**The London School of Economics and Political Science**

# The Impact of European Integration on Minority Nationalist Mobilisation in France

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# Abstract

The EU provides a new context for minority nationalist parties, not only to conceive their long-term political project, but also to organise their mobilisation. New institutional and representational opportunities have emerged from multi-level European politics, through the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the EU Regional Policy, etc. This thesis looks at the impact of European integration on minority nationalist mobilisation in France. The French position on internal diversity – still largely influenced by Jacobinism - is emblematic of the tensions existing between minority nationalism and the concept of nation-state. This makes it a valuable "hard" case to assess the significance of the EU for minority nationalist contestation in member states. Evidence gathered from three parties in Brittany (UDB), Corsica (UPC) and the Northern Basque Country (AB) shows that minority nationalists have found it hard to participate in European politics and to access the European political space. As a result of a lack of institutional recognition and parliamentary representation, minority nationalists in France are constrained to operate exclusively at the local level. Consequently, and unlike many minority nationalists in Europe, none of these parties have conceived the EU as an alternative to their relations with the French state and/or fully reformulated their demands in accordance with the European level. European integration has nevertheless entered the strategic considerations of minority nationalists in France, albeit to different degrees. Unlike what could be expected from their trans-border identity, Northern Basque nationalists have perceived the least opportunity in Europe for their mobilisation. It is argued that this is because AB does not mobilise in an institutionalised region. The regional status of Brittany and Corsica has involved both regions in the European policy-making process and this is why European resources have proved valuable to the UDB and the UPC. In the end, though, the comparison of the Breton and Corsican cases shows that the value of Europe as a strategy is contingent on the level of exclusivity that minority nationalists can claim on the European issue within their local political spheres.

# Acknowledgements

# Table of Contents

# Chapter 1 – Introduction

Academic commentators have portrayed minority nationalists as fervent supporters of European integration. The pro-Europeanism of these parties has been noted in almost all datasets on party attitudes towards the EU (Ray, 1999; Marks, Hooghe, Nelson & Edwards, 2006), granting them to be referred to as the "Europhile fringe" of European party systems (Jolly, 2007). Europe has, since the 1980s, become a key feature in the programmes and campaigns of these political actors demanding self-government on behalf of regional minorities. Minority nationalists have been vocal advocates of the Europe of the Regions, a future European polity where political power would be shared between the European and regional levels (Elias, 2008). The kind of multi-level politics emerging in Europe has been seen as providing new ways of accommodating minority nationalist demands. The transfer of competences to the EU has been interpreted by minority nationalists as the sign of a weakening of the state, i.e. their traditional adversary. By challenging the state as the sole basis of political authority, European integration has seemingly opened up unprecedented avenues for the resolution of the minority nationalist predicament. Accordingly, several minority nationalists have reformulated their long-term political project to demand self-government within some kind of European framework (Lynch, 1996). For instance, Plaid Cymru has called for a "full national status" for Wales within a Europe of the Regions, while Convergencia i Unio outlined a vision of Catalonia within a plurinational Spain and a regional Europe, within which subnational actors would participate equally in European decision-making alongside member states. This shared desire among minority nationalist parties to create a different kind of Europe also led to the consolidation of a new Euro-party, namely the European Free Alliance-Democratic Party of the Peoples of Europe (De Winter & Gomez-Reino, 2002; Lynch, 2007).

Yet, the dynamics underlying the relationship between European integration and minority nationalist mobilisation remain a largely unexplored area of research. The alleged unequivocal support of minority nationalists for the EU is remarkable considering that in many other respects – long-term political project, ideology, organisation, etc. - they form a rather heterogeneous party family. First, while these parties share a claim to self-determination on behalf of their minority nation, their main demands for self-government have taken different forms such as regionalisation, cultural autonomy, federalism, independence, etc. Minority nationalist parties are also spread widely across the ideological spectrum, from the Italian Lega Nord on the extreme right to the Belgian Volksunie on the extreme left. Even more importantly in relation to their interactions with higher levels of government such as the EU, the electoral and political fortunes of minority nationalist parties vary considerably. These diverse fortunes reflect the different stages of mobilisation in which the parties find themselves. From group awareness to self-

determination, minority nationalist mobilisation is a process along which some minority nationalists are more advanced than others. Some of these parties have already achieved self-government and have flourished to become the main political forces within powerful autonomous regions. The Partido Nacionalista Vasco has led the Basque regional government ever since the creation of the Comunidad Autonoma del Pais Vasco in 1978[1]. After being the main opposition party in Scotland since British devolution, the Scottish National Party has become the largest party in the Scottish Parliament following the 2007 elections. Other minority nationalists have a long record of regional government involvement but their minority nationalist aspirations are not dominant within their territory. The Partito d'Azione Sardo has had its electoral breakthrough at the end of the 1980s - party leader Mario Melis was President of Sardinia between 1984 and 1989 and the party was also represented in the Italian Parliament from 1989 to 1994 – but has since seen its electoral support diminish and stabilise around 5 percent. The electoral performance of the Bloque Nacionalista Galego has made a slow but steady progression since its creation in 1982. Galician nationalists have achieved representation in the Spanish Parliament since 1996 and have for the first time succeeded in forming a coalition government with the Socialist Party of Galicia between 2005 and 2009. Yet another kind of minority nationalists are still in the process of establishing, and mobilising support around, the specificity of their regional minority. These parties are minor political players even within their own regions, which have not achieved institutional recognition. The Union Democratique Bretonne has mobilised for an autonomous and reunified Brittany since 1964 but only gained representation in the Breton Council in 2004, through an electoral alliance with the Green Party. Mebyon Kernow was created in 1951 to campaign for the self-government of Cornwall and maintained a small representation in district, parish and town councils. As of 1st April 2009, the county of Cornwall has been turned into a unitary authority and the party obtained three seats in the newly created Cornish Council.

As these examples demonstrate, minority nationalist mobilisation is far from a uniform concept and the question that constitutes the starting point of this research is: how could European integration have the same significance for political parties with such a range of different demands and disparate levels of electoral performance, political influence and institutional recognition? This thesis will probe this assumption through a qualitative in-depth study of a universe of cases often omitted in the literature: minority nationalist parties in France. Existing scholarship has overwhelmingly been based upon an analysis of minority nationalist parties in those regions with the strongest sub-national structures (e.g. Scotland, Catalonia, Flanders). By contrast, France is arguably among the least conducive settings for sub-national mobilisation in Europe owing to the centralist bias

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[1] Following the last elections, the PNV is still the largest party in the Basque Parliament but Socialist leader Patxi Lopez was elected Lehendakari (President) on 5th May 2009 after the Socialist Party of the Basque Country formed an alliance with the People's Party.

of the French politico-administrative system. In the French Republican tradition, regional identities are considered a threat to a neutral public sphere that alone is meant to guarantee political and civil rights. The limited political and discursive opportunity structures in France significantly constrain explicit minority nationalist claims. The Unione di U Populu Corsu (UPC) in Corsica, Abertzaleen Batasuna (AB) in the Basque Country and the Union Democratique Bretonne (UDB) in Brittany – i.e. the three cases included in this thesis - provide a valuable insight into the early stages of minority nationalist mobilisation. The UPC, AB and the UDB have yet to achieve significant political representation and institutional recognition[2], and this research will establish whether the EU has provided any resources for their mobilisation in the French domestic context. Comparing three minority nationalist parties within the same member state will enable us to hold the domestic context constant and establish whether and how local factors shape the impact of European integration. Variations across three factors – regional institutionalisation, trans-border identity and the dynamics of party competition – among the cases will enable us to assess the relevance of these factors for minority nationalists' response to European integration.

## 1.1. Studying the impact of European integration

As an attempt to understand how European integration affects minority nationalist mobilisation in France, this research clearly fits within the field of "Europeanisation" research. Until recently, European studies had been mainly interested in the process of institution-building and political integration at the European level. Most studies have adopted a perspective in which the main dependent variables are the dynamics and outcomes of European integration. Less attention has been paid to the reverse relationship: how European integration might impact on the domestic politics of EU member states. With the interpenetration between European and domestic levels becoming evident, it has become necessary to bring domestic politics back into the analysis of European studies. The Europeanisation literature represents a response to this challenge. This thesis will also contribute to a better comprehension of how EU developments might affect the perceptions and choices of political actors and the dynamics in local politics. Yet, without overlooking the wider field within which it inserts itself, this research will only engage with the Europeanisation literature from a distance, not least due to the vague nature of the concept. Europeanisation has been used in different ways by scholars to explain a variety of processes such as cultural change, new

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[2] Although Corsica could be said to have a form of institutional recognition, it will become clear in the following chapters that its Special Status only goes as far as administrative devolution and does not give any political autonomy to the Corsican Assembly.

identity formation, policy change, administrative innovation, etc. It is most often associated with "domestic adaptation to the pressures emanating directly or indirectly from EU membership" (Featherstone, 2003:7), but definitions of Europeanisation differ in terms of their broadness and in relation to what it is applied to[3], giving rise to a disparate and at times confusing body of literature. Furthermore, empirical studies are inconclusive about the causal effects of Europeanisation[4], leading to arguments that academics have been too quick to operationalise it as a process capable of producing certain effects. The fact that Europeanisation has no single precise or stable meaning clearly complicates its use as a working concept, as does the absence of alternative scenarios that could test the absence of Europeanisation against a similar background of structural conditions.

In the research presented here, Europeanisation is understood in its widest possible sense. European integration is conceived of as a multi-faceted process which can have an impact on minority nationalist parties in different and contradictory ways. The objective is not to artificially isolate one EU policy area and observe its effects on minority nationalist mobilisation in France, but to remain as inclusive as possible about the potential impact of European integration. Similarly, the EU is not perceived as transmitting a coherent set of decisions and norms to all its member states. Rather, it is seen as a platform where a range of state and non-state actors compete in order to influence the trajectory of European integration. A definition of Europeanisation tailored for this research would have to be broad enough to incorporate any EU-related development used by minority nationalist parties and to reflect a dynamic understanding of the EU. However, insofar as Europeanisation can help us understand European governance, its definition must be closely tied to a specific aspect of European politics in order to shed light on specific actors, their perceptions and interactions. This is the only way of making the concept manageable in the absence of a clear definition.

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[3] Europeanisation has been seen as a process affecting not only member states but also the wider world, and is not always used in the sense of EU-isation. As shown by Featherstone (2003:3), for instance, it can include the transfer of policy from one European country to several other countries, and it has been used by historians to describe the export of West European cultural norms. When understood as a concept centred exclusively on the EU, it has been seen as a process that involves "the penetration of national and sub-national systems of governance by a European political centre and European-wide norms" (Olsen, 2002:924). In relation to its effect on domestic policies, Europeanisation has been defined as a "process by which domestic policy areas become increasingly subject to European policy making" (Borzel, 1999:574).
[4] It has been pointed out that macro-level and policy-level studies demonstrate a persistence of deep structural divergences across national and policy contexts (Hughes, Sasse & Gordon, 2004:28). It was also suggested that variations of outcome were part of the process of Europeanisation. For some, "the impact of Europeanisation is typically incremental, irregular, and uneven over time and between locations, national and subnational" (Featherstone, 2003:4). For others, the variation in impacts is more deeply structural and indeterminate because "the domestic impact of Europe varies with the level of European adaptation pressure on domestic institutions, and the extent to which the domestic context [...] facilitates or prohibits actual adjustments" (Knill & Lehmkuhl, 1999:1-2). However, many scholars view these inconsistencies as a major flaw in the concept, and question its usefulness as a tool for the study of European governance.

The Europeanisation literature has raised, and partially responded to, important methodological issues associated with studying the domestic impact of European integration. The discussion about the "bottom-up" approach to Europeanisation has inspired the party-centred perspective adopted here. As mentioned, a common criticism of the Europeanisation literature is that it assumes that it is a variable or process capable of producing clear causal effects. In order to avoid presupposing the effects of Europeanisation, scholars have opted for a "bottom-up" approach instead of trying to find out the domestic effects of independent variables defined at the EU level (Schmidt & Radaelli, 2002:13). The assumption behind the "bottom-up" approach is that the best way to see whether EU developments have had an effect on domestic policy and politics is not to trace down developments from Brussels to the domestic level, but to analyse what occurs at the level of domestic actors – most importantly, what opportunities are available to them and whether their beliefs and expectations have changed (Knill & Lehmkuhl, 1999:15). This "bottom-up" approach to Europeanisation starts from a more explicitly actor-centred premise and takes into account the context from which actors consider European integration and which colours their positions and subsequent actions.

Similarly, a concern of this research is not to overstate the importance of European integration for minority nationalist parties in France. Minority nationalist actors are assumed to actively reflect upon, respond to, and seek to influence, the changing political and institutional settings in which they are situated (Maiz and Losada, 2000:62). There is a variety of factors affecting minority nationalist mobilisation (electoral system, party system, government policies, constitutional structure of the state, etc). European integration is just one of many political and institutional elements which these parties consider in their strategic evaluation of the resources available in France for their mobilisation and the realisation of their political agenda. As such, it is difficult to isolate from other factors. Accordingly, in this thesis the impact of European integration on the mobilisation of minority nationalist parties will be observed from a party-centred perspective, in which minority nationalist parties are assumed to evaluate European integration in relation to their political self-interest. The objective will not be to trace down the effects of European integration but rather to get an idea of its significance for minority nationalist parties within the French context. In this way, this research will incorporate all the dimensions of European integration without any assumption as to what aspects of European politics are most likely to affect minority nationalists. This will not only avoid presuming that European integration has an impact on minority nationalist parties, but also help us understand what material and ideational resources (if any) it may offer to these parties within their domestic context. This party-centred perspective will shift the angle of analysis and therefore reframe the question around not just how minority nationalist parties have sought to take

advantage of resources emerging from European integration, but also what resources they perceive in the first place.

## 1.2. Shortcomings of the literature on minority nationalist parties

The literature on minority nationalist parties has been dominated by definitional considerations. In reaction to the general disregard for these parties in the party politics literature (Gallagher, Laver & Mair, 2001; Mair & Mudde, 1998), several scholars have sought to emphasise the main characteristics of the minority nationalist party family (De Winter & Tursan, 1998; De Winter & Gomez-Reino, 2002; Delwit, 2005; De Winter, Gomez-Reino & Lynch, 2006). They have proposed a classification of minority nationalist parties based on the nature of their demands, thereby distinguishing different types of minority nationalist goals (Seiler, 1994; De Winter & Tursan, 1998; Catt & Murphy, 2002). By highlighting the multiplicity of demands for self-government, these studies have significantly increased the understanding of minority nationalism. However, an issue with this line of research is that minority nationalist parties almost always change their goals over time, in an attempt to maximise opportunities available to them. For instance, a rather moderate political project (e.g. the creation of an administrative region) may in fact be a first tactical step towards a claim for regional autonomy. Not enough consideration has been given to the way these parties form, mobilise and operate in the democratic arena. In response to this lacuna, the research presented here will not only be interested in minority nationalist demands but also in the mobilisation of these parties, i.e. all the actions undertaken by the party to achieve self-government. The party-centred perspective will shed light onto the perceptions shaping the positions and strategies of minority nationalist parties. Minority nationalists are rational actors trying to maximise the resources available for the realisation of their political project. Particular attention will be given to the context within which minority nationalist actors organise their mobilisation, in order to see how European integration fits into it.

In general, the minority nationalist party family has been perceived as being overwhelmingly supportive of Europe. Even though many minority nationalists were initially critical of the European Community (Nagel, 2004), since the 1980s opposition to European integration has been replaced by growing levels of support for this process (De Winter & Gomez-Reino, 2002). Beyond this observation, however, scholars have yet to clarify the reasons motivating the convergence of minority nationalist parties around a pro-European position and to explain why some of these parties have been more responsive to European integration than others. The party politics literature and its analysis of party attitudes towards Europe have proved particularly unhelpful in the case of minority

nationalist parties. For instance, it is often argued in this literature that small parties on the periphery of party systems are prone to Euroscepticism as a way of differentiating themselves from more established parties (Taggart, 1998). Regional parties, on the other hand, have been identified as being mostly pro-European because the EU can facilitate the decentralisation of authority from the central state to their regions, while nationalist parties are assumed to oppose European integration on the ground that it diminishes sovereignty (Marks and Wilson, 2000:438-439). These predictions provide little understanding of the interest found in the EU by these small parties not only mobilising on the centre-periphery cleavage, but also claiming a right to national self-determination. Furthermore, the evolution of their positions on the EU since the 1980s points towards the need for a dynamic conceptualisation of the relationship between European integration and minority nationalist parties. These parties constantly reassess the ever-changing realities of domestic and supranational politics for the conduct of their mobilisation, and their European responses are bound to evolve accordingly (Elias, 2009).

Only a few scholars have sought to analyse the links between European integration and minority nationalist mobilisation. These observations have commonly perceived this relationship in terms of the opportunity structures that the EU offers minority nationalist parties to pursue their goal of self-government. The literature suggests that minority nationalist parties have exploited the new institutional and representational opportunities of this potentially more accommodating political space. Lynch (1996) examines how European integration has increasingly shaped the constitutional preferences of minority nationalist parties. Through the concept of political linkage, he has argued that European integration provides these parties with new political resources, in the sense that developments within the framework of the European Union can be grafted onto the political discourse of minority nationalism and serve to strengthen their demand for autonomy (Lynch, 1996:16-17). In the same vein, it has been argued that minority nationalists have sought to maximise on the EU's broad political commitment to the principle of subsidiarity and its increasing sympathy for minority rights (McGarry & Keating, 2001:3). The perception of the EU as a new political space for minority nationalist mobilisation has fostered a reorientation in the goals and strategies of these parties towards the European level. De Winter and Gomez-Reino (2002) also show that European integration has been a strong impetus for trans-national party activity, particularly through the evolution of the European Free Alliance. Minority nationalist parties have been able to link up with other like-minded actors: "an emerging European polity has thus facilitated the development of contacts and has transformed party cooperation into standard practice", leading to the constitution of a new party family (De Winter and Gomez-Reino, 2002:494).

While they underline the opportunities that minority nationalist parties derive from European integration, the perspective adopted by these authors has remained very much

"top down". The focus has been much more on opportunities created at the European level than on the form taken by minority nationalist mobilisation in the context of European integration. This approach has neglected the capacity for adaptation among minority nationalist actors, in particular those operating in a forbidding nation-state system, albeit one that is undergoing a gradual evolution. It is not just the type of opportunities created through European integration that is of interest here but also – or even more so - the way in which minority nationalist parties have used these opportunities for their own mobilisation. Since these parties operate primarily at the sub-national level, there is scope for analysing not only how they have mobilised in the European arena, but also how they have taken advantage of EU-related changes within their local political platform. This is precisely the question this thesis proposes to answer by contextualising minority nationalists' responses to Europe within the broader economic and political environment of these parties. The objective is to identify the resources emerging from the European integration process that minority nationalists have used, for what purpose and to what effect, thereby illustrating the concrete value of European integration for the dynamics of minority nationalist mobilisation.

On a case study basis, academic research has started to provide more detailed accounts of the domestic context shaping minority nationalist parties' responses to European integration (for the most recent collection of individual case studies, see McGarry & Keating, 2006). However, there is a lack of comparative perspectives, such as the one presented here, providing a more systematic analysis of how external developments such as European integration shape minority nationalist mobilisation. Furthermore, restraining the empirical study to one member state – France - will shed light on the different ways in which minority nationalists operate within a given national opportunity structure. Each member state offers a different institutional, political and ideological context for minority nationalist mobilisation and this poses a problem for cross-national comparison: how can one analytically dissociate a minority nationalist party strategy from the opportunity structure within which it has been elaborated? Looking at several parties in the same member state will place the emphasis on differences in party positions and strategies, as opposed to differences in national opportunity structures resulting in different positions and strategies. This research will compare three minority nationalist parties within France in order to see whether these parties have reacted to, and sought to exploit, the process of European integration in similar ways, and if not what factors can explain these differences.

Focusing on France will also enable to explore a hitherto under-investigated side of minority nationalist mobilisation in Western Europe. A concern with the literature is that empirical studies have concentrated almost exclusively on a handful of cases where minority nationalist mobilisation is the strongest, e.g. Scotland, Wales, Catalonia, Southern

Basque Country, Flanders, Northern Italy, South Tyrol. The common justification for this case selection is that these are "places where the process of stateless nation-building has been taken furthest and the debate on the possibilities provided by the new state order has been fullest" (Keating, 2001:15). These cases correspond to the regions in Europe with the most advanced institutional arrangements, meaning that the constitutional project of minority nationalists is fully elaborated and often at a stage of being realised. Political parties such as the Scottish National Party, the Partido Nacionalista Vasco or the Lega Nord have the electoral support necessary to exert a considerable level of influence within their regional parliaments and to send a delegation to their national parliaments. Other parties, and consequently regions and groups, that do not reach that benchmark, remain largely below the radar, most notably in the almost complete exclusion of French minority nationalist parties from academic study. Using electoral strength as a selection criterion has led the literature to exclude a whole set of cases in states, such as France, where national political institutions disadvantage small and regional parties.

This biased case selection bears a risk of presenting a distorted vision of the politics of minority nationalism in Europe. The literature has essentially based its observation on advanced forms of minority nationalist mobilisation, overlooking as a result the process undergone to get to that point. It is not the existence of a nation that generates minority nationalism, but the minority nationalist mobilisation that - in certain social and institutional settings - produces and extends a collective national identity (Mais & Losada, 1999:1). Minority nationalism remains a social construction, of which minority nationalists are the entrepreneurs elaborating a nation-building strategy. The variety of profiles of minority nationalist parties corresponds to the mobilisation phase in which each movement finds itself. Minority nationalist mobilisation can be seen as a series of progressive stages going from group awareness among elites, to recognition of the specificity of the minority nation, to wide popular support around a political project for self-government and finally to the realisation of self-determination. Depending on their institutional, political and cultural environment, minority nationalists will find it more or less difficult to mobilise for the self-government of their minority nation. The varying fortunes of minority nationalists in Europe do not only reflect the relative strength or weakness of regional identities, they also rely on the extent to which national opportunity structures are conducive to the accommodation of regional diversity. Accordingly, some minority nationalist parties in Europe - such as the three parties included in this thesis - are still translating cultural, historical and linguistic specificity into political assertiveness. Their positions and perceptions should not be discarded, as these actors in the making might be even more sensitive and reactive to changes in the institutional and political settings where they seek to establish their mobilisation.

The limited universe of cases found in the literature also raises questions regarding the conclusions drawn on the significance of European integration for minority nationalism. Although scholars have been careful to define minority nationalist parties as a heterogeneous party family (De Winter & Gomez-Reino, 2002:485), they have seemingly conceived them as a group of political parties all possessing the same set of resources and opportunities in the context of European integration. In effect, evidence has been gathered almost exclusively from cases of minority nationalist parties with parliamentary representation at the national level and whose regions have achieved self-government. The level of political autonomy achieved by these regions also translates into autonomy in European matters, thereby facilitating the involvement of minority nationalists in European politics. But what about minority nationalists who do not have political representation and institutional recognition in their domestic context? What is the value of European integration for their mobilisation? It might be that, for minority nationalist parties, access to the European political space requires "victory" at the state level (McGarry & Keating, 2006:16). The impact of European integration on minority nationalist mobilisation is likely to be uneven, depending on the level of the recognition already achieved by minority nationalists. The fact that European integration might impact on different minority nationalist parties in different ways is something that scholars have so far failed to address. Minority nationalists in France are still a long way from their goal of self-government and this research will tell us what kind of resources, if any, the EU provides to minority nationalists at an early stage in their nation-building process.

## 1.3. Factors influencing party responses to Europe

The main question of this research is: what is the impact of European integration on minority nationalist mobilisation in France? To answer it, a party-perspective will be adopted turning our attention to the resources that these parties perceive in European integration for the purposes of their mobilisation. An enriched vision of local politics – revealing the strategies employed by these parties locally – will draw out the contours of minority nationalist mobilisation in the new context created by the EU. Secondly, this research will also identify conditions for the impact of European integration, i.e. factors affecting minority nationalist parties in their perceptions and use of Europe. The comparison of three parties in Brittany, Corsica and the Northern Basque Country will permit the examination of three such factors: trans-border identity, regional institutionalisation and the dynamics of party competition[5].

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[5] This does not intend to be an exhaustive list of factors potentially affecting minority nationalist parties in their use and perception of Europe.

### 1.3.1. Trans-border identity

The first hypothesis refers to the meaning of European integration as a process reducing the significance of state borders for minority nationalists with trans-border identity. Indeed, "hard external borders between member states have been transformed into softer, more administrative boundaries" (Danspeckgruber, 2002:176). The most obvious way in which borders have changed is related to the Single Market, which has removed restrictions on flows of capital, goods, services and people. Borders are losing their functional significance in a way which even dispenses with passport controls. But borders are also symbols of identity, as barriers drawing a line between "us" and "them", and their erosion facilitates cross-border interactions (O'Dowd, 2003:27). European integration has brought about concrete opportunities for cross-border cooperation on economic, environmental and cultural matters. The first legal framework for the creation of cross-border regions, also known as Euro-regions, was provided by the Council of Europe in 1980. The EU has since emerged as the dominant supranational arena for the promotion of cross-border cooperation[6] and the INTERREG programme of cross-border partnerships has been active across every border in Europe since the end of the 1990s. A new mechanism for the establishment of legal cross-border regions, the European Grouping for Territorial Co-operation (EGTC), was also adopted by the EU in 2006. Cross-border regions, broadly defined as "groupings of contiguous public authorities across one or more nation-state borders" (Perkmann, 2005:3), can offer ways for sub-national actors to emancipate themselves vis-à-vis central governments (Kramsch & Hooper, 2004). These emerging functional spaces can also provide a new institutional form for historical territories divided between two states, as illustrated with the Euro-region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino[7].

These changes have direct implications for minority nationalists with a trans-border identity, as they can affect the way in which they conceive the realisation of their goal of self-government. The growing permeability of borders within the EU can facilitate the accommodation of minorities cut off from their co-nationals by state barriers (McGarry & Keating, 2006:9). While the resolution of their predicament seemed highly compromised in the nation-state system, European integration has now made states less sensitive about cross-border interactions and irredentism is, arguably, less of a concern. In addition, the European context has opened up unprecedented possibilities for these minorities, which now share the same currency and can participate in the same elections. Cross-border and

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[6] Although Euro-regions are Council of Europe's instruments, most of them essentially function as implementation frameworks for the EU Regional Policy.
[7] The Euro-region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino is formed by the Austrian State of Tyrol and the Italian provinces of South Tyrol and Trentino. The boundaries of the association correspond to the former Austrian County of Tyrol.

inter-state cooperation within the EU has provided new opportunities to explore constituting political communities across national borders. The most far-reaching example of cross-border cooperation of the sort that benefits minorities is that between the UK and the Irish Republic with respect to Northern Ireland[8] (McGarry, 2006). For these reasons, it is argued that minority nationalists with a trans-border identity will be fully engaged with the European question and redefine their long-term goals in relation to European integration. Framing their demands in a European perspective will appear as a natural and valid option to overcome the inflammatory nature of a political project challenging state borders.

### 1.3.2. Regional institutionalisation

The second proposition is that regional institutionalisation will increase the strategic value of Europe for minority nationalist mobilisation. The reform of the European regional policy, through the inclusion of notions of "partnership" and "participation", has drawn sub-national actors more closely into the EU policy process. Sub-national entities, especially regions, have become players in the European political system (Hooghe, 1996:175). Empirically, it is clear that national governments have maintained a "gatekeeping" role in controlling the access of regional actors to European institutions (Jeffery, 2000; Nay, 2002). The influence of the regional level within the EU should not be overestimated and the regional policy field remains intergovernmental in practice. Yet, the changes that have occurred within regions are undeniable. With regions becoming a *locus* of EU politics, regional actors have increasingly come to incorporate European policies into their political agenda. Structural funds, in particular, have transformed political dynamics within regions (Smith, 1997) and resulted in the creation of networks and new forums of public action (Jones & Keating, 1995). In its local manifestations, the European regional policy is best understood as an arena for symbolic politics in which regional actors can claim to have established a funding link with Brussels (Keating, 2006:31). Some might say that regional politics have been Europeanised (Paraskevopoulos, 2001) in the sense that the EU has not only penetrated the regional political debate, but also changed the rules of the regional political game.

Bearing this in mind, it is proposed that references to Europe will be more useful to minority nationalists mobilising in institutionalised regions than for those whose territory has not been institutionalised. This hypothesis is not about political decentralisation – which remains remarkably different from one member state to another - but is rather a

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[8] In 1985, through the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the British government formally allowed the Irish government a role in the governance of Northern Ireland, in order to address the aspirations of its large Irish nationalist minority. As part of the agreement, the Irish Republic removed its constitutionally entrenched irredentist claim to Northern Ireland. In 1998, cross-border political institutions were established, including a North-South Ministerial Council.

case of the simplest form of institutionalisation possible. The regional tier of the EU in fact corresponds to administrative units defined by central governments, meaning that European regional policy still takes place within the territorial divisions established by each member state. As a result, only regions that have achieved institutional recognition have seen their politics change via contact with European policy-making. Institutionalised regions do not always coincide with the historical territories represented by minority nationalist parties. These parties often make demands for boundary adjustment, precisely because of a mismatch between their putative territory and administrative regions (Miodownik & Cartrite, 2006). Furthermore, certain regions represented by minority nationalists have not been institutionalised at all and are instead incorporated into a larger administrative unit. Lack of regional institutionalisation, through the absence of an elected political assembly and institutional channels of representation, undoubtedly complicates minority nationalist mobilisation. But, as argued here, the lack of regional institutionalisation also diminishes the strategic resources emerging from the EU for minority nationalist parties. Any type of evocation of Europe will carry some weight in regional politics directly concerned with EU policies, and minority nationalists will find an advantage in bringing forward their Europeanism in order to reinforce their status and influence within such a context. By contrast, the EU is likely to be perceived as distant and irrelevant to local actors in territories which have not been recognised institutionally,

thereby reducing the benefits that minority nationalists could derive from associating themselves with European integration.


### 1.3.3. Dynamics of party competition

This last hypothesis deals with how minority nationalists translate questions related to European integration into a strategy for party competition at the local level. "Pro- vs. anti-European" has emerged as a new dimension of party competition, inasmuch as Europe is now a core issue which national political parties have to address (Hix & Lord, 1997). Provided that the local political sphere within which minority nationalists operate has been penetrated by the EU - if the second hypothesis proves right, this will be dependent on the institutionalisation of their territory - the same logics applies to sub-national party systems. For some political parties, positions on European integration are intertwined with the way in which they interact with other parties in electoral arenas. For instance, Taggart has demonstrated that, for extreme-right or -left parties outside the mainstreams of party systems, opposition to Europe has been a means to set themselves apart from the centre of politics (Taggart, 1998:384). Because minority nationalists essentially challenge the organisation of political authority, they are often outcasts compared to the main political parties embodying the current organisation. In a similar vein

to the argument made above, supporting the EU is for minority nationalist parties a means of getting closer to mainstream political circles. Electoral competition usually requires small political parties to change their programmes in two ways: to broaden its content beyond their "core business" in order to be able to compete with mainstream political parties on a range of socio-economic and political issues; and to moderate their political message in order to broaden their political appeal beyond their support base (Muller-Rommel and Pridham, 1991). European integration is one high-profile issue that minority nationalist parties can use to broaden and moderate their programmes in order to interact with non-nationalist parties.

Yet, the extent to which minority nationalist parties play the European card as a strategy in local politics is affected by the dynamics of party competition. It has been argued that the effectiveness of this strategy was dependent on whether other political parties have crowded out the European space at the local level (Elias, 2008:565). If all the parties of a political system have adapted to European integration, having a European profile ceases being a comparative advantage and this diminishes the political credentials that minority nationalists can derive from it. Building on this, this thesis will look more specifically at the dynamics of party competition within minority nationalist movements. The latter can be divided on the European issue, with each party reacting differently to European developments. As we will see in the empirical chapters, the referenda on the Maastricht Treaty and the proposed European Constitution have sparked off diverging responses from parties within the Basque, Breton and Corsican movements respectively. By positioning itself on European integration, a minority nationalist party might constrain other minority nationalists' ability to use Europe in order to overcome their political marginalisation. A party that is alone in promoting a European dimension will have more freedom to explore different formulations and different linkages between its mobilisation and the EU. It is proposed that the effectiveness of this strategy will also rely on the degree of exclusivity that a minority nationalist party can claim with regards to Europe within its own political movement.

## 1.4. Comparative case study approach

This framework of analysis will be applied to an empirical study of three minority nationalist parties in France: Abertzaleen Batasuna (AB) in the Northern Basque Country, Unione di U Populu Corsu (UPC) in Corsica and Union Democratique Bretonne (UDB) in Britanny. This research will explain how and why these three parties have responded to European integration in order to draw conclusions on minority nationalist parties in France. Case studies are particularly appropriate to address "how" and "why" questions such as

the ones posed here (Hancke, 2009:64), as they give an insight into the interaction of multiple factors within a single context over time. The case study method is also appropriate to the contextualised party-centred perspective set out previously. This research intends to understand how Europe is viewed through the minority nationalist lense. A case-study approach provides the mechanism for entering each party context in order to capture the opportunities that these minority nationalist parties derive from European integration and the use they make of it.

The case selection was limited to France, which possesses a large number of peripheral regions with strong historical and cultural identities: Corsica, Brittany, Northern Basque Country, Alsace, Savoy, Occitania and Northern Catalonia. Although a form of collective action defending the culture and language of these regions has existed for decades, minority nationalist mobilisation in France has received little scholarly attention. In comparison to the usual cases of Scotland, Catalonia or Flanders, the political expression of regional minorities in French regions is less developed at this point in time. The influence of the Jacobin tradition on the concept of the French nation, as well as the use of coercive policies to achieve cultural and linguistic homogeneity, have undoubtedly had a detrimental effect on regional identities. Consequently, minority nationalist mobilisation in France draws on a weak tradition of autonomy or independence and the legitimacy of demands for self-government is contested. Corsica stands as an exception within this universe of cases, inasmuch as it is the only French region whose specificity has been recognised by the French government. Since 1980s, a series of reforms have provided Corsica with a Special Status and a directly elected Corsican Assembly. Institutional recognition has been favourable to the Corsican nationalist movement, which has emerged as one of the island's main political forces. Cultural and linguistic particularities are also present in other French regions, but a clear sense of collective identity is often weak and in competition with other kinds of identification. Minority nationalist parties have maintained a small but stable electoral presence in French regions since the 1970s, but they find it difficult to mobilise a wide audience around their political programme. Their nation-building strategy may not be fully developed or very clear in its aims. And yet, these parties have many things in common with their more advanced counterparts in Europe. Ideologically, they are motivated by their cultural and historical attachment to their minority nation, and make the same demands for political and institutional rights that reflect this specificity. Even more importantly, in a rapidly changing political environment, they are confronted with many of the same challenges: What domestic arrangements would best protect their political and cultural rights as a minority? How can they defend their regional interests and advance their political project within both the unitary French state and the EU? How best to organise their mobilisation within the

context of European integration, where the French government does not have the monopoly of political power anymore?

Within minority nationalist parties in France, the selection of cases is driven by the aim to identify conditions for the impact of European integration on minority nationalist mobilisation. Variations across the three sets of factors proposed to affect minority nationalists' response to European integration – regional institutionalisation, trans-border identity and dynamics of party competition – among three relatively comparable cases will enable us to assess the relevance of these factors. Although some differences exist, AB, UDB and UPC present many similarities as key political parties of the Basque, Breton and Corsican nationalist movements respectively. The Unione di u Populu Corsu (UPC) has been the main representative of the autonomist branch of Corsican nationalism since the 1970s[9]. The basis for its claim is the notion that Corsicans constitute a distinct people, and that this specificity should be recognised through the increase of Corsica's autonomy, and in particular the extension of the legislative and fiscal powers of the Corsican Assembly. The UPC also makes demands for an official status of the Corsican language and its mandatory teaching in the island's schools (Olivesi, 1998:177-179). Created in 1964, the Union Democratique Bretonne (UDB) promotes Brittany's regional autonomy. The "national vocation" of the Breton people constitutes the basis for the UDB's demand for self-government, a necessary means to ensure the cultural and economic development of Brittany (Pasquier, 2006:90). As well as linguistic demands for the protection of the Breton language, one of the UDB's main goals in the administrative reunification of Brittany, that is the return of the department Loire Atlantique, currently part of the region Pays de la Loire, in order to reform the historical Breton region. Lastly, Abertzaleen Batasuna (AB) emerged at the beginning of the 1990s, as a coalition of political parties advocating the self-government of the Basque people in France (Crettiez & Sommier, 2002:45), and quickly became the focal point of a local mobilisation for the institutionalisation of the Northern Basque Country (Gurrutxaga, 2005). In 2001, AB ceased being a party coalition to become its own political party, promoting the creation of a Basque department as well as the official recognition of the Basque language, Euskara.

Bearing in mind the specificities of each mobilisation context, one could place AB, UDB and UPC towards the moderate end of the minority nationalist spectrum in terms of demands. Accordingly, these three parties share a common position on the use of political violence as a strategy to achieve their goals of self-government. The UPC resorted to symbolic violence in the early 1970s[10] but soon after declared itself opposed to violence of

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[9] Other political parties have emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s, such as U Rinnovu Naziunale, A Ghjama pa l'Indipendenza and A Manca Naziunale, and can be grouped within the autonomist tendency, having either emerged from the UPC or abandoned independentist goals in favour of a more moderate interpretation of the nationalist struggle.
[10] In 1975, some members of the UPC, led by the Simeoni brothers, staged an armed occupation of the wine cellar of a "pied noir" winegrower at Aléria, who had been accused of trafficking low-

any kind, as a way to distance itself from the independentist branch of Corsican nationalism organised around the Front de Liberation Nationale de la Corse (FLNC). Similarly, the UDB has made clear that it condemned the violent actions of the Armee Revolutionnaire Bretonne[11] and wished to differentiate between its mobilisation and such clandestine organisations (Crettiez & Sommier, 2002:64). Finally, AB has perhaps the most ambiguous position on political violence. The party neither condemns (like most Basque nationalist parties), nor justifies (like Batasuna) the armed struggle of ETA, calling instead for a truce. In sum, these minority nationalist parties have all rejected violence as a valid instrument of struggle in favour of democratic means. Consequently, they concentrate their mobilisation efforts on the democratic arena and local elections.

Finally, while the overall electoral impact of the Corsican nationalist movement[12] cannot be compared to other minority nationalist movements in France, the electoral performance of AB, UDB and UPC is relatively similar when taken individually. Electoral alliances and coalitions are a necessity for these small parties to survive in a largely disadvantageous electoral system, making it difficult to isolate the electoral results of each minority nationalist party. As the Northern Basque Country is not institutionalised, the results of AB in sub-national elections do not reflect the popular support found in the historic Basque territory for Basque nationalism. Nevertheless, it has been estimated that the electoral support for each of the three cases averages around 4 percent of the population in their historic territories[13]. In terms of political representation, AB, UDB and UPC have all secured seats in the local assemblies most relevant to their political project. The UPC, whose name changed in 2002 to Partitu di a Nazione Corsa (PNC), currently has three representatives in the Corsican Assembly[14]. A coalition with the Greens granted the UDB three seats in the Breton regional council, of which UDB's leader Christian Guyonvarc'h is Vice-President in charge of European Affairs. Finally, AB has managed to secure a seat in the Pyrenees Atlantiques departmental council[15] as well as the position of Deputy Mayor of Biarritz[16]. Hence, with moderate nationalist agendas, an opposition to political violence and similar levels of electoral performance, AB, UDB and UPC are

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quality wine. This incident ended with the death of two gendarmes and serious rioting in Bastia. This form of symbolic violence, in the sense of making a symbolic statement as opposed to the FLNC's prolonged armed campaign, was soon after abandoned by the UPC.

[11] Created in 1971, the Armee Revolutionnaire Bretonne recently claimed a series of terrorist attacks between 1998 and 2000. Emgann's former spokesperson, Gael Roblin, was arrested following a terrorist attack in the Mac Donald of Quevert on 9th April 2000, which led to the death of one of the restaurant's employee, but was eventually released. The Armee Revolutionnaire Bretonne is also suspected to have participated in the theft of 8.5 tonnes of dynamite by ETA in Plevin (Brittany) on 19th September 1999.

[12] As an indication, the totality of votes for minority nationalist parties, autonomist and independentist included, in Corsican regional elections was 9,07% in 1987, 24,8% in 1992, 16,77% in 1999 and 17,34% in 2004.

[13] See Appendix 1: Election Tables.

[14] Jean-Christophe Angelini, Christine Colonna and Nadine Nivagionni

[15] Jean-Michel Galant, until 2008.

[16] Jakes Abeberry, until 2008.

mostly similar cases. The three parties are clearly comparable: they conceive their long-term political projects in the same way, mobilise through the same democratic channels and have achieved similar levels of electoral support. However, some key differences exist between the cases, enabling us to explore the relevance of certain factors for minority nationalists' experience of Europe.

### 1.4.1. Trans-border identity

Although AB operates exclusively in the Northern Basque Country[17], the party's long-term goal remains the reunification of Euskadi, the historic Basque Country. The party mobilises to defend the historical, cultural and linguistic specificities of the whole Basque nation, divided by the French-Spanish border. As such, its mobilisation and political project are closely linked to developments in the Southern Basque Country. On the other hand, although the party refers broadly to the Celtic cultural identity, the UDB does not claim any historical attachment to a region in another member state. Similarly, the UPC has claimed historical links with Sardinia but the Corsican identity and territory are clearly limited to the island. Neither the mobilisation, nor the long-term aspirations of Breton and Corsican nationalists can be said to have a trans-border character.

Comparing the European response of AB to the other two cases will provide the basis to test the first hypothesis, i.e. minority nationalists with trans-border identity perceive European integration as a process enabling the resolution of their predicament. If this applies, AB will see more incentives in reframing its long-term political project in accordance with the new European context than the UDB and the UPC, which will continue to conceive the realisation of their demands for self-government within the framework of the French state.

### 1.4.2. Regional institutionalisation

A significant difference between the three cases lies in the fact that Corsica and Brittany have been institutionalised, while the Basque Country has never been recognised institutionally in France. Since the 1980s, a series of reforms have granted Corsica its own regional institutions, i.e. a *Statut Particulier* or Special Status and an elected Corsican Assembly[18]. These provisions cannot amount to regional autonomy - on the basis that the

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[17] AB was purposefully chosen as a case study for its lack of affiliation with another larger political organisation in the Autonomous Basque Community. Given the political weight of parties such the Partido Nacionalista Vasco or even Batasuna in Spain, using their Northern branches as case studies would have undermined the results of a study aiming to look at how minority nationalist parties take advantage of the resources available to them in the French context.
[18] These reforms, which have provided Corsica with a unique institutional status among French regions, will be detailed in chapter three with the overall presentation of the French politico-administrative system.

Corsican Assembly still only has consultative powers – but Corsica does have extended competences in line with its cultural and geographical specificity. Brittany is one of the few historic French regions which has been institutionalised through French decentralisation, albeit as an ordinary administrative region. Although it only has functional competences, the locally elected Breton Council provides a democratic platform for the formulation of Breton interests. In contrast, the Basque Country has yet to achieve institutional recognition despite demands for the creation of a Basque department dating back to the French Revolution. The Basque Country has no existence in the French politico-administrative system: it is neither an administrative region nor a department. Instead, it forms with Béarn the department Pyrénées-Atlantique, part of the region Aquitaine.

The clear gap in terms of institutional status between the Northern Basque Country on the one hand, and Brittany and Corsica on the other hand, will enable us to test the second hypothesis, i.e. regional institutionalisation increases the strategic value of Europe for minority nationalist parties. If this proves true, Breton and Corsican nationalists will see more advantages in using their European dimension to raise their status in local politics than Northern Basque nationalists, whose local political profile would not necessarily benefit from evocations of Europe.


### 1.4.3. Dynamics of party competition

The Basque, Breton and Corsican nationalist movements differ in terms of organisation and internal cohesion. There is an internal struggle among the different organisations of the Corsican nationalist movement, which is split in two competing tendencies: the autonomists of the UPC and the independentists of Corsica Nazione (CN). Similarly, the Basque nationalist offer in Spain is divided between a moderate branch, led by the Partido Nacionalista Vasco, and a radical branch centred around Batasuna, the public front of ETA. These divisions have been transposed to the Northern Basque nationalist movement and left AB standing somewhere in the middle. In contrast with the fragmentation of the Basque and Corsican movements, the UDB has established itself as the main voice of Breton nationalism. While there are a couple of other nationalist parties in Brittany, the leadership of the UDB over the Breton movement has never been significantly contested.

The different organisation of Basque, Breton and Corsican movements, as well as the position of the three parties within them, will give some insight to test the last hypothesis, i.e. the strategic advantages that minority nationalists can draw from European integration depend largely on dynamics of party competition. If this is right, a European strategy will be more fruitful to the UDB than the UPC and AB, whose position

on European integration is likely to be challenged by other parties within their political movements.


## 1.5. Time period and sources


The case studies focus mainly on the years from 1982 to 2006, although a broader historical perspective is provided when necessary. This twenty-four year period captures many important developments in France and in the EU. Prior to 1982, minority nationalist parties in France had no access to a democratic platform where to mobilise public support and bring forward their demands. But from the beginning of the 1980s onwards, important changes took place in French regions. The law of 2 March 1982 marked the start of decentralisation reforms creating a regional level in the French politico-administrative system and providing all levels of sub-national government with directly elected assemblies. While these reforms were not intended as a response to regionalist and minority nationalist pressures, they nevertheless changed the politics of minority nationalism in France. From then onwards, minority nationalist parties have had a chance to gain political representation in a political assembly. Hence, the time period of this study will enable us to observe the successive attempts made by minority nationalist parties to operate in the democratic arena and their progressive realisation of the resources available to minority nationalist mobilisation in France. On the other hand, developments at the European level during these years have also seen the nature of the European polity change dramatically. The EU policy competences have expanded from economic integration to fields of political and social integration, and its institutional set-up has become more complex. Direct elections to the European Parliament were introduced in 1979, and following the "eurosclerosis" of the 1970s, the 1980s are often referred to as the period of the "relaunching of Europe" (Dinan and Cowles, 2004). This was in large part due to the 1986 Single European Act and the creation of the internal market project. A number of Treaties followed in quick succession (Treaty of the European Union in 1992, Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 and Treaty of Nice in 2001), which increased EU membership to fifteen, put into practice the commitment to a single European currency and prepared the ground for more political integration. The European Convention on the Future of Europe was launched in 2001 and represented a further attempt to move the political agenda forward ahead of enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe. These countries eventually joined the EU in December 2004, taking the number of member states to 25. However, the rejection of the proposed Constitutional Treaty by French and Dutch electorates in May and June 2005 has halted the integration process in its tracks, and the future direction of Europe is unclear, at least for the time being.

The findings will be derived from the qualitative content analysis of party documentation and interviews. The objective of the case studies is to understand how AB, UDB and UPC assess the value of European integration within the broad economic and political context of their mobilisation. As such, this study is not only interested in the parties' official European discourse, but also in the strategies and tactics that have led to the adoption of such discourse. However, fieldwork has been complicated by the almost complete absence of formal party documentation beyond very basic leaflets and posters, and the opaqueness of minority nationalist party organisations. Minority nationalist parties in France rarely produce party manifestoes or even election programmes. For this reason, the empirical study relies mainly on the archive of nationalist newspapers available for consultation at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris. These magazines are called Aritti for Corsican nationalists, Enbata for Basque nationalists and Le Peuple Breton for Breton nationalists. The case studies will seek to trace the deliberative and framing processes by which these parties make up their minds about Europe. Wherever possible, therefore, data from any fora where such a debate may take place will be gathered and analysed. For this purpose, documents will be included in the analysis when they address European issues in any way. This may refer to electoral or campaigning issues, strategy and tactics relating to Europe, and the discussion of the party's European policies. Finally, in the interest of gathering data from a large number of sources, a series of semi-structured interviews complement the documentary analysis by questioning certain themes and arguments further. Interviewees were identified as being party leaders, senior party members and individuals particularly related to the European dimension of each party's activities. Most of this fieldwork research, including archives consultation at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and research trips to Corsica, Brittany and the Basque Country, was carried out between July and December 2007.

## 1.6. Thesis organisation

This introductory chapter has laid out the analytical framework chosen to study the impact of European integration on minority nationalist mobilisation. This thesis will adopt a party-centred perspective and propose a comparative analysis of three minority nationalist parties in Brittany, Corsica and the Northern Basque Country. This comparative set-up within the single context of France will place the emphasis on the different strategies that these parties deploy for the achievement of their political project. By contextualising minority nationalist parties' responses to European integration - herein broadly understood as both ideological rhetoric and institutional reality - the objective is to identify what resources Europe provides for their domestic mobilisation. The rest of the thesis is organised as follows: chapter two defines minority nationalist mobilisation and specifies

how minority nationalist parties operate in the democratic arena. It also introduces the multiple ways in which European integration can frame and change the politics of minority nationalism. While the EU has brought about a new context for demands of self-government, it does not provide a framework for the accommodation of these demands. In sum, minority nationalist mobilisation is still directed at national governments. Accordingly, chapter three then presents the ideological, political and institutional context provided by France for minority nationalist parties and their interactions with the EU. Chapter four, five and six contain the individual case studies of the Unione di U Populu Corsu, Abertzaleen Batasuna and the Union Democratique Bretonne respectively. These empirical chapters provide a contextualised account of the way in which each party has responded to and sought to use European integration for its mobilisation. Chapter seven then proceeds to the comparative analysis of the three parties' responses to the EU, listing the resources provided to minority nationalists in France and explaining the differences in their perceptions and uses of Europe. The conclusion of this chapter will briefly review the main contributions made by this research to the literatures on minority nationalism, on minority nationalist response to European integration and on sub-state mobilisation in the EU.

# Chapter 2 - Minority nationalist parties and European integration

Despite being a widespread feature of European party systems, minority nationalist parties remain poorly understood in the literature. This chapter will start by defining these political actors demanding self-government for their minority nation and by explaining how these parties form, operate and mobilise in the democratic arena. It will also respond to the shortcomings of the party politics literature in assessing the significance of minority nationalist parties whose internal logic differs from conventional political parties. The second part of the chapter will prepare the ground for the core topic of this research, the factors shaping the impact of European integration on minority nationalist mobilisation. It will mention the fundamental connections existing between European integration and minority nationalism as processes supporting alternative ways of organising political authority. More concretely, however, it will show that – far from the Europe of the Regions scenario - the EU remains dominated by state interests and cannot provide a direct solution to the minority nationalist predicament. By penetrating and transforming the state, European integration has nevertheless changed the settings where minority nationalists mobilise and provided new opportunities to advance their demands within member states.

## 2.1. Defining the object of this research: minority nationalist parties

### 2.1.1. What is minority nationalism?

Minority nationalism in European states is sometimes viewed as an anachronism – many authors still talk about the "survival" of minority nationalist parties. There is a long tradition in political science of equating the concepts of the nation and the state, the association is so strong in the French language that the terms are often used interchangeably. This conflation is rooted in a traditional view that sees nation-states as the product of historical evolution, while minority nationalist conflict is seen as the product of an incomplete evolution which is bound to disappear in due course (McGarry & Keating, 2001:2-3). This model of the European nation-state has been backed up by political scientists from the nineteenth century onwards. John Stuart Mill famously said: "Nobody can suppose that it is not more beneficial for a Breton or a Basque of French Navarre to be a member of the French nationality than to sulk on his own rocks, the half-savage relic of past times. The same remark applies to the Welshman or the Scottish highlander" (Mill, 1972:395). It was not only argued that regional minorities would disappear, but also that it was normatively desirable for them to do so. This was the basis for the Jacobin theory of assimilation, which received its fullest expression in France. The coercive policies to

achieve linguistic and cultural homogeneity and create a single French nation attested to the fear that regional diversity would threaten the territorial integrity of the state. For more than two centuries, modernist social science approaches have been predicting that economic and social forces would secure the political triumph of the nation-state and the end of minority nationalism (McGarry & Keating, 2006:2-5).

The limits of this political tradition have been sharply exposed in Western Europe by the re-appearance of ethno-territorial politics and the transformation of the state since the 1970s. While they had long existed, many minority nationalist parties have experienced a revival in their electoral fortunes in the last decades. New minority nationalist movements have been created in some places (Northern Italy and Savoy, for instance). With these parties gaining political and electoral salience, state authorities have had to respond to their demands for the re-distribution of political authority between the centre and the periphery. The rise of minority nationalism cannot solely account for the decentralisation and devolution reforms undertaken throughout Western Europe, but it is clear that these actors have had a major impact on the territorial organisation of European states. For instance, minority nationalists in Belgium were key actors in the transformation of the country into a federation of three languages and three regions in 1992 (De Winter, Gomez-Reino & Lynch, 2006:31-32). In Spain, the creation of a "state of autonomies" at the end of the 1970s, which granted substantial policy responsibilities to autonomous communities, was a concession to the demands of Catalan and Basque nationalists. In subsequent years, the Catalan Convergencia i Uno and the Basque Partido Nacionalista Vasco were able to extract further policy concessions for their communities in return for parliamentary support for Spanish government coalitions (Calvet Crespo, 2003; Guerrero Salom, 2003). In the UK, the electoral growth of Scottish nationalism during the 1980s was one factor behind the British Labour Party's commitment to devolution (Mitchell, 1998; Hepburn, 2006). Since the establishment of parliaments in Scotland and Wales in 1999, the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru have used their positions as the main parties of opposition, and then as parties of regional government since 2007, to push for a further redistribution of power from Westminster (Elias, 2009:45). The Lega Nord electoral breakthrough in the 1990s enabled the party to negotiate new institutional reforms to strengthen regional government in Italy (Ruzza, 2006:243-244). Even in France, arguably the European state most reluctant to recognise the existence of cultural and linguistic diversity within its borders, a limited degree of administrative devolution has been granted to Corsica to assuage the political demands of the island's nationalist movement (Olivesi, 1998).

This research is mostly indicative of trends and political processes in Western Europe, but minority nationalist parties have also come to the fore in Central and Eastern Europe since the beginning of the 1990s. Arguably, the configuration is somewhat

different: groups which constitute a minority in a "host" state often have an ethnic kin which is dominant in another state, the "kin" state. Examples include the Hungarians of Slovakia, Romania and Serbia; the Serbs and Croats of Bosnia-Herzegovina; and the Turks of Bulgaria (Brubacker, 1996). The Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) - the party of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria - or the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR), for instance, have toned down the territorial nature of their demands and are more oriented towards segmental autonomy in the long term. Given the recent history of the region, which saw three ex-communist plurinational federations break apart, it is not surprising that the ideal of the centralised unitary state remains dominant. These ethnopolitical parties have nevertheless been key actors in governing coalitions and been able to advance the civil and political rights of their minorities as a result, partly aided by the conditionality on minority protection for EU accession (Sasse, 2008; Toggenburg 2004; Vachudova 2005). As a coalition partner to the various cabinets led by prime ministers from the liberal conservative Democratic Convention of Romania (CDR), the UDMR was able to achieve major amendments to the education and self-government laws. In Romanian municipalities with more than 20 per cent of the residents belonging to a national minority, the use of the minority language in public administration was made legal, bilingual signs were introduced and the minority language became a language of instruction (Brusis, 2003:9). Similarly, the MRF became an official coalition partner in the Bulgarian government after the 2001 parliamentary elections and used its position to ensure funding for Turkish-language classes in public school as well as Turkish broadcasting on state television (Warhola & Boteva, 2003:270).

In brief, the minority question is not likely to disappear any time soon, but could potentially continue to grow. More than historical realities based around objective factors (linguistic, cultural, geographical, economic, etc.), minority nations are social constructs resulting from "a complex process of political, organisational, discursive and institutional genesis" (Maiz & Losada, 2000:1). Maiz and Losada (2000) have established a list of factors concurring to the emergence of minority nationalism. These include certain cultural and historical preconditions, socio-economic activators of the defence of common interests, a political opportunity structure - especially the availability of a certain level of self-government and politics of institutional recognition - along with an efficient discursive and organisational mobilisation of all this potential by minority nationalist actors. In this conceptualisation, the institutional context provided by federalism, territorial autonomy or consociationalism is not only a democratic way of accommodating internal diversity. It also reinforces collective identities and encourages demands for self-government by opening up the political opportunity structure within which minority nationalists mobilise (Maiz & Losada, 1999:2). Hence, minority nationalism has flourished in Europe since the 1970s in part because some European states have proved more inclined to decentralise power and

sovereignty. Minority nationalist movements had already existed for decades[19], struggling to defend a constitutional project seemingly incompatible with the nation-state system. Ceding some form of autonomy to regional minorities seems to be more thinkable today, now that member states have pooled their sovereignty in Brussels (McGarry & Keating, 2001:9). National opportunity structures, when they have been opened up through decentralisation, will not only enable the realisation of demands for self-government, but also feed back into minority nationalist mobilisation by strengthening sub-national consciousness.

The existence of a minority nation is not the starting point of a mobilisation for self-government, rather minority nationalists will produce and extend a minority nation in certain political and institutional settings. As such, minority nationalists can be conceived as "ethnic entrepreneurs", as agents of nationalist mobilisation who translate cultural and historical specificity into political assertiveness (Tursan, 1998). Although the focus of this study is on political parties, minority nationalist mobilisation can use many vehicles, varying from armed organisations to social movements and interest groups, and adopt a variety of strategies including the collection of votes, protest or political violence. Each of these organisations will have devised the nation-building strategy best tailored (in its view) to its own context. Minority nationalist mobilisation will then go through progressive stages. Taking group awareness among a part of the regional elites as a starting point, some parties – like the ones included in this study - are still in the first phase of Hroch's (1985) nationalist mobilisation, i.e. they are elaborating a nation-building strategy and mobilising support around the specificity of their minority nation. Others – such as the Bloque Nacionalista Galego or the Partito Sardo d'Azione - are in the second phase, having achieved some form of institutional arrangement but still demanding further concessions from the centre towards self-government. A few parties are even in the third phase, they have seen most of their demands met by the former unitary state and are the main political force in their historical region, as illustrated in the case of Volksunie or the Scottish National Party. Conceptualising minority nationalist mobilisation as a process does not however imply that every minority nationalist movement will strictly follow all these steps. A considerable amount of variation is provided by the diverse forms taken by self-government: while some minority nationalists essentially seek the cultural autonomy of their minority nation, others will not be satisfied until the achievement of full fledged independence.

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[19] For instance, the Partido Nacionalista Vasco was founded in 1895, the Scottish National Party in 1934 and Volksunie in 1954.

Table 1: Stages of minority nationalist mobilisation

Stage 1  Group awareness among elites

Stage 2  Widespread recognition of the specificity of the minority nation

Stage 3  Popular support around a project for self-government

Stage 4  Self-determination of the minority nation through the realisation of self-government

Perhaps because of an initial bias of political science in favour of the nation-state, scholars are still coming to terms with political actors demanding a right to self-government on behalf of minorities. A great variety of terminologies have been used to qualify the phenomenon: sub-state nationalism (Catt & Murphy, 2002), ethnoregionalism (De Winter & Tursan, 1998; Miodownik & Cartrite, 2006), regional nationalism (Christiansen, 1998; Van Atta, 2003), ethnonationalism (Connor, 1972; Cronin, 2002), stateless nations (Keating, 2001), nations without states (Guibernau, 1996) or minority nations (Lynch, 1996; Keating & McGarry, 2001). If some scholars remain unsure about defining these actors as "nationalists", this is partly due to the traditional association of nationalism with the concept of sovereign state. Statehood has for a long time been considered as the only possible outcome of nationalist success (Hobsbawm, 1990; Smith, 1995). But if the age of the almighty sovereign state has represented a particular form of nationalism, it is not the only one. For minority nationalism, as it has manifested itself throughout Europe, does not always aim at secession or is framed as the establishment of a separate state. The Scottish National Party has for instance adopted a "post-sovereigntist" stance since the 1980s, committing itself to independence in Europe. Scottish nationalists have perceived an opportunity to resume full statehood in the context of an intergovernmental European Union (Keating, 2001), at least for the time being. Many minority nationalists, such as the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, Plaid Cymru and the Bloque Nacionalista Galego, have embraced a post-statist policy in their rhetoric, looking to a future Europe of the Peoples in which states have disappeared altogether. This is also the position of Abertzale Batasuna, the Union Democratique Bretonne and the Unione di U Populu Corsu, the three minority nationalist parties included in this comparative study. It would be wrong to assume that minority nationalist aspirations systematically equate to the creation of new states. Rather, minority nationalist actors place the emphasis on nationhood, on the existence of a minority nation possessing a right to self-determination. Minority nationalism refers to a broader definition of nationalism, focusing on self-determination and self-government irrespective of the constitutional form which these take (McGarry & Keating, 2001:20).

Claims for nationhood at the sub-national or regional level are often disputed because of the threat they represent for the national unity and territorial integrity of states. Explicit claims for nationhood are so contentious in some places that minority nationalists will prefer using the language of regionalism, thereby adding to the terminological confusion. One can talk of nationalism in Scotland or Wales, since these places are commonly recognised as nations and the population sees itself as such. In Spain, the Constitution makes a distinction between the Spanish nation and the "nacionalidades" or nationalities that compose it, such as Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia[20]. In Italy, the Lega Nord has sought to conjure up a "Nazione Padania" but this imagined nation is not taken seriously outside the party's rank. By contrast, Sicily has its own distinct history, a language, a strong sense of identity and an autonomous government, but it is rarely referred to as a nation. Brittany is usually seen as a region and Breton political groups describe themselves as autonomists, but their claims and political agenda are essentially nationalist in content. On the other hand, Corsican groups are widely referred to as nationalist (including by the French government), a term implying the existence of a Corsican national identity. The same French authorities have however fiercely opposed references to "the Corsican people" in official documents. In sum, while there can be a general agreement on the existence of nations in some regions, nationhood is most often claimed on one side and denied on the other. It is however generally accepted among scholars and practitioners that the existence of a minority nation is not a matter of official recognition by a state, but relies instead on the presence of a collective sense of community. Capotorti's definition stands as a standard reference in the field and mentions that minorities "show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion and language" (Capotorti, 1979). This self-awareness or self-identification, while being essential to the idea of minority nation, cannot be objectively demonstrated and is therefore bound to be the subject of continuing controversy.

Empirically, minority nationalist parties can be difficult to distinguish from regionalist organisations. According to Meny (1991:61), the "defence of the territory" is the justification for the creation of regionalist parties. Minority nationalist actors certainly fit within this category, as they concentrate their efforts, both in terms of demands and strategies, exclusively on one sub-national territory. The central features of minority nationalism in Western Europe are a coinciding group identity and territory, making it a territorially integrated nationalism. Territory is defined on the basis of the historical, linguistic and cultural properties of minority nations, rather than the administrative divisions

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[20] "La Constitución se fundamenta en la indisoluble unidad de la Nación española, patria común e indivisible de todos los españoles, y reconoce y garantiza el derecho a la autonomía de las nacionalidades y regiones que la integran y la solidaridad entre todas ellas." Constitución española de 1978 (accessed online at http://www.map.es/documentacion/legislacion/constitucion.html on 6 July 2009).

of states. Minority nationalists identify with, and make claims upon central governments on behalf of, territories and groups that do not coincide with state boundaries and national populations (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983:8). Like regionalist parties, these actors therefore present a challenge to the territorial structure of the state, asking for its reconfiguration in favour of the regional territory. Both regionalist and minority nationalist organisations advocate an alternative organisation of political authority to the unitary nation-state and seek to establish the region as the most relevant political space. But while minority nationalism has much in common with regionalism, there is an important normative difference. Unlike other kinds of regionalist organisations, minority nationalist parties base their demands on the right to self-determination of their minority nation. In their view, a minority nation, just like any nation, has a right to decide the nature and form of its political identity. The exercise of this right to internal self-determination results in the elaboration of a project of self-government. Such project reflects the domestic arrangements which, in each case, are deemed necessary for the protection and continued existence of the minority nation. Hence, the crucial distinction between nationalist and regionalist claims lies in the area of legitimacy: "asserting nationhood implies that the nation, however defined, is the primary social grouping to which allegiance is due, the basis for social organisation" (McGarry & Keating, 2001:24). For minority nationalists, this normative dimension confers legitimacy to their mobilisation inasmuch as it is grounded on a fundamental right of peoples, a right being denied to them by state authorities. Other regionalist organisations do not make claims of this nature, they refer instead to functional, economic and/or identity-related arguments for demanding greater control over the affairs of the regional territory. This is not to say that minority nationalists are necessarily the chosen representatives of the regional minority they associate themselves with. According to Rokkan and Urwin, "while not all people in a territory may identify with or support such a movement, the latter may demand control of, or adjustments in the control of, the territory, and hence over all who live there, irrespective of their political opinions" (1983:8). Nevertheless, normatively, it is this grounding in the right to self-determination which differentiates minority nationalists from other type of regionalist actors also making claims on behalf of regional populations and territories.

### 2.1.2. Minority nationalists as political parties

As political parties, minority nationalists have adopted a great variety of ideological positions to defend their claims to self-determination - so much so that they have often been disregarded as an ideologically heterogeneous category in the party politics literature (Gallagher, Laver & Mair, 2001). Mair and Mudde argue that problems associated with the ideological dimension of party families are "particularly acute in the case of regional and

sub-national parties, which are sometimes grouped together as a separate family on the basis of their limited territorial appeal but which include within their ranks a remarkable diversity of ideological identities" (Mair & Mudde, 1998:222). Minority nationalist parties are spread widely across the conventional right/left spectrum, ranging from the Belgian Vlaams Blok on the far right to the Irish Sinn Fein on the far left. Some of the parties are even voluntarily excluding themselves from that traditional framework, such as the Unione di U Populu Corsu which asserts a strict "neither right, nor left" stance on Corsican politics. In some cases, minority nationalists have also displayed significant ideological volatility. The Flemish Volksunie, for instance, tended towards the right until the mid-1960s, when it moved to the centre-left and defined itself as a "socially progressive justice party". The party then adopted a "liberal-left" profile in the 1980s, but its programme was radicalised towards the extreme left by its leader, Bert Anciaux, in the 1990s (De Winter, 1998:35). The ideological variability of minority nationalist parties has meant that they have rarely been studied as a party family in the literature, as illustrated by Mair and Mudde who conclude that "the group might be more usefully disaggregated and dispersed among other competing families" (1998:222). Such disaggregation of minority nationalist parties would shift the research focus away from the specific nature of their demands and political mobilisation.

By contrast, the assumption made in this thesis is that, far from being a residual category, minority nationalist parties represent a coherent subset of political parties with distinct characteristics. For a start, the fact that the right/left divide is not predominant for minority nationalists, and that ideological positions vary from one party to another, is not as surprising as it may sound. This observation is consistent with the work of Lipset and Rokkan (1967) on the emergence of party systems and simply indicates that these parties do not mobilise on the class cleavage, unlike the traditional trajectory of the vast majority of Europe's mainstream political parties. Political parties sustain an identity that is anchored in the issues that gave rise to their birth (Tursan, 1998:5) and minority nationalist parties essentially seek to redefine centre-periphery relations with regards to a specific regional minority. As such, these parties - like regionalist parties - are grounded in the centre-periphery cleavage, i.e. the empowerment and disempowerment of levels of decision-making in the regional periphery and at the centre respectively. The centre-periphery cleavage is the "bounded rationality" shaping the way in which these parties come to terms with new challenges and uncertainties (Marks and Wilson, 2000:434). As the research presented in this thesis demonstrates - European integration striking at the very heart of this cleavage - it is particularly relevant to these parties who claim "ownership" to issues related to the territorial organisation of political power (De Winter & Gomez-Reino, 2002:484). At the same time, the way in which political power is shared among different socio-economic groups, i.e. the issue at the origin of the right-left

spectrum, is not a shared core concern of minority nationalists and each party will respond to this issue in its own way.

Instead of right/left ideology, it is the demand for self-government that primarily defines the minority nationalist party family. This demand will vary considerably from one case to another, reflecting the domestic arrangements best suited to the recognition and protection of the minority nation. The historical experience of the minority nation, the factors that induce nationalist mobilisation and define its goals, as well as the opportunity structures available for pursuing such claims, will be different in each case (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983; Keating, 1998:117). Depending on the latter, minority nationalist demands for self-government will take different forms such as independence, autonomy, federalism, devolution, cultural rights and/or even European integration. De Winter (1998: 204-208) distinguishes five types of minority nationalist parties: protectionist parties (which demand measures to protect and develop their cultural identity within the framework of the existing state), autonomist parties (which ask for specific power-sharing arrangement for their region only), national-federalist parties (which want to acquire self-government through the reorganisation of the unitary state into a federal state), independentist parties (which aim at the full political independence of their region) and irredentist parties (which aim to break away from the state to which they belong and/or favour the annexation of their region to another nation-state). This classification should not be seen in terms of strict categories, as minority nationalist parties almost always change their rhetoric and goals over time. As will transpire in the following account of Basque, Breton and Corsican nationalist mobilisation since the 1980s, these different demands for self-government are not mutually exclusive and often overlap. Each minority nationalist party will determine the domestic arrangements best adapted not only to the needs but also to the current prospects of its minority nation, so that its demand for self-government will be adjusted along the way. Another useful distinction could nevertheless be made between "fundamentalist" and "gradualist" parties. The latter see self-government as arriving in stages, seeking to use autonomy as a stepping stone to independence for instance, while the former see constitutional provisions falling short of independence as undermining the momentum for self-government (Hepburn, 2006). Independently of how it is conceived, the pursuit of self-government, based on a political right to self-determination, is what primarily distinguishes minority nationalist parties from other party families.

| Table 2: Different forms of self-government advocated by minority nationalist parties |
| --- |
| Territorial institutionalisation, regionalisation |
| Cultural autonomy, cultural & linguistic rights |
| Regional autonomy, power-sharing arrangement for one region |
| Federalism, devolution |
| Independence, creation of a new state |

An area of research relatively untouched in the literature - to which this study will make a contribution - are the dynamics underlying the mobilisation of minority nationalist parties. Evidence suggests that the internal logic of these parties is distinct from traditional political parties. The prime objective of minority nationalist parties is to mobilise support around a regional minority, to generate a group consciousness giving way to the realisation of self-determination. Rather than only seeking to improve their electoral performance and gain office at all cost, minority nationalists work towards having their demands heard and discussed in the relevant political platforms. While sitting in sub-national elected assemblies can be an effective way of influencing regional political debates, substantial representation is not always readily accessible for these small parties. In that event, minority nationalist parties will seek other ways of bringing exposure to their predicament, sometimes at the cost of electoral success. For instance, Abertzaleen Batasuna has repeatedly resorted to strategies of civil disobedience to draw public attention to its demand for the institutionalisation of the Northern Basque Country. Minority nationalist parties display more flexibility and adaptability than most political parties, revising their positions in order to make the most out of opportunities arising for their mobilisation. This will often lead to significant changes in their programmes and strategies over time.

The way in which minority nationalists identify and operate within their territory also stands out as a crucial characteristic of their mobilisation as political parties. Miodownik and Cartrite (2006) distinguish between a de jure demarcation of the territory whose boundaries and/or institutional organisation they seek to adjust through their demands, and a de facto demarcation of the territory through contesting elections across their historic region irrespective of administrative boundaries imposed by the state. For small parties with limited resources, such a strategy will come at the expense of electoral success, as they do not concentrate their resources in potentially winnable electoral districts. The Union Democratique Bretonne provides a clear illustration of this point: the party favoured maximising the number of seats contested in Brittany (including in the

department Loire-Atlantique, which is not part of the Breton administrative region) in lieu of achieving elected office. As a result of these efforts to define the historic Brittany, the UDB waited 40 years before gaining representation at the regional level in 2004. This conception of territoriality has direct implications for the way in which minority nationalists function as political parties. By using electoral activity as a tool to define their territory, they differ from most political parties whose prime objective is to achieve political representation.

The mobilisation of minority nationalist parties is also characterised by (1) a greater frequency of contestation of non-national elections instead of national elections, (2) a particularly high level of flexibility in election-coalition formation and (3) organisational survival, in the absence of significant electoral success, as a baseline of success (Miodownik & Cartrite, 2006:76). First, minority nationalist parties do not intend to capture votes across the entire electorate of a state but try to maximise electoral support from the regional minority they focus on. Since they are bounded to a pre-defined segment of the national population, these parties will place more importance on regional and sub-national elections than on state-wide elections. As the case studies will illustrate, minority nationalists whose resources are limited will commonly prefer competing for a municipal seat than taking part in parliamentary elections. Secondly, precisely because of their lack of ideological affinity, minority nationalist parties are like free electrons in politics. These parties often form electoral alliances or join political coalitions on an *ad hoc* basis, depending on which political partner will better serve their interests in the short-term. Finally, the electoral performance of these small parties is greatly influenced by national political institutions - we will come back to that in the next sections. If electoral success is hindered by national political institutions, as it is in the case of France, the continued existence of minority nationalist parties over time will constitute a baseline of success. In disadvantageous circumstances, these parties will concentrate on organisational survival, for their mere presence in elections is already a way of claiming minority nationhood. The points mentioned above single out minority nationalist parties among the vast majority of political parties, usually understood as maximising their electoral performance in the view of gaining office at the highest level of government possible.


### 2.1.3. The impact of minority nationalist parties

The distinctiveness of minority nationalists as political parties can make it difficult to assess their relevance in democratic arenas. In general, the significance of political parties is gauged in relation to levels of support in national elections. Minority nationalist parties are sometimes seen as politically unimportant because of their size and the low electoral turnout they command at the national level (Muller-Rommel, 1998:18). Most

minority nationalist parties are "small parties", i.e. polling more than one but less than 15 per cent of the national vote (Mair, 1991). In Western Europe, only two of these parties currently participate in national government - Lega Nord in Italy and Volksunie in Belgium - and few have done so in the past, at least for any significant amount of time. In Spain, Catalan and Basque nationalist parties have periodically been key actors in securing governing majorities at the state level (Calvet Crespo, 2003; Guerrero Salom, 2003). In Italy, the electoral breakthrough of the Lega Nord in the 1990s, and its participation in Berlusconi's coalition government since 2001, has had a major effect on national politics (Giordano, 2003). Beyond these few exceptions, the role played by minority nationalist parties in state-wide political arenas is marginal.

This thesis contends that one must penetrate the internal logic of these parties to appreciate their impact on politics. The electoral performance of a minority nationalist party cannot be measured in terms of the proportion of the national vote. What matters instead is the proportion of the targeted electorate and votes in the territory that minority nationalists claim to represent. Similarly, these parties make a conscious decision to operate exclusively at the sub-national level, there is little point assessing their political significance within national politics. Rather, Sartori's (1976) conceptualisation of "relevant political parties"[21] must be adapted to the regional political space, where most minority nationalists have established a stable presence. Many minority nationalist parties are mainstream parties in regional politics; when they are not parties of regional government, they act as the main opposition parties within their respective territories, as illustrated by the Scottish National Party or Plaid Cymru until 2007 (Hepburn, 2006; Elias, 2006). Even minority nationalist parties that are less successful electorally often find themselves to be key partners for electoral alliances, because of their flexibility in coalition formation, and can therefore exert influence on regional politics. For instance, the 1998 election of the Ligue Savoisienne, which gathered only 5.16 percent of the votes, considerably altered party competition within the Regional Assembly of Rhone Alpes[22]. Regional political arenas are where minority nationalists primarily seek to increase their political weight and

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[21] Sartori proposes two rules to determine the relevance of a political party: "*Rule 1*. A minor party can be *discounted as irrelevant* whenever it remains over time superfluous, in the sense that it is never needed or put to use for any feasible coalition majority . . . *Rule 2*. A party *qualifies for relevance* whenever its experience, or appearance, affects the tactics of party competition and particularly when it alters the *direction* of the competition—by determining a switch from centripetal to centrifugal competition either leftward, rightward, or in both directions—of the governing-oriented parties . . . In summary, we can discount the parties that have neither (i) *coalition potential* nor (ii) *blackmail potential*" (1976: 122-123).

[22] In 1998, after the first round of elections, the Socialist list led by Jean-Jacques Queyranne and the right-wing list led by Charles Millon had the same number of seats, with no absolute majority. The only Savoisian representative and leader of the LS, Patrice Abeille, gave its vote to the Socialists, which led Millon to break the implicit pact of non-alliance with the extreme-right by accepting the votes of the FN, represented by Bruno Gollnisch, in order to gain control of the Regional Assembly.

electoral support. Behaving as regional actors *per se*, they stand out from conventional political parties often seeing sub-national elections as second-order politics.

Going even further with this line of argument, electability does not appear to be the most appropriate concept to assess the audience and support received by minority nationalist parties. As mentioned above, the electoral behaviour of these parties differs from the traditional vote-maximising approach of most political parties and electoral results cannot fully account for their level of influence within regional politics. In addition, the political representation of minority nationalists is largely conditioned by the nature of election systems. It is generally stated that majoritarian systems restrain multipartism whereas proportional systems promote it (Duverger, 1959; Rae, 1967; Taagepera & Shugart, 1989; Lijphart, 1994). There are two sets of arguments: firstly, under majoritarian systems only larger parties have the possibility to gain representation and smaller parties are therefore penalised (Duverger, 1959); secondly, voters become aware that voting for a small party implies wasting votes and tend to refrain from voting for it (Cox, 1997). An electoral system with proportional representation will boost minority nationalist parties, as it boosts other small parties. In Spain, proportional representation is likely to have facilitated the breakthrough and rapid expansion of parliamentary representation of Catalan and Basque nationalists. In majoritarian systems, only one candidate can win in each district and any third party suffers from extreme under-representation as a result. Voters with sympathies for a minority nationalist party may not vote for such a party if it does not stand a chance of winning any seat. Electoral thresholds for representation can also be deadly for small parties and prevent minority nationalists from gaining the seats that their electorate would usually dictate. In sum, different electoral rules translate into different levels of representation for these parties and the percentage of votes that minority nationalist parties receive is not a perfect indicator of the total public support for their main issue.

Last but not least, minority nationalist parties can play a significant role within their respective political arenas, in spite of their limited electorate and political representation (Villalba, 1997; Tursan, 1998). The impact of these parties can be found in the nature of political debates rather than in terms of direct political outputs or outcomes. In pushing autonomy questions onto the political agenda, there is a sense in which minority nationalists force their opponents onto "regional" territory. This is what Rokkan and Urwin (1983:118) referred to as "the politicisation of peripheral predicaments". Instead of concentrating only on traditional issues - taxation, spending, health, education, defence, etc – state wide parties are forced to discuss regional issues, produce regional solutions and establish regional institutions (Lynch, 2003:5). From a minority nationalist point of view, these are the first steps towards the emergence of political assertiveness at the regional level and ultimately towards self-government. Furthermore, before the emergence

of widespread group consciousness, minority nationalism will manifest itself more effectively at the level of elite accommodation (Cole, 2006:49). These parties will work towards bringing exposure to their demands in regional politics, so that these demands end up being supported by the political, economic and cultural elites within their historic territory. Hence, one must also look into the content of regional political debates to appreciate the impact of minority nationalist mobilisation.

The points above have introduced minority nationalist parties as actors maximising institutional and political opportunities available to them in order to achieve the self-determination of their minority nation. In its second part, this chapter will survey the ways in which European integration has changed the institutional and political settings where these actors mobilise. The EU has opened up a debate about new ways of organising political authority and this has engendered possibilities for minority nationalism that were inconceivable within the traditional state system. In practice, however, it is still within the nation-state framework that minority nationalists must achieve self-government. Through its institutional, legal, political and economic manifestations within member states, European integration can nevertheless provide opportunities for minority nationalist mobilisation.

## 2.2. European integration and minority nationalist parties

### 2.2.1. The EU: A new framework for minority demands?

Fundamentally, European integration and minority nationalism can be seen as mutually reinforcing processes aiming for a new kind of politics. They both challenge the concept of "nation-state" as the sole basis for identity and sovereignty, and offer alternative ways of organising political authority. European integration has led to a rethinking of the relationship between territory, identity and political authority. With states transferring competences to Brussels, the notion of indivisible sovereignty has become obsolete. Rather, sovereignty is increasingly being perceived as a commodity shared between several authorities (MacCormick, 1999; Walker, 2001). Apart from the idea of sovereignty-sharing, the EU has concretely undermined the functional purpose of the nation-state. The internationalisation of economic and political relationships, and the emergence of new dimensions to traditional policy issues that the state is ill-equipped to deal with in isolation, have forced the reallocation of decision-making capacities upwards to European institutions and downwards through decentralisation and devolution (Hooghe & Marks, 2001). The state has been emptied of some of its substantive content and can no longer claim a monopoly on the exercise of legitimate political authority within a territorially bounded political system. In this way, European integration has altered the

centre-periphery cleavage that pitted the centralising state against political, economic and cultural forces – such as minority nationalists - in the peripheries (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983). Instead of the nation-state model, a new and unique European polity is being created in which European, state and sub-state actors share political powers (Marks, 1993; Marks, Hooghe & Blank, 1996; Hooghe & Marks, 2001).

The alternative organisation of political authority embodied by the EU constitutes a promising rhetoric for the self-determination of minority nations. These doctrines are appealing to minority nationalists because "if we recognise that neither nationalism nor sovereignty are absolutes and that both can change and evolve over time, and that the nation-state as it has existed since the nineteenth century is merely one way of doing this, then we open up a large array of possibilities for managing nationality issues" (Keating, 2001:42). By devising new sources of legitimate authority, the EU has opened up unprecedented perspectives for the resolution of the minority nationalist predicament. Many minority nationalists have embraced post-sovereigntist arguments according to which the traditional understanding of sovereignty and statehood are no longer appropriate in contemporary society (McGarry & Keating, 2006:23-34). Furthermore, the EU can be seen as implementing a new model of deliberative democracy, within which minority nations have an opportunity to become the "co-architects" of European governance (Malloy, 2005:250-288). Instead of asking for their rights to be respected, minority nations could be empowered with self-protection through European integration. The building of an internal market, the 1988 reform of the European Structural Funds and several innovations contained in the Maastricht Treaty - the creation of a Committee of the Regions, access for regional representatives to the Council of Ministers and the principle of subsidiarity – have been European developments hailed by minority nationalists as evidence that a Europe of the Regions has been in the making. The logical conclusion would be a future European polity in which sovereign states are being replaced by regional and supranational entities jointly exercising political power (Nagel, 2004:59). From a minority nationalist perspective, this is clearly an attractive prospect since minority nations would enjoy a level of decision-making responsibility unimaginable within the state system.

Yet, these philosophical and theoretical arguments belie a reality where member states remain in control of key policy areas tied to the notion of sovereignty and continue to play a privileged role in defining the direction of European integration. The lack of progress towards creating a Europe of the Regions was highlighted in debates held during the Convention on the Future of Europe. Many of the demands put forward by EFA on behalf of its members were not included in the final constitutional text (Elias, 2008:559). The resulting document represented a "robustly statist" vision of the EU whose powers were given to it by sovereign member states (MacCormick, 2004:342). Member states

have proved resilient in the face of pressure to transfer political authority to the supranational and sub-state levels. Furthermore, even though the EU has assumed many of their functional responsibilities, there is little evidence that sub-state actors have gained from this redistribution of policy competences. Empirically, we are still very far from the multi-level governance model where sub-state actors bypass the state to participate directly in the European policy-making process. Limitations are present constraining the mobilisation of sub-state actors in the EU and their influence on European decision-making has remained limited. The Committee of the Regions (CoR), the European assembly of elected regional and local representatives, stands as an allegory for the weakness of the regional level in the EU. While its creation in 1994 was presented as a recognition of the role granted to regions in the emerging EU polity, the CoR was only given a consultative role. The effectiveness of the CoR for the representation of sub-state interests in the EU has almost immediately suffered from the high disparities in terms of action capacity and competences among European regions (Jeffery, 1997; Loughlin, 1996). The Committee's competences have been extended by the new Lisbon Treaty: most significantly, it now has a right to approach the Court of Justice and to request the annulment of EU legislation if it is in breach of the principle of subsidiarity. Its influence remains negligible, especially since powerful regional actors, such as the Presidents of the German Länder, have long deserted the assembly.

National governments have maintained a strong "gatekeeping" role in controlling the access of sub-state actors to European institutions (Bache & Jones, 2000; Jeffery, 2000; Nay, 2002). Only the most entrepreneurial and well resourced regional governments have succeeded in mobilising directly at the European level. This is perhaps best illustrated with the right for regional representation in the Council of Ministers introduced by the Maastricht Treaty. Symbolically an important breakthrough for regional participation in the EU, this provision has for a long time only been used by Germany, Belgium and Austria (Keating, 1998:167-169). The UK (1999) and Spain (2004) have conceded the right for ministers from regional parliaments to participate in delegations to the Council of Ministers, although in all cases the latter act as representatives of their member states, and not of their respective regions (Elias, 2005). In practice, this provision remains the privilege of the strongest regions in Europe and there is no indication that it might be applied by other member states in the near future. In this context, it seems more accurate to speak of a Europe with *some* regions than a Europe of the Regions (Nagel, 2004; Jeffery, 2000). Despite claims of hosting a variety of state, non-state and sub-state interests, the EU remains largely intergovernmental in nature.

Admittedly, the state is being transformed through the increasing penetration of supranational and sub-national influences. But there is little sign of it disappearing any time soon and minority nationalist aspirations continue to be inextricably linked to

developments within member states. While the EU can give new hopes to minority nationalists in the future, their contestation is still directed at national governments. For now, the promise of a new kind of European politics remains an abstract ideal and the EU as it stands does not constitute an alternative framework in which to accommodate minority nationalist demands. European integration can however impact on the politics of minority nationalism by providing resources for the pursuit of nationalist aspirations within member states, as we shall see in the following section.

### 2.2.2. European developments affecting minority nationalist mobilisation

While the EU does not yet provide an alternative for resolving long-term minority nationalist goals, it has offered a number of opportunities for developing new strategies to achieve these goals within member states. EU policy-making procedures however continue to underline the power of central governments and most contacts between Europe and sub-national actors go through member states. The French case will serve to show how member states can constrain the degree to which minority nationalists are able to participate in the governance of Europe.

Since the 1970s, institutional opportunities have allowed minority nationalist parties to enter the European arena. The introduction of elections to the European Parliament in 1979 provided direct access to EU institutions for the first time. European elections have been an additional electoral arena where to defend minority nationalist projects and visions of the future European polity. As this research will demonstrate, these elections have a unique significance for minority nationalist parties. In centralised states such as France, these parties essentially participate in elections as anti-system actors because of the challenge that they pose to the territorial organisation. By contrast, European elections have been an opportunity to gain visibility in a positive light and to campaign behind a programme for self-government compatible with the norms and values of the EU. Furthermore, these elections have proved to be advantageous in terms of electoral results for small parties such as minority nationalist parties. Voters generally perceive them as "second order elections" because they play no role in deciding who governs the country (Reif & Schmitt, 1980). They may be less inclined to turn out to the polls as a result, but those who do vote have tended not to vote in the same way as in general elections. People will continue to vote according to national preferences despite the European character of the election (Hix, 2002) but they are likely to give their support to opposition parties or single-issue parties, in reaction to the policies of their national governments. The "wasted vote" argument that usually applies to small parties who have no chance of forming government becomes irrelevant in European elections - all votes are wasted in the sense that they do not lead to the election of a government. Voting will be more

expressive than instrumental, so that people will feel free to "vote with the heart" (Reif, 1985) or to support issues they wish governing parties would take into account (Eijk, Franklin and Marsh, 1996).

Still, only a select group of minority nationalist parties in Europe have managed to secure MEPs in every election[23]. While not all minority nationalist parties have the electoral support necessary to win a seat in the European Parliament, the electoral rules applied by some member states have also prevented small regional parties from gaining representation. For instance, until recently, European elections were organised in France within one single constituency and with a 5 percent electoral threshold to get parliamentary representation. In 2004, a more proportional system was adopted through the division of the French territory into 8 electoral constituencies and results were quick to follow: Corsican nationalist Francois Alfonsi (UPC) won a European seat for the South East constituency in the last elections[24]. Nevertheless, even minority nationalist parties without an MEP can find a form of European representation through the European Free Alliance (EFA). The EFA was formally established in 1981 with the objective of forming a "stateless nations" party group within the European Parliament. Originally composed of 6 signatory parties, the EFA now has over 30 members, most recently boosted by new members from Central and Eastern Europe (Lynch, 2005). France is currently the member state with the largest number of minority nationalist parties within the EFA, seven in total[25]. Since its creation, the EFA has grown in stature to provide a forum for minority nationalist parties (both with and without MEPs) to structure and articulate their interests at the European level. However, the EFA remains electorally heterogeneous, which inevitably undermines its cohesion, and has not yet managed to constitute its own party group, having to co-operate with the coalition of Green parties (Lynch, 2005). Furthermore, while other European party families, due to their participation in national governments, have extra-parliamentary privileged access to the EU decision-making bodies (Council and Commission), such channels of influence are not usually available to EFA members. The EFA for instance does not hold Europarty summits before the European Council and therefore lacks an opportunity for voicing its vision on the EU and claiming visibility as a party family (De Winter & Gomez-Reino, 2002:485).

Second on the list of European developments directly affecting minority nationalist parties is the European regime of minority rights. In 1993, "respect for and protection of minorities" was integrated in the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership. Although the

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[23] These correspond to the most visible minority nationalist parties in Western Europe, such as Plaid Cymru (Wales), the SNP (Scotland), the PNV (Basque Country), CiU (Catalonia), Volksunie (Flanders), Lega Nord (Northern Italy).
[24] A coalition with the Greens had already yielded a MEP seat for Corsican nationalist Max Simeoni (UPC) from 1989 to 1994.
[25] Mouvement Région Savoie, Partit Occitan, Union Démocratique Bretonne, Union du Peuple Alsacien, Unione di u Populu Corsu, Unitat Catalana and Ligue Savoisienne.

"minority criterion" was primarily motivated by security concerns, it did establish minority protection among the political norms associated with democracy within the EU (Toggenburg, 2004). Except for the basic anti-discrimination *acquis*, there is however no provision for minority rights in European law, so that the EU has relied entirely on norms developed by the OSCE and the Council of Europe to promote minority protection in Central and Eastern Europe (Sasse, 2005). EU accession has shaped minority nationalist mobilisation in new member states but the effects of EU conditionality – its scope and limitations - are a vast area of research which goes beyond the scope of this study (see for instance Sasse, 2008). In any case, minority rights remain controversial in old member states which have jealously guarded their rights to deal with their minorities in their own way. France is the most striking example in that respect, as it denies the existence of minorities on its territory and has not ratified any international document of minority protection. Despite the discrepancies in member states' approach to minority rights, the EU has nonetheless emerged as a sphere where minorities can voice their demands and concerns. The European Parliament, in particular, has pushed the agenda of minority languages and cultural diversity by commissioning reports and passing resolutions on these issues[26]. The Arfe Resolution[27] notably led to the adoption of the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) by the Council of Europe. Yet, the unwillingness of some member states to ratify the ECRML[28], whose provisions are far from ground-breaking in terms of linguistic rights, does not fare well for the adoption of an EU minority policy in the near future. Still, these European initiatives have resonated with minority nationalist concerns for the protection of their cultural and linguistic specificities. The body of rights emerging through European integration has provided a standard of norms strengthening their demands to national governments. Even more importantly, it demonstrates for minority nationalist parties a fundamental commitment by the EU to defend the right of minority groups. Recently, an explicit reference to minorities was included for the first time in the Lisbon Treaty and the Charter of Fundamental Rights[29], further indicating a growing awareness of minority issues within the EU.

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[26] For instance, the report commissioned by the European Parliament in 1996, *Euromosaic: The Production and Reproduction of the Minority Language Groups of the EU*, the creation of the European Bureau for Lesser used Languages in 1982 and the Art.128 of the Maastricht Treaty of the European Union mentioning respect for the regional diversity of member states.
[27] Resolution on a Community Charter of Regional Languages and Cultures and on a Charter of Rights of Ethnic Minorities, adopted by the European Parliament on 16 October 1981 (A1-965/80), 16-10-81 OJC 287, p.57
[28] France and the UK delayed signing the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages, with France doing so in May 1999 and the UK in March 2000. The UK and Spain eventually ratified the Charter in March and April 2001 respectively, but France has yet to do so since its Constitutional Court declared the document to be incompatible with the French Constitution.
[29] The Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000/C 364/01) states that "Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, *membership of a national*

Finally, European integration has transformed the level of government where minority nationalists operate, i.e. the region. The influence of regional actors in the European polity should not be overestimated and there is still a long way to go before subsidiarity will be fully applied to the sub-national level. Yet, as players in a wide system of European governance, regions have been recognised as a key level of political action. Regions have become functional spaces in which actors from all levels (supranational, national, regional, local) interact (Keating, 1997:17). The EU has developed several policy measures targeted at regions, such as the EU Cohesion policy, the Common Agricultural policy and the Structural Funds. As a result, new political linkages and channels of influence have emerged between the EU, member states and regions (Hooghe & Marks, 2001). EU policies have provided new channels for regional actors to put forward their demands and new resources to overcome the economic difficulties of peripherical regions neglected by their central governments. If only in this way, the EU has altered the balance of power between the state and the regions. Beyond institutionalised top-down processes, EU policy-making has also had a reverberating effect in regions, bringing into being new social and political movements. Structural fund interventions, in particular, have stimulated political mobilisation around programmes and spending projects and have encouraged people and organisations to articulate their demands in regional terms (Cole & Loughlin, 2003). Regions have adopted an active role in European politics (interregional organisations, information offices, lobby, public-private partnerships, etc) (Jeffery, 1997:4). The EU has provided an arena where regional actors can pursue their interests alongside state actors, in a non-zero sum game (Downs, 2002:173). European integration gives regions the opportunity to get involved in supranational and cross-border agreements and regional networks of influence are being created around European institutions, exchanging information, planting ideas, and gradually developing policy and increasing their technical capacity (Balme, 1995:183).

That being said, it can be extremely difficult for regional interests in some member states to articulate their demands at the European level and the most effective avenue for influencing European politics continues to be via domestic state channels (Hooghe & Marks, 1996; Bache, 1999). Only some sub-state actors participate in the implementation of the European regional policy and member states have maintained a firm grip on the management of European funds (Jones & Keating, 1995). Here again, France provides a telling example. French regions have been excluded from most parts of the European policy-making process and structural funds are dealt with at the national level (Balme, 1995:182). The government has also imposed its territorial administrations, the prefectures, as essential actors in the implementation of European policies. The

_minority_, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited" [italics are the author's] (Article 21).

development of the European regional policy has in fact triggered a territorial redeployment of the French state, which has adopted the role of intermediary between Europe and the local level (Nay, 2002). More detail will be provided on this in the next chapter, but the French case is revealing of a trend within member states. The weakening of the state in relation to the EU has prompted the internal strengthening of the capacity of state actors to pursue their goals in the face of opposition from regional actors (Evans, 2002). Still, regardless of the limitations imposed by member states, regions have irrevocably become an integrated part of the system of European governance, and this has contributed to raising the relevance and salience of regional politics, i.e. the political level where minority nationalists operate.

## 2.3. Conclusion

This second chapter has defined the key term and scope of this research, namely the concept of minority nationalist parties. Several terminologies have been used to refer to these actors and these definitional considerations were a necessary starting point to ensure a constructive engagement with the literature. The position taken in this study is that minority nationalists constitute a distinct party family identifiable by the demand for self-government but also an internal logic which differs from that of traditional political parties. The unique dynamics driving the mobilisation of minority nationalist parties is an important point to bear in mind when assessing their significance in multi-level democratic arenas. The second part of the chapter has examined the new context that the EU provides for minority nationalist mobilisation. European integration has opened up new perspectives for the self-determination of minority nations, by offering the vision of a future European polity where states would be replaced by supranational and sub-national actors. Empirically, however, it is clear that states are not disappearing just yet, although they are being transformed through economic and political integration. Direct elections to the European Parliament, the European regime of minority rights, the Europeanisation of regional politics – these are EU developments that minority nationalists can exploit to advance their demands. But the national framework within which a mobilisation is conducted will constrain minority nationalists' participation in European politics and determine the degree to which they can take advantage of European integration. The next chapter will provide an overview of the ideological, political and institutional constraints and opportunity structures that France offers for minority nationalist mobilisation.

# Chapter 3 - France as a context for minority nationalist mobilisation

Minority nationalist parties mobilise support within a framework of national political opportunity structures, which not only conditions their demands and strategies, but also shapes their response to European integration. This chapter provides an overview of the ideological, political and institutional context that the French state offers for minority nationalist mobilisation. France can be seen as a "hard case" to assess the significance of European integration for minority nationalist contestation in member states. In many respects, it embodies the tensions existing between minority nationalism and the concept of the nation-state. Jacobinism is still a pervasive component of French politics that is perceptively hostile to the minority nationalist predicament. Most EU member states have adopted measures to accommodate their internal diversity, but the French government has remained reluctant to make concessions towards its regional minorities. The latter remain deprived of legal recognition and of the collective means to preserve their distinct cultures and languages. This aversion for regional identities is also reflected in the French politico-administrative system and the successive decentralisation reforms have done little to empower sub-national actors[30]. Corsica stands as a noticeable exception among French regions, but the institutional status granted to the island amounts to little more than administrative devolution. All in all, talking of a regional level of *government* still feels like an overstatement. The French government has also been keen to monitor the involvement of sub-national authorities in the European policy-making process and has retained control of the management of structural funds. The growing importance of the EU regional policy has entailed a reinforcement of state administrative structures at the regional level, so that regional authorities have no autonomy with regards to EU matters. It is in this context of centre-periphery relations, which offers few opportunity structures to escape the interference of the French state, that Basque, Breton and Corsican nationalists pursue their claims for self-government.

## 3.1. Jacobinism and French nation

To fully understand the French official positions today, it is necessary to appreciate how deeply they are rooted in the Republican movements of the past. France is where the Jacobin theory of assimilation originated and has had its fullest expression, and the resulting conception of the French nation, one and indivisible, still proves difficult to reconcile with the accommodation of cultural diversity.

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[30] Please note that the term "sub-national" will subsequently be used to refer to all levels of government below the state (municipal, departmental, regional).

*3.1.1. The legacy of the French Revolution*

During the French Revolution, France was conceived as a "nation-state", whose national and political identities were congruent (Gellner, 1983:1). This congruence became the basis for the Jacobin ideology. From then on, "Frenchness" derived from a voluntary commitment to common political values and a common fate (Safran, 1991:220). In the words of Ernest Renan (1947:903-904), "a nation is a sentiment, a spiritual principle [...] which is based on two things. One is in the present, one is in the past; one is the common possession of a rich inheritance of memories, and the other, a common consent, a desire to live together, and the will to help the heritage that each individual has received prevail"[31]. The French nation was not a matter of heredity but of political and cultural identities, rights and duties. Furthermore, in contrast to Germany or Italy for instance, it was believed that the French state preceded the existence of the nation and (re)created it.

While there was an historical and cultural heritage common to all French people, the organic basis of French nationhood was presented as less important than its political basis. The emphasis was placed on the individual will of the citizen. The existence of the French nation was a "daily plebiscite" (Renan, 1947), a continually expressed desire to live together. One became French through the embracement of civic values, through the wish to participate in an economic and political life and through the practice of a shared language. Such a conception had no place for either culture or ethnicity as defining characteristics for membership of the political community and meant that minority nations and regional identities were deprived of political legitimacy. These identities were presented as a relic of the past, the result of an incomplete evolution. Jacobins argued that it was normatively desirable for regional minorities to be integrated into the nation-state, thereby justifying the use of coercive policies to achieve linguistic and cultural homogeneity and create a single French nation.

The French state transcended the ethnic and linguistic divisions among the population of France. The nation, thus redefined, became composed of undifferentiated individuals, not of communities (De Herte, 1988). The assumption was that one entered the French political community simply as an individual, deprived of any group affiliation (Jennings, 2000:577). This translated into three founding principles, which have been integrated into the French Constitution: the indivisibility of the French Republic, equality of all French citizens before the law and the unity of the French people. It is still a matter of debate whether this conception of nationhood was a genuine ideal type around which the French nation was fashioned, or a constructed myth to overcome the regional and social divisions within France. Today the French nation continues to be defined in the abstract

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[31] Translation by Safran (1991).

terms of the Jacobins of the Revolution - despite the emphasis on the French language that introduces an ethno-linguistic element into the civic notion of being a French citizen - and this legacy still influences the government's position on cultural and regional diversity. In a way, this legacy has been explicitly acknowledged in the preamble of the 1958 Constitution: "The French people officially declares its attachment to the Human Rights and to the principles of national sovereignty as they were defined by the Declaration of 1789"[32].

### 3.1.2. Refusal of minority and group rights

In accordance with the Jacobin tradition, the French government has not allowed any departure from the principle of the indivisibility of the nation, rejecting all group distinctions. Recognising the existence of minorities or granting collective rights is perceived as a contradiction in terms because French democracy rests on an individualism that is a direct connection between the citizen and the state (Safran, 1991:226). Instead, the French government puts the emphasis on the neutrality of its national institutions and on granting the same rights for all citizens. Within this conception, cultural and regional specificities are not proscribed, but confined to the private sphere and thus in theory depoliticised.

Internationally, the question of minority rights has been avoided by the denial of the existence of minorities within France. This was made explicit in the French reservations to Art. 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR): "Article 2 (of the French Constitution) declares that France shall be a Republic, indivisible, secular, democratic and social. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction [...] of origin, race, or religion. It shall respect all beliefs. Since the basic principles of public law prohibit distinction between citizens on grounds of origin, race or religion, France is a country in which there are no minorities". This convenient position has enabled French authorities to embrace minority protection at the international level, notably in France's external relations, while making the adoption of minority rights unnecessary at the national level. Consequently, France has not ratified any of the international documents of minority protection, including the key European standard setting documents in this area, namely the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Domestically, the government has been reluctant to develop a more pluralistic approach to the French national community. It has generally been argued that it would weaken the state and lead to separatism on the part of regional minorities. This follows the traditional Jacobin view that cultural differences could translate into political differences

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[32] "Constitution du 4 Octobre 1958", Conseil Constitutionnel.

and lead to the dismantlement of France as a single cohesive political unit. States often fear that granting minorities the right to regional autonomy and self government might lead to claims for secession and could jeopardize their territorial integrity. Consequently, minority matters have traditionally been kept within the realm of domestic politics and states adopt the political arrangements they deemed necessary for the preservation of their cultural diversity. Indeed, it has been argued that state sovereignty often takes precedence over minority rights and limits the international law response to minority demands (Jackson-Preece, 1997; Malloy, 2005). Independently of its justification, France's almost visceral fear of minorities does not bode well for minority nationalist parties.

### 3.1.3. Limited accommodation of regional diversity

Perhaps paradoxically, regional diversity has been officially acknowledged in France. Regional cultures and languages are conceived not as features belonging to a specific region or minority group, but as part of the French cultural heritage. Several measures have been adopted to ensure the protection of this heritage, in particular regional languages which are a regular feature on the government's agenda. In 1951, the Deixonne law defined them as those "languages other than French that are part of the Republic's culture", and provided for the teaching of the Basque, Breton, Catalan and Occitan languages in schools[33]. Although implementing regulations were not issued until 1970, it was followed by several laws adding Corsican to the list of recognised regional languages[34] and introducing their teaching in selected primary schools[35]. Today, regional language classes have been incorporated in schools curriculum, albeit on an optional basis[36]. An Academic Council for Regional Languages was created in 2001, whose task is to manage the content and teaching of classes in regional languages[37], and a list of "living languages" has been released, including both foreign languages and regional languages which can be the subject of an optional exam at the Baccalauréat[38]. In addition, the

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[33] Law No 51-46 of 11 January 1951
[34] Decree No 74-33 of 16 January 1974
[35] Law Haby No 75-620 of 11 July 1975, Law Bas-Lauriol No 75-1349 of 31 December 1975 and Law Toubon No 96-597of 4 August 1994.
[36] Circular No. 95-086 of 7 April 1995 provides for the teaching of all regional languages in state schools, although it is not mandatory and systematic, stating that "bilingual teaching will be organised as long as parents make a demand for it and this demand has been officially acknowledged".
[37] Decree No 2001-733 of 30 July 2001 relative to the creation of an Academic Council of Regional Languages
[38] Arrest of 13 January 2004. The regional languages mentioned are: Basque, Breton, Catalan, Corsican and Occitan.

government funds a number of cultural institutes for the promotion of regional cultures[39] and supports a variety of cultural activities, such as the printing of Provencal poetry, the production of Breton theatre or the staging of an annual Celtic festival. These initiatives have however been criticised by minority nationalists as an attempt to turn their cultures into folklore, reducing them to "folkdances and folk costumes" (Safran, 1991:234). Furthermore, the public financing of cultural organisations requires them to remain strictly apolitical, thereby maintaining a distance between these cultural movements and their political expressions (Pasquier, 2006:94).

In the eyes of many, though, such accommodation of regional diversity has already gone too far and threatens the dominant position of the national culture and, above all, of the French language. These perceived challenges to the French language were such that a constitutional amendment was deemed necessary in 1992, stating that "the language of the Republic is French". The intense debate that emerged following the signature of the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) – and the subsequent failure to ratify the Charter – also demonstrated that France is still very much committed to the Jacobin ideal of cultural and linguistic homogeneity. On the occasion of the 1997 Council of Europe summit, Lionel Jospin, then Prime Minister, made a speech on the importance of safeguarding the cultural diversity of Europe, linking tolerance and recognition of diversity at the supranational level to a "right to difference'" at the national. As a first step towards concrete action, he ordered the preparation of a report on regional and minority languages in France. The resulting Poignant report, which was delivered in July 1998, highlighted the need for better support and the promotion of the regional languages of France and advised the government to sign the ECRML[40]. The government accepted his advice and started the mechanisms to do so, by establishing a list of all the regional and minority languages spoken on the French territory[41]. The resulting document suggested that the government recognise 75 regional and minority languages, of which 55 were spoken in the DOM-TOM and 20 in mainland France[42]. On 7 May 1999, Pierre Muscovici, then Minister for European Affairs, signed the Charter on behalf of the French government in Budapest.

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[39] For instance, the Basque Cultural Institute, the Academy of Basque Language, the Cultural Council of Bretagne, the Breton Cultural Institute and the Assembly of Corsica, which is in charge of most cultural matters.

[40] Bernard Poignant, "Langues et Cultures Regionales", Rapport a Monsieur Lionel Jospin, Premier Ministre, 1st July 1998.

[41] Bernard Cerquiglini, "Les Langues de la France", Rapport au Ministre de l'Education Nationale, de la Recherche et de la Technologie et a la Ministre de la Culture et de la Communication, Avril 1999.

[42] This list deviated significantly from the provisions spelt out in the Council of Europe document which made it clear that the Charter was concerned with languages of autochthonous minorities only. In his report, Cerquiglini argued that it would be against French practice to recognise only the "historic" languages, and since France subscribed to *jus soli,* from the second generation, immigrants were French citizens and thus their languages became languages of France in the same way as any other citizen speaking a language other than French.

France agreed to 39 of the 94 articles in the Charter, barely above the absolute minimum (35) required, only accepting a mild version of the document. Education in a minority and/or regional language was made dependent on whether enough pupils/students sign up for the classes and it would not be mandatory in any case. In the section concerned with legal documents, the French government went no further than a general agreement to make the most important national texts available in the various languages when they could not be accessed through other means. Sub-national authorities in the areas where the regional and minority languages were spoken could publish official documents in the various languages of their constituents. Names of roads, towns and villages could be posted in languages other than French, as long as the signs were always in French as well. The government was to encourage television and radio programmes in the various languages and take the interests of regional and minority language speakers into account when setting funding for public broadcasting. It would generally encourage cultural and literary production in the languages, make sure that regional and minority language speakers were not prevented from using their languages in economic and social situations if they wanted, and make safety and consumer regulations available in these languages. Hence, there was not a great deal in these provisions that either committed the government to any significant concrete actions or which differed notably from practices already in place (Wright, 2000:417).

Although President Chirac had publicly supported the signing of the ECRML during a speech in 1996, he then turned to the Constitutional Court to assess the compatibility of the Charter with the French Constitution. It is difficult to know exactly what happened in the weeks following the 7 May, but it was suggested that Chirac changed his mind feeling that the adoption of the Charter could be electorally damaging[43]. The Constitutional Court was always going to be wary of a document requiring an amendment of the Constitution. On 15 June 1999, members of the Court rejected the ratification on the basis that "the Charter [...] contains provisions which are contrary to the Constitution"[44]. Constitutional Court judges stated unequivocally that the adoption of the Charter would force the government to deal with the rights of groups, something which they felt the French Constitution, with its insistence on the contract between the individual and the State, could not accommodate. Despite Jospin's persistence, Chirac refused to allow the necessary amendments. Since then, any attempt to bring the ECRML back on the government's agenda has been firmly opposed. In 2005, 3 Breton MPs and MP Francois Bayrou (UDF) proposed a constitutional amendment in view of ratifying the Charter. On 26 January 2005, the proposal was rejected by a large majority of MPs during an animated parliamentary session, illustrating the suspicious attitude of French officials towards

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[43] Jean-Yves Boulic, "Raidissement", Ouest France, 24 June 1999.
[44] "La Charte européenne des langues régionales ou minoritaires comporte des clauses contraires à la Constitution", Conseil Constitutionnel, Decision No 99-412 DC du 15 Juin 1999.

regional cultures. For instance, an MP declared: "Those who like their regional language can practice it, those who love France can preserve it"[45]. This statement, applauded in Parliament, illustrates how measures for the protection of regional and cultural diversity continue to be perceived as a sign of disloyalty to the French Republic.

Jacobin traditions continue to shape the government's positions towards the accommodation of cultural and regional diversity. The continued influence of Jacobinism means that minority nationalist parties are marginalised in French politics and demands for self-government stigmatised as a threat to national unity.

## 3.2. The French unitary state

The concept of the nation-state has also had implications for the nature of the French politico-administrative system. France was conceived as the unitary state *par excellence*, with limited or marginal institutions between the citizen and the state. Decentralisation reforms did however occur in the 1980s, not as a response to regionalist pressures, but as a step made necessary for economic and administrative reasons. While these reforms constituted a break from the past, they have remained modest in the actual empowerment of regional actors in the face of the state.

### 3.2.1. The decentralisation reforms

The law of 2 March 1982, concerning the rights and liberties of municipalities, departments and regions, is often seen as the starting point of the decentralisation of the entire French politico-administrative system[46]. The following reforms were justified by two main arguments, they were intended to serve as (1) an instrument for the management of the economy and (2) a form of modernisation of the French state. Growing economic disparities between the regions and the impact of the 1970s international recession had convinced the government of the need to develop regional economic development strategies, based on regionalised economic planning (Loughlin & Mazey, 1995:2). Decentralisation was also an attempt to decompress state functions through the transfer of executive responsibilities to local levels of government. In any case, the reforms were not intended as a response to regionalist pressures. The new laws did not bring any geographic modifications to the 26 administrative regions, despite the numerous demands

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[45] "Tous ceux qui aiment leur langue régionale peuvent la pratiquer, tous ceux qui aiment la France peuvent la conserver", M. Le Rapporteur, Parliamentary Debate, 26 January 2005.
[46] Law Defferre No. 82-213 of 2 March 1982

made by minority nationalists for a redrawing of regional boundaries in accordance with historical regions (Douence, 1995:11)[47].

The reforms undertaken in 1982 and 1984 did however create a regional level in the French political system[48]. Functional regions had already been set up in the 1970s, but the decentralisation reforms established the administrative region as *collectivité territoriale*, i.e. an entity with the same legal status as the municipalities and the departments. Regions were therefore granted directly elected assemblies and the first regional elections took place in 1986 through a system of proportional representation. This was a novelty as all other political elections (municipal, departmental and parliamentary) were and still are held under a two round majoritarian system. In addition, the decentralisation laws transformed the relations between the prefect, or representative of the government, and sub-national authorities. In this regard, two main changes were introduced: the suppression of the prefect's administrative control over sub-national authorities, and the transfer of executive powers from the prefect to the presidents of the regional and departmental councils. In other words, the *a priori* tutelage of the prefects was replaced by simple *a posteriori* supervision. Hence, while state administrations were maintained, they no longer exerted a direct control over regional, departmental and municipal elected councils.

The decentralisation laws transferred a number of responsibilities from the central government to sub-national authorities, which were also given the corresponding financial resources. Mainly, the management of land and local facilities was attributed to municipalities, while departments were in charge of the distribution of social aid and road infrastructure. Regions also received their share, with the transfer of competences in the fields of economic planning and the environment[49]. The general logic behind this repartition of competences was that matters of immediate proximity were the preserve of municipalities, matters of intermediate proximity were the policy field of the departments while matters deemed strategic were given to the regions (Cole, 2006:35). However, it was made clear that the task of the regions should not impede on the prerogatives of the departments and municipalities over which they had no legal control. Indeed, while the reforms established regions as full fledged sub-national authorities, they did not introduce a hierarchical structure of territorial organisation. Rather, the emphasis was placed on the

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[47] While they were not meant as a response to minority nationalist demands, the decentralisation reforms have nevertheless contributed to a revival of minority nationalism by strengthening sub-national consciousness. With the creation of sub-national levels of self-government, the reforms have opened up the political opportunity structures available for minority nationalist mobilisation in France.

[48] Law No. 83-8 of 7 January 1983, Law No. 83-663 of 22 July 1983 and Law No. 84-130 of 24 February 1984

[49] Law No. 82-623 of 22 July 22 1982, Law No. 82-1153 of 30 December 1982 and Law No. 95-115 of 4 February 1995 attributed the following spheres of competences to the regions: town and country planning, economic development, tourism planning, housing, fishing, train and air transportation, education (the *lycées*) as well as vocational training and apprenticeship training.

fragmentation of sub-national governance and horizontal cooperation between the three sub-national authorities. This has remained one of the key features of French decentralisation: municipal, departmental and regional authorities are equal partners and can all refer directly to the central government.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the decentralisation reforms established a new system of intergovernmental relations between the state and sub-national authorities, in the form of planning contracts. A new process of bargaining and negotiation was introduced, producing new types of relationships between the central and the sub-national. Indeed, since 1982, regions have been given a role in the formulation and implementation of the national economic plan. The formulation of regional plans has two distinct phases, looking first downwards and then upwards. In the first stage, the government takes the initiative. Through the work of the national planning agency, it communicates its objectives for the forthcoming period. Regional prefects are then instructed to prepare provisional documents in cooperation with regional elected assemblies in charge of gathering all sub-national preferences. Local consultation practices, however, are left up to the regional authorities. For instance, the regional economic and social councils (representing the major socio-economic interests) can be directly involved in the formulation of the regional plan or reduced to a formal consultation at the end. The law also demands that regional assemblies consult departmental assemblies and the mayors of the most important municipalities, but leaves the means at their discretion. Hence, although the preparation of planning contracts is left to the regional prefects, during the initial consultation phase, regional assemblies have been given the formal role of spokesperson for the municipal and departmental levels (Douence, 1995:14).

The provisional documents thus produced are then negotiated upwards between the regions and the state, to be inscribed in the priorities of the national plan and finally entrenched in planning contracts between the two parties. Regional assemblies then sign with the state a *Contrat de projet Etat-région* which defines a programme of economic development over a number of years. For many, however, contractual planning looks more like a means to mobilise the regions behind state policies than a mechanism to provide state support for regional policies (Balme & Bonnet, 1995; Le Gales, 1995). The University 2000 programme during the 1990s was a particular case in point, as sub-national authorities across France have provided financial support for the construction of new universities, which are in theory educational property belonging to the state. This has been reflected again in the negotiations of regional plans for the period 2007-2013, when several presidents of regions have accused the government of trying to discharge its responsibilities on regional councils (Libération, 11 August 2006). Thus, while a process of negotiation takes place between the government and the regions, the state has been able to maintain its leadership in contractual planning.

### 3.2.2. The limited political assertiveness of regions

Since 1982, French regions have become more powerful politically and economically. The introduction of directly elected regional assemblies and the regionalisation of the national economic plan have provided new opportunities for regions to assert themselves politically and promote regional economic development strategies. However, hopes that the region would become the most influential sub-national tier of government in France have yet to materialise (Loughlin & Mazey, 1995). Indeed, the political status and policy-making importance of regional authorities is still dependent on that enjoyed by the municipalities and the departments. Equally, the administrative influence of the French state over sub-national governance remains considerable.

First, the organisation of elections on a departmental rather than regional basis has been a major drawback to the political assertiveness of regions. Under the law of 10 July 1985, regional representatives have been elected through proportional representation, with departments as the electoral constituencies[50]. It has been said that the hidden motive for this fragmentation of the electoral process was to prevent public opinion from developing a regional awareness (Douence, 1995:16). Regional councillors were elected from the lists that received more than 5% of the votes in their department and a fixed number of seats was awarded to each department within the regional council. This system posed problems for the election of coherent majorities in regional councils. In 2004, the electoral rules changed and for the first time, regions became the constituency for the election of regional councils[51]. However, while the number of votes is now calculated at the regional level, seats within regional councils continue to be divided among departments. In addition, the increase of the electoral threshold for representation, from 5 to 10%, has had a decimating effect on regional parties (the chances of minority nationalist parties gaining regional representation have been dramatically reduced) and has reinforced the predominance of the main right and left political parties in regional elections.

Secondly, as mentioned above, decentralisation in France has not taken the form of a hierarchical organisation between the different levels of government. In contrast to the initial distribution of responsibilities, regions, departments and municipalities have not hesitated to intervene and compete with one another in all fields: economic development, regional development, agriculture, tourism, culture, transport, etc.[52] (Thoenig, 2005:690). Another, potentially contradictory, principle of the 1982 reforms was that of the "free administration of local authorities", meaning that all sub-national authorities should be free

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[50] Law No. 85-692 of 10 July 1985
[51] Law No. 2003-327 of 11 April 2003
[52] One exception is professional training policy which has remained under the control of regions.

to develop policies in areas they deemed to be important for their constituents (Cole, 2006:35). Consequently, a situation of competition has emerged among the different levels of sub-national government over the control of public policy areas. In this competitive set up, regions are clearly constrained by the influence of the long established departments, bases of local political notables for more than two centuries (Balme, 1995:168). As pointed out by Crozier and Thoenig (1975), centre-periphery relations in France have traditionally been centred around the interactions between political notables (parliamentarians, mayors and departmental councillors) and state officials (either prefects or officials from the ministerial field services), leaving no space for third parties such as economic interests, cultural associations or political movements. The creation of regions – artificial administrative units for the most part – has come as an infringement of this exclusive dual relationship. A rivalry has emerged between the "traditional" department and the "new" region to become the main sub-national political actor. Hence, although regional authorities have formally been attributed the role of spokesperson for all sub-national authorities in the planning process, in practice, departments are often reluctant to allow the regions to take the lead in operations, preferring to deal directly with the regional prefects (Nay, 2002:257).

The territorial fragmentation of sub-national governance in France has resulted in an increase of state authority in sub-national policy-making. While the 1982 laws transferred executive power from the prefects to the elected chairpersons of the regional and departmental assemblies, this "abolition" of the prefect was short-lived. In February 1992, territorial administrative reforms were introduced to strengthen the coordinating powers of the prefectures, i.e. state administrations present at every sub-national levels[53]. It seems that the absence of a hierarchical structure in territorial organisation justified a return of the state. As Nay explains, "the blurring of the areas of competence and, more generally, the dispersion of power have given new significance to the question of coordination of the actors involved in conducting local policy, and, going even further, that of responsibility in a situation where political authority is now shared" (Nay, 2002:249). The dispersion of decision-making centres and the *de facto* competition between sub-national authorities have reinforced the need for cooperation, providing prefects with a new legitimacy to act as coordinator and arbitrator on behalf of the French state. In addition, state agencies and field ministries have come to further complicate an already intricate policy-making process. In contrast with most EU member states, national ministries in France operate at the grassroots level instead of delegating to sub-national authorities. Their local units are also involved in the daily conduct of sub-national policies, as well as state administrations and sub-national assemblies. All in all, state employees located sub-

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[53] Law No. 92-125 of 6 February 1992 and Law No. 92-604 of 1st July 1992

nationally outnumber sub-national authority employees by 40 per cent (Thoenig, 2005:698).

Constrained from below by the departments and from above by the state apparatus, regions remain weakly consolidated as institutions, leaving their political influence limited. One indication is the pattern of *accumulation des mandats* following the 1985 law which has (modestly) restricted the number of electoral mandates one individual can hold[54]. It says something about French decentralisation that the mayoral office, rather than the presidency of a regional or a departmental council, continues to be the most coveted among politicians with a local political base (Cole, 2006:41). When a choice had to be made, the vast majority of politicians have chosen to give up the regional mandate. It is primarily the heavy weight politicians who have abandoned the regions, giving way to more junior figures, less well established in the public mind and with less influence on central government (Keating, 1995:13). Another indication of the weakness of regions is that campaigns for regional elections tend to be dominated by national rather than regional issues and often act as practice ground for the next national elections (Balme, 1995:170-173). Initiated by a left-wing government, regionalisation was slowed down by the rise of right-wing parties in local and regional elections. As a result, a right/left divide has been added to the expected rivalry between the state and the regions, and this obviously tempered the enthusiasm of the central government for further decentralisation. It has now become a recurrent fact that regional elections are won by parties of the opposition, as it was again the case in 2004 when almost all 26 regions were won by Left candidates, with the exception of Corsica and Alsace. This further complicates the negotiating process of regional planning and makes unlikely any extension of the competences accorded to the regions.

### 3.2.3. The 2003-2004 reforms

After the victory of the Right in the 2002 presidential and parliamentary elections, Prime Minister Raffarin – previously President of the Poitou-Charentes region - committed himself to a new wave of decentralisation. The main feature of the following 2003 Constitutional Reform[55] and 2004 Decentralisation Act[56] was the new reality of asymmetrical variation in sub-national governance (Cole, 2006). This was a significant departure from the principles of unity of the French people and of absolute equality of all French citizens from "Lille to Cayenne". The reforms introduced two new ways in which outcomes can vary across the French territory: the creation of special statute authorities and "experimentation". Four levels of sub-national authority are now recognised by the

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[54] Law No. 85-1405 of 30 December 1985
[55] Constitutional Law no. 2003-276 of 28 March 2003
[56] Law of 13 August 2004 relative to local freedoms and responsibilities

French Constitution: the municipality, the department, the region (new) and those with a special statute (new). The special statute clause covers the various types of inter-municipal bodies, but also refers to the merging of existing sub-national authorities into larger units, potentially a radical break with the past. Two separate mechanisms for institutional adjustment are now envisaged in the Constitution: an agreement between the elected representatives of two or more sub-national authorities and popular assent through local referendums. These provisions might one day produce varying institutional outcomes across France, on the condition that they are approved by the French Parliament. In addition, the Raffarin reforms have also introduced the possibility for the "experimental transfer of functions", so that any sub-national authority can now bid to exercise responsibilities in areas such as training, roads or airports that were previously in the policy domain of the central state or other sub-national authorities. Strictly speaking, the procedure of experimental transfer of competences is not entirely new, it is just a general regulation of the *de facto* intervention of sub-national authorities in most policy fields. The new laws nevertheless comprised the transfer of EUR 10 billion of spending and 150,000 central state civil servants to the sub-national authorities, which have therefore been given the means to perform these new functions. The right to experimentation has been perceived by many as a retrenchment of the central state in territorial affairs to the advantage of sub-national authorities which have seen their autonomy increase as a result (Thoenig, 2005).

Needless to say, the formulation and adoption of these reforms have generated heated debates within the French Parliament. This new wave of decentralisation - whose implementation has occurred for the most part after the time period of this study - is indicative of a trend within centre-periphery relations in France. The principles of proximity and subsidiarity were invoked at the time of the reforms, but it seems that these changes were brought about by the need to simplify and clarify the French politico-administrative system. The fragmentation of sub-national governance was initially meant by the 1982 decentralisation as a way of limiting the leverage of sub-national authorities against the central state. Twenty years later, ever-growing competition between sub-national authorities has had the opposite effect, by limiting the control exerted by the French state over sub-national policies. A complex web of interdependency has arisen since the 1980s, where thousands of sub-national bodies – municipal, departmental and regional assemblies, but also prefectures, state agencies and field ministries - are involved in most policy fields. In this informal configuration, none of the parties plays a leading role and none can act in a fully autonomous way. The absence of a hierarchical structure has turned coordination into a near impossible task, even for the omnipresent state administration. Raffarin's initial solution to this problem was to increase the influence of regions through the establishment of a relationship of subordination between the

departmental and regional levels (Thoenig, 2005:705). He has however met strong resistance from the *grands élus*, who have turned out to be the great winners of French decentralisation. As mentioned above, French law allows the same person to hold several electoral mandates at the municipal, departmental, regional, national and even European levels. While there are some restrictions to the *accumulation des mandates*, the practice is widely used in French politics, so that the vast majority of members of the French Parliament will also be mayors of large cities or presidents of sub-national assemblies, if not both. In practice, it is these *grands élus* – and not the state administration - who provide integration capacity between the different sub-national levels and across policy fields. The efforts of the French state to fragment sub-national governance and to maintain its influence at every level of government have ended up playing to its disadvantage. State units at the sub-national level are so numerous and uncoordinated that the leadership role of mayors and presidents of sub-national authorities has been significantly enhanced. In effect, sub-national politics are now under the rather conservative, as well as tight, control of an exclusive group of national politicians holding several sub-national mandates.

Decentralisation in France has consisted of little more than functions of the government being assigned to sub-national entities and managed by elected members, to whom the state provides resources. The most recent reforms point towards a retreat of the state, in that it is now just one player among the many involved in local policy-making. Centre-periphery relations in France have however remained seldom conducive to the empowerment of sub-national actors, with the notable exception of the *grands élus*.

### 3.2.4. EU regional policy

For all its shortcomings, decentralisation in France has provided a framework for the incorporation of French sub-national interests into the EU policy-making process. The procedures established by the European Commission for the allocation of the structural funds require member states to submit development plans corresponding to each of the EU funding priorities. Although there was no official connection between the decentralisation reforms and the EU regional policy, the newly regionalised planning mechanisms meant that France was equipped to respond to this request. Formally responsible for the preparation of regional plans and signatories to planning contracts, negotiated with the state, sub-national authorities have been drawn into the EU regional policy process.

The French government has been keen to monitor the involvement of sub-national actors in European regional policy. The French state has indeed reorganised itself, and has adopted the role of intermediary between Europe and the sub-national level. First, in

contrast to the German Länder or Belgian regional governments, French regions play no formal role at the national level in the formulation of EU policy. French positions on EU policy are the result of inter-ministerial negotiations between concerned ministries, such as Industry, Employment, Agriculture and the Ministry of the Interior. Overall responsibility for the coordination of EU policy lies with the *Secrétariat Général du Comité Inter-ministériel* (SGCI) for Foreign Affairs, headed by the Prime Minister. Even with regard to the preparation of regional development plans, the role of regional authorities is purely consultative. The regions are indeed excluded from the process of preparatory negotiations, which define the objects of intervention, the zones of eligibility and the interregional distribution of structural funds (Balme, 1995:182). They are brought in later, in the preparation of the Community Support Frameworks, when regional plans have to be presented within the guidelines established by the Commission. In addition, the government has imposed its territorial administrations, the prefectures, as pivotal actors in the implementation of European policy. The law of 6 February 1992 on the Territorial Administration of the Republic explicitly granted the prefects responsibility for the elaboration and execution of regional programmes implementing European policy[57]. The prefects thus became the principal coordinators of the negotiation between the different partners at the sub-national level, as well as between the latter and the French government. They were also publicly recognised as being the official interlocutors of the European Commission. The Council of Ministers confirmed this orientation by giving member states the choice of appointing the authorities responsible for the preparation and implementation of European programmes[58]. In France, this role was given to regional prefects instead of regionally elected officials[59].

The regional prefectures therefore organise the partnership between the various sub-national actors who participate in European policy. More specifically, they fulfil a function of coordination between different partners on the identification, planning, monitoring and assessment of projects funded by the EU. With the exception of the European Social Fund[60], most of the structural fund policies affect fields under the competence of *all* the French sub-national authorities, and this poses serious difficulties for the partnership procedures. All in all, this situation has largely benefited the state administrations, due to their presence at all sub-national levels. Indeed, the dynamics of negotiations over the implementation of European policy has brought about a strong mobilisation of municipalities and departments, as well as regions. Reluctant to cooperate

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[57] Law No. 92-125 of 6 February 1992 (consolidated on 15 April 2006) and Decree No. 92-604 of 1st July 1992
[58] Community Regulation No 2081/93 of 20 July 1993 on the Reform of Structural Funds
[59] Circular of 17 February 1994
[60] The ESF is one of the three main pillars of the structural fund policy. It is destined to support action of the member states and local authorities in the field of professional training and access to employment. This field of intervention has a specific character in France, as regions have been given the exclusive responsibility for managing this sector since 1982.

with regional assemblies, municipal and departmental actors prefer the confidentiality of a direct relationship with the regional prefect rather than a regionalised negotiation that they cannot control (Smith, 1997). In addition, the departmental assemblies have a firm grip on all the political, economic and associative organisations concerned with European funding. The political influence that they exercise locally makes them necessary partners for the regional prefects, who do not hesitate to satisfy their financial demands, despite the fact that these clearly do not have a regional character (Nay, 2002:257).

While the French government has generally supported the regions in their quest for EU funding, it has also stressed the functional *raison d'être* of the regions, i.e. in terms of national economic development and planning, and insisted upon the constitutional supremacy of the state with regard to EU decision-making and external affairs (Loughlin & Mazey, 1995:133). Still, regional autonomy with regards to EU matters might increase as a result of the 2004 Decentralisation laws. The reforms have established that French regions can now bid to exercise complete control over the management of structural funds on an experimental basis. Alsace was the first (and only) French region being granted to manage the European Fund for Regional Development for the period 2007-2013. Sub-national authorities have also been given the possibility to request control over the implementation of INTERREG initiatives. These are modest but significant changes in a domestic context where interactions with Brussels are for the most part state-centric.

## 3.3. Corsica

### 3.3.1. An exception in the French Republic

Corsica stands as an exception within the French conceptions of cultural homogeneity and national unity. Mainly due to its insularity, Corsica is regarded as sufficiently different from other French regions to warrant special treatment by the French government. Unlike ordinary regions, the law of the 2 March 1982 has granted Corsica its own regional institutions, i.e. a *Statut Particulier* or Special Status and an elected Corsican Assembly[61]. This was the first in a series of reforms meant to give Corsica a greater amount of autonomy in line with its cultural and geographical specificity. Although it was never officially acknowledged, the institutional concessions granted to Corsica were partly a response to several episodes of political violence since the 1970s[62]. The Corsican Assembly was therefore given extended competences in those fields relevant to the specific needs of the island: culture, transport, energy, planning and education (Lauwers, 2003:54). The first Corsican elections were held on 8th August 1982, through a system of

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[61] Law No. 82-214 of 2 March 1982 relative to the Particular Status of Corsica.
[62] The most famous of these episodes was the so called "Events of Aleria", when a group of Corsican nationalists occupied a wine cellar in Aleria on 21-22 August 1975. The incident ended with the death of two gendarmes and serious rioting in Bastia.

proportional representation[63]. While some Corsican nationalists decided to continue the armed struggle, a significant number of them chose to take this opportunity to gain political representation. The latter participated in the elections and received just under 13 percent of the votes. The newly formed Corsican Assembly was given consultative power and could solicit the Prime Minister or be consulted by the government on all matters concerning Corsica. In this way, it had the right to remind the government of Corsica's special character when legislation was being prepared. Nevertheless, this provision did not amount to legislative power, as the Prime Minister was under no obligation to follow the Assembly's advice (Hintjens, Loughlin & Olivesi, 1995:124). In practice, while the government proved willing to accept Corsican recommendations on non-controversial issues (e.g. the protection of Corsican mountains and the development of the coast)[64], it remained indifferent when the matter was political or emanating from Corsican nationalists (e.g. teaching of the Corsican language and creation of a special fiscal status)[65]. The same was true at the fiscal level: the Assembly was granted the opportunity to present Paris with an annual list of its priorities on how to spend the state budget for Corsica, but the government was not in any way obliged to follow its advice.

The Corsican Assembly rapidly became plagued with instability. Four elections were organised between 1982 and 1991, mainly as a result of irregularities in electoral lists. The situation led to the development of political clientelism and the discredit of the regional institution as a whole (Loughlin & Daftary, 1999:17). Hence, in 1991, Pierre Joxe, then Minister of the Interior, initiated the adoption of a new reform of Corsica's status in order to enhance the effectiveness of the Corsican institution[66]. This transformed Corsica into a *Collectivité Territoriale* or Territorial Community which has greater powers than ordinary regions. The reformed status introduced new electoral rules for the Corsican Assembly in the form of a two-round proportional system, with a 5% electoral threshold to access the second round[67]. It also entailed a reform of the electoral registers of the island's municipalities, reducing the electoral body from 200,000 to 158,000, in order to counter electoral fraud (Hintjens, Loughlin & Olivesi, 1995:125). These provisions were intended to produce clearer and more stable majorities within the Assembly. The Joxe reforms also mentioned specific rights related to Corsica's insularity, i.e. the preservation of cultural identity and the defence of specific economic and social interests. However, it

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[63] Following these first elections, the Movement of the Radical Left (MRG) received 23 seats, the Rally for the Republic (RPR) 29 seats and the Corsican nationalists 9 seats.
[64] Law No. 85-30 of 9 January 1985 relative to the development and protection of the Corsican mountains and Law No. 86-2 of 3 January 1986 relative to the development and protection of Corsica's coast.
[65] For instance, propositions in favour of teaching the Corsican culture and language (July 1983), giving priority to Corsicans in local employment and the recognition of the Corsican people (November 1983), creation of a special fiscal status and a free exchange zone (April 1985).
[66] Law No. 91-428 of 13 May 1991 relative to the status of the Territorial Community of Corsica
[67] Prior to the revision, the Corsican Assembly was elected in one round, with proportional representation for all the lists receiving more than 1.6 percent of the votes.

was also made clear that only the French government could guarantee these developments, and the new status did not confer legislative powers to the Assembly. As such, the Joxe reforms only represented a modest extension of the existing competences of Corsica.

### 3.3.2. No official recognition of the Corsican people

Despite the territorial accommodation of the Corsican specificity, the government has never met the demand for recognition of the Corsican people. "French people, French people of Corsica"[68], said President Giscard when addressing an audience on the island in 1978. Almost thirty years later, this statement is still reflective of the government's position, maintaining a clear support for the idea of the one and indivisible French nation. Interestingly, the recognition of Corsica's special character has been based not on the rights of Corsicans, but on its geographical features, insularity becoming the official reason for its unique institutional status. This focus on insularity pre-empted any attempts by other French regions to claim similar prerogatives, while efforts to achieve official recognition for the Corsican people have been inhibited by the provisions of the French Constitution.

Initially, the original draft of the 1982 first Special Status included the notion of "Corsican people". Expressing concerns that the term "people" might lead to similar claims on the parts of the Bretons or Basques, the Council of Ministers had opted for a different formulation, i.e. "the Corsican people, component of the French people"[69]. In the end, however, the reference to the Corsican people was restricted to the statement of motives and did not appear in the actual law. It has been suggested that such reference would have been deemed unconstitutional (Hossay, 2004:415) and could have jeopardised the whole decentralisation reforms. The Jacobin tradition seems to have dictated that an official recognition of the Corsicans as a people would constitute a threat to national unity and could trigger a domino effect with other regional groups asking for similar recognition.

Nevertheless, the expression "the Corsican people, component of the French people" was again mentioned in the 1991 Special Status for Corsica. The proposed first

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[68] Le Monde, 9 June 1978, p.8
[69] Minister Chevènement: "On page 6 it speaks of a "Corsican people". This expression bothers me. Will we be speaking tomorrow of a "Basque People" and a "Breton people"? We are putting our fingers in the machinery without knowing where it will drag us."
[...]
President Mitterrand: "But France wasn't made all of the sudden. All these people are components of the French people."
Minister Defferre: "Eureka! That's the solution. I propose that we write: "the Corsican people, a component of the French people"."
President Mitterand: "You have my agreement. The statement of motives will take your formulation." (Transcript of the Council of Ministers meeting of 6 January 1982, in Favier & Martin-Roland, 1990:150, my translation)

article of law stated: "The French Republic guarantees to the living historical and cultural community which constitutes the Corsican people, a component of the French people, the right to preserve its specific economic and social identity. These rights, related to [Corsica's] insularity, are exercised with respect to national unity and within the framework of the Republic and the present status"[70]. The reference to the Corsican people was however opposed by the Constitutional Court[71]. Stressing the "egalitarian principle", members of the Court argued that the Constitution recognised no other people than the French people and asked for the expression to be removed from the final law.

### 3.3.3. The Matignon Process

Corsica's new status failed to satisfy the demands of Corsican nationalists and political violence intensified in the 1990s, not least because of the government's refusal to officially recognise the Corsican people. Following the assassination of the prefect of Corsica on 6 February 1998[72], former Prime Minister Lionel Jospin entered into direct negotiations with the Corsican Assembly. Once again, political violence had acted as a trigger for further concessions from the central state. This process led to the signature of the Matignon Agreement on 29 July 2000, proposing broad changes that would result in some form of autonomy for Corsica. The key provisions of the Agreement included the transfer of some limited legislative powers to the Corsican Assembly, enabling it to adapt French law without consulting the Parliament. In an important symbolic change, the instruction of Corsican would also be mandatory in elementary schools during normal hours, rather than an after-school activity.

This Matignon Agreement was reworked into a law and adopted by the Parliament in January 2002[73], albeit with modifications. Indeed, the Senate and the Constitutional Court imposed several revisions of the initial document in relation to the legislative powers of the Assembly and the teaching of Corsican. The Senate, using its power of amendment, asked for the mandatory nature of Corsican teaching to be removed and replaced by "optional teaching during normal school hours"[74]. In addition, the Constitutional Court rejected the planned delegation of legislative powers to the Corsican Assembly on 17 January 2002[75]. In the end, members of the Court only permitted a diluted version of the initial proposal, enabling the Corsican Assembly to adapt the implementation of laws for a

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[70] Le Monde, 2 November 1990, p. 7

[71] Conseil Constitutionnel, Decision No 82-138 DC du 25 Fevrier 1982 and Decision No 91-290 DC du 9 Mai 1991.

[72] On 4th July 2003, Yvan Colonna has been arrested for the murder of Claude Erignac, then regional prefect of Corsica. Colonna was close to the FLNC in the 1980s, but had seemingly distanced himself from the clandestine organisation since the 1990s. On 13 December 2007, he was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

[73] Law No. 2002-92 of 22 January 2002 relative to Corsica

[74] Senat, Amendement No. 221 of 7 November 2001

[75] Conseil Constitutionnel, Decision No. 2001-454 of 17 January 2002

fixed period of time, subject in each case to the acceptance of the Parliament. In addition, the final document on the new status of Corsica contained no further reference to the Corsican people. Instead, the text begins with mention of "the specificities of Corsica in the Republic" while later references identify "the existence of a territorial community". Hence, although the Corsican specificity has been acknowledged, constitutional recognition is still a long way off.

While these provisions cannot be considered full-fledged autonomy, they nevertheless attest to the attempts made by successive French governments to respond to the Corsican specificity. This was again the case when, on 6 July 2003, a referendum was organised for the adoption of a new territorial organisation for Corsica. This proposal envisioned the fusion of the two Corsican departments into a single territorial entity, but was rejected by 50.98 percent of the voters. Since then, and despite the declaration of President Sarkozy[76], the "Corsica file" seems to have been shelved by the government.

## 3.4. France as a context for minority nationalist mobilisation

The domestic French context offers few opportunities and many constraints for minority nationalist parties. First, the pervasiveness of Jacobinism in French politics is a major constraint for these parties. The debate around the adoption of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages clearly illustrates the difficulties of French society to accommodate its internal diversity. Given its reaction to the Corsican example, it is highly likely that the Constitutional Court will continue to block any attempt to derogate from the norms of the indivisibility and unity of the French nation. Equally, although the possibility of institutional variations has been introduced in the last wave of decentralisation, there is a strong pressure to maintain the homogeneity and uniformity of the French territory. As a result of this legal and political tradition, demands for collective rights and self-government have been met with a considerable amount of suspicion from any actor outside of minority nationalist circles. Second, as the empirical chapters unfold, it will become apparent that a significant hindrance for minority nationalist mobilisation in France lies in the nature of electoral systems. The French preference for majoritarian electoral systems and the lack of proportionality in sub-national elections has limited minority nationalists' access to elected assemblies. Regional elections are the only French elections organised on the basis of a proportional system, but the electoral threshold for taking part in the second round (raised from 5 to 10 % in 2004) has impacted on the

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[76] "Security in Corsica" was a major theme in the presidential campaign of Nicolas Sarkozy, who visited the island 25 times in the last 5 years in his capacity of Minister of the Interior and twice as a presidential candidate. In his last speech on the island on 30 April 2007, he declared his intention to put an end to terrorism and bring back the rule of law in Corsica during his mandate (Le Monde, 31 April 2007).

representation of small parties. Also, regional elections are an opportunity only for those minority nationalists whose minority nation, i.e. the targeted electorate, and historic territory coincide with an administrative region in the French system[77].

In any case, sitting in a sub-national elected assembly does not necessarily provide an efficient channel for putting forward minority nationalist demands in state policies. Decentralisation in France has remained for the most part functional and has not resulted in the creation of sub-national levels of *government*. Moreover, the French state has sought to maintain a presence in all aspects of sub-national governance, resulting in a complicated web of interdependency where no sub-national actor – neither state administration nor sub-national authorities – has much room for manoeuvre. The consequent polarisation of local power in single individuals, the *grands élus,* is *a priori* a constraint for minority nationalists due to a strong commitment among political elites to the Jacobin ideal of the indivisible French nation. However, real opportunities will arise if one of these powerful politicians happens to be sympathetic to minority nationalist demands, as chapter six will illustrate through the collaboration of Breton nationalists with Jean-Yves Le Drian, President of the Brittany region. Finally, while the French state could be seen to have lost some of its hegemony on sub-national governance, it has maintained a firm grip on all matters related to the EU Regional Policy. France is characterised by a rather tight and state-centric form of interaction with Brussels, within which sub-national actors have no direct access to the European policy-making process. It is clear from this overview that the French ideological, institutional and political opportunity structures are far from hospitable to minority nationalist parties, and this research will establish what changes, if any, European integration has brought to this set-up.

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[77] The administrative division of France in 26 regions and 100 departments has taken a strandardised form and has, for the most part, not coincided with the historical territories defended by minority nationalists. For instance, Occitan nationalists make claims over a large space encompassing roughly the southern third of the French territory. The Northern part of Catalonia, as defined by Catalan nationalists, corresponds to about two thirds of the department Pyrenees-Orientales. Similarly, the Northern Basque Country has no institutional recognition and forms with Bearn the department Pyrenees-Atlantiques. Yet another example is the historical region Bretagne, which comprises the administrative region Brittany and the department Loire-Atlantique, part of the region Pays de la Loire.

## Chapter 4 – The Unione di U Populu Corsu

This chapter illustrates the significance of European integration for Corsican nationalist parties, by focusing on the Unione di U Populu Corsu (UPC). It starts with an overview of the Corsican nationalist movement in order to situate the UPC as the leading organisation of the moderate branch of Corsican nationalism demanding Corsica's full-fledged autonomy. The chapter then surveys the party activity since the 1980s, illustrating how developments at the European level have affected, and been used by, the party in the context of Corsican and French politics. The objective is to contextualise the UPC's perception and use of European integration in order to identify what concrete opportunities it has provided to the party. It will show that European integration has provided discursive resources to advance the UPC's political project in relation to the French state, but also to re-assert its role within the Corsican nationalist movement through its connections at the European level.

## 4.1. The Corsican nationalist movement

The origins of contemporary Corsican nationalism can be traced back to the 1950s, when the economic decline of Corsica became apparent in contrast with France's booming post-war economy. In 1957, a Regional Plan of Action was adopted to counter the handicaps of the insular economy, through the development of tourism and the modernisation of the agricultural sector (Bernabeu-Casanova, 1997:52-56). However, the economic benefits of the policies designed by the French government were perceived to be distributed unequally, with "continental" interests, rather than the island's inhabitants, profiting the most (Loughlin, 1989:138-145). In the 1960s, the process of decolonisation in Northern Africa exacerbated these frustrations, as considerable financial support was given to repatriated French citizens settling in Corsica, as well as privileged access to the new economic opportunities originally destined to benefit the Corsican population (Crettiez, 1999:27). This wave of immigration led some to fear that the historic Corsican community would disappear altogether, especially after the publication of a confidential report advising the French government to encourage immigration and mass tourism in order to weaken the Corsican identity[78]. Demands started to appear for the protection of

[78] At the end of 1960s, the DATAR (Delegation for Land Planning and Regional Action) asked the Hudson Institute to draft a report on the future of Corsica. The American experts concluded that a change of governmental policy was necessary, offering two options: the State could either accelerate the disappearance of the Corsican identity by encouraging immigration and mass tourism, or the State could protect the Corsican identity and develop the island through the promotion of its historic and cultural features. The Hudson report was made public in 1971 by an organisation called Corsican Regionalist Action. In the same year, the Land Planning Scheme

the Corsican language, threatened by the influx of non-Corsicans into the island, and for the re-opening of the University of Corte, in order to put an end to the exodus of young people getting educated on mainland France. The environmental consequences of economic modernisation also generated protest against a seemingly complete disregard for the island's natural resources (Olivesi, 1998:176-177). In the 1970s, the events of "the red mud" – "les boues rouges" - particularly caught the public attention: Montedison, an Italian company, dumped toxic residues off the shore of Cap Corse, causing the death of animal life, with the implicit consent of the French authorities (Lefevre, 2001)[79]. The implications of these socio-economic and ecological developments for the Corsican identity acted as a catalyst for Corsican nationalist mobilisation[80].

The French government remained for the most part indifferent to demands for the protection of the Corsican identity and increasing frustrations led to the events of Aleria. On 21 August 1975, eight men led by Edmond Simeoni proceeded to occupy the wine cellar of a "pied noir"[81] winegrower at Aleria, who had been accused of trafficking low-quality wine. During the 30 hours of occupation, Simeoni conducted interviews with journalists, stating the main demands of the Corsican nationalist movement[82]. This incident ended with the death of two gendarmes and serious rioting in Bastia. The events of Aleria are seen by many authors as the founding moment of the contemporary Corsican nationalist movement (Bernabeu-Casanova, 1997; Crettiez, 1999). A period of political violence followed, with numerous attacks against governmental buildings in Corsica but also on mainland France[83]. It marked the start of a demand for the self-government of the Corsican people, as a result of the mistrust in the French government and its ability to solve Corsica's economic problems while preserving the Corsican identity. When the Corsican assembly was created[84], and with the amnesty of Corsican political prisoners by

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adopted for Corsica suggested that the French authorities had opted for the first proposition, as it promoted a development based essentially on mass tourism with little concerns for the Corsican culture (Crettiez, 1999:33-35); Interview with Max Simeoni (19 September 2007).

[79] The French government never took action against Montedison, which was eventually condemned by the Italian authorities on 27 April 1974.

[80] Interview with Max Simeoni (19 September 2007)

[81] French national born in Algeria during colonial times.

[82] "We demand [...] the imprisonment of the five colon conmen, and that their 2000 hectares of land and wine cellars be seized and given to the most deprived young Corsican farmers [...]. Our action is for the exclusive benefit of the Corsican people and supports other Corsican demands such as job creation for Corsican young people, the "Corsicanisation" of employment, the implementation of a Charter for the return of exiled Corsicans, the establishment of official bilingualism, with the promotion of the Corsican language and culture through all the necessary technical means. Our movement also asks for our land currently devoted to agriculture and tourism to be reclaimed and used to develop a sustainable Corsican economy [...] as well as for the regeneration of the Corsican countryside", Edmond Simeoni, on 22 August 1975 (my translation), in Arritti, Occupation de la cave Depeille, 22 August 1995 (1470).

[83] On the night of the 4th May 1976, 20 attacks were perpetrated by the FLNC in Corsica, Paris, Marseille and Nice. On 27th February 1978, the Ministry of Finances was dynamited.

[84] The law of the 2 March 1982 has granted Corsica its own regional institutions, i.e. a Statut Particulier or Special Status and an elected Corsican Assembly which was given extended competences in the fields relevant to the specific needs of the island: culture, transport, energy,

newly elected President Mitterrand, the intensity of Corsican violence decreased – although it never disappeared completely - in favour of the use of democratic means to bring forward nationalist demands. However, while it stemmed from a common position that the Corsican people is distinct from the French nation and has a right to self-determination, the Corsican nationalist movement has become increasingly fragmented. Two main tendencies, autonomist and independentist, have defined the parameters of the nationalist political space in Corsica since the 1970s. Beyond differences in terms of party goals, the question of the use of political violence has also divided Corsican nationalists. While autonomist parties have renounced political violence, independentists are still linked to several clandestine military groups. The distinction between autonomists and independentists has corresponded to two contradictory strategies: "legal action" and "clandestine action" (Molas, 2000). The autonomists have accepted the new institutional and democratic channels created by the government since the 1980s whereas, for the independentists, the occupation by French authorities justifies the use of non-democratic means in the struggle for the national liberation of Corsica. There has nevertheless been a lot of fluidity within the Corsican nationalist movement, with individuals going from one tendency to another, and strategic alliances have taken place in several elections between the two tendencies.

The Unione di u Populu Corsu (UPC) has been the main representative of the autonomist branch of Corsican nationalism since the 1970s[85]. The UPC was founded in 1977 and seeks Corsica's autonomy within the French Republic. The basis for this claim is the notion that Corsicans constitute a distinct people and that this specificity should be recognised through the increase of Corsica's autonomy, and in particular the extension of the legislative powers of the Corsican Assembly. The UPC also makes demands for an official status for the Corsican language and its mandatory teaching in the island's schools (Olivesi, 1998:177-179). Although party leaders Edmond and Max Simeoni had resorted to political violence prior to the creation of the UPC[86], the party has always declared itself opposed to any form of violence. The UPC has been one of the few Corsican political parties to maintain a certain degree of organisational continuity, mostly resistant to internal tensions and scissions. The UPC merged with smaller groups, Scelta Nova and Mossa Naziunale, in November 2000, and was later dissolved to create U Partitu di a Naziona

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planning, and education. The Corsican Assembly was also given consultative power, and could solicit the Prime Minister or be consulted by the government on all matters concerning Corsica.
[85] Other political parties have emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s, such as U Rinnovu Naziunale, A Ghjama pa l'Indipendenza and A Manca Naziunale, and can be grouped within the autonomist tendency, having either emerged from the UPC or abandoned independentist goals in favour of a more moderate interpretation of the nationalist struggle.
[86] Edmond Simeoni occupied a wine cellar in Aleria on 21 August 1975, he was sentenced to 5 years in prison and released in January 1977. Exactly a year later, on 22 August 1976, his brother, Max Simeoni, occupied and blew up a wine cellar in Aghione. He was never arrested and benefited from the 1982 Presidential Amnesty.

Corsa (PNC) in December 2002 (Dominici, 2004). However, this name-changing is more a re-packaging, rather than a re-formulation, of the UPC's moderate nationalist agenda, of which the PNC is clearly a continuation (Elias, 2009:112).

An independentist tendency also emerged, after the events of Aleria, called the Front de Liberation Nationale de la Corse (FLNC). The FLNC was created on the "blue night" of 4-5 May 1976, during which 20 attacks were perpetrated in Corsica, Paris, Marseille and Nice. In the 1980s, A Cuncolta Naziunalista (aCN) became the public front of the clandestine organisation[87]. The party advocates the independence of Corsica based on the right of nations to self-determination. As explained by Crettiez (1999:44), with the creation of the FLNC, "les problèmes corses" – economic, social and cultural – became "le problème corse", namely the use of political violence as a strategy in the pursuit of a nationalist political project. In the late 1980s, a struggle over the control of the organisation led to the implosion of the military structure and a series of splits which complicated the radical nationalist panorama considerably (Crettiez & Sommier, 2002:30-31). One time leader of the FLNC, Pierre Pogioli left aCN in 1989 to form his own party, Accolta Naziunale Corsa (ANC), with links to its own clandestine group Resistenza. The FLNC split again in 1990, to create the FLNC canal "habituel" with its new public front, the Mouvement pour l'Autodetermination (MPA)[88], and the FLNC canal "historique", whose front organisation remained aCN.

An electoral alliance between independentist and autonomist parties was formed in 1992 under the name Corsica Nazione, bringing together the UPC, ANC, aCN and the Greens[89]. This led to the best electoral results to date for Corsican nationalists, with a total of 24.8 percent of the votes in the second round, and 13 seats in the Corsican Assembly[90]. However, the refusal by the aCN to give up political violence ultimately drove the UPC, the ANC and the Greens out of the alliance, leaving Corsica Nazione to be the electoral branch of radical nationalism, mainly led by the aCN (Crettiez & Sommier, 2002:38). The latter changed its name to A Cuncolta Independentista in 1998 and then to Indipendenza after its fusion with Corsica Viva in 2001. The close relationship between Indipendenza

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[87] The public front of the FLNC underwent several name changes during the 1980s. Initially called Cuncolta di I Cumitati Naziunalisti (CCN), the party was dissolved by the French authorities in September 1983 due to its close links to the clandestine organisation. It was replaced by the Muvimentu Corsu per l'Autodeterminazione (MCA), which was also declared illegal in January 1987. A Cuncolta Naziunalista was therefore created in June 1987, and has remained since then.
[88] In March 1996, the MPA declared himself in favour of autonomy and the end of violence, and dissolved the FLNC canal "habituel". The MPA was then disbanded in 1999, with most of its members joining the newly created U Rinnovu Naziunale, while the remaining others opted for the formation of yet another party, Corsica Viva, with its own clandestine group, the FLNC du 5 Mai.
[89] The national Green party often forms electoral alliances with minority nationalist parties for strategic purposes, but its Corsican branch, I Verdi Corsi, also makes claims for cultural autonomy.
[90] This includes 4 seats for MPA (8% votes) and 9 seats for the coalition Corsica Nazione (16.8% votes).

and Corsica Nazione has recently been formalised by yet another name change to Indipendenza-Corsica Nazione (Elias, 2009:113). In addition, in the last few years, Indipendenza-Corsica Nazione seems to have opted for a more progressivist strategy and seeks the increase of the legislative, fiscal and executive powers for the Corsican Assembly, as a first step towards independence[91].

On the 6th February 1998, the assassination of the French prefect in Corsica, Claude Erignac[92], started a new phase in the evolution of the Corsican nationalist movement, one which Crettiez and Sommier (2002:31) have referred to as "the politics of reconciliation". Although Corsicans support many of the demands made by nationalists, the majority of the population remains completely opposed to the armed struggle (Loughlin & Daftary, 1999:15). This realisation, as well as a decrease in electoral results at the 1998 regional elections, seemed to trigger the emergence of a status quo among Corsican nationalists. By the end of 1999, eight parties had come together to form an electoral alliance called Unita[93], quickly followed by the clandestine organisations which created the FLNC "Union des Combattants"[94]. Efforts to consolidate the Corsican nationalist movement reached their climax with the 2004 regional elections and the creation of Unione Naziunale, a nationalist coalition bringing together independentists and autonomists[95]. Unione Naziunale obtained 8 seats[96], making it the third largest group in the Corsican Assembly. Despite being the most successful attempt at unity since 1992, the alliance suffered from the rivalry between the UPC/PNC and Corsica Nazione to gain leadership of the Corsican nationalist movement. After months of internal friction, the coalition eventually broke up at the beginning of 2008. The unfortunate timing of the split, just weeks before municipal and cantonal elections, attests to the degree to which division continues to prevail in Corsican nationalist contestation.

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[91] http://www.corsica-nazione.com/accoltafrancesa.htm, accessed on 10 May 2007
[92] On 6th February 1998, Claude Erignac, the regional prefect of Corsica, i.e. the most important French government official on the island, was shot dead in the streets of Ajaccio. On 4th July 2003, Yvan Colonna has been arrested for the murder. He was close to the FLNC in the 1980s, but had seemingly distanced himself from the clandestine organisation since the 1990s. On 13 December 2007, he was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.
[93] These parties included ANC, Chjama per l'Indipendenza, Corsica Viva, Corisca Nazione, Cuncolta Indipendentista, Associu per a Suvranita, Partitu per I Indipendenza and I Verdi Corsi . Notably absent from the alliance was the UPC. The alliance was short-lived, strategic disagreements quickly led to a new wave of scissions, name changing and the creation of new groups in the following years.
[94] Among the groups making the "Union des Combattants" were FLNC Canal historique, FLNC du 5 Mai, Resistenza, Clandestinu and Fronte Ribellu.
[95] The members of Unione Naziunale include: Independenza-Corsica Nazione, PNC, the ANC and A Chjama Naziunale, Edmond Simeoni's party. Rather than joining the coalition, U Rinnovu Naziunale and A Manca Naziunale both preferred presenting their own lists in the 2004 regional elections.
[96] Unione Naziunale received 12.14 percent of votes, just above the 10 percent electoral threshold in the first round of elections. The results of U Rinnovu Naziunale (2.2%) and A Manca Naziunale (0.6%) were not sufficient for gaining representation.

## 4.2. The Unione di U Populu Corsu

### 4.2.1. Before 1989

Immediately after its creation in 1977, the autonomists of the UPC sought to develop contacts with other European minority nationalist movements. The Corsican Assembly had not yet been created and this strategy of internationalisation appeared as a necessity, due to the absence of a local democratic platform, to bring exposure to the Corsican nationalist struggle[97]. Also, party leaders hoped to circumvent the stigma associated with Corsican nationalism in the French context following the rise of political violence and the events of Aleria[98]. International links with strongly established and democratic minority nationalist parties in Europe were used to differentiate the moderate and legal UPC from the pro-violence and clandestine FLNC – which had made contact with ETA in the Basque Country and the IRA in Northern Ireland[99]. The UPC found support in Wales and Flanders, and party delegations attended the annual meetings of Plaid Cymru (1977) and Volksunie (1979). The party then signed with four other minority nationalist parties – Volksunie (Flanders), Fryske Nasjonale Partij (Friesland), Partei Deutschsprachiger Belgier (German-speaking Community of Belgium) and the Elsass-Lothringische Volkspartei (Alsace) - the Declaration of Bastia in 1979[100], in order to establish a common manifesto for the first direct elections to the European Parliament. This initiative subsequently led to the creation of the European Free Alliance, the "stateless nations" party group in the European Parliament, when Volksunie returned one MEP in the 1981 European elections. Soon after, however, the UPC's attention shifted back to the national level where presidential elections were taking place. Since its creation, the UPC had adopted an apolitical stance, distancing itself from right/left politics in order to mobilise the largest number possible around the demand for Corsica's autonomy (Dominici, 2005). Making an exception, the party campaigned in favour of Socialist candidate Francois Mitterrand (Simeoni, 1995:204). His programme included the adoption of a Special Status for Corsica and the amnesty of Corsican political prisoners[101]. Mitterrand's victory on 10th May 1981 raised much hope among UPC members[102] as well as the entire Corsican nationalist movement (Bernabeu-Casanova, 1997:137-141). One year later, regional elections were held for the first time on the island and the UPC obtained seven seats in the newly created Assembly of Corsica. Following this democratic

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[97] Interview Edmond Simeoni, 23rd September 2009
[98] Arritti, Arritti et l'UPC: Au coeur de l'internationalisation du probleme corse, 19th August 1993 (1361)
[99] Interview Edmond Simeoni, 23rd September 2009
[100] Representatives from Volksunie, Fryske Nasjonale Partij, Partei Deutschsprachiger Belgier and the Elsass-Lothringischer Volkspartei attended the UPC annual meeting on 19th August 1979, and signed the Declaration of Bastia on the same day.
[101] 110 Propositions of Candidate Mitterrand, 1981, http://www.psinfo.net/entretiens/mitterrand/110.html, accessed on 18 March 2008.
[102] Arritti, Espoir pour tous ceux qui souffrent, 13th May 1981

opening, the party concentrated its efforts on local politics while its international dimension diminished[103].

From 1982, the party invested all its resources on the Assembly of Corsica and on taking advantage of this new institutional channel. The FLNC had not taken part in the elections, as this would have been the sign of an accreditation of the French state (Crettiez, 1999:76-78). With its seven seats, the UPC was therefore the sole representative of the Corsican nationalist movement in the Assembly. However, it was soon clear that the decisions of the Assembly had little political weight in the eyes of the French government[104]. In September 1983, a motion on bilingualism proposed by the UPC and adopted by the Assembly was vetoed by the Prime Minister. Later that year, the French government declared invalid the decision to close the thermal station of Vazziu, despite the Assembly's competences in energy matters (Bernabeu-Casanova, 1997:166). Consequently, in February 1984, the UPC stopped sitting in the Assembly, causing its dissolution. In the following elections, however, the UPC was less successful, only returning three seats. This was mainly because, this time, the public front of the independentists, the MCA, had presented candidates and gained 3 seats. The popularity of the FLNC, particularly among young Corsicans, was starting to take its toll on the UPC's electoral appeal[105]. The party also suffered from the premature retirement of its charismatic founder, Edmond Simeoni, for health reasons[106]. Deprived of its leader and threatened by the rise of the FLNC, the UPC made an electoral alliance with the MCA for the 1986 elections. The party had however always defined itself in opposition with clandestine organisations acting for the national liberation of Corsica, emphasising its fundamental incompatibility with the FLNC regarding the way to conduct the nationalist struggle (Bernabeu-Casanova, 1997:118-120). But Max Simeoni, who had taken over from his brother Edmond, instigated this rapprochement with the independentists as an attempt to ensure political representation for the UPC[107]. The UPC-MCA list achieved the lowest electoral score of the Corsican nationalist movement to date, 8.44 %[108]. While it enabled the UPC to keep its three seats in the Assembly, this strategy of unity ended up discrediting the two parties. It confused both the autonomist electorate, opposed to the political violence promoted by the FLNC, and the independentist electorate, perceiving the

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[103] Interview Max Simeoni (19 Sept 2007); Interview Francois Alfonsi (18 Sept 2007)
[104] Arritti, Statut ou chiffon de papier?, 27th July 1983
[105] Interview Edmond Simeoni (25 July 1996) in Bernabeu-Casanova, 1997:220-240
[106] Interview Edmond Simeoni (25 July 1996) in Bernabeu-Casanova, 1997:220-240
[107] Interview Max Simeoni (19 Sept 2007)
[108] The day after the elections, on 17 March 1986, representatives of the UPC-MCA filed a complain for electoral frauds in the department Haute-Corse. On 8 July 1986, the Constitutional Court declared the cancellation of the 1986 elections, and ordered the organisation of new elections on 22 March 1987. In the meantime, Max Simeoni was appointed President of the Ad Hoc Committee on Electoral Fraud. In the 1987 elections, the UPC-MCA again obtained 3 seats.

UPC as collaborators with the French government[109] (Bindi, 1990). The alliance was put to an end when French authorities ordered the dissolution of the MCA in January 1987[110].

From early on, the UPC had been vocal about its support for European integration, which was clearly stated in the founding charter of the party. This position made a clear contrast with the anti-Europeanism of the various political parties gravitating around the FLNC[111] and their mistrust of "the federalist type solutions [which] only serve to camouflage the dominant political system with new political and administrative divisions"[112]. Beyond this self-professed Europeanism, however, developments at the European level did not feature prominently in the concerns of the UPC for the best part of the 1980s. It is only after the signature of the Single European Act that the party raised concerns over the opening of the Single Market and its potential consequences for the island : "Against speculations, Corsica is defenceless [...]. The takeover bid is getting prepared and it will [...] be done on the only thing available: natural sites, beaches, sun..."[113]. In the party's perspective, French authorities had prevented Corsicans from developing their local economy and, with the Single Market, the island risked being robbed of its only wealth, its natural resources[114]. Progressively, the UPC also began to exploit the contacts it had established at the European level. The party used the European Free Alliance (EFA) to bring resonance to the debates ongoing between the French government and the Assembly of Corsica, such as the ICO cable. The EFA proposed a resolution to the European Parliament asking the French government to renounce the installation of the ICO cable, an electric cable linking Corsica to Italy and Sardinia, and instead to develop Corsica's own hydro-electric resources[115]. For the UPC, it was a clear instance of France serving its own interests, i.e. opening the Italian market for the public electricity supplier EDF, to the detriment of Corsican interests[116]. Although the French government never responded officially to the resolution, the ICO cable, also opposed by the Green party, was not installed. In addition, at the demand of the UPC, the EFA opened a debate on the specificity of the socio-economic problems encountered by Corsica and Sardinia, which led to a European report by the EP Committee on Regional Policy[117]. This idea would run its course in the 1990s, and be exploited by the UPC to highlight the contrast in the institutional arrangements of Corsica and Sardinia – which has had regional autonomy since 1948 - and to ask for an autonomous status in line with its insular specificity. Hence, it is only towards the end of the 1980s that the UPC started using

[109] Interview Edmond Simeoni (25 July 1996) in Bernabeu-Casanova, 1997:220-240
[110] Council of Ministers, Decree of 22 January 1987.
[111] Interview Edmond Simeoni, 23rd September 2009
[112] U Ribombu, "Non A l'Europe! Oui a la Mediterranee", July-August 1979, p.1
[113] Arritti, Autonomies et Europe, Editorial de Max Simeoni, 16th June 1988 (1106)
[114] Arritti, La proie pour la speculation, Editorial de Max Simeoni, 6th August 1987 (1061)
[115] Arritti, Cable ICO: le Parlement Europeen saisi par l'ALE, 7th May 1987 (1048)
[116] Arritti, Cable ICO: le Parlement Europeen saisi par l'ALE, 7th May 1987 (1048)
[117] Arritti, Corsica-Sardinia: le rapprochement par l'Europe, 12th January 1989 (1136)

European developments as opportunities to highlight the inadequacies of the French state in defending Corsican interests. There was however little in the party's discourse - at this point at least - suggesting that European integration was perceived as a process with direct relevance for the achievement of Corsica's self-government.

### 4.2.2. The UPC in the European Parliament (1989-1994)

The UPC found a new interest in Europe when Max Simeoni, through his cooperation with the Green Party, obtained a seat in the European Parliament in 1989. In electoral decline since 1984, the UPC had sought to reassert the environmental dimension of its nationalist struggle in order to mobilise a wider audience (Lefevre, 2001:36-37). Hence, in the presidential elections of 1988, the UPC campaigned in favour of the Green candidate, Antoine Waechter. Max Simeoni himself went around French regions to ensure the support of other minority nationalist, autonomist and regionalist parties[118]. This enabled Antoine Waechter to have the signatures of elected officials necessary to validate its candidacy to the presidential elections[119]. In return, Max Simeoni was given the fourth position on the Green list for the European elections that resulted in its MEP mandate from 1989 to 1994. His election, in the capacity of representative of minority nationalist and regionalist parties of France[120], had a symbolic importance. It was the first time that an actor of the Corsican nationalist movement – or of any minority nationalist movement in France – would sit in a supra-national political assembly. At first, he seized this opportunity to publicly challenge French ministers attending sessions at the European Parliament. For instance, on 27 July 1989, he questioned Foreign Minister Roland Dumas[121] on the government's lack of accommodation of regional diversity and its rejection of the Council of Europe's Resolution 192 on minority languages[122]. However, this channel proved largely ineffective to initiate a dialogue with the French government, as Simeoni's limited speaking time (5 minutes) made it all too easy for French officials to dismiss his interventions and any written follow up[123]. After he became Budget Rapporteur for the Committee of Culture and Youth, Simeoni obtained the doubling of the European budget line for "Minority

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[118] Interview Max Simeoni (19 Sept 2007)

[119] In accordance with the French Constitution of 4 October 1958, an individual must be sponsored by at least 500 elected officials, from any level of government, in order to be candidate to the presidential elections.

[120] Accordingly, his parliamentary assistants were Christian Guyonvarc'h, leader of the UDB in Brittany and Jean-Guy Talamoni, of A Cuncolta Naziunalista.

[121] On the same topic, he also challenged Lionel Jospin, then Minister of Education, on 7 November 1989 and Jack Lang, Minister of Culture, on 27 November 1989.

[122] In 1988, Resolution 192 of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe launched the preparation of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, which was adopted by the Council of Europe in 1992.

[123] Interview Max Simeoni (19 Sept 2007)

Languages and Cultures"[124]. While this went relatively unnoticed at the European level, Simeoni's action was a political victory for the UPC, as "all will know that a Corsican MEP is behind this achievement"[125]. For the party, Simeoni's European mandate was a source of visibility for Corsica and the Corsican nationalist predicament. In turn, Simeoni raised the UPC's attention on the deficiencies of Corsica's European policy and the under-use of European funding opportunities by Corsicans[126]. Using data provided by the European Investment Bank, he found evidence that Corsica had received 25 times less financing than Sardinia between 1986 and 1990[127]. Identifying a need to coordinate between Corsicans and funding bodies at the European level, the UPC made an official demand to the Corsican Assembly for the creation of a Corsican bureau in Brussels[128]. This did not go through, but Corsican representation in the EU became one of the UPC main demands from then onwards.

In the meantime, the UPC leader became the government's advisor in the context of increasingly unstable Corsican politics. Indeed, within just one decade, the Assembly of Corsica had become plagued with electoral irregularities and political clientelism (Loughlin & Daftary, 1999:17)[129]. Frustrations also came from the consultative nature of the Assembly, whose proposals were hardly given any consideration by the Prime Minister (Lauwers, 2003:50). Hence, in 1991, Minister of the Interior Joxe initiated a reform of Corsica's status in order to enhance the effectiveness of the Corsican institution. Possibly as a result of the legitimacy acquired through his European mandate, Simeoni was one of the four Corsican elected officials[130] secretly consulted for the preparation of the Joxe status (Lefevre, 2001:37). Although this demonstrated a certain acknowledgement of the Corsican nationalist predicament by the government, one issue remained contentious: the official recognition of the Corsican people. During the negotiations, Simeoni insisted that the term "Corsican people" was used in the proposed Joxe law, as already suggested –

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[124] This budget line, amounting to 2 millions of ECU, was voted in the European Parliament on 25 October 1990.
[125] Arritti, Max Simeoni au Parlement Europeen : Premier Bilan du Mandat, 18th December 1990 (1238).
[126] Arritti, Pour pallier les carences de la politique europeenne en Corse, 25th June 1991 (1265)
[127] EIB Financing in millions ECU, 1986-1990 (Source: Arritti, 25th June 1991 (1265))

| | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | Total | Per Habitant |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Baleares | | 0.1 | 9.3 | 16 | 13.6 | 39 | 390 |
| Canarias | 8.7 | 1.4 | 114.4 | 36.2 | 28.5 | 189.3 | 880 |
| Corsica | 4.4 | | 0.1 | 0.8 | 0.3 | 5.5 | 154 |
| Kriti | 17.9 | 3.6 | 23 | 4.7 | 20.3 | 69.4 | 935 |
| Sicilia | 257.5 | 221.7 | 158.2 | 306.9 | 264 | 1208.3 | 1690 |
| Sardegna | 152.7 | 142.6 | 280.9 | 213.9 | 241.4 | 1031.6 | 4004 |

[128] Motion avec Demande de Priorite Deposee par le Groupe UPC, 17th June 1991.
[129] Interview Edmond Simeoni, 23rd September 2009
[130] In addition to Max Simeoni (UPC), Jose Rossi (UDF), Laurent Croce (PS) and Henri Antona (RPR) were also part of this secret consultation.

but finally dropped – in the 1982 Special Status[131]. However, the Constitutional Court opposed the formulation, arguing that the Constitution recognised no other people than the French people[132]. Simeoni made use of the European arena to publicise the Court's decision and subsequent lack of recognition for the Corsican people, intervening in the European Parliament and sending written questions to the Commission and the Council of Minister[133]. This proved unsuccessful as the reference to the Corsican people was finally removed from the final Joxe status, which introduced only a modest extension of the existing administrative and fiscal powers of the Corsican Assembly[134]. Nevertheless, the involvement of Max Simeoni, and therefore of the UPC, in the Joxe process was significant for the party, as it confirmed its self-definition as the legal and democratic face of Corsican nationalism. The party's involvement in the EFA and its formal representation in the European Parliament also reinforced the contrast with the clandestine organisations acting for the national liberation of Corsica. As explained in the manifesto Autunumia, "the choice of democracy as an end and a mean, conceived as the historic feature of the Corsican people and as the only way to ensure its durability, is in clear opposition with the principle of the struggle for the national liberation according to which colonialism does not allow for democracy and therefore imposes the use of non-democratic means"[135]. This is a paradox of the UPC in the early 1990s : although its electoral base was in decline – the FLNC attracting most of the votes – the UPC did not stop exerting influence on Corsican politics, due to it being the only party of the "legal action" with democratic connections and representation at the European level (Dominici, 2005:13).

In accordance with Corsica's new institutional status, elections were organised on the island in 1992. Despite its opposition to "clandestine action", the UPC had prepared the ground for another electoral alliance with the FLNC. In October 1990, the party had officially recognised the right to self-determination of the Corsican people, in solidarity with the FLNC position. In exchange, the UPC convinced the FLNC canal "historique" to accept the concept of autonomy as a first step towards independence (Dominici, 2005:14-15). This new found programmatic compatibility allowed for the creation of Corsica Nazione, an electoral coalition bringing together the UPC, the Greens, as well as the ANC and the can – both public fronts of the FLNC. The UPC had no other choice than to join this strategy of unity due to its limited partisanship, all the more since its founder Edmond Simeoni had returned to politics in order to preside over Corsica Nazione[136]. Equally, the independentists needed the actors of the "legal action" if they were to have any chance of attracting voters from the island's traditional clans (Colas, 2000:14). This strategic alliance

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[131] Interview Max Simeoni (19 Sept 2007)
[132] Conseil Constitutionnel, Decision No 91-290 DC du 9 Mai 1991.
[133] Arritti, Peuple Corse, Max Simeoni interpelle le PE, 11 June 1991 (1263)
[134] Law No. 91-428 of 13 May 1991 relative to the status of the Territorial Community of Corsica
[135] Autunumia, Projet politique de l'UPC, Juin 1991
[136] Interview Edmond Simeoni, 23rd September 2009

earned the Corsican nationalist movement its best electoral score to date, 24.8% of the votes[137], and established it as one of the main political forces on the island. However, the alliance did not last long, mainly due to some members' refusal to give up political violence. On 6 May 1994, following the assassination of ACN member Robert Sozzi by the FLNC canal "historique", Edmond Simeoni left Corsica Nazione and resigned from his seat at the Assembly of Corsica[138]. This led the UPC to abandon the alliance, leaving Corsica Nazione to become the mouthpiece of Corsican independentists. Isolated within the Corsican nationalist movement, the UPC was also unable to retain its European representation at the end of Simeoni's mandate. Indeed, the Greens had not renewed their offer to Max Simeoni of a prime position on their list for the 1994 European elections[139]. He subsequently tried to lead a "regionalist and federalist list" to the European elections, with the support of parties in other French regions. His list only achieved 0.39 percent of the votes and he lost his seat in the European Parliament. This was a major drawback for the UPC, for which Simeoni's European mandate was a vital source of visibility and credibility in times of electoral decline. A positive development nevertheless came out of Simeoni's initiative with the creation of Solidarity Region-People (R&PS), a federation of regionalist and minority nationalist parties[140]. Over the next years, R&PS grew to become the mouthpiece of minority nationalist mobilisation in France, most notably by maintaining a close relationship with the Green Party, arguably the best political ally of minority nationalists in the French context.

Under Max Simeoni's influence, the party developed its European discourse around the idea of a "Europe of the Regions" and began to advocate a federal system at the European level. At that time, the party saw this development as inevitable – "Europe cannot avoid it. Europe will become a Europe of the Peoples and the Regions"[141] – and believed that only a federal system would "give full rights to all cultures and to all nations, by proposing the free-association of all within a common political framework", as a basis for "a new political ethics which will banish cultural and colonial domination"[142]. Developments at the European level could be presented by the UPC as the reaffirmation of the validity of democratic means – as opposed to "clandestine action" - to find a solution to the Corsican nationalist struggle. The fact that the UPC's European sentiments echoed the aspirations of other political actors within the European political space reinforced and legitimised this discourse. It also provided the basis for a common platform for promoting

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[137] Corsica Nazione got 16.8% votes (9 seats), and the public front of the FLNC canal "habituel", the MPA obtained 8% (4 seats).
[138] Interview Edmond Simeoni, 23rd September 2009
[139] Interview Max Simeoni (19 Sept 2007)
[140] Created in 1995, the federation Solidarity Region-People currently has 8 members: UDB in Brittany, Bloc Catala and ERC in Northern Catalonia, UPA in Alsace, Partit Occitan in Occitania, EA and PNB in the Northern Basque Country, and the UPC/PNC.
[141] Arritti, Qu'est ce que l'Europe? Que peut-elle etre?, 9th March 1991 (1249)
[142] Arritti, La Corse et l'enjeu europeen, 26th February 1987 (1038)

minority nationalist concerns within the supranational sphere: "locating the struggle of the Corsican people at the heart of the struggle of the peoples of Europe for the recognition of their rights will allow for our demands to be heard"[143]. Nevertheless, while European integration could bring a new legitimacy to the party's demands, it was never presented as an alternative to Corsica's link with the French state, even within long-term plans. Rather, the constitutional reform of the French state was seen as a prerequisite for an autonomous Corsica to get involved in the European polity: "Autonomy provides the means to allow us to adapt to the European continental and economic context. Autonomy is not meant to satisfy a desire for an independent Corsican state. It is necessary in order to survive in, and adapt to, a world which is constantly moving and changing"[144]. Beyond these general references, however, the UPC did not give much details as to what the "Europe of the Regions" would look like and what would Corsica's place be within it. Instead, it seems that the party's support for European integration came from the idea that "the Europe that is being constructed will apply pressure on the Jacobin state, [...] bring to the fore its internal contradictions and will force it to transform itself"[145].

European regional funds also started featuring in the UPC's discourse as new resources to help the island's economy[146]. In 1986, Corsica was made eligible for the Integrated Mediterranean Program, i.e. special projects responding to the problems of the Mediterranean's insular economies in order to reverse economic decline and increase the competitiveness of islands within the European Common Market, and received 90 million ECU from the EU. In 1989, Corsica was placed under Objective 1 of the Structural Funds[147], reserved to regions lagging behind in their development and in need of priority European funding. Structural funds and Community Initiative Program (INTERREG, LEADER) included, the island was given 180 million ECU for the period 1989 to 1993, and 250 million ECU for 1994 to 1999. Despite the financial aid coming from the EU, the UPC did not approve of the Maastricht Treaty. In the referendum, the UPC campaigned in favour of abstention on the grounds that "it is a treaty which does not take into account the reality of the Corsican people; it has been written by and designed for states, and as such, a Europe of Peoples is not present in this treaty"[148]. The Treaty was perceived as reinforcing the domination of economically strong states over peripheral regions. The UPC also saw it as an opportunity to blame the French government for failing to defend Corsican interests at the European level. Unlike other member states that had negotiated

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[143] Autunumia, Projet politique de l'UPC, Juin 1991; Interview Edmond Simeoni, 23rd September 2009
[144] Arritti, Editorial de Max Simeoni, 27th June 1996
[145] Arritti, Editorial de Max Simeoni, 24th May 1991
[146] Arritti, La Corse et l'enjeu europeen, 26th February 1987
[147] Objective 1 of the Structural Funds is the main priority of the European Union's cohesion policy. It concerns regions lagging behind in their development and where the GDP is below 75% of the Community average.
[148] Arritti, Editorial, 29th July 1992

specific derogations for their most vulnerable regions, notably in the form of fiscal exemptions[149], French authorities had not made such demand in relation to Corsica[150]. French representatives had only concentrated on fiscal arrangements for France's overseas territories in the Maastricht negotiations. Later, in 1994, Prime Minister Edouard Balladur would try and fail to negotiate a POSEICOR (Program of Specific Options for the Remoteness and Insularity of Corsica) with Brussels. The UPC accused the French government of purposefully failing to negotiate fiscal exemptions for Corsica with the EU in order to impose, in 1996, a Free Trade Zone[151]. There was a certain ambiguity in the UPC's perception of European integration, which was a development opening new perspectives for the democratic resolution of the Corsican nationalist predicament, but also a process emphasising the French government's economical neglect of Corsica.

### 4.2.3. Europe and the "legal action" rhetoric

After its departure from the Corsica Nazione coalition, the UPC was in need of new strategic resources in order to maintain its influence both within the Corsican nationalist movement and over Corsican politics. First, while the party had previously expressed its disagreement with political violence, it now officially condemned it (Colas, 2000:19). Even more than before, the UPC sought to insert its action within a set of values that were democracy, human rights, minority rights, social justice and environmental protection (Dominici, 2005:15-16). The UPC therefore fell back on the one political space where these values were being promoted : the European level. Europe was used by the UPC as a strategic tool to define itself in relation to other political forces in Corsica. Although the party did not have an MEP anymore, it still had solid and long-term connections with the European Free Alliance (EFA). The party also became active in the federation Solidarity People-Region, bringing together most of the EFA members in France[152]. It is really at this point that the UPC started to develop its European discourse as an extension of the "legal action" rhetoric. References to the EU could provide legitimacy to both the "legal action" in Corsican politics and the demand for autonomy within the broader French context. In the party's perspective, European integration and the UPC's action were mutually reinforcing processes acting for the transformation of the French state[153]. The whole French system was portrayed as disconnected from the European reality: "Europe is slowed down by France. Because Europe is primarily an institutional model conceived to organise diversity

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[149] For instance, Azores and Madeira or the Canaries benefited from the POSEIMA and the POSEICAN programs respectively.
[150] Interview Francois Alfonsi (18 Sept 2007)
[151] In accordance with the law Nb. 96-1143 of 26 December 1996 in relation to the Free Trade Zone in Corsica, small Corsican firms (up to 30 employees) are dispensed from paying trade taxes and certain social security contributions.
[152] Interview Francois Alfonsi (18 Sept 2007)
[153] Arritti, Pour la Corse, l'Europe commence en Sardaigne, 13-19 Juillet 2000 (1716)

and solidarity, as opposed to the Jacobin model which glorifies unity, indivisibility, and actually uniformity"[154]. In contrast, Corsican nationalists appeared as the champions of Europeanism, autonomy being the way forward for the necessary reform of the French state: "The struggle against the Jacobin system allows to act not only for the salvation of Corsica, but also for the modernisation of France as a whole"[155]. Still, the UPC remained under no illusion regarding the transformative power of the EU on the French system. With the creation of the Committee of the Regions, the party assessed the possibilities emerging from the regionalisation of European politics for Corsican nationalism: " What can we expect from this wave of regionalisation for the nationalist struggle in Corsica, for the recognition of the Corsican people and nation? Not much, actually, in the short term. The road leading to the French regionalisation, to the Europe of the Regions, will be long and full of obstacles"[156]. While the new kind of European politics could offer increased competences and influence to regions, it was clear to the party that the European polity was still under construction. In addition, regionalisation in itself was not an end for Corsican nationalism. Regional autonomy was only one part of the UPC's political project and needed to be accompanied by the official recognition of the Corsican people: " And if [regionalisation] guarantees a form of political autonomy for our island [...] it gives no guarantee whatsoever that the national interests of the Corsican people will be taken into account"[157].

Although the EU could not offer a direct answer to the Corsican political problem, European integration had enabled the UPC to link-up with other actors and to insert its action within larger political movements. As explained by Simeoni during his European mandate, "the issue is to find a point of convergence with other forces, in similar situations within Europe [...] And there are two axes: the axis of the islands and the axis of the peoples"[158]. This is reflective of the two aspects of the Corsican question that the UPC has sough to exploit in the European context: insularity and identity. Like many in the Corsican elite, the UPC has perceived regional cooperation with other insular regions as a way to assert the specificity of Corsica in France and in Europe. Establishing Corsica as one of Europe's Mediterranean islands, the party considered that insularity should lead to a preferential treatment from Brussels: "Europe must urgently take into account insularity and define global projects of development directly with each island [...]. These development plans must be accompanied by a regime of insular derogation with regards to European norms [...] these derogations must be sufficient to guarantee to the Corsican people the control of its destiny"[159]. The projects of cooperation between insular regions in

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[154] Arritti, La situation en Corse est le revelateur d'un mal francais, 10-16 Juin 1999 (1662)
[155] Arritti, Autonomie de la Corse, 24-30 Juin 1999 (1664)
[156] Arritti, La Region, une chance pour l'Europe ?, 4-10 Janvier 1996 (1490)
[157] Arritti, La Region, une chance pour l'Europe ?, 4-10 Janvier 1996 (1490)
[158] Kyrn, 3 February 1989
[159] Autunumia, Projet politique de l'UPC, Juin 1991

the EU, such as IMEDOC, confirmed the UPC's view. IMEDOC has been created in 1995 as a regional cooperation network formed by the authorities of the Balearics, Corsica and Sardinia[160]. The objective of the IMEDOC initiative has been to ensure the representation of the interests of the three regions in the EU and manage projects of economic, environmental and cultural cooperation between Mediterranean islands. In this network, the party has seen an opportunity to pave the way for an autonomous status for Corsica: "IMEDOC will constitute a new catalyst for the political debate in Corsica [...] an opportunity to express the local identity in an autonomous way [and] to establish the cultural differences advocated by the nationalists"[161]. The UPC has particularly favoured more cooperation with Sardinia. Although Corsica and Sardinia have had little in common historically[162], European integration has triggered a rapprochement between the two islands, featuring among the poorest regions of France and Italy respectively[163]. Corsican and Sardinian elites have seen in the European level an opportunity to change their island's relationship with their states (Bernabeau-Casanova, 2001). In 1990, the department Haute-Corse and the province of Sassari were chosen in the framework of the trans-border cooperation project INTERREG, in order to "open up the Corsican-Sardinian geographic entity". The project has then been renewed in 1994 and in 1999, these times including Tuscany. For the UPC, "any increase of the [...] cooperation will de facto reinforce the autonomous reality of Corsica or Sardinia, in the face of France and Italy, as well as in the face of Europe"[164]. Indeed, Sardinia has had regional autonomy since 1948 and highlighting the similarities between the two islands has enabled Corsican nationalists to ask for a similar degree of autonomy for Corsica.

In addition, the UPC conceived the European arena as a context where the backward ideological and political positions of the French government with regards to cultural diversity could be exposed in contrast with the standards of other member states[165]. France was presented as an archaic exception within Europe and as bound to adapt to the changing European reality through the recognition and accommodation of its internal diversity[166]. On the evidence of the comparable cases of other small nations and historic regions in Europe, an autonomous Corsica in Europe appeared not as

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[160] Sicily joined the IMEDOC in 2000, and the network is planning to include three other Mediterranean islands : Crete, Malta and Cyprus.
[161] Le Figaro, Corse : la solution europeenne, 24 Mars 1996
[162] Corsica and Sardinia have had a different fate since the 14th century : Corsica was under Genoa rule from 1284 to 1729, while the Spanish (Aragon) were in control of Sardinia from 1323 to 1713. After a short period of independence (1755-1769), Corsica was definitively integrated to France in 1789. Sardinia, on the other hand, was given to Savoy in 1718 and formed part of the Piedmonts' kingdom which then became Italy.
[163] The Corsican economy contributes to 0.3% of the French GNP, while Sardinia represents 2.2% of the Italian GNP.
[164] Arritti, Combat des Peuples : l'Union fait la force, 12-18 Octobre 2000 (1726)
[165] Arritti, "UPC Scelta Nova et Mossa Naziunale: Accord Politique d'Union", 24th January 2002 ; Interview Francois Alfonsi (18 Sept 2007)
[166] Autunumia, Projet politique de l'UPC, Juin 1991.

inconceivable but, on the contrary, demonstrably preferable to any other minority nationalist project[167]. The EU was seen as an ally particularly in the protection of linguistic diversity[168], following the adoption of the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML). The Charter was to become a pivotal reference in the UPC's discourse, both as a positive initiative in the protection of linguistic diversity in Europe and as an opportunity to expose the backwardness of the French state in its refusal to adopt minority rights[169]. Already in 1992, Corsica Nazione had proposed a motion asking the French government to sign the ECRML adopted by the Council of Europe on 22 June 1992. The motion also stated that Corsican was the official language of Corsica (Lefevre, 2002)[170]. The French government retaliated against the pressure to sign the ECRML by amending the French Constitution, stating that "the language of the Republic is French"[171]. At that time, the UPC had campaigned for the signature of the ECRML and for the protection of regional languages in France[172]. As Max Simeoni argued, "only a legal status can guarantee rights for our languages mistreated by Jacobinism [...] administrative measures do not amount to legal protection"[173]. However, it is only when Lionel Jospin became Prime Minister in 1997 that the debate on France's linguistic diversity re-emerged. On 7 May 1999, the French government finally consented to the signature of the ECRML. This victory was short-lived, as the Charter was quickly after deemed unconstitutional[174], preventing the ratification and therefore the entry into force of the ECRML. Regardless, the mere existence of the Charter was for the UPC further evidence of France's deficiencies in contrast with other member states' more progressive attitude towards cultural and linguistic diversity[175].

The UPC had derived important discursive resources from European integration, mainly to expose France's exceptional stance on internal diversity and strengthen the party's demand for autonomy and the recognition of the Corsican people. The introduction of the Euro was also seen as a positive development for the UPC, essentially because it meant a loss of national sovereignty for the French state[176]. However, not all the implications of European integration were deemed advantageous to Corsica. The

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[167] Arritti, L'UPC s'engage dans un processus de refondation,13-19 Novembre 1997 (1583); Interview Max Simeoni (19 Sept 2007); Interview Edmond Simeoni, 23rd September 2009
[168] Arritti, La politique linguistique francaise: une exception europeenne, 29 May – 3rd June 1997 (1561)
[169] Arritti, La Liste Regions et Peuples Solidaires, 5th May 1994, p.3
[170] The motion was rejected by the Assembly of Corsica (23 votes against, 22 votes for).
[171] As stated in Article 44 of the 1958 French Constitution, members of the National Parliament and members of the Government have a right to amend the Constitution.
[172] Edmond Simeoni had organised a petition to attract the attention of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament on the lack of linguistic rights in France.
[173] Arritti, L'Europe, une nouvelle dimension de lutte, 1993 (1361)
[174] "La Charte européenne des langues régionales ou minoritaires comporte des clauses contraires à la Constitution", Conseil Constitutionnel, Decision No 99-412 DC du 15 Juin 1999
[175] Arritti, "UPC Scelta Nova et Mossa Naziunale: Accord Politique d'Union", 24th January 2002
[176] Arritti, Euro: c'est un peu d'Etat francais qui disparait, 22-27 May (1610)

"steamroller of European harmonisation"[177] raised the concerns of the UPC, the EU being a "formidable technocratic machinery to destroy fiscal and economic specificities"[178]. The fiscal status of Corsica had been a contentious matter between the nationalists and the French government, as Corsica had historically benefited from specific fiscal arrangements to counter the problems linked to its insularity[179]. Yet, despite repeated demands, the Assembly of Corsica has never been granted fiscal powers. European harmonisation[180] and European competition policies made fiscal exceptions and public subsidies, one of the island's main resources, more unlikely: "In the European logic, there is no room for public investment schemes and other fiscal regimes"[181]. This shows how the UPC's assessment of the benefits of European integration for Corsica was ambivalent: "More Europe, it's more federalism but [...] more Europe, it's also more indifference"[182]. The European Council of Berlin also reminded the UPC of how much control the French government had over the funds coming from Brussels. In 1999, Corsica was removed from the list of European regions under Objective 1, following the re-evaluation of the island's GDP by the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE). Corsica's GDP was then estimated at 82 per cent of the European GDP while only regions with GDPs below 75 percent of the European GDP could be eligible for Objective 1. The UPC contested this re-evaluation, arguing that a change in the INSEE's methods of calculation had resulted in the misevaluation of the Corsican GDP[183]. The party mentioned that Spain and Italy had managed to negotiate for their insular regions to remain under Objective 1, despite an increase in their GDP. In its view, the French state had voluntarily failed to defend its interests in the European institutions, meaning that European funds were diminishing whereas Corsica's insularity required specific attention from Brussels[184]. For all its European rhetoric, the party could not ignore the reality of Corsica's economy, heavily depending on the French government for public funding and access to European funds.

Led by Edmond Simeoni, the UPC went alone in the 1998 regional elections. The party failed to go beyond the 5 percent electoral threshold in the first round, and for the

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[177] Arritti, Le gouvernement est comptable de la situation en Corse, 6-12 Juin 1996 (1512)

[178] Arritti, L'Euro est arrive !, 28 Janvier – 3 Fevrier 1999 (1643)

[179] Corsicans have been exempted from paying inheritance taxes by the 'Miot Decrees' ('Arrêtés Miot') dating back to 1801. A special fiscal regime was also put into place to compensate for the high costs involved in the transportation of goods to the island (Law of 15 November 1994). In addition to reduced value added tax on certain items, a special free trade zone was created in December 1996. Finally, Corsica receives the product of taxes levied on local sales of tobacco and alcohol.

[180] Arritti, La France est comptable de la situation en Europe, 6-12 Juin 1996 (1512)

[181] Arritti, L'Euro est arrive !, 28 Janvier – 3 Fevrier 1999 (1643)

[182] Arritti, Un Euro pour la Corse, 7 – 13 Janvier 1999 (1640)

[183] Arritti, L'Assemblee de Corse supprime sa 'commission europeenne' !, 6 – 12 Mai 2004 (1897)

[184] Arritti, Conseil Europeen de Berlin : Trahis par Paris, 8-14 Avril 1999 (1653)

first time in 15 years, did not gain representation in the Corsican Assembly[185]. The strategy aimed at raising the UPC's profile by presenting it as the defender of Corsican interests in the European arena had not been enough to stop the party's electoral decline. This is primarily because Europe was no longer a field of action and a discourse reserved to the UPC. Although a European dimension had initially been largely absent from the language of Corsican independentists, the FLNC elites had changed their attitudes towards European integration since Maastricht[186] and moved towards advocating Corsican independence within Europe, as an alternative framework to the French state[187]. In fact, the independentists' analysis of the opportunities emerging from the EU for Corsica focused primarily on the receipt of European funds (Elias, 2009:129-130). A key theme of Corsica Nazione's European discourse had become the lack of representation of Corsican interests in Brussels and the under-use of European funds on the island. Corsica Nazione was active in pushing for the creation of a Commission for European Affairs within the Corsican Assembly, and in 1999, its leader Jean-Guy Talamoni was appointed President of the new Commission. It was clear at that point that the UPC could no longer claim to be the first point of contact for the European affairs of Corsica. While Europe had been the exclusive terrain of the UPC up to the 1990s, it had now become a central issue in Corsican politics on which every political actor would position itself.

### 4.2.4. A new strategy of internationalisation

At the beginning of the 2000s, the salience of Europe diminished in the discourse of the UPC. Instead, the party's attention was turned towards local developments. Indeed, following the assassination of the prefect of Corsica on 6 February 1998, then Prime Minister Lionel Jospin had entered into direct negotiations with the Corsican Assembly. From 2000, the Matignon process was being negotiated, generating much expectation among Corsican nationalists[188]. Because it did not sit in the Assembly of Corsica, the UPC

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[185] Following a complaint from Edmond Simeoni, the State Council cancelled the results of the 1998 elections for frauds. The subsequent elections in 1999 did not change much for the UPC which got 4.96% of votes in the first round, while Corsica Nazione obtained 5.23% of votes and 8 seats in the second round.

[186] The Maastricht Treaty caused a split within the FLNC tendency, when the MPA declared itself in favour of the Treaty seeing it as a step towards a federal Europe, the disappearance of the nation-state and the legal and institutional recognition of national identities. At the other extreme, the ANC campaigned for 'no' vote in the referendum on the Maastricht Treaty, arguing that the costs of economic integration as managed by states and transnational business outweighed the as yet unsubstantial opportunities for the re-assertion of national self-determination. In between, the aCN, like the UPC, campaigned for abstention, justifying their position by saying that "an analysis of the Treaty shows clearly that no derogations have been given to Corsica, either in the cultural, fiscal or political domains" (Elias, 2006:202-204).

[187] U Ribombu, "Presentation du Nouvel Executif", 9th July 1998.

[188] This process led to the signature of the Matignon Agreement on 29 July 2000, proposing broad changes that would result in a new form of autonomy for Corsica. The key provisions of the Agreement included the transfer of some limited legislative powers to the Corsican Assembly, the

was excluded from the preparation of Corsica's new institutional status, leaving leaders of Corsica Nazione[189] to put forward nationalist demands. The Prime Minister's acceptance to negotiate with nationalist actors who did not condemn political violence had put into question the validity of the "legal action" advocated by the UPC. Indeed, despite the government's insistence that it would not respond to violence, it was the power struggle between the FLNC and the French State that had led the government to revise Corsica's institutional status. Nevertheless, the aftermaths of the Matignon process have also had consequences for the independentists, who became increasingly divided between those wishing to pursue the national liberation through political violence and those in favour of negotiating with the French government (Dominici, 2005). In contrast, the UPC had long opted for democratic strategy over clandestine action and remained largely unaffected by this debate. On 29 January 2000, the party merged with two smaller organisation, Scelta Nova and A Mossa Naziunale[190], and was later renamed Partitu di a Nazione Corsa (PNC). The party's leadership changed too, as the Simeoni brothers had distanced themselves from the UPC/PNC since 1999[191]. The PNC was now led by younger party members, organised around Francois Alfonsi and Jean-Christophe Angelini. This did not however involve a change in the party's programmatic profile, as the new generation of party elites mobilised around a demand for the full autonomy of Corsica and a strong opposition to any form of violence[192]. In 2002, the PNC took part in the legislative elections for the French National Assembly. These elections are usually overlooked by minority nationalist parties, as a two-round majoritarian electoral system makes political representation nearly impossible for these parties. This was an electoral strategy to gain visibility as the UPC's rival Corsica Nazione - the only Corsican nationalist party sitting in the Assembly of Corsica – would not compete in the legislative elections. The PNC's results, just below 5 percent of the votes[193], were not improved but the elections had still proved to be a platform where the party could project itself as a leading force of the Corsican nationalist movement.

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mandatory instruction of Corsican in elementary schools, a new system of tax credits and a public investment scheme. This Matignon Agreement was reworked into a law and adopted by the Parliament in January 2002, albeit with modifications. Indeed, the Senate and the Constitutional Court imposed several revisions of the initial document. The Senate, using its power of amendment, asked for the mandatory nature of Corsican teaching to be removed and replaced by "optional teaching during normal school hours". In addition, the Constitutional Council only permitted a diluted version of the initial proposal, enabling the Corsican Assembly to adapt the implementation of laws for a fixed period of time, subject in each case to the acceptance of the Parliament. The final document on the new status of Corsica contained no reference to the Corsican people, although such official recognition was the main demand of Corsican nationalists.

[189] Jean-Guy Talamoni and Paul Quastana, elected members of the Assembly of Corsica.

[190] Arritti, "UPC Scelta Nova et Mossa Naziunale: Accord Politique d'Union", 24th January 2002

[191] Interview Max Simeoni (19 Sept 2007)

[192] Arritti, Faire du PNC un outil strategique majeur au service d'une Corse souveraine, 10-16 October 2002 (1822)

[193] The PNC got 4.58 percent of the votes. The independentists of A Manca Naziunale also participated in the legislative elections and obtained 1.8 percent of the votes.

In 2003, a referendum took place in Corsica regarding the administrative reunification of the island's two departments, Haute-Corse and Corse-du-Sud, and the creation of the Territorial Community of Corsica[194]. This was the last part of the reform envisioned by Lionel Jospin, even though a change in government meant that new Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin and then Minister of the Interior Nicolas Sarkozy organised the referendum. The government was supportive of the reform, the Corsican nationalist movement was for once relatively unified in favouring the "yes" vote, but it was unexpectedly rejected by 51 percent of the islanders[195]. The arrest of Yvan Colonna - accused of murdering the prefect of Corsica in 1998 - just days before the referendum was said to have influenced Corsicans away from the perspective of more autonomy[196]. In addition, the traditional clans had turned against the reform, presumably because the reunification of Corsica into one single politico-administrative entity would have reduced the number of elected seats on the island[197]. In any case, the results of the Corsican referendum were perceived as the islanders' reaction against the political violence of the FLNC (Crettiez & Sommier, 2002:31). This anti-violence climate triggered the emergence of a status quo among Corsican nationalists around the need for unity and for a common nationalist programme. On 11 November 2003, the FLNC-Union des Combattants declared a truce which opened the way for an electoral alliance between the PNC and Corsica Nazione – Unione Naziunale - in preparation for the 2004 regional elections[198]. The coalition's programme included measures for an increase of European funds for Corsica and a better representation of Corsican interests in European policy-making[199]. This new common ground indicated that the whole Corsican nationalist movement, not just the UPC, was now committed to enhancing Corsica's status within the EU. The alliance, led by Edmond Simeoni, received 17.34 percent of the votes: a disappointment in the light of the near 25 percent obtained by the last alliance in 1992, but also in comparison with the independentists' score in the 1999 elections, 16.77 percent. These elections had nonetheless enabled the PNC to reintegrate the Assembly of Corsica. With two regional seats and participation in the third largest group in the Assembly, the party was now back as one of the main political forces on the island[200].

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[194] Law Nb. 2003-486 of 10 June 2003 organising the consultation of Corsican voters on the modification of the institutional organisation of Corsica
[195] According to Arsh Opinion on 23 April 2003, 62% would vote 'yes', and the Sofres poll done on 5-7 June predicted 55% of 'yes' votes while for the Ipsos study of 11 June, it would be 54%.
[196] Interview Francois Alfonsi (18 Sept 2007)
[197] Interview Max Simeoni (19 Sept 2007)
[198] The main members of Unione Naziunale were Independenza-Corsica Nazione, PNC and A Chjama Naziunale.
[199] Unione Naziunale (2004) Lista d'Unione Naziunale: Un Votu per l'Unione, Un Passu pe a Nazione, Bastia: Unione Naziunale.
[200] The Unione Naziunale coalition secured eight seats in the Corsican Assembly out of a total 51 but collapsed in early 2008 due to internal rivalries and disagreements over the armed struggle within the Corsican nationalist movement.

This change of fortune for the PNC coincided with a new international direction: "the strategy of international cooperation started by our movement [...] will now be enhanced"[201]. Although the UPC had somewhat neglected the opportunities arising from the European Free Alliance (EFA) since the end of Simeoni's European mandate, the PNC now seemed eager to maximise its involvement in the Alliance. The PNC then multiplied the meetings with the MEPs of the EFA, which publicly took position in favour of Corsican nationalists on domestic issues such as the teaching of Corsican in primary schools[202], changes in the electoral system[203] or the privatisation of the Societe Nationale Maritime Corse Mediterranee[204]. The EFA was a strategic asset for the PNC within the Corsican nationalist movement since rival Corsica Nazione had been refused EFA membership due to its support for the FLNC's armed struggle. In addition, PNC's leader Francois Alfonsi made an alliance with the Greens to represent the EFA on their list for the 2004 European elections[205]. His 16th position on the list did not earn him a seat, but it laid the ground for another alliance with the Green Party in the 2009 European elections. This collaboration would prove to be more profitable and yield the PNC a seat in the European Parliament. For now, featuring on the Green list served as a way of re-asserting the PNC as the representative of minority nationalist and regional parties in France through the Region-People Solidarity federation[206]. In December 2005, Corsica was granted an extra 30 million Euros on top of the Objective 2 funding for 2007-2013, to help with the transition from Objective 1. The PNC was able to take some credit for this funding. The EFA had organised a meeting between the party leaders and the President of the European Commission a few months before in order to explain the alleged miscalculation of Corsica's GDP[207]. This was an important achievement for the PNC, as the leaders of Corsica Nazione had come to Brussels in 2003 but failed to secure any additional funding from the Commission.

The debate on the European Constitution was an occasion for the PNC to re-assert its Europeanism. In its referendum campaign, the PNC's arguments in favour of a "yes" were based on the significance of the European Constitution for the nationalist struggle, for the protection of minority languages, the rights of peoples, the improvement of democracy and the weakening of the legitimacy of the French state[208]. Unlike Corsica Nazione, still essentially concerned with Corsica's receipt of European funds, the PNC

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[201] Arritti, Faire du PNC un outil strategique majeur au service d'une Corse souveraine, 10-16 Octobre 2002 (1822)
[202] Arritti, La France montree du doigt par l'ALE, 16 – 22 Janvier 2003 (1834)
[203] Arritti, Pour l'ALE, « La France d'en haut tue la diversite », 13 – 19 Fevrier 2003 (1838)
[204] Arritti, Participation majoritaire de la puissance publique au capital de la SNCM : A la demande du PNC, l'ALE interroge l'Europe, 13 – 19 Octobre 2005 (1964)
[205] The Greens list obtained 3.06% in the first round, 7.41% in the second round and 6 seats.
[206] Interview Francois Alfonsi (July 2003) in Dominici, 2005.
[207] Arritti, Fonds Structurels, le PNC rencontre Jose Manuel Barroso, 9-15 June 2005 (1950)
[208] Arritti, Auropa: Avvene, 7 – 13 Mars 2005 (1937)

was willing to play a role in the construction of Europe and influence the trajectory of European integration[209]. At the same time, the party was well aware of the entrenchment of state interests in European policy-making: "Brussels gives the impression of disengaging itself from the regional policy and giving it back to each member state"[210]. The PNC was also clear about the possibilities for EU intervention in the face of the French state: "Europe, as it stands, does not have any direct power to improve the legal status of the island [...] It is within the French system that Corsica lives its present and plays its future"[211]. In the context of this pessimistic assessment of the EU, the response of the European institutions to the Basque conflict inspired a new strategy to the leaders of the PNC.

In 2004, the PNC started adopting the language of conflict resolution and tried to mobilise the widest audience (and not necessarily nationalist partisans) around the start of a peace process in Corsica[212]. This reframing of the Corsican issue was an attempt to use political violence as an incentive for institutional change, while taking advantage of the clean democratic record of the PNC to lead the peace process negotiations with the government. Unsurprisingly, Corsica Nazione was in total disagreement with the PNC taking leadership of the peace process, arguing that a resolution could only be found with the actors of the conflict, i.e. the FLNC[213]. The PNC used the European context to provide resonance to the so-called Corsican peace process by stressing the similarities between the Corsican political situation and the conflicts undergoing in the Basque Country and Northern Ireland. In both cases, the international community intervened to help reach a political solution between minority nationalists and their national governments[214]. By portraying the Corsican political situation as a conflict, and promoting the start of a peace process, the PNC tried to raise the attention of the European community in order to put pressure on the French government[215]. Although the PNC reproved the attacks of the FLNC, it used security arguments in an effort to embarrass the French government in front of the international community and open up a room for dialogue[216]. Rather than leading a minority rights campaign, the party tried to expose the inability of the French government to maintain political stability within its borders. Yet, the strategy of the PNC found little success with the French government, which had not adopted the language of conflict resolution in relation to Corsica and had been unwilling to re-open the "Corsican file" since

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[209] Interview Jean-Christophe Angelini (November 2005) in Arritti, 17-23 November 2005 (1969)
[210] Arritti, La Corse et l'Europe 'elargie', 7 – 13 Mars 2005 (1937)
[211] Arritti, La Corse et la France, l'Europe et le Monde, 16 – 22 Juin 2005 (1951)
[212] Arritti, L'heure est a la relance du processus de paix, pas a la relance de la clandestinite, 1 – 7 Juin 2006 (1996)
[213] Arritti, Un evenement important, 30 November – 6 December 2006 (2018)
[214] Arritti, Le parlement europeen legitimise le dialogue avec ETA !, 6-8 Novembre 2006 (2014)
[215] Arritti, L'heure est a la relance du processus de paix, pas a la relance de la clandestinite, 1 – 7 Juin 2006 (1996)
[216] Interview Francois Alfonsi (18 Sept 2007)

the failure of the 2003 referendum. The party nevertheless achieved its objective within the friendly audience of the EFA, which now supports the peace process in Corsica, as well as the Basque Country and Ireland[217]. All in all, this strategy was the latest attempt by the PNC to use the European arena to find a place within the Corsican nationalist movement, while putting forward its project of autonomy to the French government.

## 4.3. Summary of European responses

Although France is one of the founding members of the EEC, the UPC has only started showing an interest for Europe since the end of the 1980s. The influence of Max Simeoni during its European mandate has played a big part in the introduction of European themes in the discourse and programme of the UPC. Support for European integration has first stemmed from its potential to facilitate the increase of Corsica's autonomy by weakening French centralisation. The EU has also provided a context where the refusal of the French government to recognise the rights of the Corsican people could be exposed in contrast with the standards of other member states. More than European institutions themselves, it is the institutional arrangements of other European regions that the UPC has used to legitimise its demand for self-government and highlight the anachronistic nature of the unitary French state. The party has however never gone as far as devising a comprehensive European policy detailing what would be the place and role of Corsica within the Europe of the Regions. It has in fact not seemed to consider the EU as an alternative to Corsica's link with the French state, at least not in the foreseeable future. Rather, the UPC's involvement with the EU has been motivated by the prospect that it would change, rather than replace, the relationship between Corsica and France.

This pragmatism in the UPC's European discourse can be explained by the fact that, since the 1960s, the Corsican nationalist movement has been structured essentially around the relation between Corsica and the French state. Within this paradoxical relationship, the French government is the only referent of Corsican nationalists, being both the enemy and mediator in the nationalist struggle (Lefebvre, 1992). European perceptions of the UPC/PNC have been shaped within this frame of reference. For instance, there is a fundamental contradiction in the programme of Corsican nationalists, between the demand for self-government and for public subsidies from the French government. The same inconsistencies have been transposed to the party's analysis of the concrete implications of European integration. While European funds have become one of the island's main resources, the EU also prevents investment scheme and other public subsidies from the French government. The party has on many occasions stressed

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[217] http://www.e-f-a.org/home.php

the perceived indifference of the EU for the island's specific needs, which could only reinforce the economical neglect of Corsica among French regions. Yet, Corsican nationalists have clearly found it difficult to mobilise at the European level and to have their voice heard in Brussels. Simeoni's MEP seat was a significant achievement for the UPC (and minority nationalists in France) but has proved limited as a channel to bring exposure to the Corsican predicament. Despite getting help from the European Free Alliance, the UPC has rarely been in direct contact with European institutions in order to defend Corsican interests.

Europe has however turned out to be a strategic tool for the local mobilisation of the party. Europeanism has progressively become a defining feature of the UPC/PNC, from which it has gained political visibility and credibility. The UPC's representation in the European Parliament, if only symbolic after Simeoni's mandate, gave a unique status to the party in Corsican politics. These connections at the European level have helped the UPC assert its local influence, despite being in electoral decline. Furthermore, in the context of the power struggle among nationalists, the European profile of the UPC/PNC has helped establish the party as the democratic option within the Corsican movement. As explained in this chapter, the Corsican nationalist space has been divided between two competing strategies, the parties of "clandestine action" whose political violence is the engine behind the successive institutional arrangements granted to the island, and the parties of "legal action" whose distance from this violence puts in a position to negotiate with the French government. At one time, this distinction mirrored the two branches of Corsican nationalism, led by the independentists of Corsica Nazione and the autonomists of the UPC/PNC, but it has become blurry in the last decade. Regardless, the dynamics remain unchanged, and Europe has played a role along them with regards to the internal organisation of the Corsican nationalist movement. The European mandate of Max Simeoni, as well as the party's involvement with the European Free Alliance, has enabled the UPC/PNC to insert its action within larger political movements at the European level, thereby validating the "legal action", i.e. the use of democratic means to conduct the nationalist struggle in Corsica. As such, European integration has provided the UPC/PNC with additional means to maintain a durable and stable presence within Corsican politics.

## Chapter 5 – Abertzaleen Batasuna

This chapter analyses the significance of European integration for Northern Basque nationalists – referred to as the Abertzale - by focusing on the party Abertzaleen Batasuna (AB). It starts with an overview of the Northern Basque nationalist movement to follow its development and the process of unification which led to the creation of AB, as well as its relations with the parties of the Southern Basque Country. Basque nationalism on the two sides of the French-Spanish border shows distinct features, demonstrating how strongly it has been conditioned by the political, social, economic and cultural evolution of the two respective states within which it is inserted. It is, however, also true – given the greater political strength of nationalism in the Basque territories of Spain – that the latter has had a direct influence on the movement in the Northern Basque Country, also known as Iparralde. The chapter then goes on to survey party activity since the 1980s[218] in order to establish the relevance of developments at the European level for AB's mobilisation. It will show that European integration has never gained prominence in the concerns of AB, which has made few attempts to engage in European politics. Instead, the Abertzale have invested all their resources on mobilising local actors around the demand for a Basque department and contributing to the "national construction" of the Basque Country. Several features specific to the Northern Basque nationalist movement - such as its lack of organisation, internal divisions and reluctance to condemn ETA - provide some explanation in relation to this limited interest in the EU. But the lack of institutional recognition of the Northern Basque Country has also limited the opportunities that AB could derive from European integration, not least those related to cross-border cooperation.

### 5.1. The Northern Basque nationalist movement

The first nationalist demands emerged in Iparralde[219], the Northern Basque Country, at the beginning of the 1930s. A local member of the clergy, the Abbe Pierre Lafitte, started mobilising around a demand for decentralisation and an official status for Euskara, the Basque language[220]. When the Spanish civil war broke out, however, the Northern Basque elites became hostile to the large number of Southern Basque

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[218] The chapter will start by surveying the party activity of EMA and EB, the two organisations that formed Abertzaleen Batasuna in 1992.

[219] Euskadi, the historic Basque country, is divided into Hegoalde (southern Spanish part) and Iparralde (northern French part).

[220] A document entitled "Eskual Herriaren Alde", published on 20 November 1933, stated the principles of his Eskualerriste movement and soon after Aintzina, the movement's magazine, was created (Larronde, 1991).

refugees[221], mainly because of their controversial alliance with the communists[222] (Jacob, 1994:93-96). This hostility quickly contaminated the very idea of Basque nationalism, forcing Lafitte and his supporters to take a back seat and concentrate on aiding the refugees. After the Second World War, Northern Basque nationalists re-emerged briefly when four Basque candidates participated in the 1945 local elections[223]. Despite their marginal electoral performance, they convinced local notable and independent MP Jean Etcheverry-Ainchart to present a project for an "Autonomous Status of the Northern Basque Country in the French Republic" to the National Assembly (Gurrutxaga, 2005:77). The proposal was rejected even before being put to the vote in parliament[224]. During the 1960s, under the influence of refugees from a new terrorist organisation called Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), the Northern Basque nationalist movement evolved from its Catholic and clerical origins into a secular political movement (Jacob, 1994:129-137). The role played by ETA refugees in the development of Northern Basque nationalism would create lasting links between the Abertzale and the organisation's public front, Herri Batasuna. On 15 April 1963, the Charter of Itxassou was signed, asserting that the Basques were one people, nation and democracy, and calling for the right to unity[225]. As the founding manifesto of Northern Basque nationalism, the Charter expressed the determination to achieve the unification of the Basque territories of Spain and France in the framework of the "Europe of the Peoples" (Loyer, 2003:103). On the basis of these proposals, Enbata, the first Northern Basque nationalist party, was created. The newly founded party took part in the departmental elections of 1964 and 1967, and in the parliamentary elections of 1967, gathering nearly 5% of the votes.

At the beginning of the 1970s, Enbata radicalised its discourse around the theme of the national liberation of the Basque people and became closer to ETA (Jacob, 1994:170-179). The French government ordered the dismantlement of the party shortly after, leading to the implosion of the Basque nationalist movement (Crettiez & Sommier, 2002:45). The following outbreak of violence in the Northern Basque Country – in the form of the pro-independence military organisation Iparretarrak (IK) – divided the Abertzale between those conceiving violence as a valid instrument of struggle and those rejecting it

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[221] An estimated 194,000 refugees flowed in France in three stages corresponding to the battles occurring in the Southern Basque Country between August 1936 and June 1938.
[222] The Spanish Basque Catholics had made a tactical alliance with Communist and anarchical forces in defence of republican institutions during the Civil War. This did not go down well with the conservative Northern Basque elite.
[223] Marc Legasse run as a 'Basque nationalist' in the canton of Saint-Jean-de-Luz (95 votes), Jospeh Darmendrail as a 'Basque nationalist' in the canton of Bayonne Nord-Est (549 votes), Pierre Landaburu as 'Nationalist Basque' in the canton of Biarritz (59 votes) and Andre Ospital as an 'Independent' in the canton of Bayonne Nord-Ouest (57 votes).
[224] Jean Etcheverry-Ainchart introduced the proposal before a committee of the National Assembly working on the new French constitution, where it was rejected as encouraging separatism.
[225] Enbata, Charter of Itxassou, 15th April 1963, Itxassou.

in favour of peaceful democratic means (Gurrutxaga, 2005:78)[226]. The only legal alternative to IK was Euskal Herriko Alderdi Sozialista (EHAS), a party advocating the end of French colonialism and the reunification of the Basque Country[227]. Following IK's physical intimidation of EHAS leaders, however, the party stopped its activity in Iparralde on 5 May 1981[228], leaving IK to be the sole carrier of Northern Basque nationalist ideas. In the following years, the intensity of IK's violence increased to the point of firing at policemen and breaking into government prisons[229]. The French government responded with a massive police presence in the region and the arrest of IK leader Philippe Bidart in 1988 sent the organisation into disarray.

The actions of IK had served to discredit Basque nationalism not only in the eyes of the French government, but also with regard to the Basque population (Jacob, 1994:329). Hence, the mid-1980s saw the rise of Basque moderation and of political parties which sought to distance themselves from Basque violence. First, Ezkerreko Mugimendu Abertzalea (EMA) was created in preparation for the 1986 legislative and regional elections[230]. The ambition of EMA was to unify Northern Basque nationalists behind the national liberation and independence of the Northern Basque Country. Yet, the party refused to condemn the armed struggle[231] and this limited its appeal as a unifying force able to overcome the stigma of association with IK[232]. Political mobilisation, in the

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[226] Iparretarrak, literally meaning "those of ETA of the North", was never connected to ETA, although the two organisations shared similar ideas and objectives.

[227] As the first trans-national Basque party, EHAS had been created in 1975 through the merging of two parties of socialist ideology, Herriko Alderdi Sozialista in France and Euskal Alderdi Sozialista in Spain.

[228] Euskaldunak 81 (May 1981), p.2; The Southern Basque section of EHAS had already been integrated into Herri Batasuna in 1978. Since then, EHAS had maintained a presence in Iparralde but stopped participating in elections.

[229] In July 1986, IK opened fire on two CRS guarding the Palais de Justice of Bayonne , and on 13 December 1986, a team of IK commandos called 'Commando Didier' (after IK member Didier Lafitte who had been killed by the police three years before) succeeded in breaking into the prison of Pau and liberating IK members Marie-France Heguy and Gabriel Mouesca, who were serving sentences of four and thirteen years respectively, for their actions with IK.

[230] The Herri Taldeak groups (HT) had started mobilising around the idea of a reunified and socialist Basque Country, in view of the 1986 legislative and regional elections. While the HT supported the armed struggle of ETA in the South and IK in the North, they no longer wanted to limit their nationalist ambitions to "the political ghetto of violence" (Ateka 20 (May 1985)). Hence, they created EMA as a self-defined nationalist-socialist party acting for the recognition of the Basque people as one nation in two different political contexts and for its right to self-determination (Ateka 29 (February 1986)).

[231] In reality, the party's positions were very close to the ones of IK, although the two organisations diverged on the role of violence as a tool for Basque nationalism. At its first general assembly, EMA clarified its position with regards to the armed struggle by establishing that (1) the first political violence was that of the state, (2) the armed struggle was a political struggle, (3) there were different means of action available to the Abertzale and (4) EMA would be an exclusively open and public organisation (Jacob, 1994:341).

[232] All the more since the actions of the Grupos Antiterrorista de Liberacion (GAL), death squads targeting ETA in the Northern Basque Country, had reinforced the strong anti-violence feelings of the Northern Basque population. Between 1983 and 1987, the GAL targeted ETA members and supporters who had found refuge in the Northern Basque Country, caused the deaths of 27 persons, the majority ETA refugees but also civilians. Following an investigation by the Spanish newspaper El Mundo, it was revealed that the GAL had connections with Spanish government

Northern Basque Country, was initially conceived as a means to prevent the consolidation of Iparretarak as a symbolic referent for Basque nationalism (Letamendia, 2000). Unlike what can be observed in the Corsican case, the political dimension of the Northern Basque movement was never subordinated to the military dimension represented by IK. A significant number of Abertzale did not sympathise with the radicalism of EMA's demands and called for a more moderate nationalist agenda[233]. This led to the creation of Euskal Batasuna (EB) in 1986 by Jakes Abeberry and others interested in building a gradualist agenda for achievable changes[234]. The party mobilised for the territorial recognition of the Northern Basque Country and an official status for Euskara, the Basque language[235]. EB's position on political violence remained ambiguous: the party was strongly opposed to the use of violence in the Northern Basque Country and condemned the actions of IK, but it "understood" ETA's fight in the South. In fact, EB's criticism of IK mirrored the position of Herri Batasuna (HB) and ETA, according to which Iparralde should not be a front of the armed struggle[236]. This understanding of political violence as a valid strategy in one context and inappropriate in another became fundamental to the Abertzale of the Northern Basque Country in the 1990s. While the Northern Basque movement grew to unequivocally condemn IK's actions, there would be little questioning of the legitimacy of ETA's struggle.

A major novelty in the Northern Basque political landscape was the arrival of political parties from the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (CAPV)[237]. In the past, HB had close contacts with Northern Basque nationalists but had never directly engaged with French politics. In contrast, moderate Basque nationalist parties started becoming active in Iparralde following the entry of Spain in the EU. Eusko Alkartasuna (EA) opened an office in Bayonne in 1987 and started taking part in French elections under the name EA-Iparralde. This move triggered a redefinition of moderate Basque

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officials. In the 1994 trial, it was established that the GAL were funded by the Spanish Ministry of the Interior when the Socialists were in government (Woodworth, 2001).

[233] Enbata, Editorial, 13 March 1986 (913)

[234] Enbata, 29 Mai 1986 (924)

[235] Enbata, Euskal Batasuna, 17 Juillet 1986 (931)

[236] Initially, there was no conflict between IK and ETA. According to the strategy of the "single front", the presence of armed organisations on each side of the border was a reflection of the existence of a single people and a single fight, albeit with different methods and rhythms. This changed in the 1980s, when ETA became critical of the struggle led by IK. ETA had decided to cease political activity in the Northern Basque Country, replacing the theorisation of the "single front" by that of the "priority front": until self-determination was achieved in the South, the priority of the struggle would be centred exclusively on these territories (Jacob, 1994:274). Within this conception, the Northern Basque Country was destined to be a sanctuary, i.e. a place of relative safety for ETA members, and it should therefore not be a front of the armed struggle. This strategic change in ETA's position was also an attempt to avoid provoking French authorities, which had become harsher towards ETA members since the 1980s, denying them political refugee status and facilitating extraditions to Spain.

[237] In 1979, three provinces of the Southern Basque Country (Biscaye, Alava, Guipuzcoa) formed the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country. The province of Navarre, while being part of the historic territory, refused to be associated with the other three provinces and gained its own autonomy status through the creation of the Foral Community of Navarre.

nationalism around the (re-)construction of the Basque Country, made of its 7 historic provinces, in the EU (Izquierdo, 2001:167-171). This prompted the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV) – the dominant political party in the CAPV - to open a Northern section, the Parti National Basque (PNB), in 1991[238]. Most of the Abertzale however favoured the development of the Northern Basque nationalist movement independently of its Spanish counterpart. Also, Northern Basque nationalists were not ready to officially condemn the struggle led by ETA. This was a point of disagreement with EA and the PNV which created difficulties for electoral alliances within the movement. After an encouraging electoral performance in the 1992 regional and cantonal elections - the overall Abertzale vote in the Basque Country was 9.98 percent – EMA and EB formed a political platform called Abertzaleen Batasuna (AB). Left out of the Abertzaleen Batasuna platform, EA-Iparralde and the PNB failed to establish a strong electoral base in Iparralde, participating only intermittently to French local elections. Since 1997, AB has promoted the creation of a Basque department as well as the official recognition of the Basque language, Euskara[239]. Following an electoral breakthrough in 2001, AB ceased to be a political platform and became its own political party[240]. With more than 150 municipal councillors, 16 mayors and even a seat in the departmental council[241], AB emerged as a steady force in the Basque political scene. Internal divisions appeared when some party members, led by Xabi Larralde, left AB to join the newly created Batasuna. As the new public front of ETA, Batasuna chose to advocate a full autonomous status for the Northern Basque Country. Undoubtedly weakened by the scission, AB has maintained its focus on the demand for a department but its electoral performances remained affected by the presence of Batasuna - hugely subsidised from the South - in Northern Basque elections.

The fragmentation of the Basque movement is reminiscent of the divisions among Corsican nationalists. AB, EA-Iparralde, the PNB and Batasuna have divergent positions regarding the use of political violence and the best strategy to achieve autonomy (demand for a Basque department vs. right to an immediate autonomous status) but also in relation to the "domination of the South". Recently, Northern Basque nationalists have started to work jointly, mainly due to the weakness of their electoral results. Euskal Herria Bai, a new nationalist coalition has been formed by AB, EA-Iparralde and Batasuna in the 2007 legislative elections, although the PNB declined taking part in it. This alliance is clearly

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[238] Yet, the PNV only started taking part in French elections in 1996.
[239] Gara, Entretien avec Jakes Abeberry, 9th October 1999.
[240] AB's membership was essentially composed of members of EMA and EB, as well as several independent Abertzale.
[241] Alain Iriart was elected Mayor of St Pierre d'Irube, a town in the suburbs of Bayonne, and Jean-Michel Galant became the representative of the canton of St Etienne de Baigorry in the departmental council.

motivated by strategic reasons and does not suggest that a new common ground is emerging for the nationalist struggle in the Northern Basque Country.

## 5.2. Abertzaleen Batasuna

### 5.2.1. The arrival of nationalist parties from the CAPV

At the start of the 1980s, the European dimension of Northern Basque nationalism was pretty much inexistent. At a time when most minority nationalists over Europe were establishing contacts abroad and the European Free Alliance was being created, the Abertzale remained impervious to developments at the European level. The Northern Basque nationalist movement was in a critical state and the Abertzale struggled to distance themselves from the shadow of Iparretarak (IK). Mainly as a result of IK's intimidation tactics (Jacob, 1994:225), Basque nationalists had not taken part in French elections since 1978[242]. This lack of political participation combined with episodes of political violence had contributed to the marginalisation of Basque nationalism. The priority was therefore to establish the Northern Basque nationalist movement as a positive, and above all democratic, local political force. EMA was created for the 1986 regional elections, quickly followed by EB, and by the second half of the 1980s, Northern Basque nationalists were present in all the local elections. Once re-organised politically, the Abertzale started paying attention to European integration, a process with very tangible effects for the Northern Basque nationalist movement.

More specifically, Europe had transformed the position of the moderate branch of Southern Basque nationalism towards the Northern Basque Country. The Southern Basque nationalist movement had for decades been divided between moderate organisations opposed to political violence, led by the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV), and a more radical branch centred around ETA and its public front, Herri Batasuna. Another difference between the two dimensions was their distinct positions vis-à-vis Iparralde as a territory. Historically, Iparralde had been conceived by the PNV as a refuge during the Civil War and a sanctuary for Basque nationalists under the Franco regime. The PNV had in fact never integrated Iparralde into its political project, either short or long term. In contrast, ETA and Herri Batasuna had always considered Iparralde an integrant part of the Basque Country, which they saw as a territory occupied by the Spanish and

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[242] When EMA took part in the 1986 elections, it had been almost ten years since a Northern Basque nationalist party had faced the public vote. The last elections to which the Abertzale had participated were the 1978 legislative elections, where EHAS obtained an average of 3.89 percent over the districts of the Northern Basque Country. Across the Northern Basque Country, EMA's score was 3.77 percent in the legislative elections and 4.21 percent in the regional elections (Enbata, 20 March 1986 (914) and 27 March 1986 (915)). This electoral performance was similar to that of EHAS in 1978 or even Enbata in 1967, proving that there was a small but stable electorate for Basque nationalist ideas.

French states. ETA's definition of the Basque territory goes some way into explaining the Abertzale's support for the organisation, despite their uncertainties about political violence as a strategy[243]. In any case, a change in moderate Basque nationalism occurred with the combination of two factors: when Spain became an EU member state in 1986 and when, in the same year, Carlos Garaikoetxea left the PNV to create Eusko Alkartasuna (EA). The ambition of EA was to depart from the essentially CAPV-centred discourse of the PNV in order to attract the electorate favouring the reunification and independence of the Basque Country, but opposed to the use of violence. EA renewed with the rhetoric of "Zazpiak Bat", meaning "Seven in One" and referring to the reunification of the seven provinces constitutive of the historic Basque Country, of which three are in France and four in Spain. By altering the significance of the French-Spanish border, European integration had made this political project, i.e. the (re-)construction of the Basque Country, acceptable for a moderate minority nationalist party, albeit as a long-term goal (Izquierdo, 2001:167-171).

In practice, this re-orientation of moderate Basque nationalism towards ideas of reunification and independence meant that EA, and a few years later the PNV, became active on the Northern Basque political scene. The PNV and EA's presence on both sides of the border enabled the parties to draw new imaginary spaces for their political project and nationalist aspirations (Izquierdo, 2001). Still, it is worth pointing out that neither EA nor the PNV would ever make a real effort to pull their weight in French local elections[244] and to adapt their programmes to the specificities of Iparralde[245]. Their interest in the latter remained essentially as a discursive resource for political debates taking place in the CAPV and for the defence of the construction of the Basque Country within Europe (Izquierdo, 2001). Still, while engaging in Northern Basque politics, EA and the PNB introduced the Abertzale to the possibilities emerging from "the participation of both parts of Euskadi, separated by the French-Spanish border, in the same European institutions"[246]. The seven provinces of the historic Basque Country now had a chance of being represented in the same political assembly, the European Parliament. The European concept of cross-border region also opened significant new avenues for Basque nationalism and provided an unprecedented institutional framework for the links existing within the Basque Country[247]. With both Spain and France in the EU, cross-border cooperation was to become easier and greater, despite the limitations imposed by the French and Spanish governments. These were just the premises of a European discourse but, unlike EA which went on to build its identity as a Basque political party around the

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[243] Interview Jean-Noel "Textx" Etcheverry, 11th September 2009
[244] EA-Iparralde and the PNB do not take part in all the municipal, cantonal, departmental and legislative elections and, unlike AB, make no effort to present candidates in all the electoral districts constitutive of the Northern Basque Country.
[245] Interview Jean-Noel "Textx" Etcheverry, 11th September 2009
[246] Enbata, Une Chance ?, 2 Janvier 1986 (903) ; Interview Peio Etcheverry-Ainchart, 4 December 2007
[247] Enbata, Euskal Batasuna, 17 Juillet 1986 (931)

idea of Europe (Gonzalez, 1999), EMA and EB did not expand on these general postulates. Their analysis of the advantages of European integration remained for the most part centred on its potential to weaken the Spanish and French governments: "the construction of Europe [will] weaken the dogma of absolute sovereignty of our two jailer states"[248]. Like most minority nationalists in France, EMA and EB gave their support to the candidacy of the Corsican Max Simeoni on the Greens list for the 1989 European elections[249]. The Abertzale were however keen to stress that European integration was a means to achieve their nationalist goals, *not* an end for their political project[250]. This was clearly directed to the PNB and EA-Iparralde, both seeing the EU as the only institutional framework within which the Basque Country could be reunited. Northern Basque nationalists were more reserved in their assessment of the opportunities emerging from European integration, no doubt influenced by Herri Batasuna's strong rejection of the EU.

In the 1988 legislative and cantonal elections, EMA, EA-Iparralde and EB presented joint candidates in the Basque electoral districts. The three parties campaigned for the creation of a Basque department and the official status of the Basque language, under the slogan "Europe now gives us a chance to exist as a people"[251]. As an average over the cantons constitutive of the Northern Basque Country, Basque nationalists received 5.85 percent in the legislative elections and 7.49 percent in the cantonal elections[252]. After the success of this first electoral alliance – a 2 percent increase from EMA's score two years earlier - the parties joined forces again for the municipal elections of 1989, gathering 9.26 percent on average. Nevertheless, the question of political violence surfaced to disrupt the fragile unity of the Northern Basque nationalist movement. On 12 January 1988, EA had signed the Ajuria Enea pact condemning ETA's violence and this was causing tensions between EA-Iparralde and the Abertzale[253]. Disagreements on the use of political violence as a minority nationalist strategy, as well as a strong desire not to be subordinated to the Southern Basque nationalist movement, ended up creating an irreconcilable gap between the parties[254]. Although EMA and EB continued working together, the two parties would only form another electoral alliance with EA-Iparralde a mere 20 years later, for the 2007 legislative elections.

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[248] Enbata, Une Chance ?, 2 Janvier 1986 (903)
[249] The Green party had given the third position on their list to Max Simeoni, as the representative of the minority nationalist movements in France. The Abertzale Ramuntxo Camblong (EA) also featured on the list, at the 43rd position.
[250] Enbata, 29 Juin 1989 (1083)
[251] Enbata, Elections du 5 Juin, 26 Mai 1988 (1028)
[252] Enbata, 26 Mai 1988 (1028)
[253] Enbata, 28 Septembre 1989 (1094)
[254] Interview Jakes Abeberry, 3rd December 2007; Interview Jean-Noel "Textx" Etcheverry, 11th September 2009

## 5.2.2. The emergence of Abertzaleen Batasuna

Far from the original and unified Enbata movement of the 1970s, the Northern Basque nationalist movement was now divided in four political formations: EMA, EB, EA-Iparralde and the PNB. Furthermore, although the arrest of IK's leader Philippe Bidart[255] had significantly weakened the organisation, IK had resumed its activity in 1989 and claimed four attacks within one year[256]. The Abertzale sought to distance themselves from this violence and to unite behind a moderate agenda, in order to present a credible platform to the Basque public and the French government (Jacob, 1999). In addition, concerns arose that if Northern Basque nationalists did not organise themselves quickly, their struggle would be taken over by the parties of the South through their recently established branches, EA-Iparralde and the PNB[257]. This realisation favoured the emergence of a new common ground around the specificity of the Basque struggle in the North. This meant acknowledging that, unlike the Southern Basque Country, Iparralde was a small territory without institutional recognition and where the nationalist vote rarely exceeded 10 percent in local elections[258]. The consensus was that, within this context, the best strategy to adopt was to conceive institutional recognition as arriving in stages[259]. Such a gradualist vision enabled most of the Abertzale to unite behind short term objectives, without necessarily agreeing on common long term goals. The independentists of EMA and pro-autonomy EB could agree on a set of common propositions, such as the creation of a Basque department-region with extended cultural competences as a first step towards territorial recognition[260]. In the 1992 regional elections, Jakes Abeberry led a common EB-EMA list under the name "Abertzaleen Batasuna" and won 6.92 percent of the votes in the Basque Country[261].

Following this electoral success – the Abertzale vote had doubled since the last elections - EMA and EB formed Abertzaleen Batasuna (AB), a political platform destined to create unity within the Northern Basque nationalist movement. The idea of a political platform was suited to the involvement of the independent Abertzale, i.e. not associated to any political party. The electoral support of independent Abertzale, usually running for

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[255] Philippe Bidart was arrested on 20 February 1988. Condemned to a life sentence in prison for the murder of 3 policemen, he has been released on 14 February 2007, after 19 years of imprisonment.

[256] In 1989, IK claimed an attack against the tax office of Bayonne, against the gendarmerie of Maignon, the bombing of the railway in Biarritz during the visit of Pierre Joxe, Minister of the Interior, and the arson of the DDE in Bayonne.

[257] Interview Jakes Abeberry, 3rd December 2007

[258] Interview Jean-Noel "Textx" Etcheverry, 11th September 2009

[259] For instance, in 1991, EB endorsed a double political project, full autonomous status for the long term and a "proposal in line with the traditional principles of common law" in the short term (Enbata, 7 Fevrier 1991 (1163).

[260] Enbata, 21 Novembre 1991 (1202)

[261] EA-Iparralde made an electoral alliance with Entau Pais, an Occitan political party, which enabled the two parties to present candidates all over the Pyrenees-Atlantiques department, in the Basque Country but also in Occitan Bearn. It obtained 1.1 percent of the votes in the Basque Country. The PNB, only just established, did not take part in the 1992 regional elections.

mayor seats, was considerable at the local level and their personal electoral bastions could not be overlooked by EMA and EB. The creation of AB provided a neutral common ground for Abertzale from across the political spectrum sharing the common objective of advancing Basque interests at large[262]. Differences remained over the use of political violence[263] but the issue was deliberately left aside as a matter of individual conscience (Jacob, 1999:80). This way, AB was able to concentrate on goals supported by the majority of Abertzale, such as the institutionalisation of the Northern Basque Country, the opening of a Basque Chamber of Agriculture, an official status for the Basque language and the establishment of a Basque university[264]. Electoral results were quick to demonstrate the success of the initiative: AB won 5.48 percent of the votes in the 1993 legislative elections[265], 11.3 percent in the 1994 cantonal elections[266], and 11 percent as well as 18 seats in the 1995 municipal elections.

The debate over the Maastricht referendum revealed a clear line of division within the Basque nationalist movement, in that EMA and EB did not share what they described as the blind optimism of the parties of the South towards anything related to the EU[267]. The historic attachment of the PNV[268] – and subsequently of EA – to the idea of a federal Europe meant that the two parties were strongly in favour of the Maastricht Treaty. In their views, it was a step towards more economic and political integration, which could only help to achieve self-government for the Basque Country (Gonzalez, 1999). For EMA and EB, on the other hand, the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty were not the right bases on which to build Europe and contributed above all to serve the interests of member states[269]. The EU was criticised for being technocratic and not taking into account the plight of the Basque people struggling for its right to self-determination[270]. There were also discrepancies between EMA and EB's leftist ideology and the ideas driving European integration: "The Europe of capitals that is being proposed to us is very far from fulfilling our wishes"[271]. EMA advised its members to abstain from voting in the referendum, because "the EC has nothing to offer in response to our legitimate claims, and [...] the

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[262] Interview Michel Berhocoirigoin, 3 September 2009.
[263] In short, the Northern Basque nationalist movement was divided in three groups: those opposed to any form of violence (EA-Iparralde, PNB and the majority of independent Abertzale), those opposed to violence in the North but who "understood" ETA's struggle (EB), and those supporting the action of both IK and ETA (EMA).
[264] Enbata, 15 Decembre 1994 (1358)
[265] Enbata, 29 Avril 1993 (1275)
[266] Enbata, 5 Mai 1994 (1325)
[267] The PNB campaigned for the 'yes', considering that any further integration should be welcome, while EA-Iparralde advised voting 'yes' on the grounds that Maastricht opened the way to a federal Europe (Enbata, 10 Septembre 1992 (1242)).
[268] Since the Doctrine Aguirre, dating back to 1976, the PNV supports the idea of a Europe of the Peoples, whereby a federation of European historic regions, such as the Basque Country, would progressively replace the European state system.
[269] Enbata, Maastricht, 4 Juin 1992 (1230)
[270] Enbata, Vous avez dit technocrate?, 2 Juillet 1992 (1234)
[271] Enbata, 4 Juin 1992 (1230)

Maastricht Treaty would not bring anything positive to the Basque Country"[272]. EB campaigned for a "yes", but only just, on the basis that "the more Europe there will be, the more cracks there will be in Jacobin France"[273]. While being in disagreement with the content of the Maastricht Treaty, the party considered that the process of European integration was nevertheless a step in the right direction.

With the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty and the opening of the Single Market, AB members formulated a common position on the EU, along the lines of "Europe helps those who help themselves"[274]. As before, their support for European integration primarily came from the fact that it would undermine the French and Spanish states and diminish the significance of the border dividing the historic Basque Country[275]. However, a key point in AB's discourse was that European integration should not be seen, like the PNV or EA would suggest, as a process that will in due course solve out the problems of the Basque Country. Instead, it was the Abertzale's task to exploit the weaknesses created in France and Spain in order to achieve self-determination for the entire Basque people[276]. In this view, the EU was not perceived as looking after the interests of the Basque people, nor was European integration seen as a process with direct relevance for Northern Basque nationalism. Accordingly, the Abertzale still showed no interest in European politics and did not join other Basque nationalist parties in the ranks of the European Free Alliance[277]. Arguably, AB's sympathy for the struggle led by ETA limited its opportunity for party cooperation, as the EFA demands a clear condemnation of political violence from its members. The same could be said about party cooperation within France, since AB did not join the newly created federation Solidarity Region-People (R&PS), which brought together minority nationalists of most French regions. Going full circle, this lack of socialisation outside of the Basque nationalist movement explained the absence in AB's European discourse of references such as the Europe of the Regions, multi-level governance and subsidiarity.

The same themes as in the Corsican and Breton case had nevertheless started to emerge in AB's discourse: France and its Jacobin principles were pictured as an exception in Europe, as backward in comparison to other member states[278] and ill-adapted to the process of European integration[279]. The European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages was an important document, as the progressive European provisions to minority languages offered a way out of the discrimination of the French government

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[272] Enbata, 10 Septembre 1992 (1242)

[273] Enbata, Oui a Maastricht, 10 Septembre 1992 (1242)

[274] Enbata, Le nouveau droit linguistique vient d'Europe, 27 Aout 1992 (1240)

[275] Interview Michel Berhocoirigoin, 3 September 2009.

[276] Enbata, Basque et Europeen, 7 Janvier 1993 (1259)

[277] EA joined the EFA in 1987, but the PNV has preferred sitting with the European People's Party in the European Parliament.

[278] Enbata, L'Europe des Etats Regionaux, 20 Avril 2000 (1624)

[279] Enbata, Jacobinisme archaique et isole, 29 Avril 1993 (1275)

towards any language other than French[280]. The Abertzale would also praise the practical advantages of European integration, which meant that, for the first time, Basques of French and Spanish nationality could vote in the same local elections and share the same currency[281]. In practice, however, the Spanish and French states left little room for manoeuvre to Basque nationalist parties in terms of trans-national cooperation. For instance, EB and EMA had planned to feature on the HB list led by Karmelo Landa in Spain for the 1994 European elections, but the Spanish government adopted a decree prohibiting French nationals from being candidates in Spanish elections[282]. Consequently, AB members chose to spare their limited resources by not taking part in European elections, thereby reiterating that these were not a priority for the Abertzale.

### 5.2.3. Pays Basque 2010

By the mid-1990s, Europe had seemingly disappeared from the considerations of Northern Basque nationalists. AB had emerged as one of the Basque political forces and found itself in a position to introduce its demand for the institutionalisation of the Basque Country into the local debate. In 1992, an unprecedented opportunity had opened up in the Northern Basque political landscape when the sub-prefect of Bayonne initiated a study of the local situation in which 500 local representatives took part. One year later, responding to the economic and cultural diagnosis established in the subsequent report "Pays Basque 2010"[283], these personalities took positions on a series of questions that Basque nationalists had been alone in defending until then, notably acknowledging the role of local identity as a factor of development[284]. Consequently, the Council for Development (CDPB) and the Council of Elected Officials (CEPB) were created between 1994 and 1995[285]. While the CDPB and CEPB hardly had any competences and essentially played a consultative role in the French politico-administrative system, they had provided the first democratic platform where all Basque actors could interact and

[280] Enbata, Le nouveau droit linguistique vient d'Europe, 27 aout 1992 (1240)
[281] Enbata, Oui a Maastricht, 10 Septembre 1992 (1242)
[282] Enbata, Declaration d'EB du 6 Juin 1994, 8 Juin 1994 (1330)
[283] CDPB, Pays Basque 2010, December 1993 (for a summary of the report, see http://www.lurraldea.net/bibliodocs/synthese2010.pdf, accessed on 25 November 2008)
[284] All the actors involved in "Pays Basque 2010" agreed on the following points: (1) the specificity and territorial unity of the French Basque Country was accepted, (2) the decision was taken to strengthen trans-border cooperation with the Spanish provinces, (3) the role of local identity as a factor of development was accepted, with the resolution to promote the Basque culture and Euskera; and (4) the demand was made for the establishment of mechanisms of representation for the French Basque Country (CDPB, Pays Basque 2010, December 1993 (for a summary of the report, see http://www.lurraldea.net/bibliodocs/synthese2010.pdf, accessed on 25 November 2008).
[285] The CDPB brought together the great majority of the social, cultural, economic and political actors of the Northern Basque Country - including state representatives - in the view of drawing a development policy. The CEPB was constituted by the elected officials of the territory and had the decision-making capacity (Chaussier, 1996).

express their views. Through their involvement in the CDPB and CEPB, AB members were able to intervene in the local political debates and to make alliances with Basque economic and political actors outside of the nationalist circles.

In 1996, the CEPB voted for the adoption of a Territorial Planning Scheme proposed by the CDPB[286]. The Planning Scheme did not fully satisfy AB members, not least because it transformed the Basque Country into a "pays" – an administrative concept of inter-communal cooperation[287]. The Councils struggled to set in motion the other proposals of the Planning Scheme, due to the lack of resources and funding allocated by the municipal, departmental and regional authorities[288]. For some, "Pays Basque 2010" had been the French government's attempt to respond to – and ultimately put an end to - demands for the institutionalisation of the Basque Country (Pierre, 2006)[289]. The opposite happened, in that "Pays Basque 2010" turned out to be a great opportunity for the Abertzale to mobilise the local elites around the demand for a Basque department[290]. Indeed, the development policies initiated by the state administration had paved the way for a more general discussion over the future of the Northern Basque Country. The Abertzale were not alone in demanding institutional recognition: since the 1970s, a growing number of economic and political actors also favoured the creation of a Basque department[291]. Their rationale was different: while the nationalists advocated the right of the Basque people to self-determination, these local elites saw it as a necessity for the development of the territory (Loyer, 2003). With "Pays Basque 2010", these two sectors - the Abertzale and the local elites also favouring the institutionalisation of the Basque Country – could work together. Th rough their joint efforts, the idea of a Basque

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[286] The document envisioned the implementation of a comprehensive strategy for the economic development of the territory, both urban and rural, and the creation of a Council of the Basque Language, destined to enhance the preservation of Basque culture and language. CDPB, Schema d'Amenagement et de Developpement du Pays Basque, 26 Octobre 1996 (http://www.lurraldea.net/bibliodocs/schema.pdf accessed 12 August 2008)

[287] Without a territorial institution, AB questioned how the proposals of the Scheme would be implemented. Besides the institutional demand, the Abertzale had also made requests for the opening of a Chamber of Agriculture and of a local university, which had not been retained by the CDPB in the final document (Enbata, 31 Octobre 1996 (1449))

[288] A "pays" has the capacity to promote development plans, but no powers to implement them. Hence, the role of implementing the policy remained in the hands of the municipal, departmental, regional and state institutions. Frustrated by the lack of response over the implementation of the development proposals, the President of the CDPB resigned, sending the local initiative into disarray. In fact, although the Planning Scheme was assumed by the three territorial instances (Department, Region and State), none of them was to concede – until the end of 2000 – sufficient funds to finance the programs.

[289] The demand for the creation of a Basque department has existed since 1792, cyclically reasserted in 1836, 1945, 1963 and 1981. On this last occasion, Francois Mitterrand, then socialist candidate in the presidential elections, had incorporated the Basque department into its "110 Proposals for France" (http://www.psinfo.net/entretiens/mitterrand/110.html - accessed on 24 November 2008). Once elected, the Socialist government however did not honour its electoral promise to the Basques, and the Basque department was not mentioned again in the 1982 decentralisation reforms.

[290] Interview Jean-Noel "Textx" Etcheverry, 11th September 2009

[291] Interview Michel Berhocoirigoin, 3 September 2009.

department had found wide support in the Basque local elites and even penetrated the most mainstream spheres of French politics[292]. On 30 October 1996, 63.7 percent of the Mayors of the Northern Basque Country voted in favour of the Basque department[293]. Despite the resistance of some high profile politicians[294], the local political climate had never been more pro-department. On 3rd October 1997, a possible division of the department was even discussed in the General Council of Pyrenees Atlantiques. Under the impulse of Abertzaleen Batasuna, the mobilisation behind the development of the territory had transformed itself into a mobilisation for the institutionalisation of the Basque Country.

In this instance, AB had acted as a real "ethnic entrepreneur" according to De Winter and Tursan's definition (1998:1). The Abertzale's influence on the debates over the future of the Northern Basque Country had gone way beyond what would be expected from their electoral performance. While demanding territorial recognition, AB members had yet to officially agree on the political form that institutionalisation should take in the Basque Country. This was due to the variety of positions within AB: while many independent Abertzale pushed for a department, EB wanted the creation of a department-region and EMA opted for a full autonomous status[295]. Following a deep debate in 1997, AB members chose to assume the demand for a Basque department and to adopt a gradualist strategy in line with the French politico-administrative context. Abertzaleen Batasuna clearly defined a pro-department strategy based on three stages: (1) to place AB at the centre of the pro-department mobilisation; (2) to then generate a broad movement to socialise the demand, trying to achieve a social majority in favour of institutionalisation; and (3) to spread a dynamic of civil disobedience making it impossible

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[292] Following a public consultation – whereby 76.14 percent of the Basque population declared itself in favour of the creation of a Basque department - MP Michel Inchauspe proposed an amendment for the creation of a region 3B (Basque Country, Bearn, Bigorre) and a department Pays Basque –Adour. The National Assembly refused the proposed amendment on 30 November 1994, but it served to bring exposure to the institutional demand at the national level. Lionel Jospin, then candidate in the 1995 Presidential elections, declared himself in favour of the creation of a Basque department if the majority of elected officials demanded it. On 19 November 1998, MP Inchauspe re-presented his institutional project and the National Assembly again voted against it. On 19 January 1999, he proposed an amendment to Article 19 of the Law 95 - 115 of 4 February 1995 relating to territorial planning and development, according to which a "pays" composed of more than 20 cantons should be granted the status of department. This amendment would have opened the way for the Basque department, but it was rejected by the National Assembly.
[293] It should be noted that the mayors of the most important Basque cities (Bayonne, Biarritz, St Jean de Luz and Hendaye) did not participate in the vote.
[294] A group of local politicians, led by MP and President of the Regional Council of Aquitaine Francois Bayrou and including the mayors of the largest Basque cities (Bayonne, Biarritz, Anglet), opposed the institutional demand on the ground that the Basque department would not be sustainable economically and insisted that the development policies should be differentiated from the institutional debate (Enbata, 31 October 1996 (1449)).
[295] Interview Michel Berhocoirigoin, 3 September 2009.

to maintain the status quo[296]. By focusing on the Basque department, AB had opted for a tactic of minimum demands adapted to its political weight and to the opportunity windows opening up in the local political scene[297]. From that point on, AB became the backbone of the broad coalition of political, economic, social and cultural actors in favour of institutionalisation. In the 1998 regional elections, AB centred its campaign on two major demands, the Basque department and an official status for the Basque language[298]. The electoral platform obtained 9.35 percent of the votes in the cantonal elections and 8.40 percent in the regional elections, improving again its electoral performance[299].

### 5.2.4. The "national construction" of the Basque Country

Shortly after, AB members Richard Irazutza and Merxte Colina participated in the drafting of the Lizarra-Garazi pact, which was signed on 12 September 1998 by the PNV, Herri Batasuna, EA and AB as well as 24 Basque political parties, trade unions and social movements[300]. Inspired by the success of the Irish peace process, Basque nationalists signed this joint declaration to set in motion a negotiation process with the Spanish and French governments[301]. The pact reasserted the demand for the creation of a Basque Country made of all its historic provinces currently in France and Spain, and stated: "the Basque question is an historical conflict of political nature within which both the Spanish and French states are involved. Its resolution will necessarily be political"[302]. Four days after the signature of the Lizarra-Garazi pact, ETA declared an unlimited truce to show its support to the peace process[303]. It was the first time that Basque nationalists from the North and from the South united to become one single political actor representing the whole Basque Country[304]. Although the Lizarra-Garazi initiative did not meet the expected

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[296] AB, Proposition de campagne soumise a l'approbation d'Abertzaleen Batasuna (lors de la prochaine assemblee generale de juin), 1998.
[297] Interview Jean-Noel "Textx" Etcheverry, 11th September 2009
[298] Enbata, 26 Fevrier 1998 (1516)
[299] The alliance EA-PNB obtained 4 percent of the votes in the regional elections and did not take part in the cantonal elections.
[300] Political parties: Abertzaleen Batasuna, Batzarre, EAJ-PNV, Eusko Alkartasuna, Herri Batasuna, Iniciativa Ciudadana Vasca, Ipar Euskal Herriko Berdeak, Izquierda Unida-Ezker Batua, Partido Carlista-EKA, Zutik. Trades unions: EHNE, ELA, ESK-CUIS, Euskal Laborarien Batzarra, Ezker Sindikala, Hiru, LAB, STEE-EILAS. Observers: CFDT. Social movements: Amnistiaren aldeko batzordea- Gestoras Pro, Amnistía, Anai Artea, Autodeterminazioaren Biltzarrak, Bakea orain, CAR/Ahaideak, Comité de défense de droits de l'homme en Pays Basque, Egizan, Elkarri, EPSK/Gureak, Gazteriak, Gernika Batzordea, Gogoa, Gurasoak, Hautetsi Abertzaleen Elkartea, Herria 2000 Eliza, Herriarekin, Jarrai, Presoen Aldeko, Koordinaketa, Senideak, Sostengu Komiteak, UDA-Treviño
[301] They wished to follow the example of the Stormont Negotiation in Northern Ireland (1994-1998), and the Signature of the Agreement of Belfast (10th April 1998).
[302] Enbata, 17 Septembre 1998 (1543)
[303] Similarly, Iparretarak, which had re-emerged after years of silence with two highly publicised attacks in 1997, also declared a unilateral truce (IK Press Release, 2 June 1997 (http://mokoka.free.fr/info_ik2.htm, accessed on 8 July 2008)).
[304] Enbata, 15 Octobre 1998 (1547)

reaction from Madrid and Paris[305], being part of this movement was significant for AB as a recognition of the platform's role and presence in Iparralde.

Following on from the Lizarra-Garazi pact, the first trans-national political institution was set up in order to assert the existence of the Basque Country as a nation. On 18 September 1999, an Assembly of Basque Mayors and Municipal Councillors, called Udalbiltza, was created with 2000 members from both sides of the French-Spanish border, including AB representatives. The constitution of a specific institution, without the presence of state parties, had been a symbolic way of defending an alternative political project for the entire Basque Country. As a trans-national institution, the Udalbiltza began promoting "joint work over and above the legal, political and administrative divisions imposed upon the Basque Country"[306]. Concretely, its task of promoting the "national construction" of the Basque Country has taken the form of organising and financing trans-national projects all over the territory. However, divisions appeared in the Udalbiltza just a few months after its creation when ETA broke its self-declared truce[307]. Unlike other members, the PNV and EA representatives officially condemned the violence of ETA and have left the Udalbiltza to form their own assembly, called Udalbide. The two institutions have co-existed since then, although the Udalbiltza has experienced difficulties in the context of the prosecution and subsequent illegalisation of Herri Batasuna – its most powerful member – by Spanish authorities[308]. AB was forced by ETA's resurgence to clarify its position on political violence. During an ad hoc assembly in September 2000, AB adopted a position on violence that could be referred to as "neither for, nor against" and indicated that it did not officially support ETA's struggle[309]. It was the first time that AB members expressed a joint opinion on political violence, an issue which had so far been left aside as a matter of individual conscience. While seemingly unassuming, this position did not sit well with the most radical members of AB and caused tensions within the platform.

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[305] The Spanish government refused to engage the dialogue, responding with repression against Basque nationalists. In 1998, Herri Batasuna was vetoed by the Spanish judicial power, which took legal actions to forbid the different offspring of HB (the party nevertheless re-emerged under the name Euskal Herritarrok). As for the French authorities, they did not make an official response, thereby denying having any reason to take part in this development. Only the Socialist Party made a declaration to "emphasise that neither the territory, nor the citizens of the French Republic, were to feel concerned, in any way possible, by the events [of Lizarra-Garazi]" (Enbata, 24 Septembre 1998 (1544)).

[306] http://www.udalbiltza.net/fr/node/582 (accessed on 5 August 2008)

[307] ETA's truce lasted a bit more than a year, until the organisation announced that it would resume its activity on 28 November 1999. IK also broke its truce in 2000 when it attacked a police station in Lecumberry and a holiday resort near Bayonne.

[308] In May 2003, Judge Garzon suspended and confiscated the totality of the Basque Funds for Development and Cohesion created by the Udalbiltza, due to the relations of its members with ETA.

[309] AB declared "having made the choice of using systematically and exclusively pacifist means in order to defend its claims", and that consequently "it was not, and would never be, the political front of any armed organisation", for its objective was to "rise above this violence in order to find a political solution to the Basque conflict" (Enbata, 5 Octobre 2000 (1646)).

With all of AB's attention directed towards the pro-department mobilisation and the "national construction" of the Basque Country, Europe remained an issue of secondary importance for the Abertzale. To be sure, the sense of opportunity that AB derived from European integration invariably remained practical and down-to-earth: "Europe diminishes the significance of state borders dividing Euskal Herria, [it] has brought the same currency on our seven provinces, [it] makes possible for a Basque of French citizenship to participate and vote in the European and local elections in Spain and vice-versa"[310]. Beyond this, AB did not seem to perceive any European opportunity to serve its local mobilisation for the creation of a Basque department. Nor did it see the EU as an arena where to expose its minority nationalist demands[311]. Once more, AB declined taking part in the 1999 European elections, arguing that the single constituency in which these elections were held made its participation pointless and unnecessary[312]. In contrast, by making electoral alliances with other minority nationalist parties in Spain, the PNV and EA had managed to overcome the problem of the single constituency and ensure their representation in the European Parliament for more than a decade[313]. Due to its isolation from other minority nationalist movements in France and in Europe, such a strategy was not available to AB whose only option was to face the European ballots alone or not at all.

One aspect of European integration had however sparked interest among AB members: the new forms of cross-border cooperation emerging from the EU[314]. In the Abertzale's view, "European integration, the emergence of a Basque autonomous authority in the South, the new consciousness of a collective identity project in the North: these three developments work together to radically modify the political and cultural context of trans-border relations"[315]. Several projects of cross-border cooperation had emerged since the 1980s, such as the Consorcio Bidassoa-Txingudi[316], the Euro-city Bayonne-Donosti[317] and the Euro-region Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarre. In light of these initiatives, some AB members saw a possibility for the creation of a trans-border structure including the seven provinces of the Basque Country[318]. A motion for the Euro-region Euskal Herri was presented at AB's 1998 annual meeting. The motion proposed that AB's

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[310] Enbata, 25 mars 1999 (1570)
[311] Except in June 1996, when EB and several organisations concerned with the treatment of Basque political prisoners demonstrated in Brussels, denouncing the oppression of the Basque people and asking for the recognition of Iparralde. The event did not have much of an impact, and was not reiterated.
[312] Enbata, 1er avril 1999 (1571)
[313] In 1987, Carlos Garaikoetxea was elected for EA; in 1989, Garaikoetxea was re-elected, as well as Jon Gangoiti for the PNV; in 1994, Josu Jon Imaz won a seat for the PNV; in 1999, Josu Ortuondo represented the PNV while Gorka Knorr-Borras was elected for EA.
[314] Interview Michel Berhocoirigoin, 3 September 2009.
[315] Enbata, 27 Fevrier 1997 (1466)
[316] Created in 1988 with the French town of Hendaye, and the Spanish cities of Irun and Fontarabie.
[317] Created in 1993 with the province of Gipuzkoa in Spain, and the district of Bayonne-Anglet-Biarritz in France.
[318] Enbata, 26 Fevrier 1998 (1516)

long-term objective, once the Basque department was in place, became the creation of a Basque Euro-region. This Euro-region would ensure the representation of Basque interests in Brussels and would permit the establishment of a single electoral constituency for the election of Basque MEPs. As stated in the motion, "the Basque European institution will be a way to escape the context of the French state and to construct the Basque Country through the will of the Basque people only"[319]. In the end, however, the Euro-region motion was not adopted. Instead, a full autonomous status for the Northern Basque Country was voted as AB's long-term political project. The majority of AB members felt it more important to concentrate on the short to medium term goals, such as the institutionalisation of the North, before envisaging the reunification of the Basque Country[320]. In addition, even in the event of the creation of a Basque department, the Euro-region project was perceived by many AB members as an "empty shell"[321]. Beyond getting funds from Brussels, Euro-regions do not have increased political capacity, nor do they offer the possibility to bypass the national level[322]. The competences of Euro-regions only go as far as those of the sub-national authorities part of it and these are limited to functional responsibilities in the French politico-administrative system. A Basque Euro-region would be submitted to the control of the state administration of the French and Spanish governments and these are likely to oppose it for fear of separatism. While the European question had been fully integrated to the PNV and EA's political project – both parties advocate a self-governed Basque Country in the EU - AB did not reformulate its demands in relation to the European level. Instead, the Abertzale focused on the achievement of the first step of institutional recognition, i.e. the creation of a Basque department.

### 5.2.5. The pro-department mobilisation in Iparralde

In the meantime, the pro-department mobilisation planned by Abertzaleen Batasuna had followed its course. The Lizarra-Garazi initiative had galvanised the population of the Basque Country and demonstrations were being held on both sides of the border[323]. On 30 January 1999, AB brought together 6,000 people on the streets of Bayonne to demonstrate in favour of the creation of a Basque department. A variety of local actors had united around AB to create a social movement called "The Appeal of the

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[319] Enbata, Motion construire l'Euro-region Euskal Herri, 15 Octobre 1998 (1547)
[320] Enbata, Iparralde ficelee, 30 Septembre 1999 (1595); Interview with Jakes Abeberry, 3 December 2007.
[321] Interview with Jakes Borthayrou, 4 December 2007
[322] Enbata, Vers l'Euro-region, 26 Fevrier 1998 (1516); Interview with Jakes Borthayrou, 4 December 2007.
[323] On 9th January 1999, a large demonstration was held in Bilbao to demand the return of Basque political prisoners to the Basque Country; on 4th April 1999, public gatherings took place all over the Basque Country to celebrate the Aberri Eguna, the Basque national day; on 21st May 1999, the Basque trade unions ELA and LAB organised a general strike.

100". The movement was made up of representatives of the majority of the political formations (AB, UDF, RPR, PS, Greens), economic groups (Chamber of Commerce, worker and agricultural unions) and all of the cultural associations in Iparralde. By then, the Abertzale had become the reference point of the institutional demand in the public eye, despite the fact that such demand was supported by a whole set of non-nationalist actors. The dynamic started by AB culminated in the biggest demonstration held in the streets of Bayonne since the end of the Second World War: on 9 October 1999, 13,000 people demanded a department for the Basque Country. A survey was published at that time, indicating that 67% of the population of the Northern Basque Country favoured the creation of a new department[324]. Despite the massive demonstration called by "The Appeal of the 100", the French government did not respond to the demand for the creation of a Basque department[325]. Following AB's plan, the movement then radicalised its positions to the point of setting in motion a strategy of mass civil disobedience. The activity of civil disobedience was taken up by another organization, the group Demokrazia Euskal Herria-rentzat, also called the Demo. The Demo's actions included the theft of the seats of the 21 Basque elected councillors of the General Council of the Pyrenees-Atlantiques, the "kidnapping" of two dozen Mariannes, the replacement of monolingual traffic signs by bilingual ones[326]. These were meant as challenges to the French authorities triggering solidarity around the demand for a Basque department (Ahedo, 2004).

At the end of 2000, the French state attempted to retake the initiative following its rejection of Basque institutionalisation. A Specific Convention was signed by the State, the Region, the Department, the Council of Elected Officials and the Bayonne-Anglet-Biarritz area. Four hundred million euros were granted to the Council for Development for setting the Planning Scheme proposals underway[327]. Five years after its creation, a period of self-government finally started for the CDPB enabling the implementation of the development policies voted by the CEPB, such as the creation of a Council for the Basque Language in July 2001. However, tensions arose in the CDPB when it emerged that the demand for the creation of a Basque department would not be considered in the debates on

[324] Exclusive Survey CSA, Sud Ouest, 29th August 1999
[325] Ministry of the Interior Jean-Pierre Chevenement expressed its entire disagreement with the idea of a Basque department during a meeting with his Spanish counterpart, Jaime Mayor Oreja, on 5 March 1999.
[326] The General Council of the department Pyrenees-Atlantiques brings together 52 councillors, of whom 21 are elected in Basque cantons and the rest in Bearn. By stealing the 21 seats, the Demo intended to constitute the seats of the Basque institution that is demanded. The bust of Marianne occupies a place of honour in all the mayors' offices of France, as it is the symbol of the French Republic. When the Demo stole these busts, this was an attempt to symbolize that the democratic values represented by Marianne have been kidnapped. Finally, the Planning Scheme of the French Basque Country was favourable to traffic signs being translated into Euskera. Facing the lack of progress, the Demo
changed the monolingual French signs into bilingual ones in French and Euskera (Demo, 2002; Ahedo, 2004).
[327] Specific Convention Basque Country, 22 December 2000
(http://www.lurraldea.net/bibliodocs/conv-spedec01.pdf accessed on 6 August 2008)

decentralisation opened by the Raffarin government. Soon after, some members led by AB proposed a motion threatening to dissolve the Council if the department was not created[328]. The Council chose not to follow AB and the motion was rejected, although the CDPB 2003 report deplored "the lack of an institutional perspective [which] could undermine the Council's efforts for the development of the Basque Country"[329]. From that point, however, the pro-department mobilisation started by AB showed signs of slowing down, in the sense that its high-profile supporters appeared less widespread in the Basque political spectrum. Furthermore, the idea of a Basque department encountered strong resistance in the French government, which was under pressure from Spanish authorities not to encourage the national construction of the Basque Country with an institutional reform (Pierre, 2006). In that respect, AB's two main goals – the national construction of the Basque Country and the creation of a Basque department – were incompatible in strategic terms.

Meanwhile, AB had made its electoral breakthrough in the 2001 cantonal and municipal elections[330]. The Abertzale were now represented in the councils of the three largest Basque cities : Biarritz, Bayonne and Anglet, and for the first time, a member of AB had obtained a seat in the general council of Pyrenees-Atlantiques[331]. AB members had become unavoidable on the Basque political scene, but developments from the South were creating divisions within the Northern Basque nationalist movement. In May 2000, the Batasuna process had been initiated by Euskal Herritarrok - the organisation that had replaced Herri Batasuna after its dissolution by Spanish authorities - in order to create unity among all the leftist Basque nationalist parties on both sides of the border. The Batasuna process conceived the Basque nationalist struggle as a whole: "one party, one strategy, one territory, one political movement"[332]. Some AB members started taking part in the debates but the majority urged Euskal Herritarrok to suspend the process in their territory. AB was preparing for the 2001 municipal elections at the time and its members asked for the Batasuna process to be delayed until after the elections. The process was not suspended but AB rejected the proposal for its integration in the organisation that had emerged from Euskal Herritarrok: Batasuna. On the general assembly of 6 October 2001, two thirds of AB members adopted the "Motion of the 80" refusing the single strategy promoted by the Batasuna process on the grounds that it overlooked the specificity of the

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[328] Interview Jakes Abeberry, 3rd December 2007
[329] CDPB, Le Pays Basque a mi-parcours entre 1992 et 2010, 13 February 2003, p.67 (http://www.lurraldea.net/bibliodocs/rapportPB2002.pdf accessed 6 August 2008)
[330] Across the historic Basque Country, AB won 10.21 percent of the votes in the cantonal elections, while EA-Iparralde got 0.61 percent and the PNB 1.18 percent.
[331] With 44.11 percent of the votes in the second round of the cantonal elections, Jean-Michel Galant has been elected in the district of St Etienne de Baigorri.
[332] Batasuna, Party Manifesto, 2001.

Northern Basque Country[333]. The "Motion of the 80" also called for AB to become the main political party of the Northern Basque movement. In the last years, AB had overcome many internal differences by reaching a consensus on the questions of violence and of territorial institutionalisation. AB had developed its own political project tailored to the socio-political context of Iparralde and a strategy adapted to the territory's needs and possibilities. In that sense, AB's transformation into a political party, almost 10 years after its creation as a political platform, was a natural progression. It however provoked a scission, with the third of AB members leaving to join Batasuna.

The departure of its most radical members enabled AB to take a firmer stance on the armed struggle, by stating that the end of political violence was a necessary first step for the political resolution of the Basque conflict and calling for an immediate truce from ETA[334]. AB then tried to reassume its role at the centre of the pro-department movement, together with other sectors favouring institutionalisation. New demonstrations were organised in the streets of Bayonne to challenge the uncompromising stance of the government but their intensity decreased a bit more each time[335]. Hoping to take advantage of the decentralisation debates started by new Prime Minister Raffarin, AB created the Batera platform. Composed of five economic, political and cultural associations[336], Batera concentrated on four demands for the Northern Basque Country: the creation of a department, a chamber of agriculture, a university and the co-officialisation of the Basque language[337]. In January 2004, bearing in mind the state's rejection of these demands, Batera defined a new line of work based on holding a referendum on the department question[338] and a strategy of civil disobedience through the formation of a Basque Chamber of Agriculture in 2005[339]. However, institutional demands for the Northern Basque Country, once backed up by a wide range of Basque actors, seemed to have fallen back into isolation[340]. Tellingly, the new Planning Scheme adopted in 2006 by the CEPB has emphasised the idea of governance and stayed clear of any

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[333] Enbata, 13 Septembre 2001 (1693) ; Interview Jean-Noel "Textx" Etcheverry, 11th September 2009
[334] Enbata, 11 octobre 2001 (1697)
[335] On 1st February 2003, 7000 persons demonstrated for the creation of a Basque department, but on 21st June 2003, AB only managed to gather 500 persons.
[336] The Association for a Basque Department, the Association of Elected Officials, Euskal Konfederazioa, the ELB trade union, and the University Collective. The Batera platform is presided by AB.
[337] http://www.batera.info/article-5617940.html (accessed on 8 August 2008)
[338] Batera's plan is to gather 46 000 signatures from the inhabitants of the department Pyrenees-Atlantiques , corresponding to the 10 percent of the population required by the decentralisation laws of 2004 for the General Council to organise a referendum. The campaign has started in May 2006, and to date, almost 35 000 signatures have been collected.
[339] Created on 15 January 2005, Euskal Herriko Lanborantza Ganbara provides legal consultancy to Basque farmers and expertise on local environmental projects.
[340] Abertzaleen Batasuna, 1995-2005-2015 : dix ans de gagnés, dix ans à gagner, 2005.

mention of the institutionalisation of the Basque Country[341]. The window of opportunity, which had previously enabled AB to gather a momentum around the demand for a Basque department, had been closed[342].

### 5.2.6. The beginning of a European dimension for AB?

From 2002 onwards, European references had become more frequent in the discourse of AB, which showed interest in the regional dimension of European integration and the opportunities opening up through the principle of subsidiarity[343]. The party had also turned its attention to the structural funds and highlighted the necessity to bypass the national level in the management of European funding[344]. While these remained discursive considerations, AB seemed to renew with the Europeanist vision laid out in the original project of the Charter of Itxassou[345]. The Green Party approached AB in order to gain the Abertzale's support for the 2004 European elections. As part of an agreement with the federation Solidarity Region-People (R&PS), Green leader Gerard Onesta had planned to have minority nationalist representatives featuring in high positions on his list. Although AB was not part of R&PS - and EA-Iparralde and the PNB were members of the federation - Onesta offered the third position on his list to AB member Gorka Torre[346]. This could be seen as a point of rupture with AB's previously isolationist policy preventing electoral alliances outside of the Basque nationalist movement. AB's collaboration with the Greens was not an easy step for the party[347], which faced a great deal of criticism from Batasuna. The latter had counted on AB's support for the list it presented under the name Herritarren Zerrenda in France – following its ban from Spanish authorities, Batasuna could not participate in European elections in Spain[348]. Yet, AB felt there was enough programmatic

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[341] The CDPB and CEPB started the "Pays Basque 2020" initiative, bringing together all the local actors in the view of re-actualising the Planning Scheme for the development of the Basque Country. The resulting document identified four areas where the attention of the CDPB was required: employment, transports, academic research and healthcare. Lurraldea, Pays Basque 2020, Acte II du Projet de Territoire, 8 Juillet 2006
(http://www.lurraldea.net/bibliodocs/PB_2020_note_5_defis_forum.pdf accessed 15 August 2008)
[342] The new CEPB President was Jean-Jacques Lasserre has been firmly opposed to the creation of a Basque department. Abertzaleen Batasuna, Pays Basque 2020 et Signature du Contrat Territorial: le point de vue d'AB, 24 Juin 2006 (http://www.abertzaleen-batasuna.com/article-20728676.html accessed on 15 August 2008) ; Interview Jean-Noel "Textx" Etcheverry, 11th September 2009
[343] Enbata, 31 Janvier 2002 (1713)
[344] Enbata, 12 Septembre 2002 (1743)
[345] Enbata, 29 Avril 2004 (1826)
[346] Interview Jakes Borthayrou, 4 December 2007
[347] Interview Michel Berhocoirigoin, 3 September 2009; Interview Jean-Noel "Textx" Etcheverry, 11th September 2009
[348] Batasuna candidates in Spain campaigned for using the French list also in Spain, to be counted as null vote. There were more than 98,000 null votes in the Basque Autonomous Country and more than 15,000 in Navarre. Batasuna leaders interpreted the high rate of null votes, which was 12% of the total, as a sign that most of the nulls were for the Herritarren Zerrenda list, since the null vote was less than 1% in the previous European elections.

proximity with the Greens to make a tactical alliance[349]. Onesta had agreed to take on several of AB demands, such as the creation of a Basque electoral constituency going across the border, the recognition of the political nature of the Basque conflict and of the Basque people's right to self-determination[350]. AB's decision to take part in the 2004 European elections was also related to a change in the electoral constituencies[351]. These elections were not held with France as a single constituency anymore but with 8 electoral constituencies. In the view of the party leaders, this change made AB's participation much more relevant and worthwhile. Disappointing results did not however permit the Green list to obtain more than one seat in the European Parliament, for Gerard Onesta[352]. Still, the 2004 European elections triggered a new external orientation for AB, which soon after gained observer status within the federation Solidarity Region-People[353].

In 2004, a change in the mode of scrutiny for regional elections (the threshold for representation went from 5 to 10 percent) made AB decide to compete only in the cantonal elections. AB's limited resources did not enable the party to campaign in all European, regional and cantonal elections in a single year and this must have played a role in this decision. Publically though, AB was consistent with its electoral strategy dictating that the party would only participate in an election if it had a chance of gaining representation. However, AB started feeling the electoral impact of the scission and the competition of new rival Batasuna[354]. The Northern Basque Country was the only field of action left to Batasuna since it had been made illegal in Spain[355] and the party deployed considerable resources to campaign in French elections. In the cantons constitutive of the Basque Country, AB obtained 7.42 percent – it had gone above10 percent in the last cantonal elections - Batasuna managed to obtain 3.57 percent, while EA was far behind with 0.3 percent and the PNB did not take part in the elections. It is in the context of this electoral decrease that a new challenge presented itself to AB: the referendum on the European Constitution. AB found itself profoundly divided over the issue between those rejecting the proposed Constitution on the grounds of the party's leftist ideology[356] and those supporting the document as an imperfect but overall positive development[357]. Interestingly, the split mirrored the positions of EMA and EB respectively on the Maastricht

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[349] Interview Michel Berhocoirigoin, 3 September 2009; Interview Jean-Noel "Textx" Etcheverry, 11th September 2009
[350] Interview Peio Etcheverry-Ainchart, 4 December 2007; Interview Jakes Borthayrou, 4 December 2007.
[351] Interview Peio Etcheverry-Ainchart, 4 December 2007.
[352] The Green list obtained 7.4% of the votes.
[353] AB was given the status of observer at the R&PS General Assembly of 24 August 2005.
[354] The loss to Batasuna of Jean-Pierre Iriart, a local personality with a strong electoral base in the canton of Tardets-Sorholus, was particularly significant for AB.
[355] In March 2003, the Spanish Supreme Court ordered the dissolution of Batasuna, on the basis of the Constitutional Amendment of June 2002 against political organisations associated to terrorism (Organic Law on Political Parties, 2002, 12756).
[356] AB, Konstituzioari Ez, 2004
[357] AB, Konstituzioari Bai, 2004

Treaty, suggesting that AB members had in fact never reached a consensus on the EU. These internal divergences could at least partly explain the lack of a European dimension in AB's mobilisation. An internal referendum was organised on the European Constitution during which the "no" votes won by a short majority[358]. Party leaders decided that these results were not clear cut enough for AB to take a position on the European Constitution and therefore did not give voting instructions to its members. With the scission fresh in the minds of AB members, no risk was taken to create further divisions within the party[359]. Still, the fact that the European Constitution was deemed important enough to organise an internal debate indicated that European integration had gained prominence within the activity of AB.

In the meantime, AB had been associated with the re-launch of the peace process in the Southern Basque Country. The Basque President, PNV Juan José Ibarretxe, had proposed a radical change in the relationship between Spain and the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (CAPV) under a new formula of "free association"[360]. From the start, AB was not supportive of what it saw as the PNV trying to take credit for the process started with the Lizarra-Garazi declaration[361]. Like most Basque nationalists, AB perceived the Ibarrexte plan as an attempt to increase the competences of the Basque government - and therefore the power of the PNV in charge of it - rather than a basis for the resolution of the Basque conflict[362]. Criticism also came from the fact that the Ibarrexte plan was focused essentially on the CAPV, and not on the historic Basque Country. Iparralde was only briefly mentioned in Article 7 in the context of cross-border cooperation, without any provision for its institutionalisation[363]. On 1st February 2005, the proposal was

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[358] Interview with Peio Etcheverry-Ainchart, 4 December 2007

[359] Interview with Peio Etcheverry-Ainchart, 4 December 2007

[360] The new Political statute of the Community of the Basque Country, also called Ibarretxe Plan, would extend the powers of the Basque government and give it more autonomy in relation to EU matters (Basque Parliament, Political Statute of the Community of the Basque Country, 30 December 2004). The proposed constitutional reform was approved by the Basque Parliament on 30 December 2004, in the view to be sent to the Spanish Parliament. (http://www.nuevoestatutodeeuskadi.net/docs/dictamencomision20122004_eng.pdf accessed on 12 August 2008)

[361] Interview Gorka Torre, April 2005 (http://www.onesta.net/theme1-texte33.html accessed on 13 August 2008)

[362] AB, Reel espoir ou simple illusion, 12 October 2007 (http://www.abertzaleen-batasuna.com/article-7177617.html accessed on 13 August 2008)

[363] "Article 7 - Relations with the Basque Territories of Iparralde: 1. Basque institutions shall give priority to the relations with the Basque territories of Iparralde, and for this purpose, within the framework of the European Union, measures shall be taken to bring about the signature of any agreements and treaties that may be necessary so that the Basque Territories and Communities located on both sides of the Pyrenees may make use, in the widest and most extensive manner possible, of the potential offered by current or future regulations on cross-border co-operation in order to strengthen the special historical, social and cultural ties between the Community of the Basque Country and the Basque Territories & Communities located within the French State, including the capacity to establish instruments of co-operation at a municipal and territorial level, based on a respect for the wishes of their respective citizens; 2. Within the framework of the provisions of this article, the Community of the Basque Country shall foster the operations of a collaborating body with other Basque territories located within the French State, as well as with

rejected by a large majority in the Spanish Parliament[364], putting an end to the initiative of the PNV. Soon after, Basque nationalist parties responded to what they considered an attempt by the PNV to highjack the Basque peace process. Batasuna, EA and AB, as well as fifty other organisations, signed a Basic Democratic Agreement (BDA) for Conflict Resolution in the Basque Country, according to which "All citizens in the whole of the Basque Country must be consulted on the future of the Basque Country through whichever procedure the parties agree"[365]. The BDA was a reiteration of the fact that the solution to the Basque conflict could only be found with the involvement of all Basque political parties on both sides of the French-Spanish border, and the participation of AB in this initiative confirmed its role as the main actor of the national construction in Iparralde[366].

In May 2005, Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero made an unprecedented offer of peace talks with ETA, conditional upon a complete end of violence. ETA took 10 months to respond to Zapatero's offer and eventually declared a "permanent ceasefire" in March 2006[367], thereby launching the negotiations[368]. Despite ETA's demand that talks took place with both Spain and France, only the Spanish government accepted to sit at the negotiation table. AB was *de facto* excluded from the negotiations, but the party was able to use the contacts it had established at the European level - in the form of MEP and Vice-President of the European Parliament, Gerard Onesta – to support the Basque peace process. AB had negotiated a number of points with Onesta in the context of the 2004 European elections, including the promotion of the Basque peace process. Accordingly, MEP Onesta sponsored a public hearing in the European Parliament on 30 November 2005, where the BDA was presented. Following this public hearing, 12 MEPs supportive of the Basque peace process formed a Friendship Association to examine ways in which the European Parliament could assist the resolution of the conflict in the Basque Country[369]. This led to the adoption by the European Parliament of a Resolution supporting the peace

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the Autonomous Community of Navarre, which shall attend to the common requirements of all the Basque people", Basque Parliament, Political Statute of the Community of the Basque Country, 30 December 2004.
[364] 313 votes against (PSOE, PP, United Left (Spain), Canary Coalition and CHA), 29 votes in favour (PNV, ERC, CiU, EA, Na-Bai and BNG) and 2 abstentions (IC-V)
[365] Oinarrizko Hitzarmen Demokratikoa, 5th March 2005.
[366] Abertzaleen Batasuna, 1995-2005-2015 : dix ans de gagnés, dix ans à gagner, 2005.
[367] Declaration of ETA, Euskal Herria, 22 March 2006
(http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4833490.stm accessed on 12 August 2008)
[368] The peace talks were planned as a two track process: in the first track, ETA and the Spanish government would discuss the organisation's disarmament and prisoners' situation; in the second track, all the Basque nationalist parties would be invited to discuss the future of the Basque Country.
[369] The Friendship Association members are Gerard Onesta (vice president of the parliament), Bernat Joan i Mari (Catalan), Alyn Smith (Scottish), Bart Staes (Belgium), Ian Hudghton (Scottish), Jill Evans (Wales), Tatjana Zdanoka (Latvian), Jonas Sjostedt (Swedish), Erik Meijer (Dutch), Helmuth Markov (German) and the Sinn Féin MEP Bairbre de Brun.

process in the Basque Country[370]. The negotiation process collapsed just a few months later, when ETA attacked Madrid airport on 30 December 2006. Still, the Abertzale had been in a position to measure the strategic resources that could be derived from its alliance with Green MEP Onesta. Not only had it enabled AB to play a role in the Basque peace process, but it had also involved France in this process, if only symbolically and indirectly – this was a real achievement for Northern Basque nationalism.

## 5.3. Summary of European responses

What emerges from this survey of AB's activity since the 1980s is that Europe has remained an issue of secondary importance for Northern Basque nationalists. Unlike what had been hypothesised in chapter one based on the Basque trans-border identity, the Abertzale have not changed their demands and long-term political project in relation to the European level. This is in stark contrast to the European response of Southern Basque nationalism, which has evolved towards the idea of an independent and reunified Basque Country as a result of the entry of Spain to the EU. The arrival of EA and the PNV on the Northern Basque political scene has however prompted the Abertzale to take a closer look at the possibilities emerging from European integration. More than a real sense of opportunity, it seems that the Abertzale's interest in Europe has grown out of the European themes used by EA and the PNV in their campaigns for French local elections. Yet, Europe has never gained prominence in the core discourse and activity of AB, whose support for European integration has mainly revolved around its potential to undermine French sovereignty.

What can explain this limited interest in European developments? First, the lack of organisation of the Northern Basque nationalist movement has to be taken into account. This chapter has illustrated the process of maturation undergone by Northern Basque nationalism in the last three decades, during which the Abertzale have distanced themselves from the shadow of IK's violence to emerge as democratic and legitimate actors in local politics. They still remain so far from their aim of self-determination that their demands and positions have appeared unclear at times. For now, AB's mobilisation is better conceived as an ongoing evaluation of the best strategy to achieve the first step of institutional recognition in the French context. Through its evolution, AB has not only moderated and adjusted its nationalist propositions, but also progressively come to realise the resources to be derived from other levels of government, such as the EU, for its mobilisation.

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[370] EP, Resolution on the Peace Process in Spain, B6 0527/2006, adopted on 25 October 2006.

Second, if the formulation of a European position has seemed more problematic than in the Corsican and Breton cases, it is also due to internal divisions on the subject. Abertzaleen Batasuna has brought together a number of heterogeneous ideological tendencies within a single partisan framework. Ideological differences between more "nationalist" or more "socialist" interpretations of European integration can be identified. These have prevented the formulation of a common position in the referenda on the Maastricht Treaty and the European Constitution. Disagreements on the question of political violence have also hindered the development of AB's European dimension by limiting its prospect for party cooperation. The historical links existing between the Northern Basque nationalist movement and Herri Batasuna have delayed a strict condemnation of ETA. While the Abertzale had long reached a consensus against IK, their reluctance to condemn ETA's struggle has resulted in their isolation within minority nationalist parties in France and in Europe. AB has recently clarified its position – by calling for a truce from ETA – and this has coincided with increased party cooperation in the R&PS federation.

Lastly, the lack of institutionalisation has arguably reduced the significance of European opportunities – especially cross-border cooperation - for AB's mobilisation. More than France and Spain's fear of secessionism, cross-border cooperation has primarily been constrained by the huge institutional gap between Basque territories on both sides of the border. Building a Euro-region representative of the historic Basque Country simply cannot be done without the creation of a Basque department. The lack of institutional recognition has also meant that European integration was not a concrete reality in Northern Basque politics. Basque political actors have not been involved in the EU Regional Policy and structural funds have been exclusively managed at the level of the Aquitaine region. European integration has therefore rarely entered the sphere where the Abertzale mobilise, beyond key moments such as the Maastricht Treaty, the Euro or the European Constitution.

AB's 2004 alliance with the Green Party, renewed in the 2009 European elections, could be seen as the sign of a new direction for the party. Admittedly, the strategies of civil disobedience and mass mobilisation have done little to put forward the demand for a Basque department to the French government. In its constant assessment of the resources available for its mobilisation, AB has started considering the strategic resources emerging from European integration. Without the creation of a Basque institution – necessary pathway to higher levels of government, including the EU - it is however unlikely that Northern Basque nationalists will derive as much benefit from Europe as the Corsican UPC or the Breton UDB, as we will see in the next chapter.

## Chapter 6 – The Union Democratique Bretonne

This chapter analyses the significance of European integration for Breton nationalist parties by looking at the Union Democratique Bretonne (UDB). It starts with a brief overview of the Breton nationalist movement, establishing the UDB as the main nationalist actor in Brittany, and then goes on to survey party activity since the 1980s. Arguably more articulate than the two other political parties included in this study, the UDB has devised a European policy addressing the political, economic and social implications of European integration for Brittany. Over the years, the UDB has strengthened the European dimension of its political agenda and the defence of Breton interests in the EU has become central to its mobilisation. Breton nationalists not only aligned their demands with the European level but also gained a certain European expertise among the regional elites, which subsequently helped them to infuse their autonomist ideas into the regional political debate. After the UPC's pragmatism with regards to the EU, and AB's lack of interest for European matters, the UDB provides an example of the successful use of Europe as a strategy for local mobilisation.

## 6.1. The Breton nationalist movement

The Breton nationalist movement emerged at the beginning of the 20$^{th}$ century, but it was only in 1931 that it found its first political expression in the Parti National Breton (PNB). The party however remained on the political fringe and was largely discredited after some of its members collaborated with German occupation forces and the Vichy government during WW2, hoping for the creation of an independent Breton state (Lynch, 1996:88; Rogers, 1990:68). In 1951, while Breton nationalism seemed to have arrived at a dead end, a group of mayors created the Comite d'Etudes et de Liaison des Interets Bretons (CELIB), an apolitical organisation promoting regional economic development in Brittany. This initiative turned out to be a great success and the CELIB became a pioneering organisation in the field of regional development in France (Martray, 1983). Some of its members decided to pursue the CELIB's economic claims on political grounds. This led to the creation of the Mouvement pour l'Organisation de la Bretagne (MOB) in 1957 and the Union Democratique Bretonne (UDB) in 1964. While the MOB did not survive the disappearance of the CELIB, made redundant by the first decentralisation measures in France, the UDB grew to become the main political party of the Breton nationalist movement. On the basis of the "national vocation" of the Breton people, the UDB saw Brittany's autonomy as a necessity to rise above its current cultural and economic under-development (Pasquier, 2006:90). Building on the idea that Brittany was

essentially a colony, the UDB made internal colonialism a cornerstone of its mobilisation[371]. Placing the experience of the Breton people in the context of colonial domination facilitated the convergence between the idea of national liberation and the concept of social class (Rogers, 1990:70-71). This was important because it enabled the UDB to establish Breton nationalism as a political phenomenon of the Left.

A more radical tendency also appeared within the Breton nationalist movement in the 1960s. Initially, two clandestine organisations fighting for Brittany's independence emerged, namely the Front de Liberation de la Bretagne (FLB) and the Armee Republicaine Bretonne (ARB). These two military structures merged in 1968 to form the FLB-ARB, but their action has ceased at the beginning of the 1980s[372]. In 1983, a support group for political prisoners from the FLB founded Emgann-MGI, a political party demanding the creation of an independent "socialist Breton state" and linked to another clandestine organisation, the Armee Revolutionnaire Bretonne[373]. Emgann-MGI has however had limited electoral results, mainly due to its constant refusal to form political alliances with non-nationalist parties[374], and the party has not participated in local elections since 2000 (Dominici, 2005:102). While the two parties have collaborated at times, Emgann-MGI has conflicting relations with the UDB (Crettiez & Sommier, 2002:64). Disagreements have come essentially from the UDB's vocal condemnation of the actions led by the FLB and the FLB-ARB, which it has always regarded as irresponsible and counter-productive (Rogers, 1990:72).

Over the years, several nationalist parties have come to challenge the UDB's leadership on the Breton nationalist movement, without success. In 1982, the Parti pour l'Organisation d'une Bretagne Libre (POBL) was created as a "more clearly nationalist" alternative to the UDB. "Neither right-wing, nor left-wing, but Breton"[375], the POBL advocates the right to self-determination of the Breton nation and demands the independence of Brittany in a federal Europe[376]. While the party has existed for more than twenty years, with only 100 members, its electoral presence remains marginal. In addition, the POBL has evolved towards the right end of the political spectrum, which has left the party isolated in a predominantly leftist Breton nationalist movement. A scission appeared

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[371] UDB, Bretagne = Colonie, Quimper: Imprimerie Cornouaillaise, 1972.
[372] The FLB-ARB claimed more than 120 terrorist attacks between 1971 and 1980, and 1 failed attack in 1999.
[373] Created in 1971, the Armee Revolutionnaire Bretonne claimed a series of terrorist attacks between 1998 and 2000. Emgann's former spokesperson, Gael Roblin, was arrested following a terrorist attack in the Mac Donald of Quevert on 9th April 2000, which led to the death of one of the restaurant's employee, but was eventually released. The Armee Revolutionnaire Bretonne is also suspected to have participated in the theft of 8.5 tonnes of dynamite by ETA in Plevin (Brittany) on 19th September 1999.
[374] With the exception of the 1986 regional elections, when Emgann joined forces with the UDB and other leftist parties.
[375] L'avenir de la Bretagne 21, December 1982.
[376] The POBL bases its claims on the 1532 Union Treaty which granted a right to autonomy to the Breton nation.

in 2000 when a few members left the party to create an extreme right organisation, Adsao. The POBL has since then transformed itself into a social movement named "POBL evit Breizh Dizalc'h", or "POBL for a Free Brittany". In addition, the UDB's difficult relationship with the Socialists in the 1980s led to the departure of some of the party's members and the formation of another Breton nationalist party in 1986, Frankiz-Breizh (FB, Freedom Brittany)[377]. FB only ever had a few municipally elected officials, mainly in municipalities around Brest, and always remained close to the UDB, both in its goals and strategies. The parties have formed several electoral alliances, even conducting joint electoral campaigns, until FB recently decided to merge back into the UDB. Finally, the latest addition to the Breton nationalist movement is the Parti Breton, which was created by members of the Breton diaspora in 2000. Advocating the self-determination of the Breton nation in Europe and modelling itself on the SNP and Plaid Cymru, the Parti Breton has so far had a limited audience and has only recently started participating in elections[378].

The UDB is currently the only Breton political party with political representation at the municipal, departmental and regional levels of government. Perhaps the most important part of the UDB's programme is the rejection of the administrative boundaries established by the French government. The party demands the reunification of Brittany, that is the return of the department Loire Atlantique, currently part of the region Pays de la Loire, to the historical Breton region. The second article of the party's charter declares that "the UDB acts in the whole of Brittany and fights for its administrative reunification"[379]. Interestingly, this statement is reflected in the electoral activity of the UDB, in that the party has not limited itself to the Breton administrative region but contested seats in the five departments constitutive of historic Brittany[380]. The UDB has always placed more importance in its territorial presence than its electoral success (Miodownik & Cartrite, 2006). Basing its influence on its support at the grassroots level and representation in most municipal councils, it is only in the 2004 elections that Breton nationalists succeeded in gaining access to the Breton council.

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[377] Frankizh-Breizh (FB), meaning Liberte Bretagne, only had a few municipal elected officials, mainly in municipalities around Brest. FB always remained close to the UDB, both in its goals and strategies, and formed electoral alliances with the party until recently, when FB decided to merge back into the UDB.

[378] The Parti Breton presented 2 candidates in the 2004-2005 cantonal elections, 4 candidates in the 2007 legislative elections and 20 candidates in the 2008 municipal elections.

[379] UDB, Charte d'adhésion adoptée le 29 avril 2000 à Ploemeur / Planvour, p.1

[380] In the 1993 legislative elections, the UDB has put forward candidates in three of the ten seats in the department of Loire Atlantique, officially part of the Pays de la Loire region, while not contesting any of the seats in the department of Cotes d'Armor, part of the Bretagne region. Since then, the UDB has progressively increased its footprints both in the four departments in the Bretagne region as well as in Loire-Atlantique, contesting all 36 seats in the 2007 elections.

## 6.2. The Union Democratique Bretonne

### 6.2.1. Up to 1986: "Brittany = Colony"

A concern for Europe has always been present in the Breton nationalist movement. Already, in 1929, Maurice Duhamel, member of the PNB, published "The Breton Question in a European Context", revealing a surprisingly modern outlook on the future of Europe as a "federation of nations and not of states" (Nicolas, 2006:297). Hence, unlike the Corsican and Basque cases, the UDB developed a clear set of positions with regards to European integration ever since its creation in 1964. Europe was directly included in the core discourse of the party, whose founding statement contained a commitment to the federal integration of European peoples[381]. Breton nationalists subsequently developed their European discourse through their collaboration with the Socialist and Communist parties. The UDB had cultivated a close bond with the French Left since it considered that only socialism could change the colonial situation of Brittany. The UDB participated in elections as part of the Union of the Left – formed with the Socialist and Communist parties - and managed as a result to gain representation in the municipal councils of Rennes, Brest and Nantes. The party's association with left-wing parties was reinforced after their adoption of a Joint Programme of Government in 1972[382], which included a commitment to regionalisation and decentralisation. At that time, the concern of the French Left for regions had been attributed to the influence of the UDB on the Socialist leadership (Pasquier, 2006:96). Throughout the 1970s, Europe was a theme the UDB debated with the Socialist and Communist parties in Brittany, primarily as a way to elevate the party's profile by taking part in national debates (Lynch, 1996:98). This predominance of leftist ideas in the early years of the UDB goes some way into explaining its criticism of European institutions and their policies.

Indeed, while being supportive of European integration as a process, Breton nationalists expressed reservations towards the European Community. They perceived the EU as a capitalist institution, dominated by business and government interests, whose free-market policies were damaging to the Breton economy[383]. Primarily, the creation of a free market in agriculture was seen as having a negative impact on the Breton farming industry[384]. The UDB essentially saw a colonial relationship between the EC and Brittany in a number of policy areas, with European policies increasing regional disparities by advantaging strong regions at the expense of economically weaker regions (Lynch, 1996:97-98). These claims were linked to the party's attempt to mobilise support on socio-economic issues 'linked to the lack of regional autonomy for Brittany. Echoing the

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[381] Le Peuple Breton, January 1964, p.1
[382] The Joint Programme of Government was signed on 27 June 1972 by the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the Movement of Left Radicals.
[383] Le Peuple Breton, 15 September 1967, p.2
[384] Le Peuple Breton, 15 July 1967, p.3

colonialism of France, Europe was pictured as acting in a colonial manner through its centralised economic policies. The UDB campaigned in favour of a "no" in the 1972 referendum on the enlargement of the European Community[385], arguing that it could only reinforce its internal colonialism[386]. Yet, this position was primarily motivated by instrumental reasons, the UDB seeking to capitalise on any political development to gain exposure and advance its case for an autonomous Brittany[387]. Despite its criticism, however, the UDB was never opposed to European integration, which it conceived as an overall positive development provided that it followed the correct socialist lines: "the UDB declares itself in favour of the construction of a Europe enabling peoples ignored by current States to exist and flourish [...] the Union of the Peoples of Europe can only be done through socialism"[388].

The disappointing results of the 1978 legislative elections, after which the Right maintained its control over the National Assembly, marked the end of the Union of the Left. In fact, the demise of the Union of the Left provided an opportunity for the UDB to reassess its alliance strategy. There had been growing dissatisfaction within the party over the fact that the Left had used the UDB to gain public support in Brittany, without promoting the party's nationalist demands[389]. Not only was it felt that the Socialists had eroded the UDB's ideological specificity by exploiting themes such as the defence of Breton identity and culture, but it also became clear that the alliance with the Left had restricted the party's freedom of action as an independent political party (Rogers, 1990:73-74). The UDB had effectively tied its own fortunes to the electoral success of the Left at the national level, a vulnerable position considering the results of the Socialists in the last elections[390]. Consequently, the 1978 annual meeting sought to reassert the nationalist dimension of the UDB's political project, i.e. Brittany's autonomy, by advocating the right of the Breton people to self-determination and self-government. The party endorsed a motion signalling a departure from its identification with the Left, stating that "regionalisation and decentralisation are traps, [only] autonomy will allow the Breton people to assume its full role in the international struggle against capitalist oppression"[391]. The motion implied the development of "a programme that cannot be taken over by the French Left and the Socialists in particular", but it also stressed that "the affirmation of our specificity must not lead our party to cut itself off from the tactical gains previously attained, such as our

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[385] French voters were asked to endorse the decision to admit Denmark, Ireland, Norway and the United Kingdom, and therefore to revoke De Gaulle's veto on British membership in the EC. Overall, the "yes" vote obtained 67.07 percent, and Brittany supported enlargement by 74.8 percent.
[386] Le Peuple Breton (103), April 1972
[387] Interview Herri Gourmelen, 27 October 2008
[388] UDB, Programme Democratique Breton, Adopte par le Comite Directeur de l'UDB, le 13 Novembre 1977, Quimper : Imprimerie Cornouaillaise, 1978, p.66.
[389] Interview Mona Bras, 5 November 2008
[390] Interview Herri Gourmelen, 27 October 2008
[391] Le Peuple Breton (182), November 1978

presence in municipal councils"[392]. While the UDB would stop cultivating the ideological connections between its nationalist political project and the programme of the French Left, the party did not either turn down the possibility of strategic alliances in the future.

In the context of this re-direction towards minority nationalism rather than socialism, the UDB explored potential links with other regional minorities in France. The party formed the Union of Peoples for Autonomy and Socialism with Occitan and Basque parties in 1980, in the view of representing minority nationalists in the coming presidential elections. The Union however failed to produce a candidate for the 1981 elections[393]. The consequences of the UDB's desire for independence from the Socialists however meant that Brittany did not feature on the "110 Proposals" of candidate Mitterrand[394], unlike Corsica and the Basque Country[395]. In the end, even though it was felt that the UDB could be compromised by its relationship with the Left, the Socialists remained the party's only chance to participate in national elections[396]. Furthermore, with Mitterrand becoming the new French President in 1981, the great victory of the Left had finally become a reality and the UDB intended to claim at least some credit for the success of the Socialists. The party therefore presented 15 candidates on the Socialist list for the 1981 legislative elections, even though the terms of the electoral alliance were disadvantaging to the Bretons which did not gain representation as a result.

In reality, the election of a Socialist government placed the UDB in an uneasy situation, in that the party's long-term ally had become the representative of the Jacobin French state. While the alliance with the Socialists had been necessary for the UDB to participate in the French political process, this strategy presented Breton nationalists with the risk of failure through being integrated into a logic essentially aiming at the reinforcement of French national unity (Nicolas, 1982:354). Furthermore, due to its proximity with the Socialists in power, the UDB had to defend itself from accusations of being regionalist: "Our ambition is far from the provincialism or mild regionalism within which one would like to confine the Bretons"[397]. The discrepancy between the electoral promises and the first proposals of the new government confirmed the drift between the Socialists and Breton nationalists. The 1982 decentralisation reforms[398] did not go nearly as far in regional empowerment as the UDB had intended and, most importantly, did not

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[392] Le Peuple Breton (182), November 1978
[393] The Union of Peoples for Autonomy and Socialism failed to gather the number of elected officials' signatures necessary to present a candidate in the presidential elections.
[394] Francois Mitterrand, "110 Propositions pour la France", Élections présidentielles, April-May 1981.
[395] "Proposal 54, [...] Corsica will receive a special status. A Basque department will be created" in Francois Mitterrand, 110 Propositions pour la France, Élections présidentielles, April-May 1981.
[396] Especially since it is only in 1986 that the first sub-national elections at the region and department levels took place in France.
[397] Le Peuple Breton (235), July 1983
[398] For details on the 1982 decentralisation reforms, please refer to chapter three.

introduce a redrawing of regional boundaries in accordance with historic regions. This meant that the department of Loire-Atlantique, which contained the historical capital of Brittany, Nantes, was not to be included in the Breton administrative region and would remain in the region Pays de la Loire. In addition, Brittany retained its status as an ordinary region whereas Corsica was accorded a special status with its own regional institutions and extended competences. Under these terms, the Socialists reforms received the UDB's strong condemnation, thereby putting a considerable distance between Breton nationalists and the government[399]. This positioning however led to the departure of several party members. Among them was one of the UDB's leaders, Ronan Leprohon[400], who joined the Socialist Party instead, triggering the dissolution of the Brest federation of the UDB[401]. At its 1982 annual meeting, the UDB nevertheless decided against a systematic criticism of the Socialist government, mainly on the grounds that "this attitude would be very likely to isolate us"[402]. Accordingly, and despite obvious tensions, the UDB maintained its collaboration with the Socialists in the 1983 municipal elections, gaining about 80 seats of municipal councillors and two mayor seats. Yet, the situation had not been uniform across Brittany: in some municipalities, the PS-UDB alliance had held very well, while in others, the UDB had abandoned the strategy of alliance and presented its own lists, with marginal electoral results (3 percent of the votes on average).

The changing nature of the UDB's relationship with the Left had not greatly impacted on the party's position with regard to European integration. Just like before, Breton nationalists were in favour of Europe, but they wished for a different Europe[403]. Mainly, the EU had to become more than an economic zone of free market and to merge into the Europe of the Regions and the Peoples. Breton nationalists started making demands for more regional representation through the creation of a Senate whose powers and competences would be equivalent to the ones of the European Parliament[404]. On the other hand, the party's difficulties with the Socialists meant that Breton nationalists did not take part in the 1984 European elections. In order to demonstrate its new combative stance, the UDB had campaigned for abstention in the elections, arguing that the electoral system adopted by the Socialist government was undemocratic inasmuch as France was treated as one single constituency with no special regional representation[405]. This loss of support in the European elections had been presented by UDB leaders as a "warning" to the Left, to illustrate their "disapprobation with the policies of the Socialist government [and

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[399] Interview Herri Gourmelen, 27 October 2008
[400] Ronan Leprohon returned to the UDB in 2000.
[401] Le Peuple Breton (223), July 1982
[402] Le Peuple Breton (217), January 1982, p.28
[403] Interview Christian Guyonvarc'h, 3rd September 2009
[404] Le Peuple Breton (246), June 1984
[405] Le Peuple Breton (244/245), May 1984

its] lack of respect for electoral promises"[406]. The UDB was however clear in saying that Breton interests needed to be defended at the European level, essentially concerned with the peripheralisation of Brittany in the EU. In particular, the party expressed its disagreement with a further enlargement of the EU, on the basis that it would exacerbate regional inequalities within Europe and be detrimental to Breton agriculture and fisheries[407]. Despite campaigning for abstention, there was a sense that the UDB had missed an opportunity to present arguments in favour of Brittany's regional autonomy[408]. Soon after, the party approached the European Free Alliance (EFA) in the view of becoming a member.

The UDB's love-hate relationship with the Socialists had had a disastrous effect on the party membership, which had gone from over 2000 to 500 in just a couple of years (Nicolas, 2001:88). The UDB was continually faced with the impossible choice of remaining supportive of the government despite the disappointment of its policies – on which the party had a negligible influence anyway - or dissociating itself from the Socialists and falling into isolation (Rogers, 1990:77). This was reflected in the 1984 annual meeting, which saw two motions being presented: one in favour of maintaining a "critical" support to the Socialist government and another pushing for a more independent line, refusing the logic of electoral alliance with candidates of the Left unless negotiations took place on a range of issues[409]. The supporters of the second motion stressed that the UDB's doctrine was not socialist regionalism but minority nationalism, and that an alliance with a non-nationalist political formation could only be strategic[410]. Fearing dissolution, the party leadership opted for a middle ground position: they rejected a radical break with the French Left but also abandoned the practice of unconditional support to the Left candidates in the second round of elections. In any case, these internal debates over the alliance with the Socialists had become redundant, as the latter showed less and less interest in Breton nationalists. The UDB was no longer the ideological laboratory it once was for the Socialists, who paid little attention to the party's propositions, as illustrated in the government's refusal to receive a UDB delegation to discuss the party's development plan for Brittany in 1985.

[406] Le Peuple Breton (244/245), May 1984
[407] Le Peuple Breton (246), June 1984
[408] Interview Herri Gourmelen, 27 October 2008
[409] Le Peuple Breton (251), December 1984
[410] Le Peuple Breton (251), December 1984

## 6.2.2. Reorientation towards Europe

All in all, the context was clearly unfavourable to the UDB when the first regional elections finally took place in Brittany in 1986[411]. As well as being let down by the Socialists and seeing its membership drop dramatically, the party's credibility was being attacked from within. The UDB's leadership within the Breton nationalist movement had been challenged since the beginning of the 1980s, with the emergence of new Breton parties such as the Parti pour l'Organisation d'une Bretagne Libre (POBL) and Emgann-MGI. These new parties had been created partly on the ground that the UDB had turned to regionalism under the influence of the Socialists and that Breton nationalism needed a new voice to be defended (Nicolas, 2001:96-107). To make matters worse for the UDB, the proponents of a clear break with the Left at the 1984 assembly - refusing to submit to the decision of the party leadership - were finally expelled and went on to create Frankiz Breizh in January 1986. Despite these obstacles, the election of a Breton regional council was an unprecedented opportunity for the UDB, in terms of providing the first substantial forum for Breton interests. The party therefore designed an electoral strategy based on the unification of all political, economic, social and cultural Breton actors with "comparable aspirations" for the future of Brittany[412]. The resulting "Kemper Breizh" alliance did not include other Breton nationalist parties – apart from Emgann-MGI – but was instead oriented towards extreme-left and environmental organisations[413]. The alliance was based on three common propositions: the existence of the Breton people, a leftist ideology, and an opposition to the Socialist party in office[414]. Despite an effort to present candidates in all the historic Breton departments[415], the scores achieved by the "Kemper Breizh" lists[416] were not enough to reach the 5 percent electoral threshold and gain representation at the regional level. Having the first Breton political assembly form itself without UDB representatives was a major drawback for the party, which was forced to face the reality of having lost the greatest part of its electorate to the Socialists.

The electoral fiasco of the 1986 regional elections triggered a deep questioning of the UDB's ideology and strategy[417]. The party's political project, Brittany's autonomy, on which a number of nationalist goals depended – teaching of Breton language, return of Loire-Atlantique to Brittany, development of Breton agriculture – remained untouched.

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[411] Although the Defferre decentralisation reforms were adopted in 1982 and provided administrative regions with directly elected political assemblies, it is only in 1986 that the first regional elections took place.
[412] Le Peuple Breton (256), April 1985
[413] Formed on 8-9 November 1985, Kemper Breizh included the Unified Socialist Party, the Federation for the Alternative Left, several ecologist and pacifist organisations, Skol an Emsav, Emgann-MGI and the UDB.
[414] Le Peuble Breton (265), Janvier 1986
[415] That is Cotes-d'Armor, Morbihan, Ille-et-Vilaine, Finistere (forming the administrative region Brittany) and Loire-Atlantique (which is in the region Pays de la Loire).
[416] See Appendix 1: Election Tables.
[417] Interview Christian Guyonvarc'h, 3rd September 2009

However, the ideological justification surrounding the UDB's demand for self-government changed dramatically. The UDB abandoned the thematic of internal colonialism in favour of a federalist philosophy and began to stress a more European agenda in its campaign for Breton autonomy. Indeed, the 1986 UDB meeting operated a rewriting of the party's ideology, building on the idea of a Brittany fully integrated in Europe[418]. From that point onwards, Europe gained prominence in the activity and discourse of the UDB, and after several years of informal participation, the party became a formal member of the EFA in 1987. The UDB sought to increase the credibility of its mobilisation through its participation within a larger movement of minority nations in Europe, organised around the EFA: "everywhere in Europe, we have allies, leading the same struggle"[419]. "Europeanising" the Breton mobilisation appeared as a valid strategy to the UDB to circumvent the confidentiality of local mobilisations and gain visibility in the French domestic context[420]. The party's involvement in the EFA also brought new opportunities for electoral cooperation and, in the 1989 European elections, the UDB formed an alliance with the Greens and other minority nationalist parties in France[421]. While the UDB had high expectations for this alliance, it was the Corsican Max Simeoni, leader of the UPC, who received the one seat granted by the Greens to minority nationalists. Still, it was the first time that the party got involved in European elections, and the fact that the Green list gained higher than average support in Brittany and Corsica enabled the UDB and the UPC to claim the venture as a success[422]. In addition, UDB member Christian Guyonvarc'h became Simeoni's parliamentary assistant, providing the party with direct access to the European Parliament and first-hand information on European affairs[423].

This reorientation towards Europe did not however stop the UDB from being critical of most EU policies[424]. The Single European Act, for instance, was seen as damaging to the Breton economy as well as increasing economic isolation and depopulation[425]. Concerns emerged that Brittany, like many other peripherical regions, would be excluded from the economic benefits of European integration due to the lack of an efficient European regional policy[426]. Consequently, the UDB campaigned for direct regional representation in the EU, on a par with states representation[427]. For similar reasons, the party was suspicious of the Maastricht Treaty's proposals for economic and monetary union, viewing them as centralist measures that would exacerbate the inequalities of the

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[418] Le Peuple Breton (274), October 1986
[419] Le Peuple Breton (297), September 1988; Le Peuple Breton (301), January 1989
[420] Le Peuple Breton (324), December 1990
[421] The Green Party made an alliance with the UPC, UDB, Partit Occitan and Bloc Catala.
[422] In France, the list had achieved 10.6 percent, while it went up to 12.2 percent in Brittany and 15.5 percent in Corsica.
[423] Interview Christian Guyonvarc'h, 3rd September 2009
[424] Interview Christian Guyonvarc'h, 3rd September 2009
[425] Le Peuple Breton (285), September 1987
[426] Le Peuple Breton (297), September 1988
[427] Le Peuple Breton (330), June 1991

single market[428]. Breton nationalists were also unsure about the EU gaining new competences in the field of education and culture, fearing that this would only reinforce the linguistic and cultural prejudices of member states[429]. Yet, in 1992, the UDB did not campaign against France's ratification of the Maastricht treaty, mainly because it feared losing support among a Breton population rather supportive of the EU[430]. Breton nationalists worried that they would appear as isolationist and anti-European if they opposed the treaty[431]. The party therefore gave a reluctant "yes" to Maastricht, but largely abstained from the referendum campaign.

The UDB however reframed its political project in relation to European integration, inasmuch as regional autonomy was not only a right of the Breton people but had also become an institutional necessity to survive in the EU. Accordingly, the party started making demands for a direct representation of Brittany in Brussels[432]. This growing interest in European representation came with the realisation that decisions made by the EU had direct consequences for Brittany[433]. In particular, agriculture and fisheries were two sectors on which the Breton economy relied heavily, where the EU had competences and for which the UDB had developed clear positions[434]. While the Common Agricultural Policy was mentioned as a concrete resource for the Breton economy, the party denounced the policies of price control and quotas used by the EU since the 1960s as a source of imbalance in the agricultural market[435]. Similarly, in the party's view, the Common Fisheries Policy had to be more comprehensive in the management of resources and include the consultation of all stakeholders, in order to resolve the problem of overfishing affecting the Breton coastline[436]. Through this criticism, the UDB decried the negative impact on peripheral economies of an integration process designed and driven by state interests. Brittany being classified under Objective 2 of the EU Regional Policy, the region was not eligible for priority European funding. The party feared that this lack of EU engagement towards Brittany would only reinforce the social and economic inequalities created by the policies of the French government[437]. The UDB's main concern was that Brittany did not become a periphery of the EU, just like the Breton economy suffered from being at the French periphery.

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[428] Le Peuple Breton (343/344), July/August 1992
[429] Interview Herri Gourmelen, 27 October 2008
[430] The 1992 referendum illustrated the strong support for Europe in Brittany, with 59.9 percent of Breton voters favouring the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. In comparison, at the national level, the "yes" votes achieved 51 percent.
[431] Le Peuple Breton (343/344), July/August 1992
[432] Le Peuple Breton, Editorial, Septembre 1988 (297)
[433] Le Peuple Breton, Europeennes : abstention, pourquoi ?, Juin 1984 (246) ; Interview Christian Guyonvarc'h, 3rd September 2009
[434] Le Peuple Breton (323), November 1990; Le Peuple Breton (326), February 1991
[435] Le Peuple Breton (335), November 1991
[436] Le Peuple Breton (352), April 1993
[437] Le Peuple Breton, Minorites en Congres, Juin 1988 (294)

Hence, the international dimension of the UDB was (1) a means to gain visibility in the French context and (2) also a necessity to defend Breton interests in the EU. Yet, the party's focus on European integration also followed another logic: one of (3) a strategic comparative advantage in local politics[438]. Through the EFA and Guyonvarc'h's role as parliamentary assistant, the UDB was the only Breton political force with connections at the European level[439]. The party could derive credibility and raise its profile in Breton politics through these European connections, despite being in a difficult situation both electorally and politically since the mid-1980s. Indeed, Breton nationalists had not succeeded in gaining representation in the Breton council since getting the cold shoulder from the Socialists. After the failure of the "alternative Left" alliance strategy in the last elections, the UDB sought to unite the whole Breton nationalist movement for the 1992 regional elections. Despite sharp differences in terms of ideology and on the question of political violence[440], the UDB joined forces with the POBL, Emgann-MGI and Frankiz Breizh in a list named "The Breton People, People of Europe". However, the coalition only received 2.23 percent of the votes – almost half of the UDB electoral score in 1986[441]. It was argued that the last-minute alliance with other Breton nationalist parties had had a detrimental effect on the UDB's political credibility[442]. Once again, Breton nationalists would not sit in the Breton assembly, making it hard to have a say in the local debates. In contrast, the EU was a political space where the UDB had a form of representation through the EFA and this encouraged Breton nationalists to specialise in European issues with a direct relevance for Brittany, such as the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy. Cut off from national and local politics, the UDB would focus instead on the defence of Breton interests in the EU.

### 6.2.3. Difficult years for the UDB

The context leading to the representation of French minority nationalists in the European Parliament turned out to be a one-off. For the 1994 European elections, the UDB gave its support to the minority nationalist list "Solidarity People-Region" led by the Corsican Max Simeoni after the demise of its alliance with the Greens. The initiative did not enable Simeoni to keep its European seat, but it did create the Federation Solidarity People-Region (R&PS), composed of 9 minority nationalist parties in France[443]. The UDB

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[438] Interview Herri Gourmelen, 28 October 2008
[439] Interview Christian Guyonvarc'h, 3rd September 2009
[440] The POBL is clearly right wing, while Emgann refuses to condemn political violence. Interview Mona Bras, 5 November 2008
[441] As well as Brittany, the UDB also presented candidates in the region Pays de la Loire, where the party obtained 0.33 percent of the votes.
[442] Interview Naig Le Gars, 5 November 2008
[443] R&PS is composed of the Union Démocratique Bretonne, the Partit Occitan, the Parti National Basque, Eusko Alkartasuna, Bloc Català, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, Mouvement

was instrumental in this attempt at joining local forces in order to gain visibility in the French context and make an impact on Paris[444]. From then on, the party's discourse featured European themes familiar to other members of the R&PS. Hence, France was pictured as an exception in Europe and the French politico-administrative system, the "last of dinosaurs", was presented as archaic[445]. The French government's response to cultural and regional diversity appeared inadequate in comparison to other EU member states: "the Gallic rooster is now surrounded in Europe"[446]. The party campaigned for the ratification of the European Charter on Minority and Regional Languages, an important document providing credibility to demands for the recognition and protection of the Breton language[447]. Interestingly, party cooperation within the R&PS also triggered a process of self-definition within the UDB. Unhappy with both the regionalist (not reflective of the existence of the Breton people) and nationalist (too inflammatory and exclusive) labels, the Bretons preferred defining themselves as autonomists[448]. More precisely, the UDB was "the party of regional autonomy", which was both a right of the Breton people and the best possible type of governance for Brittany in the context of European integration[449]. In 1997, the UDB launched a new campaign for regional autonomy in response to the devolution granted to Scotland and Wales[450]. In light of the example of other European regions, the party's demand for Brittany's autonomy appeared not only as legitimate, but also as a necessity for Brittany to remain competitive in the EU. Increasingly, the party raised concerns over the weaknesses of Brittany in comparison to larger, wealthier and autonomous regions in Europe[451].

The UDB maintained a strong focus on Europe despite having lost its (indirect) representation in the European Parliament. This was illustrated in the party's programme for the 1998 regional elections, i.e. a crucial electoral event for Breton nationalists. After the disappointing results of coalitions with small parties in the last two elections, the UDB decided to face the public vote on its own and to stress its European dimension in the electoral campaign[452]. The UDB programme listed the six most important challenges facing Brittany, four of which were directly related to the EU: the Euro (likely to create more inequalities due to the lack of Brittany's export), reforms of the CAP and the Common Fisheries Policy (decrease of European funding in Brittany), enlargement of the

Région Savoie, Union du Peuple Alsacien and Parti de la Nation Corse. Abertzaleen Batasuna recently gained observer status.
[444] Interview Christian Guyonvarc'h, 3rd September 2009
[445] Le Peuple Breton, Le dernier des dinosaures, Juin 1996 (390)
[446] Le Peuple Breton (390), Juin 1996
[447] Le Peuple Breton (400), April 1997
[448] Interview Herri Gourmelen, 28 October 2008
[449] Interview Mona Bras, 5 November 2008
[450] Le Peuple Breton (405). September 1997
[451] Le Peuple Breton, La Bretagne, trop petite pour l'Europe, Fevrier 1999 (422)
[452] Interview Naig Le Gars, 5 November 2008 ; Interview Christian Guyonvarc'h, 3rd September 2009

EU to Central and Eastern Europe (more peripheralisation of Brittany), decentralisation and devolution measures in other EU member states (making Brittany less able to compete in the European market)[453]. In the party's view, regional autonomy was a necessity to face all these challenges and ensure the future of Brittany. Above all, it was clear to the UDB that autonomy should cover European matters, as the party asked for the Regional Council to have representation in Brussels, to be able to sign cooperation agreements with other European regions and to manage European funds (which were entirely dealt with in Paris)[454]. The reunification of Brittany, i.e. the inclusion of the department Loire-Atlantique into the administrative region Brittany, was also required to remain competitive against the largest European regions[455]. Similarly, in order to best defend Breton interests in the context of European integration, the UDB proposed the creation of a Western Euro-region composed of the reunified Brittany, the reunified Poitou (with Vendee), the region Val de Loire (made of Anjou and Touraine) and the reunified Normandy[456]. However, with 3.31 percent of the votes[457], the UDB's electoral results were once again insufficient to gain political representation.

A few months later, the UDB released an institutional project of special autonomous status for a reunified Brittany[458]. Article 1 of the project stated that "the Breton people, to defend its identity and to gain access to self-government, must constitute an autonomous political community inside the French Republic, named Autonomous Region of Brittany"[459]. It has been argued that this proposed institutional status was similar to the one of the Spanish Autonomous Communities (Pasquier, 2006:91). Hence, the Breton assembly would be given legislative powers in all the domains that are not state functions in federal states, i.e. education, language, environment, agriculture, tourism, etc. As well as giving substance to the party's autonomist doctrine, this was also an attempt to maximise on institutional developments taking place in Corsica. The Matignon process had started around that time, and was meant to redefine Corsica's institutional status. Breton nationalists did not see why the Corsican model would not be applied to other regions in France[460]. In their view, autonomy was a right on the basis of the existence of the Breton people, as well as the need to protect and promote the Breton culture[461]. But perhaps even more importantly for the UDB, Brittany's regional autonomy emerged as a

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[453] Le Peuple Breton (408), December 1997; Le Peuple Breton (409), January 1998
[454] Le Peuple Breton (409), January 1998
[455] Le Peuple Breton (422), February 1999
[456] Interview Nicole Logeais, 28 October 2008
[457] As well as Brittany, the UDB also presented candidates in the region Pays de la Loire, where the party obtained 0.49 percent of the votes.
[458] Le Peuple Breton (417), September 1998. This institutional status was adopted as the UDB's political project on 29 May 1999.
[459] UDB, Un Statut Politique pour la Bretagne, Cahiers du Peuple Breton, Nb. 8, Lannion: Presses Populaires de Bretagne, 1999:14
[460] Le Peuple Breton (441), September 2000
[461] Le Peuple Breton (450), June 2001

need for the Breton people to defend their interests and to compete against other European regions in the Common Market. Through the making of French centralisation and Jacobinism, Brittany had been reduced to being a "minor political player in Europe" [462]. Yet, the French state was now unable to deal with the economic and social problems facing Brittany, whose future was being played out at the European and local levels[463]. In the new context created by European integration, regional autonomy was for the UDB the best possible form of governance for Brittany. However, the party's lack of political representation at the regional level meant that the UDB's institutional project had little exposure outside of Breton nationalist circles. Furthermore, the UDB was out of its depth financially and failed to form an alliance for the 1999 European elections. Breton nationalists chose not to participate in the elections, arguing that these were still organised with France as one single constituency, giving no chance of representation to local political parties[464].

### 6.2.4. The rise to the Breton Regional Council

On 29 April 2000, the UDB adopted a new charter, stating that the party's *raison d'être* was the defence of Breton interests in France and in the EU and that its priority was to develop Brittany's profile at the European level[465]. In many ways, this new charter was the final point of a long ideological transformation for the UDB and its complete reorientation towards Europe. The party's campaign for regional autonomy was now centred around a pragmatic rationale: "How can Brittany defend its interest in Europe without being at the same institutional level of regions such as Galicia, Catalonia, Scotland, Wales, Flanders, Sardinia, which all have regional autonomy, legislative power and a budget on average 10 times higher than the Breton one?"[466]. There was a sense of urgency in the party's discourse as the Breton people could no longer afford to rely on Parisian technocrats to represent its interests in Brussels, especially in the fields of maritime transport and fisheries[467]. Europe also remained a source of credibility and legitimacy for the demands of Breton nationalists: "our ambition for Brittany is nothing exceptional if considered outside of the French context and placed in the right environment, i.e. Europe, as many Europeans already experience regional autonomy on a

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[462] Le Peuple Breton (429), September 1999
[463] Le Peuple Breton (429), September 1999
[464] Le Peuple Breton (415/416), July/August 1998
[465] UDB, Charte de l'UDB, adoptee le 29 avril 2000 a Ploemeur/Planvour, Le Peuple Breton (438), June 2000
[466] Le Peuple Breton (439/440), July/August 2000
[467] Examples quoted by the party were: the lack of response from French authorities to the oil slick caused by the Erika (Le Peuple Breton (439/440), July/August 2000), the overlooking of Breton harbours in the trans-European transport networks, apart from Nantes (Le Peuple Breton (451/416), July/August 2001) and the shortcomings of the EU Fisheries Policy (Le Peuple Breton (456), January 2002).

daily basis"[468]. The party reiterated that regional autonomy was no longer "the ideological red flag it used to be, but the way forward for the survival of Brittany"[469]. Accordingly, France was presented as "the victim of its constitutional exception" and as bound to change its Jacobin conceptions since "the gap increases between France - fixed on a static Constitution - and the international community, which evolves towards pragmatism and openness"[470].

Meanwhile, the demands of the UDB were starting to find an echo in local political assemblies. Already, a 1999 poll had revealed that 68 percent of the Breton population was in favour of the administrative reunification of Brittany[471]. On 22 June 2001, the General Council of Loire-Atlantique voted in favour of the institutional recognition of its Breton identity, through its inclusion in the region of Brittany[472]. This decision carried little political weight since the General Council has no institutional competences, but it was the sign that proposals for reunification (and potentially autonomy) had found support outside of Breton nationalist circles[473]. From then on, the UDB campaigned for a public consultation on the reunification of Brittany. In 2002, the UDB released a joint program with Frankiz Breizh, asking for a regional democracy in Brittany through three propositions: (1) a referendum on the reunification of Brittany in 2004 (2) the disappearance of the departmental level in favour of an organisation based around 20 "pays" and (3) a mixed electoral system for the regional council, which should be granted legislative and fiscal powers[474]. The Breton nationalists had the 2004 regional elections in sight and were determined to gain political representation at the regional level this time, through any means necessary[475]. As noted above, despite experimenting with different electoral strategies[476], the UDB had yet to go beyond 5 percent of the votes in the regional elections. To make matters worse, the electoral threshold giving access to the second round was raised from 5 to 10 percent for the 2004 elections[477]. This change in the

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[468] Le Peuple Breton (450), June 2001
[469] Le Peuple Breton, L'autonomie Regionale, (462/463), July/August 2002
[470] Le Peuple Breton (449), May 2001
[471] TMO-OUEST poll on February-March 1999, Le Peuple Breton (441), September 2000
[472] It should be noted that in 1972 (i.e. prior to the creation of administrative regions in the French politico-administrative system), the General Council of Loire-Atlantique had already asked to be included in the region Brittany about to be created. However, the demand for reunification, referring to a shared history of the Duchy of Brittany and the County of Nantes from the 12th century to 1789, had first emerged at the beginning of the 20th century.
[473] Interview Naig Le Gars, 5 November 2008
[474] Le Peuple Breton, L'UDB (et Frankiz Breizh) proposent pour une democratie regionale en Bretagne, (467), December 2002
[475] Interview Mona Bras, 5 November 2008
[476] As a recap, the UDB made an alliance with alternative left-wing political parties in 1986 (4 percent of the votes), united the entire Breton nationalist movement in 1992 (2.23 percent of the votes) and faced the public vote alone in 1998 (3.31 percent of the votes).
[477] The new electoral rules, introduced by Raffarin's government, established a two-round system with the region as the electoral constituency. The system combines majority and proportional rules, as access to the second round is conditional on obtaining a minimum of 10 percent of the votes in the first round, but the law also enables the combining of lists between the two rounds.

electoral rules meant that the UDB had no other choice than to renew the experience of alliance with a larger political formation[478].

In a bid to sign an electoral alliance, the UDB clarified its electoral program around three main demands: the autonomy of Brittany, its administrative reunification and an official status for the Breton language[479]. Soon after, the party approached the Greens, with whom Breton nationalists had previously been in contact through R&PS and the EFA. There was a degree of programmatic compatibility between the Greens' commitment to regionalisation and subsidiarity, and the UDB's autonomous political project. Equally, through its interest in the agriculture and fisheries sector, the UDB conceived the protection of the environment as one of its main themes of action[480]. In December 2003, the UDB signed an electoral agreement with the Greens for the 2004 regional elections. It played in the UDB's favour that the Greens were looking for partners to present candidates independently from the Socialists, in order to represent "another Left"[481]. Also, in return to the electoral alliance, the Federation Solidarity Region-People offered its support to the Green party in the 2007 presidential elections[482]. While many demands of the Breton nationalists - such as the reunification of Brittany - were included in their joint electoral programme, the UDB had to "sacrifice" its demand for autonomy for the sake of the alliance[483]. The Greens-UDB list however obtained 9.70 percent of the votes, a score enabling the coalition to bargain its way into the list of Socialist Jean-Yves Le Drian. While the Greens and the UDB had in common to disagree with the policies of the Socialists, the objective was never to divide the Left to the benefit of Josselin de Rohan, President of the then Right-majority Breton Council[484]. In the end, the large success of the Socialist list in the second round meant that, for the first time since its creation, the UDB gained three seats in the Breton assembly[485].

Shortly after, UDB member Christian Guyonvarc'h was named Vice-President of the Breton Council in charge of European Relations. This nomination, as opposed to the more obvious Vice-Presidency on Cultural Affairs, was noteworthy as a recognition of the

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The list with an absolute majority in the first round or relative majority in the second round is granted a bonus of 25 percent of the seats.
[478] Interview Naig Le Gars, 5 November 2008
[479] Le Peuple Breton, Gagner la Bretagne a gauche en 2004, (478), November 2003
[480] The protection of the environment was used by the UDB as an argument to change means of production in the Breton agricultural sector, as intensive agriculture caused serious problems of pollution and had a backlash effect on tourism in Brittany (Pasquier, 2006:92)
[481] Interview Mona Bras, 5 November 2008
[482] Le Peuple Breton, Regionales 2004: Un accord Verts-UDB historique pour la Bretagne, (479), December 2003
[483] Le Peuple Breton, Regionales 2004: Un accord Verts-UDB historique pour la Bretagne, (479), December 2003
[484] Le Peuple Breton, Regionales 2004: Un accord Verts-UDB historique pour la Bretagne, (479), December 2003; Interview Mona Bras, 5 November 2008
[485] The Socialist list led by Jean-Yves Le Drian obtained 58.79 percent of the votes, and 58 seats, in the second round of the elections.

UDB's expertise in European matters[486]. Now part of the Breton regional institution, the party could use its new political status to advance its nationalist demands. It was also helpful that the new President of the Breton Council, Jean-Yves Le Drian, was not opposed to many of the UDB's demands for a stronger and autonomous Brittany. Even more, with the decentralisation reforms started by Prime Minister Raffarin in 2003, the ideas of the UDB had gained in popularity. On 8 October 2004, the Breton Council voted unanimously in favour of the reunification of Brittany, following a resolution proposed by the UDB representatives[487]. The vote was sharply criticised by the President of the Region Pays de la Loire (where the department Loire-Atlantique is located), referring to an attempt of "annexation"[488]. Following the provisions for Local Initiative Referendum adopted in 2003[489], the resolution called for a public consultation on the issue in accordance with popular will[490]. Several surveys had indicated that the majority of the population of Loire-Atlantique and Brittany was in favour of the reunification[491]. On 17 December 2004, the Breton Council also voted unanimously for the adoption of a "Linguistic Policy for Brittany" whose provisions contained the official recognition of the Breton and the Gallo as official languages of Brittany"[492]. In addition, following a proposal by Guyonvarc'h, the Council transformed its representation in Brussels. Since 1988, Brittany had had a joint representation office with the regions Pays-de-la-Loire and Poitou-Charentes, but in July 2005, an Embassy of Brittany was opened in Brussels in order to represent Breton interests in European institutions.

Despite an intense activity in Breton politics, the UDB continued reacting on European matters. For a start, the party was not enthusiastic about the Eastern enlargement of the EU, which it analysed as resulting in a move of the European decision-making centres towards the East - thereby accentuating the peripherical location of

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[486] Interview Nicole Logeais, 28 October 2008

[487] For the text of the Resolution, see http://www.region-bretagne.fr/CRB/Public/services_en_ligne/toutes_les_decisions/archives_2004/debat_sur_lavenir_d_10972390816192 (accessed on 20 November 2008)

[488] Le Peuple Breton, Reunification de la Bretagne: un message clair du Conseil Regional, (490), November 2004

[489] Law 2003.705 of 1st August 2003 relative to the local referendum

[490] Although this would be a mere implementation of the Law 2003.705 (which requires that only 10 percent of the local population ask for a referendum), the French government has yet to give its approval on the referendum.

[491] According to a 2000 CSA poll, 71 percent of the Loire-Atlantique population was in favour of the reunification (63 percent for Brittany), an 2001 Ifop survey indicated 75 percent (63 percent in Brittany) although the same institute came up with 56 percent in 2002 and 67 percent in 2006. However, according to a 2002 poll by TNS Sofres, only 29 percent of the population of Loire-Atlantique favoured the reunification as opposed to other forms of territorial organisation, such as maintaining the current territorial division (32 percent) and the creation of another territorial entity including Brittany and Pays de la Loire (36 percent).

[492] Conseil Regional de Bretagne, Direction de la Culture, Une Politique Linguistique pour la Bretagne, December 2004. For the text of the Resolution, see http://www.region-bretagne.fr/CRB/Public/divers/cache-actualite/un_plan_de_sauvegard_11036480895536 (accessed on 20 November 2008)

Brittany – and in less European funds for the region[493]. Breton nationalists also complained that the EU was solely driven by economic considerations[494], reaffirming their "support for a federal, democratic and social Europe" and pointing out that European integration should include "a European pact of social stability ensuring full employment, the well-being of all, as well as social equity"[495]. For the 2004 European elections, a change in the mode of scrutiny – France was divided into 8 electoral constituencies – meant that the party felt it had a real opportunity to influence the trajectory of European integration[496]. An electoral alliance had been decided between R&PS and the Greens, so that UDB was able to present two candidates on the Green list[497]. In the referendum for the European Constitutional Treaty, the UDB campaigned in favour of a 'yes'. The party membership was divided on the issue and a debate was organised to discuss the European Constitution[498]. In the end, although the EU did not reflect the federal and social Europe wished for by the UDB, the party felt that the document provided significant improvements for the respect of cultural and linguistic diversity and regional representation at the European level[499]. Based on his European expertise, Guyonvarc'h has performed an agenda-setting role in the Breton Council, stressing the need for Brittany to join the "club of European regions with legislative powers"[500]. For instance, he has repeatedly highlighted the weakness of Brittany's budget in comparison to the one of Wales, a region comparable in size and population (the Breton budget is 25 times less than the Welch one)[501]. The UDB leader has also alerted the Breton Council of the under-use of European funding, notably in the field of fisheries[502]. The Breton Council has since made demands for a direct and autonomous management of European funds destined to Brittany[503].

## 6.3. Summary of European responses

[493] Le Peuple Breton, L'autonomie regionale: une imperieuse necessite pour que la Bretagne ne soit pas la victime impuissante d'un marche unique a 25, (462/463), July/August 2002
[494] Le Peuple Breton, Europe des actionnaires, Europe des precaires, (490), November 2004
[495] Le Peuple Breton, St Malo: le 27e Congres de l'UDB, (491), December 2004
[496] Le Peuple Breton, Le 13 Juin, faisons avancer l'Europe federale et sociale des peuples et des regions, Juin 2004 (485)
[497] Jedjiga Ouggad-Douillard and Herri Gourmelen also featured on the Greens list which obtained 7.66 percent and one MEP seat (Marie-Helene Aubert).
[498] 70 percent of party members were in favour of the Constitution. Interview Nicole Logeais, 28 October 2008
[499] Le Peuple Breton, Traite constitutionnel europeen : seul le 'oui' permettra des avancees, Janvier 2005 (492)
[500] Le Peuple Breton, Regions d'Europe a pouvoir legislative: la Bretagne peut se preparer a integrer le club, (203), December 2005
[501] Le Peuple Breton, Budget: les moyens financiers que donnerait l'autonomie, (506), March 2006 ; Interview Christian Guyonvarc'h, 3rd September 2009
[502] Le Peuple Breton, L'argent europeen inutilise!, (506), March 2006
[503] Interview Nicole Logeais, 28 October 2008

The UDB has showed a great deal of interest for Europe ever since its creation in 1963. From very early on - long before the EFA was even created for instance - Breton nationalists have expressed their views on the trajectory that the EU should follow. Although it was never opposed to European integration, the party has expressed criticism towards the liberalism of European policies and decried the neglect of Brittany by the EU and by the French government. Breton nationalists have asked for more political integration enabling the EU to compensate for the regional and social inequalities created by the European single market. The European dimension of the party's political agenda became stronger throughout the years to the point of emerging as central in the UDB's demand for "Brittany's autonomy within Europe". The party's campaign for regional autonomy is now based on it being an institutional and political necessity to defend Breton interests in the EU. Of the three cases, Breton nationalists have gone the furthest in embracing the Europe of the Regions rhetoric.

This chapter has also illustrated how Europe played a large role in the strategic considerations of the UDB. Specialising in European issues affecting Brittany has helped the party to go through a dry spell that lasted from 1986 to 2004, when it repeatedly failed to achieve regional representation. More than its defence of Breton culture and languages, it is through its expertise in European matters and its European connections with the Greens that the party gained entry to the Breton Council. Since 2004, the UDB has achieved recognition from the regional elites and has been in a position to influence the regional debate. There has been an acceleration in the last few years, with the Socialist President of the Breton Council taking position in favour of several UDB demands, such as the reunification of Brittany and the recognition of Breton languages. Discursive and political resources emerging from European integration have provided the UDB with means to access regional politics and subsequently to disseminate its ideas into the Breton political debate.

Of the three cases, Breton nationalists have perceived the most opportunities in Europe and used European resources to the full in order to serve their local mobilisation. The organisation and articulation of the UDB has played a part in the success of its strategic reorientation towards Europe. Unlike Basque and Corsican nationalists, the party has not been averse to forming tactical alliances with non-nationalist organisations. As well as improving its level of political representation, long-term collaboration with the Socialist Party has forced the UDB to take position on a wide range of socio-economic issues affecting the Breton people. Its political programme has not been limited to nationalist claims, thereby allowing for multiple links to be made between the EU and the political, economic and social situation of Brittany. In addition, the UDB has not been challenged in the political linkages it has made between European integration and its mobilisation. The fact that the party was the only Breton political force with connections at

the European level – even symbolic - has significantly strengthened its claim to be the defender of Breton interests in the EU.

# Chapter 7 – A comparative study of the impact of European integration on minority nationalist parties in France

The last three chapters have provided a contextualised account of the way in which the Unione di U Populu Corsu (UPC), Abertzaleen Batasuna (AB) and the Union Democratique Bretonne (UDB) have responded to European integration. This chapter will now take a step back from these individual case studies in order to draw conclusions with regards to the impact of Europe on minority nationalist parties in France. The European responses of AB, the UDB and the UPC have been shaped by a combination of their positions on European integration and the significance of Europe in their strategic considerations. The complex picture emerging from this comparative analysis is not a perfect fit with the often assumed Europeanism of minority nationalist parties. It is undeniable that minority nationalists in France have found an interest in the principles of European integration. Yet, their engagement with the European question has remained considerably influenced by the context of centre-periphery relations in France. Prevented by domestic constraints to mobilise in the EU, these parties have not searched beyond the framework of the French state for the realisation of their goal of self-government. This can come as a surprise considering the near deadlock situation in which minority nationalists find themselves in France. It shows that the European responses of minority nationalist actors are not just dependent on the potential of European integration to resolve their long-term demands, as often assumed in the literature. These responses are also based on the strategic assessment of multiple aspects of European integration for the mobilisation of minority nationalist parties in a given member state.

The aim of this thesis was to answer the two questions posed in chapter one, namely 1) what resources, if any, have minority nationalist parties in France perceived in European integration 2) what are the factors affecting these parties in their use of European resources? The evidence gathered in the empirical chapters attests that, despite being confined to the local level and not being able to mobilise in the European political space along other minority nationalists, AB, the UDB and the UPC have derived discursive, political and strategic resources from Europe. European integration has not only provided a new discourse to give credibility to minority nationalists' aim of self-government, but has also been a strong impetus for party cooperation both at the European level and the French national level. The European dimension thereby cultivated by the parties has resulted in raising their local political status and moving them from the fringes to the mainstream of local politics. In response to the second research question, the comparative analysis has indeed revealed that there were two factors affecting the value of European resources for minority nationalist parties: regional institutionalisation and the dynamics of party competition. Unlike what had been hypothesised based on their

trans-border identity, Northern Basque nationalists have perceived the least opportunity in Europe, partly due to the lack of institutionalisation of the Northern Basque Country. The regional status of Brittany and Corsica has involved both regions in the European policy-making process, thereby enhancing European resources for the UDB and the UPC. In the end, though, the comparison of the Breton and Corsican cases shows that the value of Europe as a strategy for minority nationalist parties in France is also contingent on the dynamics of party competition within minority nationalist movement themselves.

## 7.1. Party positions on European integration

The empirical research has revealed, in the three cases, a clear line of support for the general ideas of integration underlying the EU. At no point during the 25 year time period of the study has either one of the three minority nationalist parties deeply contested the validity of European integration. AB, the UDB and the UPC have essentially conceived European integration as a process of reorganisation of existing political power. Accordingly, the parties' positive response to Europe has come from its potential to bring changes to the centralised French state and transform centre-periphery relations in France. In the words of Corsican leader Max Simeoni, "the Europe that is being constructed will apply pressure on the Jacobin state [and] bring to the fore its internal contradictions"[504]. Northern Basque nationalists have been more fundamental, arguing that "Europe [will] weaken the dogma of absolute sovereignty of [their] two jailer states"[505], while Breton nationalists have stressed that European integration rendered the French state increasingly unequipped to deal with the economic and social problems facing Brittany[506]. Hence, the three parties have come to recognise the potential of Europe to resolve the minority nationalist predicament in some way or another. Their pro-European stance is striking as small or excluded parties have an incentive to take extreme positions in an effort to gain political visibility in a given party system (Taggart, 1998). Judging the marginalisation of minority nationalist parties in France, a strong opposition to the EU could have been an appealing strategy for these parties. As such, the European response of the UPC, AB and the UDB came to reinforce the argument that European integration has a singular effect on the minority nationalist party family – by striking at the heart of the centre-periphery cleavage (De Winter & Gomez-Reino, 2002). Minority nationalists have a vested interest in a process which not only changes the function of the state, but also challenges the correlation between nation and state, thereby removing a historical obstacle to the realisation of their self-determination.

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[504] Arritti, Editorial de Max Simeoni, 24th May 1991
[505] Enbata, Une Chance ?, 2 Janvier 1986 (903)
[506] Le Peuple Breton (429), September 1999

However, the example of AB, the UDB and the UPC also shows that the Europeanism of minority nationalist parties must be qualified. Minority nationalists have been portrayed in the literature as being overwhelmingly supportive of Europe (Jolly, 2007). Some authors have even argued that pro-Europeanism was a defining feature of this otherwise rather heterogeneous party family (De Winter & Gomez-Reino, 2002). Yet, without ever contesting European integration, the three political parties have all tended towards a negative evaluation of the EU as an institution. This finding is in line with arguments made in the party politics literature, which suggest that one should differentiate between party support for the idea of Europe, i.e. the general principles at the core of European integration, and support for the concrete reality of Europe, i.e. the practices of the EU and European policies (Kopecky & Mudde, 2002; Elias, 2008). The three parties have challenged the current form of the EU, dominated by state interests. They have made demands for changes in the EU's set-up in order to make it closer to satisfying their normative vision of a European polity, primarily through an increase of regional representation in European institutions. This discontent is fairly typical of minority nationalists in Europe, which have been vocal supporters of a Europe of the Regions where political power would be shared between the European and regional level. But what is striking in the case of minority nationalists in France is their consistent criticism of the European policies affecting the economic and social status of their territories. The UDB has been vocal in underlining the detrimental effects of the Common Agricultural Policy and the European Fisheries Policy for Brittany. The UPC has also appeared in rejection of the concrete policy implications of the EU, depending on how the latter have served Corsican economic interests. And while rarely featuring in the discourse of AB, European policies have generally been perceived by Northern Basque nationalists as a medium to serve the interest of member states. In sum, although they agree with the idea of European integration, these parties have been in clear disagreement with the practices of the EU.

One could argue that the positions of AB, the UDB and the UPC vis-à-vis European integration have been influenced by right/left ideology. Ample discussion in the party politics literature has established that party attitudes towards the EU are closely related to their ideological profile (Hix and Lord, 1997; Marks and Wilson, 2000; Hooghe et al., 2002; Marks, Wilson & Ray, 2002). Minority nationalists in France have leaned towards the left end of the political spectrum and the socialist orientation of these parties has at times clashed with the liberal ideals driving European integration. In the 1970s, Breton nationalists have participated in elections as part of the Union of the Left – formed with the Socialist and Communist parties – and the predominance of leftist ideas in the early years of the UDB goes some way into explaining its reservations towards the European single market. Similarly, AB has brought together different ideological

147

tendencies into a single political platform and some of its members come from EMA, an extreme left organisation mobilising for the national liberation of the Basque Country. These AB members have never departed from a socialist interpretation of European integration as a process exclusively driven by logics of the capital market. Yet, the right/left divide is not predominant for minority nationalist parties, which are more concerned with the organisation of political authority than the ideas shaping the exercise of political authority. If one looks more closely at the content of these critiques, it becomes apparent that leftist ideology cannot fully account for the position of AB, the UDB and the UPC on European integration. More than an ideological disagreement, their negative appraisal of European practices has revolved essentially around the EU not taking into consideration the interests of their minority/region. When AB did mention the EU, it would almost inevitably include a reference to its indifference to the plight of the Basque people. More specifically, European policies have been perceived by the UDB as increasing regional disparities at the expense of economically weaker regions, such as Brittany. Similarly, a main concern of Corsican nationalists has been that European harmonisation would wipe out the fiscal exemptions granted to Corsica to counter the problems linked to its insularity. This perceived indifference from Brussels has to do with the fact that minority nationalists in France have absolutely no say in European policy-making.

As explained in chapter three, in the French system, all decisions related to European policies (even in the case of the Regional Policy) are taken at the national level. Lack of parliamentary representation and institutional recognition for minority groups has however meant that minority nationalists are completely cut-off from French national politics. Unlike what is found in many other member states, there is no form of power-sharing agreement through which minority representatives could directly participate in national debates (Argelaguet, 2003). Minority nationalist parties can only rely on channels available to any local interest group in France for the incorporation of their demands into the EU policy-making process. Furthermore, domestic constraints are present to undermine both regional and national channels of representation. As elected representatives, minority nationalists should be able to relay their demands through the competences granted to sub-national authorities. The French politico-administrative system however provides little political autonomy to regional elected assemblies, or to any other sub-national assembly, whose role has been limited to policy implementation. The regional channel is unlikely to lead to the inclusion of minority demands into national preferences. Alternatively, minority nationalists could gain representation at the national level, in the French Parliament, to defend their interests and values, but the two-round majoritarian rule adopted for legislative elections is unforgiving to regional and small parties. Despite increasing party cooperation and electoral alliances with the Green Party, not one minority nationalist has ever managed to sit in the French Parliament. In sum, for

the representation of their interests in European policies, minority nationalists have to rely on political elites hostile to their predicament and over which they have no form of influence. It is therefore not surprising that Basque, Breton and Corsican nationalists have at times perceived the EU as a remote and unsympathetic institution. This also means that these parties' criticism of EU policies is primarily an expression of their disagreement with the positions of the French government on European issues.

The positions of these parties towards Europe have been filtered primarily through their struggle against the French state. Interpretations of French centre-periphery relations vary between the three cases and these have mediated the way in which each of the parties has responded to European integration. The UPC has projected onto the EU the paradox of its demands for more autonomy and more public subsidies to the French government. In the same vein, the UDB's concern for the peripheralisation of Brittany in Europe – and subsequent reticence about the enlargement of the EU - mirrors its experience within France. These parties' analysis of European integration cannot be disentangled from the national and historical context in which they have emerged. Another observation - pointing even more strikingly at the need to refine the Europeanism of minority nationalists - is that none of the parties examined in this study have perceived the EU as an alternative to their relations with the French state. Despite embedding its political project in the European context, the UDB has never conceived Brittany's self-government outside of France. Similarly, although the Corsican nationalist movement has been constructed entirely around its opposition to the French state, the UPC's support for European integration has never involved the disappearance of Corsica's link to France. And while the concept of Euro-region could open up new perspectives for Northern Basques, AB's long-term objective has remained set on obtaining autonomy from French authorities. It may seem surprising considering the persistence of the French state in its rejection of minority rights and the sterility of centre-periphery relations in France. Despite their lack of prospect within the French domestic context, minority nationalists have not gone as far as reformulating their long-term constitutional aims in accordance with the new European reality. It does not mean that it will never be the case, but for now, their political project is understood within the framework of France, although European integration is perceived as facilitating its realisation by forcing the French state to reform itself.

This position has to be seen in relation to the limited contacts that AB, the UPC and the UDB have actually had with the EU beyond a few one-off opportunities. AB did campaign in the European Parliament with other Basque nationalist parties and this led to the adoption of a resolution supporting the peace process in the Basque Country[507]. The UPC was once received by the European Commission in 2005, in order to negotiate compensation after Corsica was moved from Objective 1 to Objective 2 of the Regional

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[507] EP, Resolution on the Peace Process in Spain, B6 0527/2006, adopted on 25 October 2006.

Policy. In general, however, minority nationalist parties in France have struggled to access the European political space. As mentioned above, the domestic channels available to French sub-national actors to participate in the European policy-making process are extremely restricted. But minority nationalists have not possessed the financial and material resources necessary to approach and lobby European institutions directly. The parties examined here rely almost entirely on party membership fees to cover all their maintenance and administrative costs. As actors without resources, minority nationalists in France only have their numbers, potential disruptiveness and electoral clout to make authorities listen to their demands (Tarrow, 1995). These limited tools are mostly ineffective in a European polity where a vast array of actors compete with each other for their demands to be heard. European elections have been their only chance to participate in European politics but electoral rules in France have made it difficult for regional parties to pass the threshold for representation in the European Parliament. During the 25 years time period of this study, there has only ever been one French MEP representing a minority nationalist party, the Corsican Max Simeoni from 1989 to 1994[508]. This shows how gaining representation at the European level is very much dependent on decisions made by member states, i.e. the rules governing the electoral process, as well as the definition and number of electoral constituencies.

Minority nationalists in France have lacked the means and resources to mobilise at the European level. With limited access to the European political space, these parties do not have enough experience of operating in the European polity to jump into the post-sovereigntist arguments of other minority nationalists in Europe. Unlike Plaid Cymru or Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya – both parties have abandoned their goal of independence in favour of autonomy within the EU (Keating, 2004) - AB, the UPC and the UDB have continued to consider France as the only framework for the political realisation of their claims to self-government, despite the undeniable lack of opportunity structures in the French domestic context. A post-sovereigntist stance would demand a certain amount of optimistic projection into a hypothetical Europe of the Regions which proved to be a stretch too far for minority nationalists in France, well aware of the entrenchment of states interest in the EU.


## 7.2. Resources emerging from Europe

The closure of the French state to the institutional and political representation of minority nationalists means that the day-to-day activities of minority nationalism have

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[508] In the 2009 European elections, Francois Alfonsi earned an MEP seat after an alliance with the Green Party in the South East district.

remained entirely focused on the local political sphere. Unable to mobilise at the European level and to participate in French national politics, minority nationalists in France can only operate as political actors locally. The case studies have revealed that European integration had nevertheless entered the strategic considerations of these parties, albeit to different degrees. The next section will go though the different European resources used by AB, the UDB and the UPC in the context of their local mobilisation.

First, AB, the UDB and the UPC have derived discursive resources from European integration - primarily geared towards exposing France as an exception among EU member states – in order to strengthen their minority demands. The parties have developed a European discourse confronting the French stance on minority rights, whereby the French nation-state, based on indivisibility and uniformity, is ill-adapted to the emerging European polity where cultural and linguistic diversity are celebrated. This is a clear point of similarity between the three cases, which have all developed imageries around the theme of the French exception in Europe, referring to a "Gallic rooster" about to surrender or the "last of dinosaurs". The idea that France is bound to change in accordance with the new European reality gives a progressive tone to the political project of minority nationalists. The ideological and political positions of the French government with regards to regional diversity can be exposed as backward in contrast with the standards of other member states. The autonomous status granted to the Spanish Communities, political devolution in Scotland and Wales or the institutional arrangements adopted in Italian regions: all these developments underline the archaism of the French politico-administrative system. This has enabled minority nationalists to argue that, far from the stigma associated with minority nationalism in the French context, demands for self-government are not only commonly accepted elsewhere in the EU, but also the way forward in terms of political organisation. Similarly, the adoption of European documents of minority protection, such as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, has also confirmed the appropriateness of minority nationalist demands for linguistic rights as well as reiterated the inadequacy of the position of the French government. Placing their political project in a favourable European perspective, if only discursively, has been a way of legitimising minority nationalist mobilisation in French regions.

European integration has also been an impetus for party cooperation among minority nationalists in France. After the demise of his alliance with the Green Party, Corsican nationalist Max Simeoni convinced most minority nationalist parties in French regions to present a joint list for the 1994 European elections. The list did not allow minority nationalist movements in France to retain their representation in the European Parliament, but had the effect of uniting these parties through the creation of Solidarity Region & People (R&PS). As a party federation, R&PS has enabled minority nationalists to present themselves as one united and coherent actor within French national politics.

Above all, R&PS has proved useful in forming electoral agreements with the Green Party – arguably minority nationalists' most reliable political ally in the French context. As illustrated in the empirical chapters, electoral alliances are a necessity for these parties to reach the electoral threshold for regional representation, which went up to 10% in the 2004 regional elections. When negotiating an electoral alliance with the Green Party, minority nationalist parties have been able to offer the support of the whole R&PS federation, as well as their own support, in national elections. The extra political weight provided by the R&PS helped the UDB to bargain its way into the Breton Regional Council in 2004. In addition, ever since cooperation with the Greens yielded a European seat to the UPC, minority nationalists in France have started featuring on the Green lists for European elections. In general, AB, the UDB and the UPC have sought to spare their limited resources for local elections in which they actually stand a chance of gaining representation. Alliance with the Greens has provided an easy way for minority nationalists to participate in European elections at a low cost and bring exposure to the minority nationalist predicament in the process.

Some minority nationalists in France have also established connections with like-minded actors within the EU, since the UDB and the UPC have joined the European Free Alliance (EFA). These parties' membership of EFA has brought a number of practical benefits, such as logistics, administrative support and development of party programmes. The EFA has for instance provided financial and campaigning resources for European election campaigns, and the Green/EFA alliance within the European Parliament has also facilitated the collaboration of the French Green Party with the R&PS in local elections. More generally, since direct representation in the European Parliament is unlikely, the EFA has served as the spokesperson of minority nationalist interests within the European arena. The EFA is organised in such a way that party members without an MEP can bring up domestic issues and sometimes propose resolutions in sessions of the European Parliament. The UPC presented a resolution in the EP to denounce the French decision to install an electric cable linking Corsica to Italy and Sardinia instead of developing Corsica's own hydro-electric resources. Similarly, the UDB obtained the adoption of an emergency resolution by the EP relating to maritime safety and security after a series of shipping disasters on the Breton coastline. Furthermore, EFA membership has exposed the parties to a socialisation effect which has brought substance to otherwise abstract symbolic European ideas (Lynch, 1996: 136-166; Elias, 2009:162-163). It has facilitated the exchange of information and ideas about a whole range of European issues which had previously been ignored by minority nationalists in France. The arguments of the EFA have provided images and a rhetoric that can be taken up by individual parties as an expression of their own aspirations for their minority/region within Europe. The discourse of the UDB and the UPC started featuring the principle of subsidiarity, perceived as a

recognition and sharing of sovereignty, and a pincer strategy whereby the state is stripped of its power from above and from below. Only AB is not a member of the EFA and it is not coincidental that, of the three parties included in this thesis, AB's European discourse has displayed the least detail and substance.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the case studies have revealed the domestic added value of the European dimension of minority nationalist parties. Minority nationalist mobilisation in French regions has gained credibility as a result of its insertion within a larger movement present in all EU member states. AB, the UDB and the UPC have devoted a considerable amount of their limited material resources to bring to the fore the international dimension of their mobilisation, through the organisation of local events and talks by more established minority nationalists, from Catalonia or Scotland for instance. In a very concrete way, Europe has been a source of legitimacy for minority nationalist demands within local political spheres. In addition, there are a lot of political credentials to be gained in the eyes of the electorate at home from representation in the EU, even through the EFA. The rhetoric of being able to go directly to Brussels (or Strasbourg in this case) to defend the interests of their minority/region has brought precious political capital to minority nationalists eager to portray themselves as key political actors, such as the Corsican UPC. The EFA has also provided information on European affairs and in some cases access to the Parliament's deliberative and policy-making forums. This has allowed minority nationalist parties to claim a sense of expertise on European issues affecting their territory, giving them a say in local debates like in the case of the Breton UDB. All in all, linking their mobilisation to developments at the European level has helped raise the profile of minority nationalists among local elites.

These resources emerging from European integration have proved particularly valuable in the French context where minority nationalists are marginalised and dismissed as extremists. Jacobinism is so deeply rooted in French politics that political actors demanding self-government, even through democratic means, receive a considerable amount of suspicion. As a result, minority nationalists not only lack legitimacy and credibility, they also struggle to find political allies outside of minority nationalist circles. In contrast, in Italy and Spain, minority nationalists have often been key actors in securing governing majorities at the state level (Calvet Crespo, 2003; Guerrero Salom, 2003; Giordano, 2003). The resources mentioned above have helped the UDB and the UPC to overcome the political isolation affecting minority nationalists in France. The European dimension of the UDB has contributed to establishing the party as the democratic option within the Corsican nationalist movement not only in the eyes of the population, but also of the French government. Re-orientating its mobilisation towards the EU has proved an effective strategy for the UDB to surmount its marginalisation within Breton politics since

the demise of its alliance with the Socialist Party. The same cannot be said of AB, which has showed relatively little interest in European matters and has not made full use of the resources emerging from European integration. The next section will explain differences between the cases, by going through the three factors initially proposed to condition minority nationalist responses to Europe, i.e. trans-border identity, regional institutionalisation and dynamics of party competition.

## 7.3. Factors influencing party responses to Europe

### 7.3.1. Trans-border identity

In chapter one, the Basque trans-border identity had been suggested as a factor increasing the significance of European integration for the realisation of minority nationalist projects. It had been hypothesised that, with the new perspectives opening up through the changing nature of the French-Spanish border, Northern Basque nationalists would have reformulated their demands for self-government in line with the changing European reality. Minority nationalists' principled support for European integration was expected to be enhanced in the case of Northern Basque nationalism. Yet, in comparison to the UPC and the UDB, Abertzaleen Batasuna has proved the least interested in European politics, suggesting that the party did not perceive Europe as opening up new possibilities for the realisation of its political project, which has remained centred on achieving autonomy in the French context. European integration has not gained prominence in the discourse of AB and the party has not sought to join the EFA like the other two cases. Arguably, AB's reluctance to denounce ETA's struggle has limited its prospect for party cooperation through the EFA, which formally requires from its members to condemn political violence. But the UPC became part of the EFA long before taking an official position against Corsican political violence. Although it has always claimed to be a democratic organisation, the UPC only publicly condemned the actions of the FLNC after it left the Corsica Nazione coalition in the mid-1990s. And Northern Basque nationalists have never even approached the EFA about a possible membership. The fact of the matter is, until recently, AB had made no effort to socialise outside of the Basque nationalist movement and was reluctant to perform electoral alliances with non-nationalist political parties. AB's partnership with the Green Party for the 2004 European elections has been contested not only by the leadership of Batasuna, but also by AB own members. The exclusive nature of Northern Basque nationalism and a certain level of mistrust towards non-nationalist organisations have to be taken into account to understand AB's lack of engagement with other minority nationalist parties in the EU.

It would be misguided to conclude from the experience of AB that European integration is not conducive to opportunities for the accommodation of minorities with a

trans-border identity. The 1999 creation of the first Basque trans-national institution, the Udalbiltza, reuniting the entire Basque nationalist movement on both sides of the border would suggest otherwise. The emergence of this new political community was not framed as European cross-border cooperation by Northern Basque nationalists who instead preferred the term "national construction of the Basque Country". It is however unlikely that this development would have taken place without the erosion of the French-Spanish border triggered by the EU. It is also true that the sort of cross-border cooperation sought for by Basque nationalists has been hindered by compelling political and institutional factors. Cross-border cooperation is less likely to flourish in politically charged situations, such as those involving divided minorities (Perkmann, 2003:166), and these initiatives in the Basque Country have been constrained by France and Spain's fear of secessionism. Even more directly, cross-border cooperation has been inhibited by institutional discrepancies on both sides of the border. For the Comunidad Autonoma del Pais Vasco (CAPV) - one of the most powerful regions in the EU - there is arguably little to be gained from forming a political association with French sub-national authorities, in all account minor political players. In any case, the lack of institutionalisation of the Northern Basque Country has prevented any attempt at creating a Basque Euro-region, which could only be done through the grouping of existing sub-national institutions. Consequently, cross-border cooperation in the Basque Country has been found at the municipal level, such as Eurocity Bayonne-San Sebastian, and at the regional level, such as the Euroregion Euskadi-Navarre-Aquitaine. The Northern Basque Country is however located at a meso level, i.e. it is large enough to encompass several municipalities but too small to be a regional unit, and none of these initiatives have satisfied Northern Basque nationalists as an reflection of the links existing within the historical Basque Country.

The Northern Basque case is most compelling with regards to the powerful constraints imposed on minority nationalist mobilisation in the French domestic context. The political and electoral weakness of the Northern Basque nationalist movement is striking when compared to its Southern counterpart. It is noteworthy that AB has not been able to derive much benefit from the existence of another Basque nationalist movement actively mobilising in the EU, especially when evidence suggests a certain amount of sympathy for the Basque political issue on the part of European institutions. In 2005, with the help of French MEP Onesta, Basque nationalist parties have lobbied the European Parliament and obtained the adoption of a European resolution in support of the Basque peace process. On this occasion, AB was propelled into the European political space, eluding the strong gate-keeping of the French state on sub-national mobilisation in the EU. This one instance attests the political resources that Northern Basque nationalists could have exploited, had they been able to mobilise in the European political space. As it is,

however, AB has remained constrained to operate exclusively within the French domestic context, just like the UDB and the UPC.

Regardless of the political, institutional or even symbolic possibilities opened up by European integration for the Basque predicament, the limitations imposed by the French state are such that AB is not more able to access the EU than any other minority nationalist party. Still, like any other minority nationalist party in France, maybe even more so, AB has suffered from political marginalisation in its local political sphere. Chapter five has illustrated the efforts deployed by Northern Basque nationalists, in the context of the mobilisation for the creation of a Basque department, to establish themselves as legitimate political actors. Yet, unlike Breton and Corsican nationalists, at no point did they use Europe to gain credibility among the Basque political elites. If the UDB and UPC did perceive advantages for their local mobilisation in the EU, one can wonder why AB has not followed the same rationale. The answer lies in the lack of institutional recognition of the Northern Basque Country.

### 7.3.2. Regional institutionalisation

The comparative analysis indicates that a minimum level of regional institutionalisation is necessary for minority nationalists to draw strategic resources from European integration for their local mobilisation. Northern Basque nationalists essentially defend a territory which has no existence in the French politico-administrative system, not even as a sub-regional entity like a canton. In opposition, the UPC and the UDB have mobilised in institutionalised regions: Brittany is an administrative region while Corsica has a unique institutional status. This difference in terms of institutional recognition has affected the concrete reality of European integration in the three territories. Compared to many other regions in Europe, French regions are weakly consolidated as institutions and their influence within the French politico-administrative system is limited. Yet, simply as a result of their regional status, Brittany and Corsica are much closer to EU policy-making than the Northern Basque Country. With the growing importance of EU policies in Breton and Corsican politics, the need has increased for regional representation in European institutions. This is precisely why the European dimension of the Breton and Corsican nationalists has constituted an asset and a tool to participate in the local political debates. Regions, i.e. the administrative units identified as region within each member state, have become the local level of government where European policies take place (Jeffery, 1997). As French regional interests seek to be incorporated into the EU policy-making process, regional actors with some form of influence within European institutions have seen their status improve.

Cultivating a European dimension has constituted an effective strategy to raise the profile of the UDB and the UPC among the regional elites. The UPC has used Simeoni's European mandate and its EFA membership to maintain its influence over Corsican politics at a time when the party did not sit in the Corsican Assembly. Similarly, stressing its involvement in the EFA and reorienting its mobilisation towards the EU has helped the UDB to gain representation in the Breton regional council. Both parties have positioned themselves as defenders of Corsican and Breton interests in the EU and this has ultimately given them political visibility and credibility. In contrast, Europe does not come into play in the local politics within which Northern Basque nationalists are engaged, at least not in a direct way. European funds and European projects of cross-border cooperation are being dealt with at the level of the Aquitaine region. Beyond the fact that gaining representation in the regional council is out of reach for Northern Basque nationalists, it means that European politics have less relevance in the eyes of the Northern Basque population. For instance, the control of structural funds is not a stake like it can be in Breton or Corsican politics. Evocations of Europe would not have provided AB with added political weight and this explains why the EU has been marginal in the strategic considerations of Northern Basque nationalists.

### 7.3.3. Dynamics of party competition

Representation and party co-operation at the European level have been the main substantive elements of the European dimension of the UDB and the UPC. Such experiences have raised the parties' awareness and knowledge of the European polity, and this has proved to be their entry point into the mainstream of Breton and Corsican politics. The UPC and the UDB have exploited the European issue to score political points against their rivals, may it be other minority nationalists or mainstream political parties. From a strategic viewpoint, positioning themselves as defenders of their minority/region in Europe is convenient for minority nationalists: they can blame the French government – and therefore the political parties in office – for the disadvantages of European integration and take some form of credit for its advantages among local political actors. The two parties were not equally "equipped" on the European issue, inasmuch as the UPC had an MEP from 1989 to 1994, but have both successfully used it to raise their local political profile. In the end, the impact of direct representation within the European Parliament on the party's status has not been as stark as one would imagine. Corsican politics are characterised by a strong antagonism between the island's clans - in control of the local branches of national political parties, such as the Socialist Party or Sarkozy's Union for a Popular Movement - and the nationalist movement. Arguably, the task of overcoming marginalisation in this particular historical context has been more arduous, even with

Simeoni's prestigious European mandate. Yet, the UDB has also significantly benefited from its European dimension over time, despite never having formal representation in the EU. Membership of a European network like the EFA has proved sufficient for Breton nationalists to portray themselves as European (as well as Breton) political actors defending Breton interests in European institutions. It is argued that the effectiveness of Europe as a strategy for the UPC has been hindered by the power struggle taking place within the Corsican nationalist movement.

In chapter one, it was posed that dynamics of party competition within minority nationalist movements would affect parties' ability to draw strategic benefits from Europe. The comparison of the Breton and Corsican cases has reinforced the argument that the utility of Europe has been dependent on the political space that the parties have to play the European card in local politics (Elias, 2008:565). The UPC and the UDB have not been alone in adapting their discourse to the new European reality, other minority nationalist parties have also adopted European themes which were previously their exclusive terrain. Evidence demonstrates that the local benefits derived from Europe are greatest when a minority nationalist party detains some kind of exclusivity on European matters within its political movement. In the mid-1990s, Corsica Nazione (CN) started taking an interest in European politics, primarily because of the growing importance of structural funds for the Corsican economy. The prestige derived from Europe by the UPC was undoubtedly tempered when CN leader Jean-Guy Talamoni became responsible for European affairs within the Corsican Assembly. In contrast, the Breton nationalist movement is united around the UDB, whose leadership has rarely been contested. The UDB has been able to take the full advantage of its European dimension precisely because it could present itself as being the only Breton political force with contacts at the European level.

## 7.4. Conclusion

What has been the impact of European integration on minority nationalist mobilisation in France? Arguably, European integration has made little difference to the relations between minority nationalists and the French government. The French insistence on granting the same rights to all citizens has remained constant throughout the time period of this study. Impervious to the territorial re-organisation of most EU member states in favour of regional minorities, France has continuously refused to recognise and accommodate its internal diversity. Minority nationalists in France have faced strong institutional constraints to operate at the national and European levels of government. The three parties included in this thesis have rarely been able to mobilise in the European

political space along minority nationalists from other regions in the EU. Yet, European integration has changed the local politics of minority nationalism in France. It has provided discursive, political and strategic resources helping minority nationalist parties to overcome their marginalisation in local politics. By strengthening their mobilisation for self-government at the local level, European integration could help minority nationalists to work their way up and force concessions from Paris through the democratic channel.

While noteworthy considering the "hard case" that France represents in this context, these conclusions are at odds with the literature on minority nationalist mobilisation in the EU. By looking at a universe of cases neglected in the literature – minority nationalist parties in France - t his research has revealed that European integration does not have the same significance for all minority nationalist parties in Europe. Rather, it has demonstrated that the extent to which minority nationalists are able to benefit from European integration is dependent upon their national circumstances. Where national structures recognise and accommodate minority nationalism, as for instance in those cases most widely cited in the existing literature (Scotland, Wales, Northern Italy, South Tyrol etc.), European integration is indeed an advantageous new political space for minority nationalist mobilisation. But where national structures, as in France, provide little or no recognition or accommodation of minority nationalism, European integration is, at best, an ideological reference point.

Furthermore, by analytically dissociating minority nationalists' response to Europe from the national opportunity structures where they mobilise – this was done by comparing three parties within the same member state – this research has been able to identify local factors affecting the impact of European integration. Regional institutionalisation has appeared as a necessary condition for minority nationalists to derive political resources from the EU, while dynamics of party competition – in particular the fragmentation of minority nationalist movements - has emerged as a factor undermining the strategic advantages of Europe. This research was never meant to provide an exhaustive account of local factors interfering in the value of European integration for minority nationalist mobilisation. Rather, the point was to establish that, contrary to assumptions made in the literature, the impact of European integration is context specific. European integration does provide opportunities for minority nationalist mobilisation, but minority nationalists' access and use of these opportunities emerging from the EU will depend on (1) whether the national opportunity structures within which they operate is conducive to sub-national mobilisation in the EU and (2) on local factors specific to their immediate environment.

## 7.5. Contribution to the literature

This thesis has explored the impact of European integration on minority nationalist mobilisation through the experience of the Unione di U Populu Corsu (UPC), Abertzaleen Batasuna (AB) and the Union Democratique Bretonne (UDB). This last section will go through the implications of the findings of this study for the literatures on minority nationalism, on minority nationalist response to European integration and on sub-state mobilisation in the EU.

First, this research has provided an insight into the way in which minority nationalist parties form and operate in the democratic arena. The literature on minority nationalist parties has so far concentrated on the variety of their constitutional projects for self-government (Seiler, 1994; De Winter & Tursan, 1998; Catt & Murphy, 2002), considerably less attention has been given to the process through which these parties have not only mobilised support for, but also come to formulate, these demands. Scholars have mainly been interested in the most advanced minority nationalist parties in Europe, the Scottish Nationalist Party, Plaid Cymru, the Partido Nacionalista Vasco, Volksunie, etc. Apart from the content of their programmes, there is little differentiating these widely established parties from other regional, or even national, political parties in the way they organise and mobilise. By contrast, this research has focused on the early stages of minority nationalist mobilisation and this has made the specific features of minority nationalists as political actors more apparent. Minority nationalists are the entrepreneurs of a minority nationalist mobilisation, in the most fundamental sense. Their role is to produce a minority nation and to create a momentum for the realisation of its self-determination. The Unione di U Populu Corsu, Abertzaleen Batasuna and the Union Democratique Bretonne have used the democratic arena primarily to generate group awareness along the lines of their minority nation and to disseminate their minority nationalist demands in local political debates, for them to be supported by the local elites. In doing so, they have sometimes diverged from the votes-maximising behaviour of traditional political parties, by favouring lower levels of representation or refusing alliances with powerful political partners.

This research has also demonstrated the degree to which these parties have adapted their nation-building strategy to opportunities arising for the realisation of their political agenda, often reformulating their demands and changing their tactics. Minority nationalists are context-sensitive actors who will reflect upon and respond to changes in the institutional, political, social and economic environment where they mobilise. This reactivity and flexibility might be less obvious in the case of parties such as the Scottish National Party or the Partido Nacionalista Vasco, which operate within the favourable institutional and political settings they have contributed to create. Yet, it is a central feature

of minority nationalist parties that will define the way they react to new developments, such as European integration. Indeed, such conceptualisation of minority nationalist parties is in line with the latest contribution to this literature which has argued for a dynamic relationship between European integration and minority nationalists, where party attitudes to the EU reflect the evolution and direction of the integration process at any given time (Elias, 2009).

Secondly, this research has also provided evidence on how minority nationalist parties formulate their European response, through a combination of party positions on the EU and strategic considerations for their mobilisation. The party politics literature has been quick to categorise these parties as pro-EU, purely based on the potential of European integration to resolve the minority nationalist predicament in the long-term (Hix & Lord, 1997; Marks & Wilson, 2000; Jolly, 2007). While Corsican, Basque and Breton nationalists have all demonstrated support for the principles underlying European integration, this research has revealed the limitations of this argument inasmuch as they have not conceived their long-term future in the EU. Their assessment of the benefits of European integration has also taken into account the immediate and concrete implications of Europe. Since minority nationalists in France have had no say in European policy-making, EU policies have often failed to incorporate their interests. Strategic considerations have come into play as well, depending on the value of European resources for their local mobilisation. This research has established that the European responses of minority nationalist parties are not solely based on principled support for European integration, but also on the specificities of each mobilisation context. This finding could help explain a question left unanswered in the literature, i.e. why minority nationalist parties have responded to different degrees to European integration?

This research has been built on the few academic accounts that have identified opportunities emerging from European integration for minority nationalist parties (De Winter & Gomez-Reino, 2002; Lynch, 1996; McGarry & Keating, 2001; McGarry & Keating, 2006). As pointed out from the outset, this literature has however not addressed how minority nationalist actors use these opportunities domestically and translate them into resources for their local mobilisation. As contested and marginalised actors, minority nationalists in France have primarily been in need of legitimacy for their demands, credibility as political actors and visibility for their mobilisation. They have exploited European opportunities to respond to these needs. Following the argument made by Lynch (1996), the parties have linked themselves to developments within the framework of the EU, such as the referendum on the European Constitution. The contextualised account provided in this thesis has illustrated that these political linkages have primarily been a way of bringing exposure to their mobilisation. As suggested by McGarry & Keating (2001;2006), the parties have sought to maximise on the EU's commitment to the principle

of subsidiarity and minority rights, as well as the examples of other autonomous regions in Europe. These have been the basis of a new discourse exposing the deficiencies of the French position on internal diversity. Minority nationalist demands for self-government have appeared not only as legitimate but also as progressivist in this European perspective. The Corsican UPC and Breton UDB have both joined the European Free Alliance (De Winter & Gomez-Reino, 2002) and subsequently used party cooperation at the European level to raise their political profile within local elites. The information on and knowledge of European affairs acquired through EFA membership has helped them to overcome their marginalisation in French politics. In many ways, European integration has changed and re-shaped minority nationalist mobilisation in France. However, saying that Corsican, Breton and Basque nationalists have entirely reoriented their goals and strategies towards the European level – as implied by this literature – would be an overstatement. Aside a few notable exceptions, they have found themselves unable to mobilise at the European level. Indeed, as demonstrated in this study, access to the European political arena, and to the full spectrum of opportunities deriving from it, is dependent on the level of recognition achieved by minority nationalists in member states.

More generally, this research makes a contribution to the literature on sub-state mobilisation in the EU. This was arguably a "hard case" for this literature, inasmuch as the French government has been keen to monitor the involvement of sub-national actors in European policy-making and has also been reluctant to see minority matters escape the realm of domestic affairs. It has clearly illustrated that links between sub-state actors and European institutions continue to go through the national level. When domestic channels are limited – as it is the case for minority nationalists in France - it is extremely difficult to articulate sub-state interests at the European level. Representation in the European Parliament (EP) is equally contingent on decisions made by member states regarding electoral rules for European elections. On a couple of occasions, minority nationalists in France have succeeded in bypassing the strong gate-keeping of French authorities: AB has campaigned in the EP along with other Basque nationalist parties during the latest Basque peace process and the UPC has recently won an MEP seat through an alliance with the Green Party. This suggests that there are political dynamics triggered by European integration that member states cannot control. Overall, though, this research reinforces the argument that interactions between the EU and sub-state actors remain to a large extent state-centric. Looking at minority nationalist mobilisation in France has exposed the limitations of Europe, inasmuch as national structures continue to be a precondition for practical engagement with European institutions.

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# Appendix 1: Election Tables

These results have been compiled by the author from various sources, including databases from the Ministere de l'Interieur and the Centre de Donnees Socio-Politiques, newspaper articles, party magazines and documents provided by the parties themselves.

## 1. Legislative elections

UPC/PNC in legislative elections

|  | 1986 | 1988 | 1993 | 1997 | 2002 | 2007[509] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CORSE** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Corse du Sud** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| District 1 | 8.87 (UPC-MCA) | - | - | 3.77 | 3.71 | 10.51 (Unione Naziunale) |
| District 2 | 6.31 (UPC-MCA) | - | - | 2.65 | 4.81 | 14.53 (Unione Naziunale) |
| **Haute-Corse** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| District 1 | 6.30 (UPC-MCA) | - | - | 4.62 | 2.46 | 6.29 (Unione Naziunale) |
| District 2 | 6.39 (UPC-MCA) | - | - | 6.64 | 6.88 | 13.50 (Unione Naziunale) |

UDB in legislative elections

|  | 1986 | 1988 | 1993 | 1997[510] | 2002 | 2007 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **BRETAGNE** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Cotes d'Armor** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| District 1 | - | - | 2.10 | 2.20 (SRE list) | 1.53 | - |
| District 2 | - | - | - | - | 0.93 | - |
| District 3 | - | - | - | - | 1.01 | - |
| District 4 | - | - | - | 2.21 (SRE list) | 2.23 | 4.93 |
| District 5 | - | - | - | 3.12 (SRE list) | 2.23 | 2.20 |
| **Finistere** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| District 1 | - | - | - | - | 1.31 | - |
| District 2 | - | - | - | 1.89 (SRE list) | 1.32 | 1.25 |

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[509] The UPC/PNC participated in the 2007 legislative elections as part of the nationalist coalition Unione Naziunale.
[510] For the 1997 legislative elections, the UDB formed electoral lists under the name "Solidaires Regions Ecologie" (SRE) with two parties - Convergences Ecologie Solidarite and Parti Ecologiste – which would join the Green Party a few years later.

| District 3 | - | - | - | 1.48 (SRE list) | 1.17 (Frankiz Breizh) | - |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| District 4 | - | - | - | 2 (SRE list) | 1.11 | 3.85 (with Greens) |
| District 5 | - | - | - | - | 1.55 (Frankiz Breizh) | - |
| District 6 | - | - | - | 3.20 (SRE list) | 11.28 (with Leftists) | 12.41 (with Leftists) |
| District 7 | - | - | - | - | 1.30 | - |
| District 8 | - | - | - | 2.22 (SRE list) | 1.48 | 2.98 (with Greens) |
| **Ille-et-Vilaine** | | | | | | |
| District 1 | - | - | - | - | 0.60 | - |
| District 2 | - | - | - | - | 0.87 | - |
| District 3 | - | - | 2.40 | 1.50 | 0.78 | - |
| District 4 | - | - | 1.40 | 2.33 | 2.17 | - |
| District 5 | - | - | - | - | 0.90 | 3.57 |
| District 6 | - | - | - | - | 1.47 | - |
| District 7 | - | - | 3.20 | 2.22 | 1.44 | 2.97 |
| **Morbihan** | | | | | | |
| District 1 | - | - | - | 2.18 | 1.69 | 1.51 |
| District 2 | - | - | - | 2.37 | 1.38 | - |
| District 3 | - | - | 7.44 (with Greens) | 2.36 | 1.23 | 4.25 (with Leftists) |
| District 4 | - | - | - | 1.91 | 1.19 | - |
| District 5 | - | - | - | 2.52 | 1.35 | 1.45 |
| District 6 | - | - | - | 2.32 | 1.82 | - |
| **PAYS DE LA LOIRE** | | | | | | |
| **Loire Atlantique** | | | | | | |
| District 1 | - | - | 1.09 | 6.06 (SRE list) | 0.74 | 1.08 |
| District 2 | - | - | - | 1.26 | 0.76 | 0.79 |
| District 3 | - | - | - | 1.30 | 0.95 | - |
| District 4 | - | - | - | - | 0.68 | - |
| District 5 | - | - | - | 1.35 | 1.16 | - |
| District 6 | - | - | 1.32 | 1.64 | 0.99 | 0.82 |
| District 7 | - | - | - | 1.10 | 1.62 | 0.81 |
| District 8 | - | - | - | 1.20 | 1.29 | 0.89 |
| District 9 | - | - | - | - | 0.67 | - |
| District 10 | - | - | - | - | 0.89 | 0.72 |

AB results in legislative elections

| | 1986 | 1988 | 1993 | 1997 | 2002 | 2007[511] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AQUITAINE** | | | | | | |
| **Pyrenees-Atlantiques** | | | | | | |

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[511] For the 2007 legislative elections, AB formed an electoral coalition with EA-Iparralde and Batasuna and presented candidates under the name "Euskal Herria Bai" (EHB).

| District 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| District 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| District 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| District 4 | 3.35 | 4.75 | 10.59 | 12.97 | 10.74 | 13.11 (EHB List) |
| District 5 | 2.14 | 3.45 | 2.96 | 2.65 | 3.34 | 4.5 (EHB List) |
| District 6 | 3.47 | 5.61 | 5.03 | 6.6 | 5.64 | 9.09 (EHB List) |

## 2. Regional elections

UPC/PNC in regional elections

| | 1986 | | 1992 | | 1998 | | 2004 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | Seats | % | Seats | % | Seats | % | Seats |
| **CORSE** [512] | 9.07 | 6 | 13.7 (Corsica Nazione) | 9 (16.8) | 3.85 | - | 12.14 (Unione Naziunale) | 8 (17.34 in round 2) |

UDB in regional elections

| | 1986 | | 1992 | | 1998 | | 2004[513] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | Seats | % | Seats | % | Seats | % | Seats |
| **BRETAGNE** | | | | | | | | |
| Cotes-d'Armor | 2.26 (Kemper Breizh) | - | 2.23 | - | 4.08 | - | 9.70 (coalition with Greens) | 3 |
| Finistere | 1.91 (Kemper Breizh) | - | 2.03 | - | 2.77 | - | | |
| Ille-et-Vilaine | 1.79 (Kemper Breizh) | - | 1.73 | - | 2.53 | - | | |
| Morbihan | 1.93 (Kemper Breizh) | - | 2.69 | - | 3.88 | - | | |
| **PAYS DE LA LOIRE** | | | | | | | | |
| Loire-Atlantique | 1.37 (Kemper Breizh) | - | 1.69 | - | 2.47 | - | - | - |
| Maine-et-Loire | - | - | - | - | - | - | | |
| Mayenne | - | - | - | - | - | - | | |
| Sarthe | - | - | - | - | - | - | | |
| Vendee | - | - | - | - | - | - | | |

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[512] Unlike other regions in France, and in accordance with its Special Status, regional elections in Corsica are not organised with departments as electoral districts, but within one single constituency.
[513] Following a change in electoral rules, since 2004, regional elections are organised with the entire region as one single constituency.

AB in regional elections

| | 1986 | | 1992 | | 1998 | | 2004 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | Seats | % | Seats | % | Seats | % | Seats |
| **AQUITAINE** | | | | | | | | |
| Dordogne | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Gironde | - | - | - | - | - | - | | |
| Landes | - | - | - | - | - | - | | |
| Lot-et-Garonne | - | - | - | - | - | - | | |
| Pyrenees-Atlantiques | 3.27 (EB + EMA) | - | 3.14 | - | 3.78 | - | | |

3. Cantonal elections

UPC/PNC in cantonal elections

| | 1992[514] | 1994[515] | 1998 | 2001 | 2004 | 2008 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CORSE** | | | | | | |
| **Corse du Sud** | | | | | | |
| Celavo-Mezzana | | 13.65 (CN coalition) | | - | | - |
| Tallano-Scopamana | | 18.25 (CN coalition) | | - | | - |
| Les Deux Sorru | | 7 (CN coalition) | | - | | - |
| Ajaccio 2 | | 6.11 (CN coalition) | | - | | 5.21 |
| Figari | | 22.01 (CN coalition) | | - | | - |
| Petreto-Bicchisano | | - | | - | | **22.48**[516] (with A Chjama Naziunale) |
| Ajaccio 6 | | 9.94 (CN coalition) | | - | | - |
| Ajaccio 7 | | 14.57 (CN coalition) | | - | | - |
| Ajaccio 1 | 9.10 (CN coalition) | | - | | - | |
| Ajaccio 3 | 11.79 (CN coalition) | | - | | - | |
| Ajaccio 4 | 12.11 (CN | | - | | - | |

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[514] For the 1992 regional and cantonal elections, the UPC as well as most Corsican nationalist parties (with the exception of MPA) joined the Corsica Nazione (CN) coalition led by Edmond Simeoni.

[515] The UPC was still part of Corsica Nazione in 1994, although it would leave the coalition just a few months after the cantonal elections.

[516] Joint UPC/ACN candidate Paul-Joseph Caitucoli was elected in the second round with 45.33 percent of the votes. He is the first Corsican nationalist to become a departmental councillor in Corsica.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | coalition) | | | - | | - | |
| Ajaccio 5 | 18.82 (CN coalition) | | | - | | - | |
| Bastelica | 4.60 (CN Coalition) | | | - | | 12.69 | |
| Les Deux Sevi | 10.61 (CN coalition) | | 16.64 | | | - | |
| Levie | 9.98 (CN coalition) | | | - | | - | |
| Zicavo | 11.89 (CN coalition) | | | - | | - | |
| Olmeto | 7.94 (CN coalition) | | | - | | - | |
| Porto-Vecchio | - | | | - | | 26.89 | |
| **Haute Corse** | | | | | | | |
| Ghisoni | | 16.06 (CN coalition) | | - | | - | |
| Bustanico | | 6.59 (CN coalition) | | - | | 16.68 | |
| Vescovato | | 9.89 (CN coalition) | | - | | - | |
| Bastia 5 | | 6.05 (CN coalition) | | - | | - | |
| Bastia 1 | 16.75 (CN coalition) | | | - | | - | |
| Bastia 3 | 10.33 (CN coalition) | | | - | | - | |
| Campoloro di Moriani | 14.44(CN coalition) | | | - | | - | |
| Canpobianco | 23.32 (CN coalition) | | | - | | - | |
| Corte | 10.69 (CN coalition) | | | - | | - | |
| La Conca d'Oro | 9.34 (CN coalition) | | 5.31 | | | - | |
| L'Ile Rousse | 11.66 (CN coalition) | | | - | | - | |
| Niolu-Omessa | 5.85 (CN coalition) | | | - | | - | |
| Prunelli | 11.66 (CN coalition) | | | - | | - | |
| Sagro di Santa Giulia | 14.44 (CN coalition) | | | - | | - | |
| Venaco | 4.70 (CN coalition) | | 11.28 | | | 10.11 | |

UDB in cantonal elections

| | 1988 | 1992 | 1994 | 1998 | 2001 | 2004 | 2008 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **BRETAGNE** | | | | | | | |
| **Cotes d'Armor** | | | | | | | |
| Plerin | | 8 | | - | | 10.90 | |

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perros-Guirrec | | - | | 7.39 | | 8.07 | |
| Plouha | | 5.53 | | 7.05 | | 7.42 | |
| Mael-Carhaix | | - | | 6.68 | | 6.20 | |
| Paimpol | | 4.40 | | 5.43 | | 5.84 | |
| Chatelaudren | | - | | - | | 4.84 | |
| Dinan-Ouest | | 3.90 | | - | | - | |
| La Roche Derrien | | 4.50 | | 6.08 | | - | |
| Pontrieux | | - | | 1.68 | | - | |
| Begard | 5.76 | | 6.60 | | - | | 6.65 |
| Guingamp | - | | - | | 9.06 | | 4.41 |
| Lannion | 6.93 | | - | | 7.34 | | 5.38 |
| Plouaret | 6.74 | | 8.90 | | 5.13 | | - |
| St Brieuc Nord | - | | - | | 3.82 | | 6.74 |
| Treguier | 6 | | 5.60 | | 7.38 | | 7.81 |
| Lezardrieux | - | | 3.80 | | - | | - |
| St Brieuc Sud | - | | 2.80 | | - | | - |
| **Finistere** | | | | | | | |
| Carhaix | | 10.50 | | 7.85 | | 31.14 (with Leftists) | |
| Le Guilvinec | | - | | | | 8.52 | |
| Rosporden | | 5.60 | | 5.36 | | 8.14 | |
| Brest Lambezellec | | - | | | | 7.37 | |
| Bannalec | | - | | | | 7.18 | |
| Arzano | | 1.80 | | | | 7.10 | |
| St Pol de Leon | | - | | | | 7.07 | |
| Plouzevede | | - | | | | 4.65 | |
| Brest Kerichen | | - | | 5.52 | | - | |
| Brest St Pierre | | - | | 3.01 | | - | |
| Pont L'Abbe | | - | | 3.30 | | - | |
| Brest Bellevue | - | | - | | 2.26 | | - |
| Brest Centre | - | | - | | 2.73 | | - |
| Chateaulin | - | | - | | 6.85 | | - |
| Chateauneuf du Faou | - | | - | | 5.19 | | 10.28 |
| Quimper 1 | - | | - | | 2.62 | | - |
| Quimper 2 | - | | - | | 2.26 | | - |
| Quimper 3 | - | | - | | 5.96 | | 5.08 |
| St Renan | - | | - | | 5.06 | | 9.06 |
| Qimperle | - | | - | | 3.35 | | - |
| Douarnenez | - | | - | | 4.15 | | - |
| Landerneau | - | | - | | 7.36 | | - |
| Ploudiry | - | | - | | 3.96 | | - |
| Pont-Aven | - | | - | | 4.33 | | - |
| Taule | - | | 1.90 | | 2.91 | | - |
| **Ille-et-Vilaine** | | | | | | | |
| Rennes Sud Est | | 2 | | 3.50 | | 9.26 | |
| Rennes Centre Ouest | | - | | 3.74 | | 7.02 | |
| Cancale | | - | | - | | 5.53 | |
| Cesson-Sevigne | | - | | - | | 4.82 | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| St Malo Sud | | 3.55 | | 5.25 | | - | |
| Bruz | | - | | 3.39 | | - | |
| Rennes Centre Sud | - | | - | | 2.56 | | 2.34 |
| Rennes Nord Est | - | | - | | 2.01 | | 2.44 |
| Rennes Nord Ouest | - | | 3.10 | | 2.54 | | - |
| St Aubin du Cormier | - | | - | | 8.54 | | - |
| Redon | - | | 6.60 | | 9.78 | | - |
| St Malo Nord | - | | - | | 2.27 | | |
| **Morbihan** | | | | | | | |
| Sarzeau | | 6.45 | | 8.80 | | 9.90 | |
| Pluvigner | | 4.70 | | 4.77 | | 9.18 | |
| Locmine | | - | | - | | 7.50 | |
| Ploemeur | | - | | 3.67 | | 6.54 | |
| Quiberon | | - | | 4.43 | | | |
| Muzillac | | - | | 4.33 | | 5.83 | |
| Questembert | | - | | - | | 3.90 | |
| Lanester | | 3.98 | | 4.83 | | - | |
| Lorient Nord | | 4.40 | | 4.01 | | - | |
| Pontivy | | 2.62 | | 2.79 | | - | |
| Vannes Centre | | - | | 6.24 | | - | |
| Vannes Ouest | | - | | 3.81 | | - | |
| Gourin | | - | | 3.07 | | - | |
| Port-Louis | | - | | 4.65 | | - | |
| St Jean Prevelay | | - | | 2.77 | | - | |
| Ploermel | | - | | 5.09 | | - | |
| Hennebont | - | | 6.80 | | 2.88 | | 4.48 |
| Palais | - | | - | | - | | 6.77 |
| Elven | - | | 5.80 | | 3.93 | | - |
| Lorient Sud | 7.62 | | 10.50 | | - | | 4.15 |
| Pont Scorff | - | | - | | 3.50 | | - |
| Malestroit | 5.61 | | - | | - | | 4.64 |
| Grand-Champ | | | 5.50 | | 3.12 | | - |
| Plouay | - | | 6.40 | | 5.28 | | 18.49 |
| Vannes Est | - | | - | | 3.66 | | 5.40 |
| Lorient Centre | - | | - | | 3.12 | | - |
| Baud | - | | 3.50 | | - | | - |
| Josselin | - | | 5.20 | | - | | - |
| **PAYS DE LA LOIRE** | | | | | | | |

| Loire-Atlantique | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| St Herblain Est | - | | - | | 13.29 (with Leftists) | |
| Herbignac | - | | - | | 4.23 | |
| St Nazaire Ouest | 4.96 | | 2.90 | | 2.93 | |
| Ancenis | - | | - | | 2.92 | |
| St Nazaire Est | - | | - | | 2.52 | |
| Nantes 5 | 3.67 | | 5.55 | | 2.47 | |
| Nantes 3 | 2.50 | | - | | 2.20 | |
| Nantes 1 | - | | - | | 1.99 | |
| Orvault | 2.74 | | 4.02 | | 1.88 | |
| Nantes 9 | 2.38 | | 2.85 | | 1.78 | |
| Savenay | - | | - | | 1.75 | |
| Blain | - | | - | | 1.75 | |
| St Etienne de Montluc | - | | - | | 1.68 | |
| La Baule-Escoublac | - | | - | | 1.53 | |
| Carquefou | - | | - | | 1.40 | |
| Vertou | - | | - | | 1.37 | |
| Bouaye | - | | - | 1.81 | | |
| Croisic | - | | - | 2.13 | | 4.62 |
| Guerande | - | | - | 3.76 | | - |
| Nantes 2 | - | | - | 3.46 | | - |
| Nantes 4 | - | | - | 2.54 | | - |
| Nantes 6 | 2.26 | | 3.40 | 4.53 | | - |
| Nantes 7 | - | | - | 3.58 | | - |
| Nantes 8 | - | | - | 3.29 | | - |
| Nantes 10 | 1.80 | | - | 2.02 | | - |
| Nozay | - | | - | 4.22 | | - |
| Pontchateau | - | | - | 6.06 | | - |
| St Gildas des Bois | - | | - | 4.11 | | - |
| St Herblain | 1.87 | | - | 5.81 | | - |
| St Nazaire | - | | 2.20 | 4.56 | | - |
| St Nicolas de Redon | - | | - | 2.33 | | - |
| Ligne | - | | - | - | | 2.29 |
| Montoir de Bretagne | - | | - | - | | 3.33 |

| La Chapelle sur Erdre | 1.96 | | 7.30 | | 3.81 | | - |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reze | 2.88 | | - | | 6.66 | | 2.38 |
| Le Pellerin | - | | - | | 3.58 | | - |

## AB in cantonal elections

| | 1988 | 1992 | 1994 | 1998 | 2001 | 2004 | 2008[517] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AQUITAINE** | | | | | | | |
| **Pyrenees-Atlantiques** | | | | | | | |
| Anglet-Nord | | 3.62 | | 4.63 | | 4.25 | |
| Bayonne-Est | | 5.05 | | 6.17 | | 5.82 | |
| Bayonne-Nord | | 3.1 | | 3.48 | | 3.25 | |
| Bayonne-Ouest | | 3.15 | | 5.92 | | 5.64 | |
| Biarritz-Ouest | | 8 | | 5.37 | | 4.68 | |
| Hasparren | | 27.6 | | 19.63 | | 5.5 | |
| Iholdy | | 17.42 | | 13.92 | | 14.73 | |
| Bastide-Clairence | | 10.2 | | 13.47 | | 12.62 | |
| Et Jean Pied de Port | | 26.94 | | 22.04 | | 17.73 | |
| Tardets Sorholus | | 5 | | 8.07 | | - | |
| Biarritz-Est | 7.03 | | 11.46 | | 14.17 | | 9.73 (EHB List) |
| Bidache | | | 9.20 | | 4.4 | | 8.08 (EHB List) |
| Espelette | 10.53 | | 12.33 | | 10.61 | | 22.23 (EHB List) |
| St Palais | 7.95 | | - | | 5.75 | | 8.86 (EHB List) |
| Mauleon-Licharre | 9 | | 8.82 | | 4.90 | | 9.58 (EHB List) |
| St Etienne de Baigorri | 10.97 | | 11.83 | | **29.13**[518] | | 31.80[519] (EHB List) |
| St Jean de Luz | 7.18 | | 14.14 | | 11.33 | | 15.07 (EHB List) |
| Hendaye | 6.54 | | 9.93 | | 9.02 | | 12.17 (EHB List) |
| Anglet Sud | 2.66 | | 6.13 | | 4.57 | | 8.53 (EHB List) |

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[517] For the 2008 cantonal elections, AB renewed the "Euskal Herria Bai" (EHB) alliance with EA-Iparralde and Batasuna.
[518] AB candidate Jean-Michel Galant went to the second round and got elected as departmental councillor for the canton of St Etienne de Baigorri with 44.11 percent of votes.
[519] EHB candidate Jean-Michel Galant went to the second round but was not re-elected with 48.80 percent of votes against 51.20 percent for Jean-Baptiste Lambert (UMP).

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ustaritz | 8.93 | | 11.32 | | | | 19.58 (EHB List) |
| St Pierre d'Irube | 5.96 | | 5.87 | | 5.18 | | 6.81 (EHB List) |

# Appendix 2: List of Interviews

## Unione di U Populu Corsu

Francois Alfonsi, MEP & Leader of the UPC (18th September 2007)

Max Simeoni, Ex-Leader of the UPC (19th September 2007)

Edmond Simeoni, Founder of the UPC & Leader of Chjama Naziunale (23rd September 2009)

## Abertzaleen Batasuna

Jakes Abeberry, Municipal Councillor of Biarritz & Founder of AB (3rd December 2007)

Jakes Borthayrou, AB Member (4th December 2007)

Peio Etcheverry-Ainchart, AB Spokesperson (4th December 2007)

Michel Berhocoirigoin, President of Laborantza Ganbara / Northern Basque Chamber of Agriculture & AB Member (3rd September 2009)

Jean-Noel "Textx" Etcheverry, Coordinator of the Foundation Manu Roblez Arangiz & AB Member (11th September 2009)

## Union Democratique Bretonne

Herri Gourmelen, Leader of the UDB (27th October 2008)

Nicole Logeais, Secretary-General R&PS & UDB External Relations Coordinator (28th October 2008)

Mona Bras, UDB Spokesperson (5th November 2008)

Naig Le Gars, Regional Councillor of Brittany & Leader of the UDB (5th November 2008)

Christian Guyonvarc'h, Vice-President of the Breton Regional Council & Leader of the UDB (3rd September 2009)