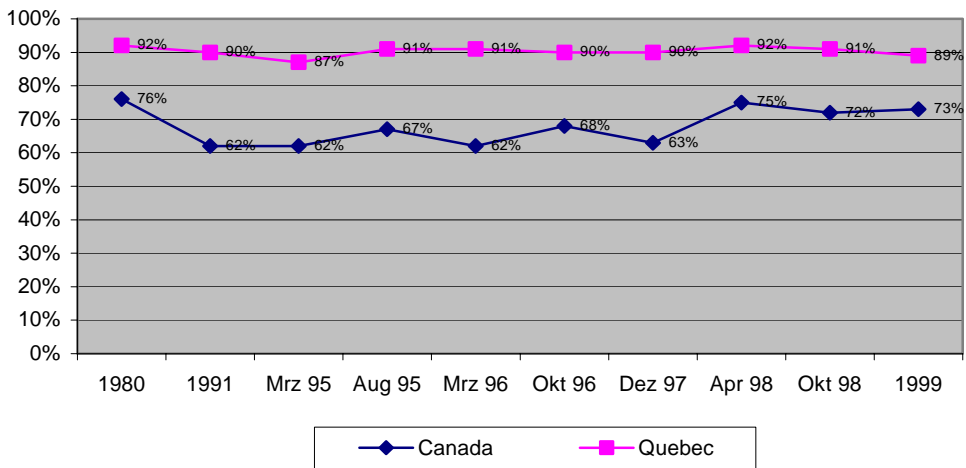
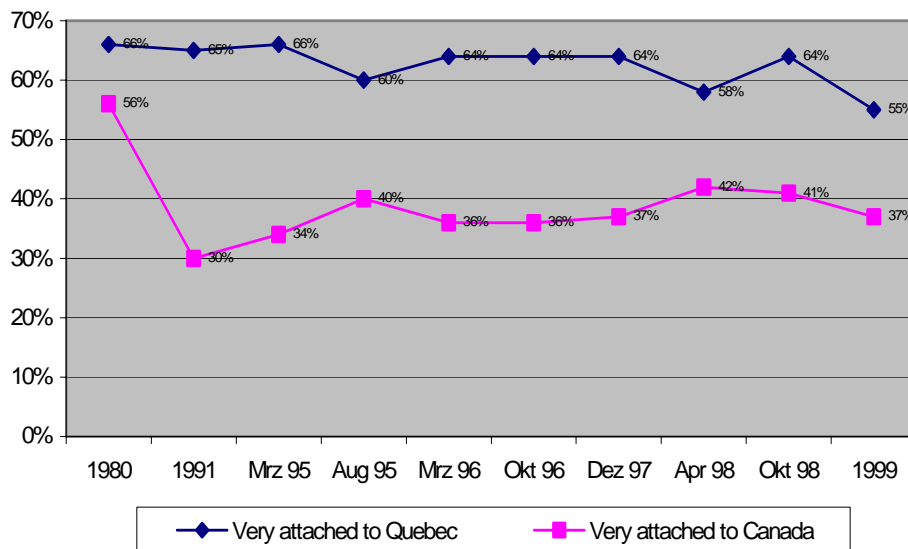


Figure 2: Attachment (All Quebecers)



Do you agree or disagree with the statement: 'I feel profoundly attached to Québec/Canada'  
 Source: Mendelsohn 2002.

Figure 3: Intensity of Attachment (All Quebecers)



Source: Mendelsohn 2002.

# Redefining the Territorial Bases of Power: Peasants, Indians and Guerrilla Warfare in Chiapas, Mexico

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*This paper analyses the role that federal and local elites played in the transformation of a non-violent movement of peasant protest in Chiapas, Mexico, into a guerrilla movement that eventually embraced a programme of ethnoterritorial demands. It is argued that the contradictory government responses to initial peasant protest opened the door for the radicalization of indigenous mobilisation and demands. Claims for agrarian reform in the 1970s were met with piecemeal/clientelistic land redistribution and police repression. When demands shifted in the 1980s from land reform to the democratisation of local governance and respect for human rights, local elites insisted on clientelism and repression. This led to the Zapatista insurrection of 1994. Unsuccessful attempts by federal authorities to negotiate a peace settlement while clientelistic social reformism and military repression were underway led the Zapatistas into embracing a programme of ethnoterritorial demands and into the creation of de facto autonomous governments in the 1990s. This paper suggests that neither policies of carrots and sticks pursued under authoritarian rule nor limited multicultural reforms approved by democratic governments have provided any meaningful incentive to organised Indians in Chiapas to leave off the streets or to lay off arms.*

**I**n the last thirty years indigenous populations in Mexico have undergone one of the most dramatic processes of social and political transformation since colonial times. One of the most significant outcomes of this process is the emergence of a national indigenous movement that demands the right to autonomy and self-determination for indigenous peoples and therefore a radical reconstruction of Mexican political and territorial structures. Opposed to *indigenismo*, the official policy of the Mexican state for the assimilation of indigenous populations to the mestizo national mainstream, this movement embraces a political

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programme known as *indianismo*. Although claims for autonomy and self-determination are generally couched in terms of pre-Hispanic, primordial identities, the fact is that an Indianist programme demanding a territorial reorganisation of part of the country on ethnic grounds is a relatively new phenomenon.

The emergence of an ethnoterritorial movement in Mexico has followed two parallel tracks. One advanced by indigenous peasant organisations engaged in a three-decade-long wave of mobilisation, demanding land reform and the democratisation of municipal authorities. And another one pursued by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), a guerrilla group of Mayan peasants that declared war to the Mexican federal government back in 1994. Even though a programme calling for the right to autonomy and self-determination for indigenous peoples had already been devised by local indigenous organisations in the 1980s, it was only after the EZLN insurrection that a window of opportunity opened for the national projection of an Indianist movement. In the emergence and consolidation of this movement the southern state of Chiapas played a prominent role.

The purpose of this article is to analyse the emergence of an ethnoterritorial movement in Chiapas and the political and policy responses of the Mexican federal and state governments. The paper is structured as follows. In the next section I outline some basic socio-economic and political features of Chiapas that help understand the circumstances under which an Indianist movement emerged. In Section 3, I discuss the main features of Chiapas's ethnoterritorial movement, particularly the emergence of *de facto* Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities and Pluri-ethnic Autonomous Regions. In Section 4, the article traces back the origins of this movement to a long wave of peasant protests that began in the 1970s. In Section 5, I analyse the different and contradictory responses that the Chiapas and Mexican governments gave to a peasant movement that eventually transformed itself into an ethnoterritorial movement. In the final section I draw some policy lessons from the Chiapas case.

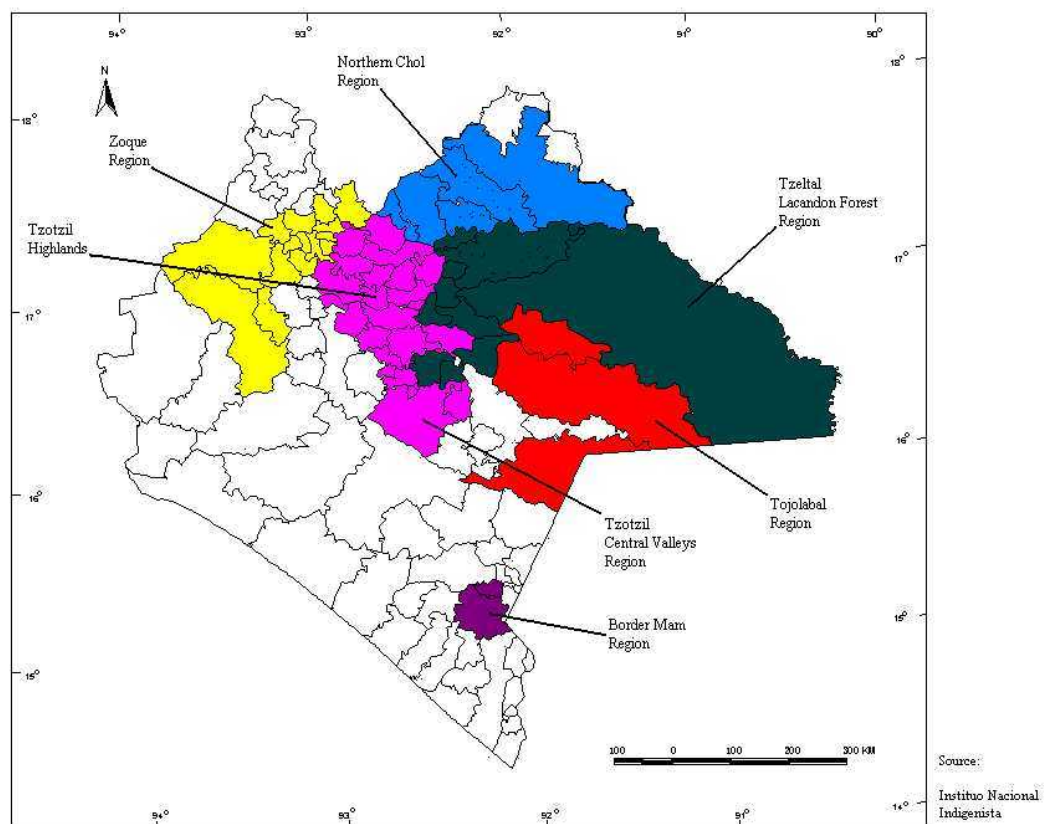
## **1. Chiapas in a Nutshell: The Changing Structural Background of Ethnoterritorial Disputes**

Chiapas is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse states in the Mexican federation. According to census data, Spanish-speaking mestizos account for 75 per cent of the population and the other 25 per cent belong to an indigenous ethnic group (INEGI 1990). In fact, Chiapas is only the fourth state with the largest percentage of indigenous people in Mexico. Indigenous populations in the state mainly cluster into six ethnolinguistic groups: (1) the Tzeltals in the Lacandon jungle, east of Chiapas, and in the Highlands, (2) the Tzotzils in the Highlands, (3) the Chols in northern Chiapas, (4) the Tojolabals in eastern and southeastern Chiapas (5) the Zoques in the centre-west and northern part of the state and (6) the Mams on the southeastern border with Guatemala. As evidenced by the geographic concentration of these groups in a few areas, although indigenous populations represent only 25 per cent of Chiapas's population, almost 50 per cent of the

municipalities in the state have a 25 per cent indigenous population. The most heavily indigenous areas include the Highlands, the northern Chol region and eastern Chiapas. One significant aspect of these ethnic groups is that while other Mexican indigenous groups live across different states, Chiapas's indigenous groups are confined within the state's boundaries.

Chiapas is a state of relatively young people who in the last 30 years experienced one of the most explosive rates of population growth in contemporary Mexican history. The 1980s were the most explosive period, as the state experienced an average annual rate of population growth of 4.3 per cent (INEGI 1990). The state's indigenous regions contributed with the largest share of population growth. For example, the rate of population growth of the municipality of Ocosingo, one of the strongholds of the Zapatistas, surpassed an annual level of 6 per cent in the 1980s. Another factor that contributes to a rapidly growing population is the relatively low levels of out-state migration. Unlike the states of Guerrero, Puebla or Oaxaca, where indigenous populations have established migratory routes to the United States, indigenous populations in Chiapas for the most part remain within state boundaries. Chiapas is not only a net producer but also a net importer of people. (INI 1993).

**Map 1. Indigenous Regions in Chiapas, Mexico**



from the Highlands, the northern Chol region and some parts of eastern Chiapas have left the heavily indigenous and rural municipalities, as they have moved away from plantation agriculture (1960s and 1970s) and from cattle raising (1980s) into the service sector in the state's urban centres. The largest cities in these regions, however, have also experienced a process of Indianisation. Cities like San Cristóbal, Teopisca, Yajalón and Las Margaritas have become home to thousands of Indian victims of religious expulsions (the Tzotzil municipalities of San Juan Chamula, Mitontic, Tenejapa or the Tojolabal region of Las Margaritas), political rivalries and intercommunal strife (the Tzotzil townships of Chenalhó and El Bosque or the Chol/Tzeltal municipalities of Tila, Salto del Agua or Tumbalá) or conflicts between the EZLN and the Mexican Army (the Tzeltal/Tojolabal regions of Altamirano, Ocosingo or Las Margaritas).

In the last 30 years Chiapas has undergone a slow but unequivocal process of "peasantisation" (Villafuerte et.al. 1999; Reyes 1999; Van der Haar 1999). The structure of land tenure and the productive use of land have undergone dramatic transformations in the last 30 years. In roughly three decades Chiapas went from an economy dominated by landowners engaged in plantation agriculture (1930s–1960s) to cattle raising (1970s and 1980s) to an economy dominated by small-plot producers (*minifundios*) mainly engaged in subsistence agriculture. After three decades of peasant protest, land invasions and forced land reform, most ranches and farms previously owned by mestizos or foreigners in the Highlands and eastern Chiapas have been swept away, leaving most land in Indian hands. As we will describe below, the struggle for land against landowners of the 1970s and 1980s has turned into bitter inter and intracommunal conflicts after 2000.

Agriculture remains the dominant economic activity in Chiapas today. By 1990 58 per cent of the state's working population was employed in agricultural activities but agriculture contributed only with roughly 15 per cent of the state's GDP (Villafuerte et.al. 1999). Most peasants are engaged in subsistence agriculture (corn) and the production of coffee and cattle for domestic and international markets. Illiterate, undercapitalised and with no access to credit or to new technologies, most overpopulated small-plot rural producers in Chiapas live under conditions of poverty or extreme poverty. Calculations based on census-reported income suggest that up to 90 per cent of the agricultural workforce in Chiapas live under the poverty line (Villafuerte et.al. 1999).

Whatever social indicator one may choose, Chiapas comes across as the most underdeveloped state in Mexico. In terms of the human development index, while northern Mexican states like Chihuahua or Baja California rank along with Hong Kong or Singapore, Chiapas ranks together with Guatemala or India (Trejo and Jones 1998). In terms of income inequality, Chiapas stands out as the Mexican province with the highest level of intra-state inequality (Hernández Valdéz 2000). While Mexico as a country ranks among the ten most unequal countries of the world, Chiapas's Gini index nears that of Brazil – the world's second most unequal country. In terms of educational opportunities, while in 1990 21.6 per cent of

Chiapas's mestizo population was illiterate, 54 per cent of the state's indigenous population could neither read nor write (INEGI 1990).

Since the 1950s religious competition has been one of the main sources of cultural transformation in Chiapas. Chiapas is the single Mexican state with the largest Protestant and Evangelical population (16 per cent) and one of the states with the fewest Catholics (68 per cent). In the last five decades, the rate of growth of Protestantism in Chiapas has been five to ten times greater than that of Catholicism. Religious competition has been most intense in the northern Chol region, the Highlands and eastern Chiapas. Missionaries from the Presbyterian Church penetrated into Chiapas indigenous territory with the Bible in hand and sub-contracted the Summer Institute of Linguistics to translate the scriptures into autochthonous languages (Esponda 1986). Presbyterians ran literacy groups and opened community health clinics and peasant cooperatives. This strategy resulted in large payoffs for the Presbyterian Church and also triggered a fascinating process of language revival and ethnic pride (Trejo 2001). In the 1960s and 1970s, conversions to Protestantism skyrocketed in Chiapas. A few years after his appointment in 1959 Bishop Samuel Ruiz García launched a crusade to prevent a Protestant takeover in Chiapas and mirrored the strategy of language revival and communal organisation that had been initiated by the Presbyterian Church. Thus was born the Autochthonous Church in Chiapas.

Contrary to what modernisation theory would predict, Chiapas experiences today levels of multiparty competition that rival those of the most economically developed states in northern Mexico. Traditional PRI electoral hegemony in Chiapas broke down in the aftermath of the Zapatista insurrection (Sonnleitner 2001). Within a six-year period, from 1994 to 2000, Chiapas went from being PRI's most traditional bastion in the country to a highly competitive party system in which PRI-PAN competition prevailed in the urban centres and PRI-PRD in rural areas. Indeed, in the 2000 gubernatorial election, Pablo Salazar Mendiguchía, a former PRI Senator running under an opposition coalition including the centre-right PAN and the centre-left PRD was able to defeat the PRI. The PRI, however, maintained control over two-thirds of the state's municipal presidencies and a majority in Congress. Although the opposition coalition did not survive the 2000 election and most political parties are in disarray, like many other states in the country Chiapas experiences today the nuts and bolts of divided government.

## **2. Is there a territorially based ethnic movement in Chiapas?**

The right to autonomy and self-determination for indigenous peoples has been on the political agenda of Chiapas at least since the late 1980s. The two main actors in the consolidation of an Indianist programme of ethnoterritorial demands have been the independent peasant indigenous movement that emerged in Chiapas in the 1970s and the EZLN. Following parallel paths, both actors have consolidated this ethnoterritorial programme by means of local and national ideological persuasion

and establishing by force de facto autonomous arrangements in the state. Neither the peasant indigenous movement nor the EZLN originally espoused an ethnic discourse and only strategically raised the ethnic banner after economic and political options for the advancement of a peasant-based programme had been cancelled.

### *2.1 The framing of an ethnic discourse*

A programme for the right to autonomy and self-determination of indigenous peoples was originally devised in the late 1980s by organisations gathered under the Frente Independiente de Pueblos Indios (Indigenous Peoples' Independent Front – FIPI), an umbrella organisation founded by Tojolabal Indians from the southeastern municipality of Las Margaritas, Chiapas. In the context of the international campaign against the 500 years of the conquest of the Americas, and as the Mexican government announced the liberalisation of land tenure, a small group of indigenous organisations rapidly transformed peasant demands into a language of ethnic rights, following the programme of indigenous rights granted by Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation. In no other Mexican state was this identity shift more evident than in Chiapas (see below). Peasant community leaders raising the ethnic banner were for the most part community leaders that had been trained by the Catholic or Protestant Church or by the state itself in their battles to wrest political and ideological control over indigenous communities (Trejo 2001). Yet these young indigenous leaders did not have the power within the already consolidated local peasant indigenous movement to push for the ethnification of demands.

The right to autonomy and self-determination for indigenous peoples became the leading ethnic demand of Mexico's and Chiapas's indigenous movement only when the EZLN made it its number-one priority in the second round of peace negotiations with the federal government in 1996. Originally espousing the traditional economic programme of other Latin American Marxist-Leninist guerrillas, between 1995 and 1996 the EZLN underwent a dramatic strategic shift by embracing an ethnoterritorial programme. While the main issue in the first round of peace negotiations in 1994 was the allocation of federal funds to indigenous communities, in the second round in 1996 the right to autonomy and self-determination for indigenous peoples became the dominant theme.

Such a radical shift by the Zapatistas, from class to ethnicity, was made possible by a long-term and a short-term factor. The long-term factor is that ethnic pride and language already existed at the communal level, mainly as the unintended outcome the processes of religious and political competition between Catholic and Protestant Churches and the state in the 1970s and 1980s. The short-term factor is that a group of social scientists and intellectuals who served as Zapatista advisers in the second round of peace negotiations helped the EZLN frame that communal ethnic pride into a political programme of ethnoterritorial demands. Indeed, without the long-term process of ethnic renaissance the Zapatistas could not have



undertaken a radical identity shift, even with the best advisers. But without the advisers, communal ethnic pride would have remained, as in the past, buried under the peasant hat. Since 1996 the EZLN tied up the result of peace negotiations to a constitutional reform that guaranteed the right to autonomy and self-determination for indigenous peoples in the whole country. The peace negotiations between the Mexican federal government and the EZLN has gone into successive stalemates since then.

## *2.2 Establishing autonomy arrangements by means of civil disobedience and force*

De facto autonomy arrangements were established by means of civil disobedience or violence in Chiapas between 1994 and 1997. These de facto governments represent the most advanced form of ethnoterritorial dispute in Mexico and for all practical purposes exemplify a situation of multiple sovereignties (Tilly 1979). Autonomy arrangements come in four types, depending on the organisation sponsoring it (the EZLN or independent peasant indigenous organisations) and on the territorial space on which they claim jurisdiction (municipal or regional). The EZLN claims that Zapatista base communities have created at least 38 *Municipios Autónomos Zapatistas* (Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities – MAZ) and two *Regiones Autónomas Zapatistas* (Zapatista Autonomous Regions – RAZ). Independent organisations, on the other hand, claim six *Regiones Autónomas Pluriétnicas* (Pluriethnic Autonomous Regions –RAP) but no autonomous municipalities (Burguete 1998). Although these autonomy arrangements in principle would involve 40 per cent of Chiapas's municipalities, in fact only some of these autonomy governments fully operate, while many others exist only as "imagined autonomies".

## *2.3 Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities and Regions: MAZ and RAZ*

MAZ are de facto local governments that claim legitimate jurisdiction over newly defined territories within constitutionally specified municipal boundaries. Rebel authorities and council members deny any legitimate authority to constitutionally elected mayors, governors and the President of Mexico and declare themselves only accountable to their Zapatista base communities and to the EZLN commanders in chief (Burguete 1998). Therefore MAZ authorities deny access to their territory to any local, state or federal authority, police or member of the Mexican army and have closed all agencies, schools, and hospitals under the jurisdiction of constitutionally elected authorities. MAZ community members refuse to pay taxes, to participate in any electoral competition, to pay electricity or water bills and decline to receive any government programmes or subsidies. Local governments of MAZ are charged with collecting taxes and with the administration of communal resources, the administration of civil and penal justice, public security, and with the provision of public goods, educational and health services for their communities. For autonomy advocates, regional Zapatista governments (RAZ)

are a superior stage from MAZ, only to the extent that the territorial jurisdiction of the RAZ governments is greater than the rebel municipal authorities (Burguete 1998). RAZ governments are charged with similar financial, judicial, security and public policy responsibilities as MAZ.

Contrary to many other ethnoterritorial movements around the world, Zapatista rebel authorities have always emphatically declared that autonomy, whether municipal or regional will never lead them into secession. In their view, autonomy arrangements are only the means by which they aspire to change the terms of their insertion in the Mexican state and nation. As the authorities of the autonomous municipality of San Andrés Sacamch'en put it: "We have decided to rule ourselves under autonomous municipalities as part of the Mexican Republic. We do not want to secede from Mexico, nor do we aspire to be part of any other country. We are only exercising our rights as Mexicans. And Mexicans we are and will always be."<sup>1</sup> Half a century without a single secessionist movement in the whole of Latin America lends some credibility to their claim.

Rather than secessionist ambitions, Zapatista rebels suggest that the main objective of de facto autonomous governments is to create truly representative and accountable local authorities, unlike the experience of almost a century of PRI hegemonic control. Echoing both a severe critique against local PRI authorities and a romanticised view of community authority structures, Zapatista community members of the autonomous municipality of Tierra y Libertad of Las Margaritas declared that "in these territories our autonomous authorities rule and will continue to do so because we need them, because they respect us, because we know them, because they obey us and because we know how to obey them."<sup>2</sup>

De facto Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities were first established at the end of 1994. On 19 December 1994, Zapatista support bases and militants launched a "silent" take over of 38 municipal palaces in Northern, Central (Highlands and Central Valley) and Eastern Chiapas, breaking the military siege that had been imposed in the so-called Zapatista conflict zone earlier in January of that year. Although the EZLN claims to have 38 autonomous municipal governments in all these regions, students of autonomy governments suggest that the most consolidated Zapatista autonomous municipalities operate (or have operated) in the Highlands (Consejo Autónomo de Polhó in Chenalhó, San Andrés Sacamch'en in San Andrés Larrainzar and Santa Catarina in Pantelhó and Sitalá), North (San Juan la Libertad in El Bosque), and in Eastern Chiapas (Tierra y Libertad in Las Margaritas). Other less-developed autonomous municipalities operate in Eastern Chiapas in Ocosingo (Ricardo Flores Magón, Moisés Gandhi and Ché Guevara), Altamirano (17 de Noviembre) and Las Margaritas (San Pedro Michoacán and Tierra y Libertad) in Eastern Chiapas (Ebert 2000; Leyva Solano 2000; Mattiace 2000; Burguete 1999; and *La Jornada*). Some of the most consolidated MAZ, like the Autonomous Council of Polhó, exercises strict military, political, judicial and

<sup>1</sup> Cited in Burguete 1998. My translation.

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Burguete, 1999. My translation.

administrative jurisdiction over a territorial space that accounts for almost one fourth of the municipality of Chenalhó.

Zapatista Autonomous Regions evolved out of the municipal experiences. The most advanced regional form of government is represented by the Región Autónoma Tierra y Libertad, a regional government that was built around the MAZ Tierra y Libertad in southeastern Chiapas. The RAZ Tierra y Libertad comprises mainly six municipalities in the region and at least two indigenous ethnic groups: the Tojolabals and the Mams. At one point in time, this RAZ had its own government buildings where the president, the regional council members and the judicial authorities operated. RAZ authorities served civil duties such as issuing birth certificates and adjudicated penal conflicts. RAZ authorities were evicted from their government buildings in 1998. (Burguete 1999). The other RAZ government claimed by the Zapatistas is the Totz-Choj government, operating in the Tzeltal/Tojolabal area of eastern Chiapas. Comprising around seven municipalities, this RAZ only operates judicial and conflict-resolution activities.

#### *2.4 Pluri-ethnic Autonomous Regions: The RAP project*

RAPs are de facto regional governments that bring together a plurality of ethnic groups and municipalities which, according to their advocates, represent a “a fourth level of government” between the state and the municipality (Ruiz 1999; Mattiace 2000). RAPs were the first de facto autonomy arrangement declared in Chiapas by independent peasant indigenous organisations.<sup>3</sup> Like the Zapatistas, RAP members denied legitimate authority to state and municipal authorities. Yet, unlike the EZLN, RAP advocates suggest that as a fourth level of government, RAP authorities should negotiate with different government authorities, regardless of party affiliation. In fact, RAP members have not declined to participate in electoral competition, nor do they close their doors to federal resources. Like the MAZ, RAP authorities are charged with administrative, judicial and policy responsibilities. Yet, unlike the Zapatistas, RAP authorities only partially exercise these duties because the idea is to coordinate these actions with other local authorities. The original RAP plan included a legislative regional structure – an Indian parliament – composed by community members of RAP municipalities. Like many of the declared RAPs, this Indian parliament only operated for a very brief period of time.

On October 12 1994, a host of indigenous organisations gathered under the Indianist wing of the Consejo Estatal de Organizaciones Indígenas y Campesinas de Chiapas (State Council of Chiapas’s Indigenous and Peasant Organisations – CEOIC), a short-lived umbrella organisation that gathered most of the state’s peasant and indigenous organisations after the Zapatista insurrection, declared the existence of eight RAPs.<sup>4</sup> FIPI and the Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas

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<sup>3</sup> *La Jornada*, 20, 21 and 27 October 1994.

<sup>4</sup> *La Jornada*, 13 October 1994.

y Campesinos (Independent Central of Agricultural Workers and Peasants – CIOAC) from the Tojolabal region of Las Margaritas were the most enthusiastic promoters of indigenous autonomy. When CEOIC was dissolved, in 1995, some of the most radical and Indianist organisations gathered under the Asamblea Estatal Democrática del Pueblo Chiapaneco (State Democratic Assembly of the Chiapan People – AEDPCH) showed strong support for the RAP project. Figure 1 summarises these organisations by region.

Despite the initial support expressed by these organisations, the RAP project has only partially taken root in a few regions in Chiapas. Two are the most visible RAP experiences from the six cases claimed by RAP leaders. The first one, the Región Autónoma Norte (Northern Autonomous Region – RAN), encompassing eight municipalities from the Tzotzil-Zoque-Chol area, north of the Highlands, was found in 1994 by CIOAC supporters.<sup>5</sup> RAN was found on the accumulated experience of land protest from municipalities like Simojovel, Huituipán and Soyaló. As members of CIOAC, Tzotzil peasants from Simojovel displayed one of the most intense struggles for land in Mexico in the 1980s. Disputes over the control of municipal power also brought Tzotzil peasants into violent disputes with PRI-supporters. In the aftermath of the Zapatista insurrection and as members of the RAN, CIOAC supporters in the region escalated levels of land invasion and by the late 1990s they had practically swept away the nearly 720 farms that existed in the region (González and Quintanar 1999). As members of the RAN indigenous peasants from the regions also escalated the intensity and violence of disputes over municipal power from PRI peasants and caciques. In terms of administrative, judicial and policy tasks that RAPs are supposed to operate, the RAN adjudicates conflicts among their members following internal CIOAC procedures, but, unlike the most developed Zapatista municipalities or regions it does not undertake any administrative, civil or policy functions.

**Figure 1:** Peasant and Indigenous Organisations Supporting Autonomy Arrangements by Region in Chiapas, 1994

North	Highlands	Eastern	Southeastern
CIOAC	CRIACH	ORCAO	OPEZ
FIPI	Tres Nudos	ARIC-Indep.	OCEZ
Xi-Nich	OIMI	COAO	ISMAM
Abu-Xu	Muctawinik	MOCRI	
COLPULMALI	SCOPNUR	CIOAC	
CNPI	Movimiento Democrático de Chalchihuitán	FIPI	

Source: *La Jornada* (various issues) and Gómez (1999)

<sup>5</sup> *La Jornada*, 20 and 21 October 1994.

### 2.5 Violence and negotiation: the difficult coexistence of constitutional and autonomous authorities

Intercommunal conflict in Chiapas has skyrocketed since 1994. Figure 2 shows all intercommunal conflicts reported in seven national newspapers in all municipalities in Chiapas between 1970 and 2000 had at least 10 per cent indigenous population (N = 55 or half the municipalities in the state). Figure 2 captures all actions undertaken by organised groups or by individual communal members against their adversaries, including physical harassment, physical attacks, destruction of homes and property, kidnapping, political and religious expulsions, ambushes, individual assassinations, collective assassinations and mass murders.<sup>6</sup> The largest share of intercommunal conflict in Chiapas involves personal attacks and the invasion or destruction of property, followed by religious and political expulsions. Most intercommunal conflict is stimulated by disputes over land or federal resources, political rivalries and religious differences. Intercommunal conflict involves very high levels of violence: in average, every time there is intercommunal strife, one person dies.

**Figure 2:** Intercommunal Conflict in Chiapas



Source: Trejo 2002b.

<sup>6</sup> Religious expulsions from the municipality of San Juan Chamula are not coded as intercommunal conflict because local PRI authorities have traditionally sponsored such expulsions. The first expulsions of Protestant or Catholic liberationists were first reported in the late 1960s and continue to this day. Preliminary reports suggest that more than 40,000 Chamulas have been violently expelled from their communities by PRI municipal presidents and local *caciques*.

Although Chiapas, together with Oaxaca and Puebla have traditionally contributed with almost 90 per cent of all intercommunal conflict reported by the national press in Mexico, since 1994 intercommunal conflict has risen to unprecedented levels in Chiapas. Figure 2 illustrates a first significant peak in 1994, following the Zapatista insurrection, but the highest levels of intercommunal strife were reached between 1997 and 1998. By region, the highest per capita levels of intercommunal conflict are reported in the Central Valleys (Venustiano Carranza), in the Highlands (El Bosque, Chenalhó, Simojovel and San Juan Chamula), in the Northern Chol and Tzeltal municipalities (Tila, Tumbalá and Salto del Agua) and in Eastern Chiapas (Altamirano, Ocosingo, Chilón, Palenque and Las Margaritas). Two-thirds of all intercommunal aggressions involve groups linked to the PRI and one third involve aggressions by Zapatistas and indigenous peasant organisations linked to the left. Although PRI militants are victims of intercommunal strife, the vast majority of victims are either Zapatistas or members of the left.

A strong association exists between those municipalities that experience the most severe and violent levels of intercommunal conflict and those in which a Zapatista Autonomous Municipality or Region has been established. Situations involving multiple sovereignties generally result in violent conflict. On the one hand, the Zapatista communities are supported by the EZLN to defend their newly defined territories. On the other, however, PRI governors, mayors, local deputies and members of state and local police forces have sponsored armed civilian groups (often referred to as paramilitary groups) in those regions where autonomous governments have been established. Some aided, others only tolerated, by the Mexican military, these armed civilian groups have been engaged in violent conflicts with the Zapatista support bases over the control of land, territory and people.

The Highland municipalities of Chenalhó and El Bosque represent two of the most severe cases of government-sponsored intercommunal conflict. The mass murder of 45 Tzotzils in Acteal, Chenalhó, in 1997, was the last stage of six months of communal strife between pro-Zapatista forces, the PRI municipal authorities and a group of PRI-affiliated armed civilians known as *Máscara Roja* (Red Mask). In the Northern Chol region, pro-Zapatista forces have been engaged in a small civil war against the PRI-affiliated group of armed civilians known as *Paz y Justicia* (Peace and Justice). In the highest point of the conflict, in 1997, thousands of families were displaced from the Chol region. Similar conflicts have been underway for almost a decade in Ocosingo, Altamirano and Las Margaritas where PRI militants and pro-Zapatistas continue to threaten each other.

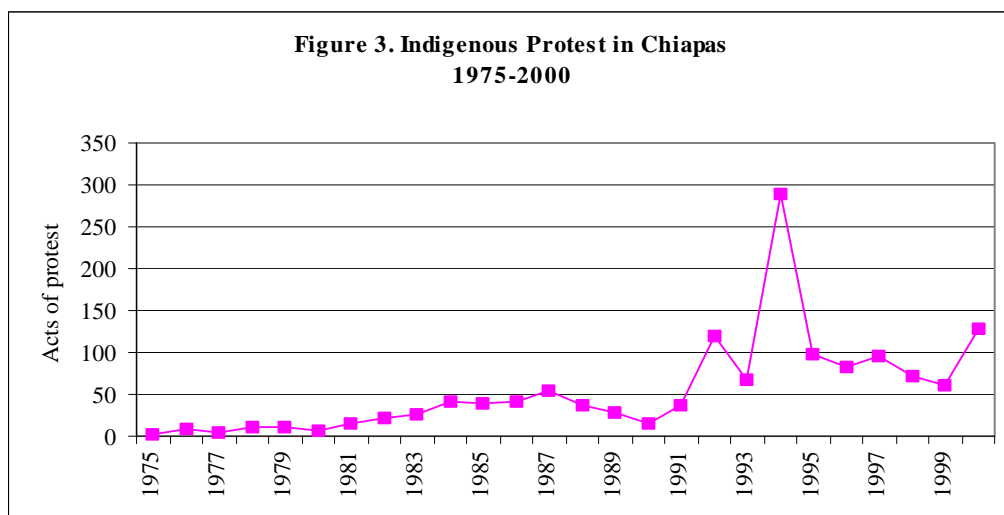
Although Zapatistas and PRI militants have learned to coexist in some municipalities where autonomous and constitutionally elected authorities live side-by-side (San Andrés Larrainzar), and PRI and RAP supporters have succeeded in sharing power (Ocosingo), for the most part this has not been the case (Viqueira 2001; Hernández Cruz 1999). In those municipalities in which Zapatistas and PRI militants are engaged in a severe conflict over land, territory and people, a pro/anti-

Zapatista cleavage is taking deep roots. In at least 25 municipalities in the state, most social and political cleavages are increasingly converging toward a Zapatista/anti-Zapatista divide. In a context of enormous religious diversity, perhaps the most dangerous overlap would be with religion. In some parts of the state, this Zapatista/anti-Zapatista divide has already overlapped with a Protestant/ Catholic cleavage (i.e. Ocosingo and Las Margaritas in Eastern Chiapas). In most parts, however, Protestants and Catholics still partake on both sides of the divide (i.e. the Highlands and the Northern Chol region) (Leyva 2000; Ebert 2000).

### 3. The origins of the movement: Peasants into Indians

Chiapas's territorially based ethnic movements (the Zapatista and the RAP) are to a large extent an outcome of a long wave of peasant indigenous protest that began in the mid 1970s and which continues to this day. Figure 3 illustrates the long stretch of this wave throughout the whole process of democratic transition in Mexico (1977–2000). The figure captures all acts of protest in all municipalities with at least 10 per cent indigenous population between 1970 and 2000 (N = 55). Acts of protest range from public denunciations, marches, meetings, hunger strikes, land invasions, the takeover of government buildings, the kidnapping and lynching of authorities, the invasion of municipalities, the establishment of rebel autonomous territories to guerrilla attacks. Most acts of protest include actions near the non-violent edge: public denunciations, marches and public meetings, land invasions and the takeover of municipal palaces.

**Figure 3:** Indigenous Protest in Chiapas 1975-2000



Source: Trejo 2002b.

Average levels of protest increasingly grow from one decade to another: in the 1970s there was one act of protest every two weeks, in the 1980s every week and in the 1990s every other day. Although public demonstrations took a first important hike under the administration of General Absalón Castellanos (1982–88), the most dramatic peaks took place in 1992 and 1994 under the administration of Patrocinio González (1988–94). Levels of protest after the Zapatista uprising have remained at the level reached under the administration of González. Nationwide Chiapas indigenous peasant protest plays a dominant role in Mexico. Although the state accounts for less than 10 per cent of the country's indigenous population, since 1992 – two years before the Zapatista insurrection – Chiapas has systematically accounted for more than 50 per cent of the country's indigenous contentious action year after year.

On a per capita basis, most acts of indigenous peasant protest have mainly concentrated in key municipalities in the Central Valleys (Venustiano Carranza), the Highlands (Simojovel, El Bosque, San Andrés Larrainzar, Bochil, Chenalhó, San Juan Chamula and San Cristóbal de las Casas), and Eastern Chiapas (Altamirano, Ocosingo, Palenque, Chilón and Las Margaritas). The most contentious indigenous organisations include the EZLN, which operates across regions in at least 25 municipalities; CIOAC, which mainly operates in the Northern and Eastern region, with Simojovel and Las Margaritas as CIOAC bastions; the Organización Campesina Emiliano Zapata (Emiliano Zapata Peasant Organisation – OCEZ), which has operated in Ocosingo (East) and Venustiano Carranza (Sierra); ARIC-UU, ORCAO and COAO in Palenque, Chilón, Altamirano, Ocosingo and Las Margaritas (East); Xi-Nich and CNPI, which operate in Tila, Tumbalá, Salta del Agua, Palenque and Yajalón (North); and CRIACH and ORIACH, protestant-led indigenous organisations from the Highlands.

**Figure 4:** Leading Peasant and Indigenous Organisations in Chiapas, 1975–2000

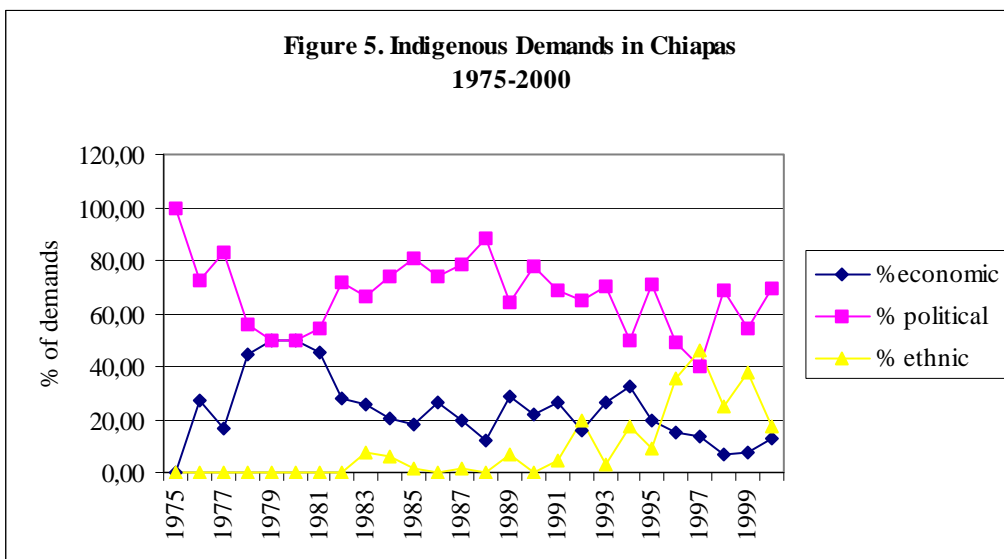
<i>Sierra</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Highlands</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Border</i>
OCEZ	EZLN	EZLN	EZLN	OPEZ
CNPA	CIOAC	CRIACH	ORCAO	OCEZ
	Xi-Nich	ORIACH	ARIC-UU	EZLN
	CNPI	Las Abjeas	COAO	
	Abu Xu	Tres Nudos	MOCRI	
	COLPULMALI		CIOAC	

Indigenous demands and identities have undergone important transformations along this wave of social protest. Figure 5 shows the evolution of indigenous public demands, 1975–2000, as expressed in all acts of contention described in Figure 3. Economic demands are mostly *outcome oriented*: requests for public services, anti-poverty and agricultural programmes and land reform. Political demands are mainly *regime oriented*: denunciations against local public authorities for



corruption or fraud; petitions of removal of municipal presidents; accusation of repression by *caciques*, local, state and federal police, the military, and paramilitary forces; and pleas for the liberation of political prisoners. And ethnic demands are *community oriented*: demands of public services to ethnically differentiated populations; the recognition of indigenous peoples' customary laws and traditions to select their local authorities and to administer justice; the right to municipal or regional autonomy and self-determination; and demands for secession.

**Figure 5:** Indigenous Demands in Chiapas 1975-2000



Although economic or outcome-oriented demands were dominant in the 1970s, in the late 1990s they were reduced to only a 10 per cent overall level. Economic demands in Chiapas have boiled down to one issue – land. 77 per cent of all economic or output-oriented demands involve petitions for land reform and only 21 per cent involve requests for anti-poverty programmes or programmes of agricultural support. As illustrated in Figure 5, demands for land reform exploded in the late 1970s and represented almost half of all indigenous demands between 1978 and 1981. Between 1982 and 1993, claims for land reform systematically amounted to 20 per cent of all indigenous demands. In 1994, following the Zapatista uprising, the state of Chiapas experienced one of the most dramatic rural insurrections since the 1910 Mexican Revolution: more than 1,000 plots were invaded that year by peasants and Indians affiliated to independent organisations and to the PRI. During 1994, 30 per cent of all public demands included issues related to land redistribution. Two years after the liberalisation of land tenure and the official announcement by the federal government that the post-revolutionary land reform was over, the Chiapas peasantry exploded. Yet, as the federal and the

state governments launched successive programmes of land reform between 1994 and 1998, economic demands have systematically declined to a 10 per cent level.

Political or system demands have dominated the agenda of peasant indigenous organisations in Chiapas over the last 25 years. More specifically, the democratisation of municipal power and the end of government repression and human rights violations have been the highest priorities of Chiapas's indigenous movement. 30 per cent of all political demands involve issues of democratisation of decision-making power of municipal authorities and 60 per cent involve demands for an end of repression of local, state and federal police forces and the military, as well as demands for the release of political prisoners. The Zapatista rebellion also opened the door for an indigenous civil insurrection against municipal authorities. During 1994, almost 50 per cent of all demands involved demands for punishing or displacing mayors. Local Congress removed 30 per cent of Chiapas's municipal presidents that year. Between 1982 and 1993 demands for local democratisation and respect for human rights systematically scored about 75 per cent of all demands in the state. After 1994, however, political demands have slowed down to around 50 per cent.

Contrary to primordialist theories of ethnic identity formation that trace indigenous ethnic identification from time immemorial, Figure 5 shows that ethnic or community-oriented public demands are of recent coinage in Chiapas. 70 per cent of all ethnic demands in the state involve local decision-making power: the capacity to elect their own authorities according to customary laws and traditions and demands for local or regional autonomy and self-determination. Almost 30 per cent of all ethnic demands include requests for the constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples. The first significant peak of ethnic demands took place during the 1992 campaign to condemn 500 years of the Conquest of the Americas. Ethnic demands then only included the constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples. More radical ethnic demands, including the right to autonomy and self-determination became dominant demands and occupied up to 43 per cent of all demands in the state in 1996. Ethnoterritorial demands have not displaced demands for land and local democratisation; rather, indigenous organisations now increasingly raise territorial demands (instead of land reform) and demands for self-government (instead of denouncing wrongdoings by municipal presidents). It should be pointed out that in 25 years of active collective dissent, Chiapas's indigenous organisations have only made one demand for secession (the PRIistas of San Juan Chamula).

Practically all peasant indigenous organisations displayed in Figure 4 played a key role in the transformation of peasant demands into an ethnic programme. Yet the ethnification of peasant demands has varied across organisations and regions. For example, the EZLN made a radical identity shift between 1995 and 1997, as it embraced the autonomy programme during the second phase of peace negotiations in San Andrés Larráinzar. As illustrated by the geography of the MAZA, RAZ and RAPs and by publicly expressed demands, the most radical levels of ethnification of demands have been experienced in the Highlands (Chenalhó, Larrainzar,

Chamula and Zinacantán) and Eastern Chiapas (Altamirano, Ocosingo, Las Margaritas, Oxchuc, San Juan Cancuc, Huixtán and Chanal) in the north-of-the-Highlands (El Bosque, Bochil, Huitupán, Ixtapa and Jitotol) have experienced the most radical levels of ethnification. Organisations like CIOAC and FIPI have played a key role in the slow process of ethnification of Las Margaritas and La Trinitaria and the north-of-the-Highlands region around Simojovel and Huitupán. Finally, the Central Valleys (Venustiano Carranza) and the Chol region (Sabanilla, Tila, Tumbalá and Salto del Agua) have experienced intermediate and low levels of ethnification in the past 5 years, respectively.

#### **4. State Responses in Historical Perspective: Co-optation, Repression and Negotiation**

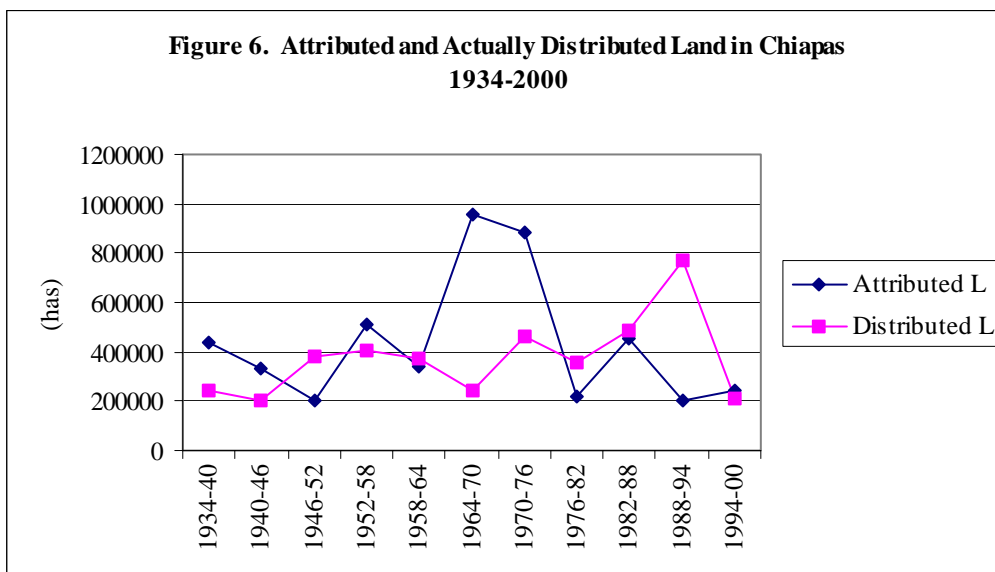
Two elements are essential to understand the different strategic responses undertaken by the Mexican and the Chiapas governments. The first one is Mexico's dual transition to democracy and to a market-oriented economy in the 1982–2000 period. And the second one is the concurrent nature of federal and state elections in Mexico and Chiapas and the overlapping six-year terms of presidents and governors. State responses to peasant and indigenous protest may thus be divided according to the government actor that undertakes the response (federal or state governments) and depending on the sphere of government action that is involved in such a response (constitutional reforms, political-institutional changes and policy reforms).

State responses to peasants and Indians in Chiapas can be divided into five historical periods – (1) Between 1975 and 1993, PRI local authorities combined piecemeal land reform with increasing levels of police repression. (2) In 1994, after the Zapatista insurrection, the federal government tried to negotiate a peace agreement via radical social policy reforms while local police forces – now joined by the military – escalated repression levels. (3) In 1996, the federal government tried again to negotiate a peace agreement, now via a constitutional reform granting some ethnocultural rights to indigenous communities. (4) Between 1997 and 2000, the federal and state governments practised well-orchestrated division of labour. The federal government concentrated on focalised anti-poverty programmes targeted at the “conflict zone” and pushed for the militarisation of this area. Also the state government introduced important reforms to the state constitution to grant limited ethnocultural rights to indigenous communities; launched a programme of remunicipalisation; and resumed high levels of police repression combined with government-sponsored intercommunal strife. (5) In 2001, under democratic rule, while the federal government tried to go back to the negotiation table with the Zapatistas via a constitutional reform granting the rights to autonomy and self-determination to indigenous peoples, the opposition-led state government launched a programme of inter- and intracommunal reconciliation.

#### 4.1 Local policy responses to peasant protest: Piecemeal land reform and police repression

Between 1975 and 1993 the federal government delegated in the hands of Chiapas's governors the capacity to respond to peasant indigenous demands. State authorities tried to persuade local peasants to contain mobilisation in exchange of piecemeal land reform or else face severe police repression.

**Figure 6:** Attributed and Actually Distributed Land in Chiapas 1934-2000



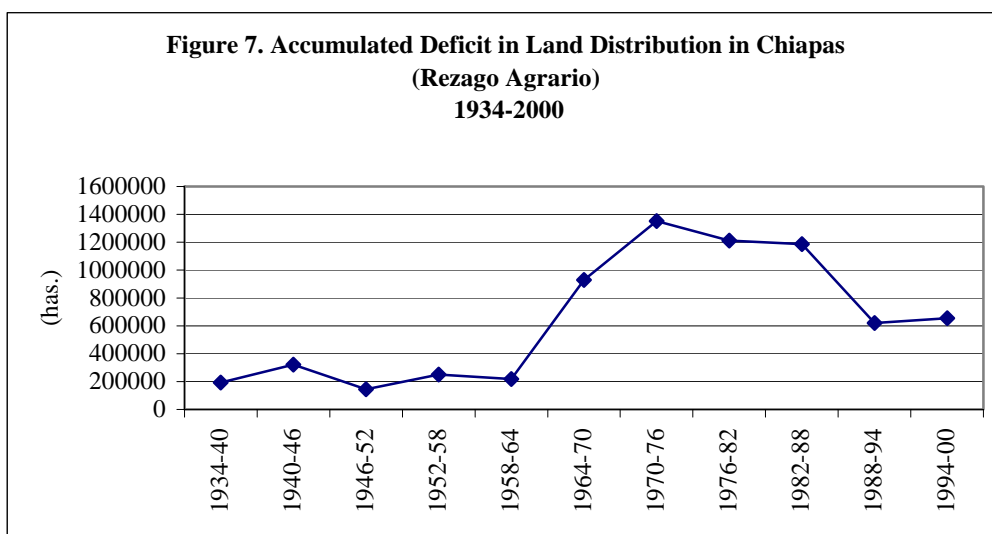
Source: *Registro Agrario Nacional*, taken from Villafuerto et al. 1999.

In 1976 President José López Portillo (1976–82) announced the end of land reform in Mexico. In principle, his administration would not distribute more land and would instead concentrate on anti-poverty and productivity-enhancing rural-support programmes. As shown in Figure 6, the president's predecessors (1964–70 and 1970–76) had attributed the largest number of hectares for Chiapas's peasantry in post-revolutionary Mexican history, thereby pushing the accumulated deficit in land distribution (see Figure 7) to its highest historical level in 1976. Peasant expectations were high when López Portillo announced the end of land reform. After the Indian National Congress in San Cristóbal de las Casas 1974, peasant and indigenous communities from the Highlands (Simojovel and Huituipan), the Central Valleys (Venustiano Carranza) and Eastern and Southeastern Chiapas (Chilón, Ocosingo and Las Margaritas) initiated a wave of peaceful protest to demand land redistribution.

Although the interim administration of Governor Juan Sabines (1979–82) ended up distributing as much land as many of his predecessors, Chiapas's ruling élites

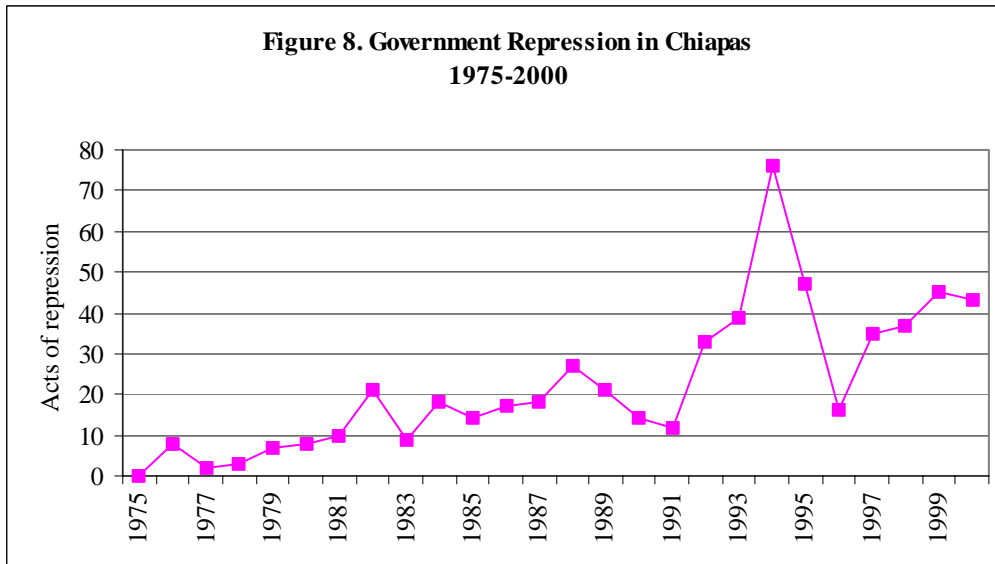
reacted with great fear to initial peasant indigenous mobilisation. 70 per cent of all acts of protest in the 1978–82 period were matched by subsequent acts of police repression against independent peasant organisations. Fuelled by historical myths of an Indian insurrection or a caste war in the state, local élites in Chiapas reacted violently to peasant indigenous mobilisation throughout the 1980s. Figure 8 summarises all acts of government repression against Chiapas’s indigenous peasant populations between 1975 and 2000.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 7:** Accumulated Deficit in Land Distribution in Chiapas 1934-2000.



Source: Registro Agrario Nacional, taken from Villafuerto et al. 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Government repression includes personal harassment, physical attacks, destruction or invasion of land and private houses, destruction of an organization’s offices, ambushes, illegal detentions, rapes, individual assassinations, collective assassinations and massacres undertaken by local, state or federal police and the army.

**Figure 8:** Government Repression in Chiapas

Source: Trejo 2002b.

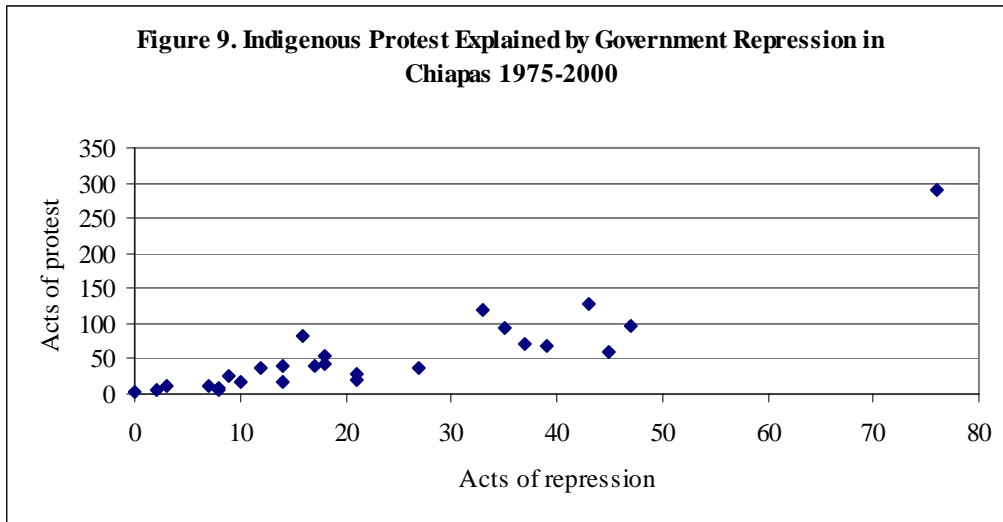
With peasant mobilisations underway, the administration of General Absalón Castellanos (1982–88), charged by President Miguel de la Madrid with the task of preventing any possible contagion from the Central American civil wars on to Mexican soil, resorted to the strategies of his predecessor: land reform and police repression. As evidenced in Figure 6, General Castellanos distributed more land than any of his predecessors but also engaged in police repression more than any of his precursors (see Figure 8). General Castellanos inaugurated what eventually became Chiapas-style land reformism, by which governors would buy land from landowners and distribute it to the *campesinos*. Scholars of peasant politics in Chiapas suggest that Chiapas's authorities generally overcompensated landowners by paying a "political" rather than market price for the land (Reyes 1999). And, also, that up to 84 per cent of the land distributed would end up in the hands of PRI-affiliated peasants (Villafuerte et al 1999). Land overpopulation and the accumulated deficit in land distribution sent many opposition peasants into protest. A vicious cycle of protest, repression and protest initiated under the administration of General Castellanos, particularly in Simojovel, Huituipan, Venustiano Carranza, Chilón, Ocosingo and Las Margaritas.

Governor Patrocinio González (1988–94) took power amid a highly mobilised peasantry demanding land reform, the democratisation of municipal power, and an end to government repression in the state. Although González openly criticised the rural policies of his predecessor, under his administration more land was distributed than under any other administration. Some of this land was, once again, bought from local landowners and distributed to PRI and opposition peasant organisations. After the reform of Article 27 and the liberalisation of land tenure in

1992, González announced the end of land reform in the state. To avoid local and international condemnations, the federal administration of Carlos Salinas pursued a double-track compensatory strategy. On the one hand, Salinas introduced a constitutional reform by which Mexican indigenous peoples would receive constitutional recognition and, on the other, his administration launched a massive anti-poverty programme: PRONASOL, the National Solidarity Programme. The land reform and the compensation measures had unintended effects for the regime. The liberalisation of land tenure dramatically increased the levels of peasant protest in Chiapas and the constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples provided a very strong incentive for Indian peasants to take up the ethnic banner. The Solidarity programme contributed to internal discontent mainly because most funds were distributed via traditional PRI-corporatist channels. As Figure 8 suggests, as land distribution and social policy did not discourage social mobilisation, after 1991 the González administration resorted to increasing levels of police repression and human-rights violations.

Throughout the 1980s, organised peasant indigenous populations in Chiapas were victims of the classic response to social mobilisation by a post-revolutionary authoritarian regime: the carrot and the stick. For national and local élites, peasant protest was a question of buying off conflict with peacemeal land reform and anti-poverty programmes. If these solutions did not pay off, police repression was the most obvious last-resort solution. While opposition parties had made initial important inroads in northern and central states, by the early 1990s they failed to minimally penetrate most regions in Chiapas. Facing no real competition, local élites faced scant incentives to undertake insitutional changes that would open Chiapas's political system to more pluralistic contestation. As depicted in Figure 9, protest led to repression and repression, in turn, to further protest. This spiral of contention revealed the incapacity of the state's political system and actors to provide institutional channels for conflict resolution to an increasingly impoverished, pluralistic, participatory and divided society.

**Figure 9:** Indigenous Protest Explained by Government Repression in Chiapas 1975-2000



Source: Trejo 2002b.

#### 4.2 Federal response to a peasant rebellion: Negotiating peace through traditional policy channels

The insurrection of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation marked a turning point in Chiapas's contemporary history. As argued above, the Zapatista rebellion revealed a deep crisis in Chiapas's economic structure as well as a structural crisis in the state's political arrangement. After ten days of open combat between the Mexican Army and the EZLN, President Carlos Salinas called for a ceasefire. A few weeks later, the federal government would initiate peace negotiations with the rebels. Manuel Camacho, the Peace Commissioner, and Subcommander Marcos, the guerrilla military strategists and spokesman, came very close to signing a peace agreement in March 1994. The essence of the agreement consisted of massive fiscal transfers and social programmes to indigenous communities in Chiapas. Although Zapatista commanders always disliked the federal government's inflexible position of reducing the rebellion to a local phenomenon, which called for a local solution, they were nonetheless close to signing the peace agreement, had it not been for the assassination of the PRI presidential candidate in March 1994. The political crisis and the elite fragmentation that was made evident by the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio opened a window of opportunities for the Zapatistas to sit and wait for a more ambitious peace agreement. By the same token, the rural and civil insurrection underway in Chiapas also revealed the deep crisis in the local political system and the unparalleled social momentum that the Zapatista rebellion had opened up. The Zapatistas thus decided to explore their electoral potential and threw all their moral and political capital behind the PRD candidate, Amado Avendaño.



With peace negotiations between the federal government and the EZLN at a stalemate, local politics took over. The 1994 massive wave of land invasions was met with a combination of renewed land reform and with government repression. The 1994 electoral challenge in the gubernatorial race was met with a combination of fraud and selective police repression against dissident leaders. And the 1994 civil insurrection against municipal presidents that reached its highest levels after the electoral fraud in the gubernatorial elections was met with a combination of negotiation and repression. Figure 8 illustrates that 1994 was the year with the most severe levels of repression in Chiapas's contemporary history. This old combination of protest (now insurrection) and repression would provide incentives for rebels and independent indigenous organisations to take a more radical turn: ethnicity.

#### *4.3 Federal response to an Indian civil uprising: Negotiating peace through piecemeal constitutional reformism*

Disenchanted by the electoral fraud in the gubernatorial race, in December 1994 the Zapatistas took over 38 municipal palaces and established rebel municipal territories. President Ernesto Zedillo's (1994–2000) reaction was to order the military to capture Subcommander Marcos and the top Zapatista commanders-in-chief. A domestic and international civil campaign again brought military action to a halt and opposition parties in Mexico pushed for a constitutional reform by which rebels would be given amnesty. All parties called for a second phase of peace negotiations, which would take place in 1996.

The federal government and the rebels convened to a negotiation scheme involving four consecutive negotiation panels. The first one would deal with the right to autonomy and self-determination for indigenous peoples, the second one with reforms to Mexico's system of representative democracy, the third one with economic (land) issues and the last one with women's rights. Unlike the first phase of peace negotiations in which economic demands were at centre stage, ethno-cultural rights became the centrepiece in the second round. To the surprise of everyone, the Peace Commissioner and the Zapatistas signed an agreement (the San Andrés Accords), which obliged the Mexican President to push through Congress the constitutional reforms agreed on in the Accords. Convinced that if that agreement were pushed through Congress Mexico would follow the "Balkanisation" path, however, President Zedillo never sent the Accords to Congress and negotiations broke down.

While the federal government and the EZLN negotiated the San Andrés Accords, a series of interim governors in Chiapas tried to cope with the massive wave of land invasions. Under different schemes and programme names, the government of Chiapas resorted again to the old policy of buying land from landowners to distribute it to the *campesinos*. Between 1995 and 1998 the Mexican and the Chiapas governments distributed as much land as General Lázaro Cárdenas, the

father of Mexico's agrarian reform, had done back in 1934. Yet, once again, up to 60 per cent of the land benefited PRI-affiliated peasant organisations, when 70 per cent of all invaded plots were in the hands of anti-PRI independent organisations such as CIOAC, OPEZ, OCEZ, CNPA, CNPI and ORCAO (Villafuerte, et.al. 1999). As we will see in the next section, one of the unintended short-term effects of this PRI-biased distribution of small plots was that the government set the structural conditions for intercommunal strife between PRI and anti-PRI forces.

#### *4.4 Federal response to stalemate: Local constitutional reformism and the privatisation of repression*

With the peace negotiation process at a new stalemate, the Zedillo administration followed the good old recipe of combining social policy with government repression. This time the federal government launched a series of focalised anti-poverty programmes in the Zapatista-dominated "conflict zone". The most prominent of all these programmes was the "Programa Cañadas", a comprehensive targeted plan, which included a series of programmes of physical infrastructure (water, electrification, housing and the construction of communal roads) and productivity-enhancing agricultural actions. Pro-Zapatista forces denounced the programme as a new strategy to buy-off Zapatista supporters. Together with these programmes, the federal government promoted a new wave of militarisation of the "conflict zone".

Amid the national stalemate, reformism shifted from the federal to the local government. Interim governor Roberto Albores (1997–2000) followed a three-track strategy, combining constitutional reforms, institutional changes and the privatisation of government repression by sponsoring or protecting armed civilians in their growing strife against Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities.

The constitutional reform track included a reform in Chiapas's constitution that introduced substantive changes to an otherwise ethnic-blind constitution –

(1) Chiapas was constitutionally recognised as a pluricultural state and the constitution specifies the nine indigenous ethnic groups that the state should protect. (2) The constitution specified that the government should protect and promote indigenous customary laws and traditions. The state's Electoral Code was reformed to encourage political parties to name indigenous candidates to compete in those municipalities and electoral districts of indigenous majority. (3) The constitution established penal sanctions on racial discrimination. (4) The constitution also demanded that the state guarantee equal access to judicial courts for indigenous populations, providing them with translators and lawyers sensitive to their customary laws and traditions. And (5) the state was obliged to provide bilingual education wherever necessary. Many of these changes placed Chiapas, together with Oaxaca, at the forefront of pro-Indian state constitutions. For most indigenous organisations in Chiapas, these changes came at least a decade late. With an eye set

on more fundamental reforms to the national constitution, these changes passed unnoticed.

Governor Albores promoted a long-requested programme of remunicipalisation and created eight new municipalities. As suggested by local observers, however, the new municipalities were all established next to Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities mainly to manage the resources that the Zapatistas rejected (Leyva 2000). In fact, confronting the Zapatista-controlled territories had been one of the key objectives of the Albores administration. The governor ordered the dismantling of at least half-a-dozen ZAPs.<sup>8</sup> The state government also promoted or permitted, together with PRI municipal authorities, local deputies and the military, the emergence of government-sponsored anti-Zapatista armed civilians (the so-called paramilitaries). The result was an unprecedented increase in intercommunal conflict, particularly in the Highlands, the Northern Chol region and Eastern Chiapas between 1997 and 1999.<sup>9</sup> During these years some regions of Chiapas practically slipped into small civil wars in which hundreds of families were displaced from their communities and mass murders like Acteal took place.

#### *4.5 Federal and local responses to an Indianist movement: Can majority rule solve ethnominority problems?*

On 2 July 2000, with the electoral victory of the opposition candidate Vicente Fox, Mexico's protracted transition to democracy came to an end. A month later, on 20 August, a former PRI Senator, Pablo Salazar, became the first opposition candidate to defeat the PRI in a gubernatorial race. In his inaugural speech, President Fox announced that his first government action would be to send to Congress the COCOPA law initiative – a legal translation of the San Andrés Accords, drafted by a multi-party congressional commission, and approved by the EZLN. By sending the law initiative to the Senate, the President hoped to resume peace negotiations with the Zapatista rebels. In Chiapas, in his inaugural speech, Governor Salazar announced that “reconciliation” would be the main policy objective of his administration. To that purpose he created a Commission for Reconciliation charged with the difficult task of rebuilding social relations in those municipalities in which pro- and anti-Zapatista forces were engaged in fierce disputes over land, territory and populations. The key problem for the President and the Governor was that neither of them had a majority in their respective congresses. Moreover, to pass his constitutional reform initiative Fox had to strike important deals with 19 PRI governors (out of 32 states). To make his programme of reconciliation come true, Salazar also had to strike important deals with PRI mayors who dominated two-thirds of the municipal presidencies in the state.

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<sup>8</sup> See *La Jornada*, in 1997: 11, 16 and 20 March; in 1998: 8 April, 2 May, 11 June; in 1999: 8, 9, 10 and 15 April and 7 and 11 June.

<sup>9</sup> See *La Jornada*, in 1997: 23, 24 and 26 December; in 1998: 14 May, 27, 3 and 30 June, 25 October and 2 December; in 1999: 5 February; and in 2000: December, various issues.

The COCOPA law initiative, which essentially recognised the right to autonomy and self-determination to indigenous peoples, was supported by President Fox, the Zapatistas and by more than 70 per cent of public opinion. Both Fox and the Zapatistas assumed that the real battle to push the constitutional reform through Congress would be played out in the media and not in the legislative halls.

To lobby in favour of the law initiative, the Zapatistas organised an “epic” two-week march that took the commanders in chief of the EZLN and Subcommander Marcos from Chiapas to Mexico City and then to Congress. Yet, the Zapatistas never bothered to approach personally federal and state legislators from all political parties to lobby for the reform. Following authoritarian logic, the EZLN assumed that once the President threw his support behind the COCOPA law initiative, Congress would automatically approve it, as in the golden years of PRI hegemony. On his side, President Fox launched a massive media campaign to show his support for the COCOPA law initiative and his commitment to the Indian cause, but he never organised a serious lobby campaign to secure a majority in Congress. Following a plebiscitarian logic, the President assumed that his enormous first-year popularity and media campaign would corner all legislators in approving his reform. Legislators from the President’s right-of-centre National Action Party (PAN) and the PRI drafted and passed an Indian law that turned out to be substantially different from the COCOPA law initiative.

The Indian law approved mainly by PAN and PRI legislators introduced the right to autonomy and self-determination to indigenous peoples in the constitution but left its legal implementation in the hands of state legislatures and governments. In fact, the law was substantive on federal social provision but weak on political transformation. The Zapatistas condemned the law immediately and prospects for peace negotiation soon collapsed.

Why did the Zapatistas reject an Indian law that, though limited, opened many doors for negotiating far-reaching reforms at the state level? Three reasons can be offered. First, since 1998 the EZLN made its dominant strategy to condition any peace agreement to the constitutional approval of the COCOPA law initiative. This all-or-nothing strategy was the Zapatistas’ reaction to President Zedillo’s decision not to honour what his Peace Commissioner had signed back in 1997. In the view of the Zapatistas, accepting an Indian law different from the COCOPA law initiative was tantamount to opening the door for the government to fail to honor its word in future negotiations. Second, one of the main objectives of the Zapatista march on Mexico City in 2001 was to push for the emergence of a national indigenous movement for the first time in Mexican history, by bringing together a host of local indigenous organisations under the banner of the Zapatista-supported Indigenous National Congress (CNI). A law initiative that opened the door for different local autonomy arrangements would counter the Zapatista goal of creating a pan-Indian movement of all Mexican Indians. And, third, since 1996/97 Subcommander Marcos has embraced the goal of becoming the Indians’ Martin Luther King. To signal his true commitment to an Indianist programme and to wipe out his Marxist-

Leninist past, he has radically embraced a primordialist discourse that accepts nothing short of an autonomy regime, as embodied in the COCOPA law initiative, for all Mexican Indians.

Reconciliation in Chiapas has turned into a complicated mission in the post-PRI era. With the Zapatistas back in the jungle and the PRI out of government, the bipolar structure of intercommunal conflict (PRI versus anti-PRI) has given way to a multipolar structure that pits Zapatistas against their former comrades of the left as well as against PRI-affiliated organisations. While the Commission for Reconciliation has somehow unsuccessfully tried to bring to terms historical PRI and anti-PRI enemies, little has been done to reform the judicial system to adjudicate effectively and impartially future multipolar conflicts.

### **5. Does Chiapas provide any policy lessons?**

Within the short time-span of three decades, indigenous populations in Chiapas went from organising a non-violent peasant movement demanding land reform to becoming the main engine in the emergence of a guerrilla-backed national Indianist movement demanding the right to autonomy and self-determination for indigenous peoples. Although the state's socio-economic conditions may help explain such radical shift in strategies of dissent and demands, it is the dynamic process of strategic interaction between the peasant indigenous movement and the federal and state governments that provides a better explanation.

Initial responses to the wave of peasant indigenous protests that began in the 1970s involved mainly state government action in two domains: land reform and police repression. This contradictory logic of combining land reformism with police repression was a direct result of the pathological nature of Mexico's agrarian reform. Although Mexican presidents attributed hundreds of hectares to landless peasants, it was up to the *campesinos* themselves to actually obtain the land. This inevitably led to a wave of peasant indigenous protest. As the case of Chiapas exemplifies, governors played a key role in the bargaining over the actual distribution of land. The main problem was that land reform followed an incremental and clientelistic logic, in which PRI-affiliated peasants and Indians received the greatest shares. The Chiapas story suggests that under conditions of increasing land overpopulation and a bipolar structure of conflict (i.e. PRI versus anti-PRI forces), land reform, if systematically biased towards one group, creates the structural conditions for further protest and for intercommunal strife.

When land reform failed as a disincentive to social turmoil, local élites in Chiapas resorted to police repression. As scholars of repression have analytically demonstrated, such contradictory policies of inviting and repressing land invasion at once, opens the door for the radicalisation of dissent (Lichbach 1987). Indeed, as police repression increased, peasant indigenous organisations in Chiapas added to their outcome-oriented demands, new system demands: the democratisation of

local power structures and an end to human-rights violations. Chiapas's local élites reacted to this universalistic language of democracy and human rights with more land reform and police repression. In other words, rather than opening the Chiapan political system to greater multiparty contestation, local élites insisted on the traditional corporatist recipe of the carrot and the stick.

In a context of one-party dominance, in which peasant indigenous dissenters had no institutional channels to respond through by peaceful means, peasant indigenous protest eventually scaled up into rebellion. And, in the aftermath of the 1992 liberalisation of land tenure, universalist demands for land, democracy and respect for human rights gave way to a language of group-specific ethnocultural rights. Caught by historic fears of an Indian uprising or a caste war, and unlike local élites elsewhere in the country (i.e. Hidalgo and Oaxaca), élites in Chiapas did not show the boldness of introducing *timely reforms* which would open up the state's social, economic and political arenas for greater participation by peasant indigenous populations.

The insurrection of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation marked a turning point in the history of Chiapas and in the evolution of the state's indigenous peasant movement. Since 1994 the federal government took charge of indigenous peasant dissent in Chiapas and, together with the state government, tried all sorts of contradictory solutions, including peace negotiations, constitutional and institutional reforms, more land reformism and more police and military repression. Peace negotiations included ambitious social policy reforms and initial attempts at constitutional reforms to introduce the right to autonomy and self-determination for indigenous peoples. However, negotiations failed in 1994 because a dramatic change of political circumstances after the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio opened a window of opportunity for the EZLN to transcend a package of social policy reforms. Two years later negotiations failed again simply because the President failed to honour the agreement his negotiators had previously reached with the Zapatistas. Two lessons can be learned from the 1996 round of peace negotiations. One is that authoritarian governments seldom keep their word in peace negotiations if there is no international third-party involvement. And, second, that it often backfires when a guerrilla group relies on authoritarian solutions, such as assuming that a President would push constitutional reform by authoritarian fiat.

When negotiations at the national level failed in 1997, the Zedillo administration opened the door to an intense period of local constitutional reformism allied with severe police and military repression. Once again, the ambitious constitutional reforms introduced in these years show local élites in Chiapas reacting a decade late. Had these reforms been implemented in the late 1980s, neither indigenous peasant protest would have scaled up into rebellion, nor the movement demands been transformed into a radical programme of ethnoterritorial demands.

The simultaneous opposition victory in the 2000 national election and in the gubernatorial race in Chiapas also marks a turning-point in the history of

indigenous peasant protest. The strategy of newly elected President Fox to combine constitutional reforms with peace negotiations was in principle a step never taken under authoritarian rule. The peace negotiation never took off, mainly because the constitutional reform to grant the right to autonomy and self-determination for indigenous peoples was only partially accepted by Congress. The lessons to be learned from the constitutional reform experience of the Indian law is that ethnoterritorial reforms are not symbolic changes, but comprehensive reforms that redefine the territorial bases of power in a polity. Hence, plebiscitarian appeals to the public like the ones made by Fox and the Zapatistas are not the most effective means towards passing such ambitious reforms. By the same token, the experience of the Indian law reveals that under conditions of high political pluralism and in a system operating under majority rule, minority groups should not simply rely on all-or-nothing strategies of persuasion.

After the defeat of the COCOPA law initiative in Congress, one of the greatest challenges ahead for Mexican democratic institutions and élites is to persuade the Indianist movement that Indians will no longer be permanent losers under the new democratic arrangement. For the Indianist movement, the challenge ahead is to show that they have the flexibility to transform incrementally the territorial bases of the Mexican state. It should be pointed out that, unlike minority groups in other world regions, neither the civilian Indianist movement nor the Zapatistas are demanding the redefinition of the country's external borders (secessionism) but, rather, the redrawing of its internal political boundaries: state, district and municipal frontiers. If democracy proves dysfunctional to the Indian movement in this objective of redefining the territorial bases of power and if the movement fails to pursue this change under increasingly pluralistic conditions, protest, intercommunal strife and government repression will most likely continue to be as intense as under authoritarian rule.

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# The Decline of PKK and the Viability of a One-state Solution in Turkey

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*Prior to the 1990s, most regional experts insisted that only a negotiated settlement could provide a solution to "the Kurdish problem" in Turkey. It was widely assumed that the uncompromising stance of the government would result in a radicalization of the Kurdish population, which would further fuel violence. This has not happened. In the late 1990s, the Turkish state defeated the insurgent organization PKK militarily, without making any important concessions to Kurdish nationalism. This article analyzes the effect of Turkey's hard-line policy on Kurdish politics. First, it is argued that PKK's collapse resulted from strategic factors and had little to do with popular support. Second, the article contends that the radicalization of Turkish Kurds in the 1990s was overstated. The median Kurdish voter probably supported center-right Turkish political parties. Intra-ethnic and cross-cutting political cleavages explain why polarization has not been the overwhelming trajectory of recent Kurdish politics in Turkey.*

As recently as 1998, the foremost expert on Kurdish history wrote:

The conflict between the Republic of Turkey and a large part of its Kurdish population continues to be escalating. On both sides moderates have had to yield to hardliners, and the prospects for a peaceful settlement are not very bright. If wisdom does not prevail – and there are as yet no signs that it will – we are likely to witness an ongoing confrontation of increasing violence and brutality in which either the Kurdish secessionist movement is physically destroyed or the social costs of the war become so high to Turkey that the as yet unthinkable alternative, secession, will come to be considered as the best solution (Bruinessen 1998).

Despite the steadily declining battlefield fortunes of PKK<sup>1</sup> during the second half of the 1990s, most observers agreed with Bruinessen's assessment and argued for the necessity of a political compromise by the Turkish state.<sup>2</sup> They insisted that the

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<sup>1</sup> The *Parti Karkaren Kurdistan*, or Kurdish Workers Party, is a militant organisation established with the aim of creating an independent, Marxist-Leninist, Kurdish state in Southeastern Turkey.

<sup>2</sup> See Barkey and Fuller 1998, 214; Muller 1996, 193; Kirisci and Winrow 1997, 183, for similar statements.

state's single-minded focus on a military response to PKK would only further polarise identity and opinion, turning peaceful civilians into militants.

Developments in Turkey since the late 1990s pose a puzzle for this analysis. As of 2002, the Kurdish Southeast of Turkey is largely pacified. PKK guerrillas have withdrawn across the Iraqi border. Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK leader, languishes in the island prison of Imralı. Emergency rule has been lifted in all but four provinces. For all intents and purposes, PKK is no longer a military presence in Turkey. Moreover, this outcome was achieved without the granting of *any* important concessions by the state.

If violence results from frustrated ethno-politics, then we should not be seeing what we are seeing in Turkey. What Bozarslan (1996) calls the "policy of *aggiornamento*" should have caused an increase in militancy rather than its decline. Instead, since the capture of Abdullah Öcalan in February 1999, a new political movement has begun to emerge in Turkey that favours electoral competition and non-institutional pressure tactics over violence. Only since the collapse of militancy has the government begun to make hesitant steps toward concessions.

The failure of those with the best area knowledge to foresee these events resulted, I believe, from flawed theory: in particular, a tendency to conflate distinct processes of conflict and violence (Brubaker and Laitin 1998). Violence is neither a natural nor an inevitable consequence of ethnic politics, even when political demands not satisfied. Organised violence is always the product of organisations designed for violence, and violent organisations are not reducible to the social groups they purport to represent. PKK managed to build an impressive base of both active and passive popular support in the early 90s, but it remained throughout an organisation "built" for war and dedicated to winning compliance and control. PKK lost its war to a determined enemy using an effective counterinsurgency strategy.

The civilian population of the Kurdish region was profoundly effected by the civil war that raged from 1984 to 1999. Many were killed; vast numbers were uprooted from their lands. The effects of insurgency and counterinsurgency on their ethnic identities and political views are difficult to measure, but it would be a caricature to treat the conflict as one that pitted rigid ethnic blocs against each other. Although the civil war appears to have had a polarising effect on *some* Kurds, that result was not universal. The evidence suggests that ethnic boundaries in Turkey continue to be porous and multifaceted, while ethnicity is only one of the factors that influence political opinion.

The strategy of this volume, disaggregating violence, identity, and opinion, is therefore well suited to analysing Kurdish politics, because the effect of Turkish government policy on each component of the ethnic research agenda is distinct. This chapter is divided into three main sections, each addressing one of these three dependent variables. In Section 1, I argue that PKK/state violence is best described as a classic rural insurgency, rather than a popular uprising. The state's counter-

insurgency campaign was effective in defeating it, and similar violence is unlikely to arise in the future due mainly to rapid urbanisation. Section 2 addresses identity. I argue that, despite civil war, the boundaries of Kurdish identity are more open than is often appreciated. Although polarisation has occurred for some individuals, processes of assimilation continue simultaneously, and further ethnification is not inevitable. In Section 3, I address support for Kurdish nationalism by examining returns from three recent elections. Although Kurdish nationalist parties have been competitive, the majority of Kurdish voters favoured rightist and Islamist parties, which suggests that support for nationalism is weaker than usually thought. I conclude by discussing some of the policy implications of this case.

### *Note on Terminology*

The “Kurdish question” is fraught with semantic discord. The state insists that use of the term “Kurdistan” implies an endorsement of secession; Kurdish nationalists argue that terms like “the Southeast” are euphemistic, intended to deny their existence as a distinct group. Similarly, the state argues that calling PKK violence “civil war” legitimates the organisation; they prefer “terrorist”.

There is no way out of these arguments except to state one's prejudices. I do not believe the legitimacy of ethno-national claims to political status can be decided in ideal terms. A Kurdish state has no more, *or less*, right to exist than states based on any of the other identities that cross-cut or sub-divide Kurdish identity. I concur with Levy (2000, ch. 3), who argues that a generalised right to self-determination is incoherent. When identities overlap and crosscut, granting self-determination to one group *entails* denying it to others.

Given that I do not endorse one “side”, I use the terms that identify the region interchangeably. Although terror has been part of PKK's (and the state's) repertoire, it has been the predominant tactic of neither. By historical standards, the 5,424 civilians reported killed from 1984 to 1999 (U.S. DOS 2000) is extraordinarily low, and suggests selectivity and restraint by both parties.<sup>3</sup> The violence in Southeastern Turkey satisfies scholarly definitions of civil war, insurgency, and ethnic violence, and I use all three in ways that are consistent with that literature.

## **1. Violence and Demographic Shift**

In this section, I argue that Turkey is unlikely to return to the violence of the period 1984–99, regardless of the degree to which it accommodates Kurdish nationalist

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<sup>3</sup> This figure is based on government sources and may be an underestimate. I am unaware of any independent attempt to estimate war deaths in Kurdistan. Even if the true figure is five times greater, this case was far less deadly than insurgencies in, e.g., South Vietnam, Algeria, or Sri Lanka. In civil wars, civilian casualties typically exceed combatant casualties (Kalyvas 2000a, 6), which has not been true in Turkey.

demands. The reason for this is fundamentally strategic, not political. The civil war in Kurdistan was a rural insurgency, not a popular uprising, and while Southeastern Turkey was ideally suited to guerrilla warfare in the early 1980s, it is no longer. The civil war has fundamentally altered the demographics of the region, inducing vast internal migration and rapid urbanisation. Insurgency warfare is a rural phenomenon and cannot be resurrected in the new urban landscapes of Kurdish life. Though we will likely continue to see ethno-national political activity in Kurdistan, some of which may overflow non-violent boundaries, the coming years are unlikely to witness a return to generalised violence.

There are two dominant narratives about the Kurdish region prior to the civil war. On the one hand, the region is described as prostrate under state repression (McDowall 2000, 402). The second narrative identifies the region as lawless and neglected by authorities. Yalman (1969, 213) describes the area around Diyarbakir as "[V]ery unsettled. The law is weak and distant. Only tough men can survive the ruthlessness of the struggle. The landlord who is weak loses all he has and may, indeed, have to write off very considerable and valuable property as a total loss." In Yalçın-Hekmann's (1991) description of life in a Kurdish village, relations with the state were arbitrary, but sporadic. Before the civil war, Kurdistan was predominantly rural, with low population density: 62 per cent of the inhabitants lived in villages and there may have been as many as 36,000 settlements of less than 2,000 persons (McDowall 1996, 400). These ethnographic accounts suggest that the state was both repressive and weak. Indeed, the two factors may be linked; established states typically use more and more arbitrary violence in regions they control less fully (Ron forthcoming).

The civil war inaugurated by PKK in 1984, was not a spontaneous uprising. PKK was formed by Kurdish militants who splintered from Turkish Marxist-Leninist youth groups in the mid-1970s. Left-right violence was endemic to urban areas of Turkey in the late 1970s; it largely crosscut the Turkish-Kurdish divide. Öcalan's fledgling organisation was in the minority in adopting an ethnic and separatist orientation. PKK attacked landlords and rightists in the Siverek region in the late 1970s. The organisation was largely rolled up following the *coup d'etat* of 12 September 1980. A small number of activists, including Öcalan, escaped to Syria, where they were supported with sanctuary, weapons, and training in a bid to destabilise Turkey. PKK had no popular base at this time; Öcalan himself admits that Syrian support was crucial to the organisation's survival and development (İmset 1992, 25).

The civil war began as a series of cross-border raids staged from sanctuaries in northern Iraq (İmset 1992, 38–41). The initial wave of militants often had few ties to the local inhabitants of the provinces where the insurgency began, coming instead from the original heartland of PKK in Siverek. After a few tactically disastrous attacks against the security forces, PKK adopted a strategy of targeting civilians: mayors, schoolteachers, and tribal chiefs, anyone perceived as an actual

or potential collaborator with the state (Barkey and Fuller 1998, 28; İmset 1992, 34–35, 44, 100).

PKK strategy conformed closely to classic Maoist principles of "revolutionary" war, what statist analysts call "insurgency" (Blaufarb and Tanham 1989). Rather than targeting the state's military forces, insurgency aims to create a climate of insecurity for all but large and well-armed elements of the state, reducing contact between the population and its government and undermining confidence in the state's ability to provide security and enforce its mandate. The ensuing void of authority is filled by insurgent counter-government, which is used to extract the intelligence, manpower, and resources needed for further operations. According to Öcalan, "Before anything else, there is the duty to bring the people to the stage of defending themselves and to make them believe, before anything else, that they need to be defended" (quoted in İmset 1992, 99).

The practice of basing one's logistics network on local production is charitably referred to as "revolutionary taxation", or less charitably as "looting". A sharp distinction between the two is difficult to sustain empirically (Kalyvas 2001b, 103). Villagers in insecure areas may wish to assist the guerrillas, or they may prefer directing scarce resources toward their families. Those who support insurgent goals may prefer that their neighbours shoulder the burden of paying for it. Whether giving to the guerrillas is "free" or "coerced" is difficult to determine, since it depends upon unobserved or off-the-equilibrium-path behaviour. A single beating or killing in the past, or the story of a similar incident elsewhere, may be sufficient to induce apparently voluntary compliance in the present.

In this sense, insurgents are no different from the state; both seek compliance from supporters and non-supporters alike. For this reason, students of counter-insurgency have long recognised that defeating insurgent strategy depends upon the state's ability to provide security for the population. Critics of counterinsurgency practice argue that "security" is a euphemism for "control", and that legitimate governments have no need for coercive strategies. But, security and control are opposite sides of the same coin; a state that cannot protect its citizens from the coercion of other parties cannot gain their compliance for itself.

The key role of security explains why insurgency is an almost wholly rural phenomenon (Laqueur 1998, 403–4): defence is much easier when the population is concentrated. The Kurdish case is no exception; throughout the civil war, towns were state strongholds. During the period of its greatest success, PKK contested the state for control of some district and provincial centres (Barkey and Fuller 1998, 29). However, in the force-on-force encounters that are required to take and hold towns, PKK suffered dreadful losses (Barkey and Fuller 1998, 28).

The government's control over rural Kurdistan, however, steadily declined throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. Some observers believe that the Turkish military did not take the threat seriously enough during the early years of the

insurgency (İmset 1992; Pope and Pope 1997). Consequently, the military stayed "inside the wire," instead of taking the battle to the enemy (Ron 1995). The state's strategy for rural defence mainly involved recruiting tribesmen into a local militia as *köy korucu* or village guards. The *korucu* and their families took the brunt of PKK attacks during this period, and the militia's numbers dwindled as the risks increased (İmset 1991, 100).

In the early 1990s, the state seems to have concluded that static defence of villages was a strategic failure. The security forces, while maintaining the *korucu* system, began driving civilians from their villages. "Evacuation", as this process is euphemistically described, is also a standard element of the counterinsurgent play-book. It aims to disrupt guerrilla logistics by physically removing the population. Evacuation concentrates populations in larger settlements, which can be effectively defended. The government pursued a less expensive variant of this strategy by accelerating existing processes of migration to the cities and towns. Direct action by the state was complemented by "voluntary" migration of people desperate to escape violence and economic collapse.

According to government estimates, 3,236 settlements had been cleared in Southeastern Turkey as of 1999, forcibly displacing 362,915 persons (U.S. DOS 2000, 18).<sup>4</sup> Villages were often destroyed to deny their use by guerrillas and prevent the return of residents. In some documented instances, these evacuations were carried out brutally. Soldiers met resistance with coercion: beatings, rapes, and selective instances of extra-judicial killing (Ron 1995). However conducted, being forcibly removed from ancestral villages is a horrifying and life-altering event.

The civil war dramatically altered the demography of the Kurdish region. Table 1 presents statistics on the urbanisation of Kurdistan that span the fiercest periods of violence, when the majority of evacuations took place. Two methods are used to identify the region. First, the 13 provinces that have been part of the emergency region (OHAL) are identified separately. Second, I distinguish 21 provinces that had more than 10 per cent mother-tongue speakers of Kurdish languages in the 1965 census (when language was last officially counted). Turkey identifies as an urban resident anyone who lives in a district centre.

According to the upper half of the table, the absolute size of the rural population in the OHAL provinces plunged by 11.9 per cent from 1990 to 1997, despite population growth of 14 per cent. The population of district centres in the same region jumped by 45 per cent. Simultaneously, the rural population of the rest of Turkey declined by 4 per cent, while urban areas grew by 21 per cent.

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<sup>4</sup> This figure is disputed. At the upper bound, a figure of 2–3 million displaced by evacuation is widely touted by human rights groups. The number is too high; if true, it would account for the entire 1990 rural population of OHAL or nearly a third of the *total* 1990 population of the Southeast.

**Table 1:** Rapid Urbanisation of the Kurdish Provinces, 1990–97

Provinces	% $\Delta$ Population 1990–97	% $\Delta$ Rural population 1990–97	% $\Delta$ Urban population 1990–97
OHAL (13)	14.0	-11.9	44.5
Non- OHAL (67)	11.0	-4.0	20.9
Kurdish (21)	12.8	-10.3	39.8
Non-Kurdish (59)	11.0	-3.4	19.9
Kurdish non-OHAL (8)	11.4	-8.3	34.3
Provinces	% Rural 1990	% Rural 1997	% $\Delta$ Rural 1990–97
OHAL (13)	54.2	41.9	-14.0
Non- OHAL (67)	39.6	34.2	-5.4
Kurdish (21)	53.9	42.9	-11.0
Non-Kurdish (54)	38.2	33.2	-5.0
Kurdish non- OHAL (8)	53.7	44.1	-9.5

Source: T.C. Baġbakanlık, Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü

A direct comparison with base rates is misleading, however. While rural depopulation in the OHAL region proceeded nearly three times faster than in the rest of Turkey, the population of OHAL was growing faster at the same time. Similarly, anecdotal evidence suggests many new migrants to the cities of western Turkey came from the Southeast. A similar, though less dramatic, pattern is evident if we consider all 21 Kurdish provinces.

Table 1 shows that urbanisation in Kurdistan changed dramatically from 1990 to 1997 in relative terms as well. In 1990, a far higher percentage of the population of Kurdistan lived in rural areas than did so in the rest of Turkey. By 1997, the Kurdish region was almost as urbanised as the rest of Turkey had been in 1990. Although urbanisation was rapid across Turkey, it was 2–3 times as rapid in Kurdistan. Southeastern Turkey changed from a majority rural region to a majority urban region in only seven years.

It is impossible to directly test the effects of the civil war, but the data are suggestive. The Kurdish provinces outside OHAL almost certainly suffered much less from evacuation. That these provinces displayed rates of urbanisation nearly as high as OHAL suggests that economic decline and general insecurity were more important causes of migration than previously appreciated.

However, even the dramatic statistics in Table 1 understate the urbanising trend in Turkish Kurdistan. While Kurdish residents were moving from the villages to the towns, they were also favouring larger towns. Table 2 illustrates this pattern by disaggregating growth rates to the district level in Diyarbakir Province. The table



displays percentage growth figures for rural and urban populations and raw figures for cumulative population change.

Districts are listed in increasing order of their 1997 population. First, these data confirm the effects demonstrated in Table 1. The absolute size of the rural population declined in all but two districts of Diyarbakir Province from 1990 to 1997, while the urban population grew in 11 out of 14 districts. The only significant rural population *gain* occurred in the district centre, the one town in the province with suburbs. Without this district, rural decline would have been twice as great. In addition, the two largest towns in the province, Bismil and Diyarbakir, accounted for 83 per cent of the total urban growth from 1990 to 1997, while three smaller towns in the province declined in population. In short, urban growth favoured the larger towns in Diyarbakir.

**Table 2:** Rapid Urbanisation in Diyarbakir Province, 1990–97

District	% $\Delta$ Rural Population 1990–97	District centre 1990–97 Cum. $\Delta$ Rural Population	% $\Delta$ Urban population 1990–97	District centre 1990–97 Cum. $\Delta$ Urban population
Kocaköy	-23.0	-2,567	19.3	819
Çunguş	-20.4	-5,248	5.2	1,022
Hazro	-36.5	-11,058	-25.5	-1,029
Lice	-73.5	-37,101	-20.2	-3,378
Egil	-1.0	-38,729	-7.2	-3,722
Hanı	4.0	-38,050	5.1	-3,194
Kulp	-56.4	-62,323	46.6	291
Dicle	-19.6	-68,322	140.4	7,891
Çermik	-1.7	-68,885	128.1	10,009
Çınar	-0.4	-69,048	56.3	15,684
Erganı	-4.8	-71,022	28.2	26,237
Silvan	-12.1	-77,105	22.8	39,894
Bismil	-15.1	-86,027	154.6	101,469
Province Centre	48.2	-43,737	34.2	231,965
Province Total	-9.0	-43,737	38.6	231,965

Source: T. C. Ba[ş]bakanlık, Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü

These data probably understate changes in rural concentration in one additional respect. The evacuations targeted high-altitude villages at a rate higher than more accessible settlements in valleys and near roads (Ron 1995, ch. 2). High-altitude villages tend to be smaller, because food production in mountainous areas cannot

support high population densities. Small, scattered settlements were also more vulnerable to coercion and taxation by PKK, and residents may have sought the relative security of larger villages.

The consequences of rural concentration for PKK were consistent with the counterinsurgency paradigm:

[F]rom 1996 the PKK found itself increasingly on the defensive, losing access to food and shelter because of the evictions and suffering an increasing level of casualties. By 1996 the estimated number of deaths [total, since 1984] was 20,000. By 1999 they were thought to exceed 35,000. The area dominated by the PKK was unmistakably contracting. It was clear that guerrilla tactics were failing (McDowall 2000, 442).

Far from forcing the population into the hands of PKK, the vast majority of civilians fled into government-controlled territory. Scholarly and journalistic reports amply attest to the rage that many migrants maintain against the state, but the expected nationalist explosions never materialised.

## **2. Identity**

In this section I discuss Kurdish identity. This reverses the usual order of presentation, in which violence is treated as the *consequence* of an identity cleavage. Fearon and Laitin (1996) have shown that it is a mistake to assume that identity causes violence; in fact, violence between ethnic groups is rare. In the preceding section, I argued that the rise and fall of PKK depended on strategic factors that are largely independent of the ethnic identities and opinions of the population. However, if ethnic difference does not cause violence, it remains an open question what effect violence has on the perceptions and identities of the population. Kaufman (1996) has argued that the causes of ethnic violence are irrelevant to the policy question of how violence is to be contained, because violence turns cleavages into chasms, hardening formerly fluid identities into rigid boundaries.

By contrast, I argue that the boundaries between Turkish and Kurdish identity have historically been porous and crosscut by key religious cleavages. Although the civil war has caused ethnic boundaries to rigidify for some people, the surprising fact is that Turkish and Kurdish communities remain quite open to each other and societal-level tensions continue to be quite manageable. The trajectory of ethnic identity in Turkey is difficult to predict, but I argue (in this section and the following one) that the most likely future involves a Kurdish population that remains bilingual and integrated into mainstream political life.

In its broadest understanding, the term “Kurdish” applies to speakers of one of four closely related Indo-Iranian languages (Kurmanji, Sorani, Zaza, and Gurani), or descendants of people so identified who speak other languages (McDowall 2000, 9–10). The number of people who satisfy this criterion is unknown, but some

observers place it in the range of 25 million persons (Randal 1999, 16), giving rise to the oft-repeated claim that Kurds are the “world's largest ethnic group without its own state”. Broad-definition Kurds are located mainly in contiguous territory within the borders of Turkey, Iraq, and Iran, with smaller indigenous populations in Syria and Armenia. Millions live as settled migrants in the cities of western Turkey, and large numbers have emigrated to the developed world, primarily Germany. The number of Kurds in Turkey is a subject of dispute. By a purely linguistic criterion, roughly 13 per cent of the population was Kurdish in the early 1990s (Kirişçi and Winrow 1997). If Turkish-speaking descendants of Kurds are included, the figure is certainly much higher.

The viability of the broad definition as the basis for a political identity, much less an actual state on the territory of Turkey, Iraq, and Iran, is minimal and does not appear to be on anyone's agenda in the region, though it probably has substantial support in the European diaspora. The borders in this region, though "artificial", have had a profound effect on political and social identities: "In each of these countries, the modern world was only accessible through the state language; but the Kurds who were literate in Turkish and their fellow Kurds who used Arabic or Persian came to inhabit different symbolic universes" (Bruinessen 1998).

Turkish nation-building is often treated as a failed experiment, largely on the basis of Kurdish evidence, but this is a misunderstanding. In fact, Turkey has been more successful than most twentieth-century states in assimilating a diverse population to a relatively unified collective identity (Cornell 2001). Pre-republican Anatolia was exceptionally diverse. Even discounting non-Muslims, Turkey embraced large numbers of Kurds, Arabs, Laz, Circassians, Albanians, Pomaks, and Greek-speaking Muslims. With the exception of Kurdish, these linguistic identities are not so much forgotten as they are politically inconsequential. Most people see no contradiction between being Laz and being Turkish.

Although assimilation is often characterised as "forcing" people to abandon their identity, this, too, is misleading. According to Bruinessen (1998): "More important, and ultimately much more successful [than violence], however, were the more peaceful means to which nation-building regimes everywhere have had recourse: compulsive general education, general conscription into the army (for males at least) and state-controlled radio and press." His understanding of Turkey is consistent with the literature on European nation-building, which generally treats benefits as more important than sanctions. The success of nation-building is probably attributable more than anything else to the relative openness of the Turkish opportunity structure. The Ruritanians of Gellner's (1983) modernisation story found ample room for economic and political integration.

Kurds were no exception: "This difficulty [of assimilating them] was not so much due to the strength of Kurdish nationalism as to the Kurds' sheer numbers and the tribal social structure of their society" (Bruinessen 1998). Turks eagerly point to ethnic Kurds like Türgüt Özal (a former president of Turkey) and Ibrahim Tatlıses

(a singer and television personality, arguably Turkey's most popular media figure) as evidence of a common identity. Assimilation is often crudely rendered as "selling out", but the reality is more complex. For many individuals, assimilation was essentially complete prior to the intense politicisation of the 1980s. For others, being Kurdish and Turkish poses no contradiction; their political identity does not supervene on their cultural identity (Barkey and Fuller 1998, 81).

The processes of identity formation and change in Turkey are extremely fluid, and their future direction and magnitude are uncertain. Bruinessen (1998) sees assimilation in full retreat, but he draws heavily on observation of the European diaspora community, whose political dynamics are quite different from those within Turkey. Many activists and scholars believe the counterinsurgency campaign and state harassment of Kurdish politics has radicalised the population along ethnolinguistic lines (Wedel 2000; McDowall 2000; Pope and Pope 1997). There can be no doubt but that they are correct about an important segment of the population. Barkey and Fuller (1998, 82) suggest that ethnic mobilisation and assimilation are occurring *simultaneously*.

Indeed, the institutions of nation-building, principally conscription and universal education, are still in place. Turkish national identity also has an autonomous capacity to reproduce and draw "converts" as well, given the degree to which individual life-chances are linked to the metropolitan identity. The Kurdish region of Turkey is predominantly a bi- or multilingual region. Compulsory education is conducted entirely in Turkish, and conscription entails that Kurdish men will spend at least 550 days of their lives in an all-Turkish environment. Even in the east, a great deal of commerce, and of course all official discourse with the state, is conducted in Turkish. Consequently, it is unusual to meet Kurdish men who do not speak Turkish with a fairly high level of fluency.

In my judgement, there are formidable obstacles to the development of a literate Kurdish culture in Turkey which result from factors largely outside the state's control. Given the current paucity of Kurdish-language materials, a student trained to read only Kurdish would find little to read; a student trained in Kurdish and Turkish would read mostly Turkish if he read at all. Economic opportunities in Turkey are linked tightly to literacy in Turkish and European languages, especially in the urban areas. When I asked Kurdish informants in Turkey what language they would choose to teach their children if Kurdish became a realistic option, the most common choice was both: Turkish for opportunity, Kurdish for identity.

In addition to the porousness of identity in Turkey, there is a key religious distinction that directly crosscuts the Kurdish/Turkish cleavage. Although the majority of the residents of Anatolia are Sunni Muslims, as many as 30 per cent are members of religious groups that are historically and doctrinally related to Shi'ism (U.S. LOC 1996). By far the largest of these groups is the Alevi, and this name is often used as shorthand for all Shi'ite-derived groups within Turkey. Roughly an equal proportion of Kurds and Turks are Alevi. Their confession was regarded as

heretical by the state-monopoly Sunni Islam of the Ottoman Empire. The proclamation of a secular republic in 1925 was widely embraced by Alevi, who stood to gain from Atatürk's abrogation of the official Sunni religious monopoly. Mustafa Kemal is still especially revered among Alevi.

Scholars are divided as to the political consequences of the Alevi identity for Kurdish nationalism. Some believe that Alevi mobilisation will further undermine the conceit of a unitary identity in Turkey. Others see the Alevi/Sunni division as weakening the unity of an appeal to Kurdishness.

At a social and cultural level, the Alevi/Sunni cleavage has traditionally been of far greater importance than any linguistic divisions. According to Yalman (1971, 214), in the Kurdish region "[A] Sunni Kurdish-speaker and Sunni Turkish-speaker are much closer to each other in every aspect of their culture and personality than either group is with, for instance, Turkish or Kurdish-speaking Alevi or Bektashi [another Shi'ite-related sect]." Intermarriage between ethnic Turks and Kurds is common; between Sunnis and Alevi, it is rare. The urban violence that convulsed Turkey in the late 1970s, though ideological, broke closely along religious lines. As recently as 1993, an anti-Alevi pogrom in Sivas took the lives of 37 people (Pope and Pope 1997, 324–5); despite the public passions roused by the civil war, there has been virtually no societal-level violence between Turks and Kurds (Cornell 2001). On the other hand, Kurdish Alevi have not been spared by the military's counter-insurgency campaign; Wedel (2000, 191) found Kurdish Alevi migrants in one Istanbul neighbourhood mobilising along the linguistic cleavage in response to their perception of state repression.

There is an unfortunate tendency in the literature on Kurdish politics to assume that Kurdishness is a more "natural" category and the direction that ethnogenesis "should" pursue. In Turkey, Kurdish identity is in at least a three-cornered fight with religious and state-national identity. All three have undoubted appeal. In the following section, I discuss some evidence on public opinion about Kurdish nationalism in Southeastern Turkey. This information has relevance, albeit more tenuously, for questions of identity, because it tells us something about the degree to which individuals condition on ethnicity in the formation of opinion.

### **3. Public Opinion**

In this section, I use data on voting behaviour as an indicator of Kurdish public opinion. The available evidence, though far from conclusive, suggests that supporters of Kurdish nationalism remain in the minority, even in the Southeast, and despite the brutality and dislocation of the civil war. I argue that the Kurdish mainstream remains politically conservative and unwilling to embrace the leftist agenda of Turkey's only Kurdish party.

Public opinion is notoriously difficult to measure in war zones. When identifying combatants it is common, though erroneous, to call armies by the names of the

groups they fight for (Kalyvas 2001b, 111). Thus, journalists often say that "the Kurds" have been waging a war for secession. In fact, at least twice as many Kurds were actively employed in the security forces than were members of PKK militias at the height of insurgent mobilisation.<sup>5</sup> Of course, the latter is a measure only of *compliance*, not opinion: presumably both Turkish and Kurdish boys would rather have been doing something else. PKK is known to have engaged in kidnapping as a tool of recruitment (İmset 1992, 84–6), and Kurdish families have been subjected to revolutionary surcharges if their sons report for military service (Rosenberg 1994).

In Turkey, only the military claims to have conducted systematic opinion surveys. Their data have not been made available, and their bias is well known. The best-known independent survey of Kurdish opinion during the civil war found substantial support for Kurdish nationalism and very little support for secession, but it had an urban bias and was based on a sample of convenience.<sup>6</sup>

Anecdotal evidence on Kurdish opinion is abounding, but can be extremely misleading. In April 2000 the Istanbul correspondent for a major Western newspaper, who had travelled in and reported from Kurdistan extensively over a period of years, told me: "In the Southeast, everyone supports Öcalan." When he was captured in 1999, Kurds staged demonstrations in cities across Turkey and Western Europe. However, "expressions of support", can mean many things. They can mean, "We respect this man who has fought for us", they can mean, "We support his goals and tactics", or they can mean, "We want this man to govern us". There is no necessary connection between these preferences. Most observers believe that very few Kurds in Turkey have ever supported secession, though it is widely believed that Kurdish-language broadcasting and education would be extremely popular. In casual conversations I had while travelling through Southeastern Turkey, I found people eager to insist that "this place is Kurdistan" (a punishable statement in Turkey), while simultaneously thanking God for the end of a war the Turkish military has so decisively won.

Journalists and travellers are subject to opposing biases. Travellers usually favour security, which means government control. Journalists often seek out controversy and conflict. They have very little interest in "the dog that does not bark", since it makes for poor copy. Nevertheless, in any war zone the absence of battle is far

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<sup>5</sup> Barkey and Fuller (1998, 47) estimate 5–10,000 PKK guerrillas, plus a militia of 50,000, though it is not clear what years this figure covers. The village guard system was estimated to have 67,000 fighters in 1995 (Ron 1995), of which we can assume nearly all were Kurdish. The military had 410,200 draftees in 1995 (U.S. LOC, 1996). If 20 per cent of the population is Kurdish, and we assume a constant rate of conscription, there were 82,040 Kurdish conscripts in the Turkish army in 1995.

<sup>6</sup> This survey, conducted by Prof. Doğu Ergil for the Turkish Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (TOBB), is cited in several sources (Barkey and Fuller 1998; Kirişçi and Winrow 1997), but I have not been able to obtain a copy. My criticisms of the survey are based on personal communication with Professor Ergil.

more common than its presence; civilians outnumber both activists and combatants.

All visitors to Turkey are probably subject to a bias in identifying Kurds as well. If one asks to meet Kurds, one is likely to be steered towards nationalists; if one asks "Turks" about their background, one often discovers Kurdish parents or grandparents. I have encountered people who are not entirely sure if they are Kurdish. "Discovering" one's Kurdishness is a common occurrence among Turkish citizens. One Kurmanji-speaking student I met in Istanbul griped to me about the *poseurs* who suddenly find they are Kurdish and seek him out for instruction on what to do.

The bottom line is that we do not know what the Kurds of Turkey believe and what they prefer. At best, we know what some think and want at a particular moment in time. Until systematic opinion studies by independent scholars are permitted, we simply cannot answer this question with any degree of precision.

There is one source of data on public opinion that has been somewhat neglected: election returns. Turkey was rare among states experiencing civil war in holding regular elections throughout the violence. These elections have generally been considered free and fair, though the Kurdish nationalist parties have at times been harassed by Turkish security services (U.S. DOS 2000, 3). In the early- to mid-1990s, several members of Kurdish parties were gunned down in "mystery killings", presumably committed by government-supported contra-guerrillas.

Election data have drawbacks as indicators of opinion. Ideology and ethnicity are only two among many issues that matter to voters. Turkish parties are thought to be exceptionally "personalistic". Most observers think Turkish politics is more venal than in most democracies. It has been argued that Kurdish magnates can deliver their members *en masse* to political parties. The notion that tribesmen are manipulable has been badly damaged by ethnography (Yalçın-Hekmann 1991) showing that tribal politics involves complex two-way transactions, but bloc voting remains a reality that may undermine the conclusions that can be drawn from studying vote choice in Kurdistan. Nevertheless, electoral data have the benefits of systematicity and low measurement error. They are the best indicators we have regarding Kurdish opinion.

Table 3 gives vote share in selected provinces for the parties that garnered 94.2 per cent of the total vote in the 1999 general election. In this analysis I have collapsed together parties that occupy roughly the same ideological space. A single vote share is given for the centre-left Democratic Left Party (DSP) and Republican People's Party (CHP); the True Path Party (DYP) and the Motherland Party (ANAP) are treated as a centre-right bloc. The hard-right National Action Party (MHP), the Islamist Virtue Party (FP) and the Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HADEP) are treated separately. Of these seven parties, only five received seats in parliament; HADEP and CHP failed to meet the 10 per cent electoral threshold. Three groups of provinces are included: the thirteen OHAL provinces, the eight

Kurdish provinces not included in OHAL ("other Kurdish provinces"), and four metropolitan areas in western Turkey that are thought to have large Kurdish populations.

Scholars have noted the failure of Kurdish nationalist parties to capture anything close to the presumed proportion of Kurds in the population of Turkey's western cities (Bozarslan 1996a; Bozarslan 1996b; Kirişçi and Winrow 1997). It is widely believed by residents that 20–30 per cent of the population of Istanbul is now Kurdish, but HADEP's best showing out of Istanbul's three electoral precincts in 1999 was 4.7 per cent. Bozarslan (1996a, 152), analysing HADEP's similar performance in the 1995 general election, comments, "This poor showing seems to indicate that the metropolitan cities continue to have an important integrative function that give [*sic*] birth to new political formations."

**Table 3:** Vote Share for Selected Parties, 1999 General Elections

1999 General Election	DYP/ ANAP	FP	MHP	DSP/CHP	HADEP
Turkey	25.2 %	15.4 %	18.0 %	30.9 %	4.7 %
All Kurdish provinces	29.8	19.3	12.2	12.5	19.1
OHAL provinces	29.1	17.3	6.5	10.8	27.0
HADEP Max. (Hâkkari)	27.5	9.9	2.0	10.6	46.1
HADEP Min. (Elazığ)	15.6	24.5	13.6	8.8	4.9
Other Kurd. provinces	30.6	21.5	18.4	14.4	10.5
HADEP Max. (Ağrı)	21.9	12.8	7.7	6.9	33.7
HADEP Min. (Malatya)	13.2	25.3	19.8	20.2	2.3
Major cities	25.9	15.3	12.8	40.5	4.3
HADEP Max. (Adana)	21.2	10.3	23.6	33.9	7.4
HADEP Min. (Antalya)	32.5	6.3	22.3	32.3	2.5

Source: T.C. Başbakanlık, Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü

However, there is another possibility, namely that urban Kurdish politics reflects long-standing *intra-ethnic* ideological and party loyalties. What is most surprising about these data is that HADEP, the only party with Kurdish nationalist credentials, was unable to muster a majority in *any* province of Turkey. Across the OHAL provinces, only 27 per cent of the electorate chose HADEP, while the secular centre-right and far-right (excluding the Islamist FP) gained a collective 35.6 per cent of the ballot. In the other Kurdish provinces, the party's performance was abysmal: less than 11 per cent supported HADEP, while the right garnered 48 per cent. In this context, HADEP's low level of support in the metropolis is less surprising.

Table 4 gives similar data for the 1991 and 1995 general elections. The party system in 1995 was virtually identical, and the electoral results were quite similar. Indeed, Kurdish nationalism did somewhat better in the Southeast in 1999 than it



did in 1995, but the overall tendency was a stable centre- and far-right majority in Kurdistan. In 1991, HEP (a Kurdish nationalist precursor to HADEP) formed a special electoral alliance with SHP (an ancestor of today's CHP). Though HEP had a distinct corporate identity, its candidates ran on the SHP list. Thus, a vote for SHP could have been the vote of a nationalist or a non-nationalist leftist. SHP did very well in 1991, gaining outright majorities in some provinces of OHAL. In Kurdistan as a whole, however, the right did much better. In short, during the 1990s, a period of Kurdish nationalist efflorescence and secessionist civil war, there was a stable tendency for large numbers of Kurds (probably majorities) to vote for rightist Turkish parties.

**Table 4:** Vote Share for Selected Parties, 1995 and 1991 General Elections

1995 General Election	DYP/ ANAP	RP7	MHP	DSP/ CHP	HADEP
Turkey	38.8 %	21.4 %	8.2 %	25.3 %	4.2 %
All Kurdish provinces	32.8	29.1	7.1	9.7	16.2
OHAL Provinces	31.2	26.4	5.1	7.6	24.2
HADEP Max. (Hâkkari)	31.3	6.0	2.2	4.6	54.2
HADEP Min. (Elazığ)	36.0	41.8	6.9	9.8	3.9
Other Kurd. provinces	34.6	31.8	9.1	11.9	7.8
HADEP Max. (ğdir)	25.2	9.4	15.1	21.2	21.7
HADEP Min. (K.Maraş)	36.4	36.8	10.5	12.0	2.7
Major Cities	38.6	20.8	7.8	26.8	4.0
HADEP Max. (Adana)	34.0	16.7	14.3	26.6	6.7
HADEP Min. (Antalya)	41.2	13.3	12.2	30.0	1.9
1991 General Election	DYP/A NAP	RP	—	DSP	SHP
Turkey	51.0 %	16.9 %	—	10.7 %	20.8 %
All Kurdish provinces	45.2	21.8	—	3.3	28.6
OHAL provinces	41.3	19.0	—	1.9	36.5
SHP Max. (Şırnak)	34.2	2.5	—	1.1	61.2
SHP Min. (Elazığ)	52.5	29.3	—	2.4	15.5
Other Kurd provinces	49.4	24.9	—	4.9	20.0
SHP Max. (Kars)	43.9	7.1	—	17.2	31.1
SHP Min. (Erzurum)	50.1	37.0	—	3.4	9.0
Major cities	49.3	14.2	—	14.2	21.7
SHP Max. (Ankara)	46.9	17.6	—	10.4	24.6
SHP Min. (Istanbul)	46.3	16.7	—	17.6	18.8

Source: T. C. Baġbakanlık, Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü

<sup>7</sup> "RP" stands for "Refah Partisi," or Welfare Party, the Islamist precursor to FP.

Several explanations have been offered for HADEP's poor showing. The party itself claimed widespread intimidation of rural voters, who were supposedly told by security forces to cast blank ballots (*Reuters* 19 April 1999). This allegation is not supported in the data. Although the participation rate in 21 Kurdish provinces (83 per cent) was lower than in Turkey overall (87 per cent), the proportion of valid to total votes in the Kurdish provinces was higher (95 to 94 per cent).

Bozarslan (1996a, b) argues that HADEP's success is confined to a "micro-space" of compact Sunni-Kurmanji settlement. On his account, the party's failure elsewhere is "closely linked to intra-Kurdish ethnic differentiations". This account cannot be rejected, given that many Alevis abjure Kurdish identification. There are reasons to doubt his story also. Bozarslan's reasoning explains why HADEP did worse in some Kurdish provinces than in others, but it cannot explain why Kurdish nationalists underperformed overall. Moreover, Alevism cannot explain support for rightist and Sunni-Islamist parties, which was widespread outside Bozarslan's micro-space, since Alevism is traditionally associated with the left and with suspicion of Sunni dominance.

HADEP's failure to galvanise Kurdish voters is best explained by its leftist identity. The left performed badly across the board in the Southeast. McDowall (2000, 397) argues that Kurdistan was an area "hostile to, and dangerous for, radicals of the secular left" as early as the 1950s. DSP and CHP together received only 10.8 and 14.4 per cent in OHAL and the other Kurdish provinces, respectively, at a time when DSP became the most popular party in Turkey. This raises two possibilities: either HADEP monopolised the left vote in Kurdistan, or many Kurds will only vote left for an ethnic party. The data are inconclusive on this question, yet it is clear that Kurdish voters have not shaken off the conservatism that puzzled Bruinessen (1992) in the 1960s.

The 6.5 and 18.4 per cent captured by MHP in OHAL and the other Kurdish regions, respectively, is the most surprising finding. Often known by the name of its militant wing, the Greywolves, MHP long advocated an extreme, racialist Turkism (Çağlar 1990) and has consistently resisted any concession to Kurdish demands. The appeal of MHP to some Kurds was confirmed by one of my informants. An educated young man, raised in the predominantly Kurdish provinces of Ağrı and Adıyaman, he explained that two of his uncles had long-standing ties to MHP. Both were native Kurmanji-speakers, from Ağrı. The votes of ethnic Turks undoubtedly account for some of MHP's support in the east. Nevertheless, determining why individuals cross ethnic cleavages, sometimes to extremes, is a key question for the study of ethnic politics. The most likely explanation is that contemporary MHP support stems from the left–right cleavage of 1970s Turkish politics (McDowall 2000, 411), which was weakly linked to Kurdish ethnicity.

Bruinessen (1992) concluded that the "primordial" loyalties of local tribal and kinship relations explained persistent political conservatism among the Kurds and

tended to undermine a broader nationalism. The civil war may have helped to revitalise these solidarities as security-seeking induced individuals to work collectively (Yalçın-Hekmann 1991, 71). The village guard system, in particular, was built largely along tribal lines and tribal leaders have often acted as agents of the state in the recruitment of militia forces.

The rapid urbanisation of the past decade is likely to undermine these solidarities, not least because tribes lose something of their security function in urban areas. What sort of new solidarity will emerge is difficult to predict. The evidence on Kurdish vote choice we have available suggests that urban migrants may adopt differing views depending upon where they land: the large urban areas of the east, such as Diyarbakir and Batman are emerging as strongholds of Kurdish political mobilisation, while nationalism appears to be fizzling somewhat among migrants to the Turkish milieu of the west.

#### **4. Implications for Future Policy**

Many readers will find the conclusions of this chapter normatively depressing, because it suggests that states can "win" with repression. In fact, the Turkish case should give policy-makers several reasons for optimism

First, there is very little that is worse for democracy and human rights than civil war. Although it is common to argue that rebellion results from repression and brutality, in fact the causal arrow points more strongly in the opposite direction. The end of the civil war in Turkey ought to be greeted with relief by anyone whose goal is the protection of human rights, since its continuation would surely have resulted in far more brutality on both sides.

Second, the decline of PKK suggests that the aftermath of ethnic civil wars need not involve territorial separation of ethnic groups, as Kaufman (1996) has argued. Although the civil war in Turkey involved considerable brutality, it never degenerated to the point where populations were indiscriminately targeted by ethnicity alone. Most Kurds never favoured secession, and most do not favour it now. PKK never succeeded in creating a *fait accompli*, as other rebel groups like the Kosovo Liberation Army have done. The Turkish case tells us that stable multi-ethnicity can be maintained in the face of ethnic violence.

Third, throughout the civil war, the state and mainstream political parties opposed opening the system to explicitly Kurdish demands. Important political groups in Turkey continue to support their exclusion on the grounds that "concessions" on Kurdish policy will promote secession. If, as I have argued, the production of violence depends on factors that are largely independent of peaceful politics, then suppression of Kurdish politics cannot be justified as a defence against separatism. Kurdish political organisations in Turkey have renounced violence and separatism. The question for the state is the credibility of those claims. If my argument is correct their credibility is high, because violent secession is no longer a realistic

option. The state can now maintain its Weberian monopoly on coercion at a low cost, while permitting a more open politics than it has in the past. The Western governments that have generously supported Turkey's campaign against PKK (Ron 1995, App. B) should make it clear that the indefinite postponement of reform occasioned by civil war is no longer justified.

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