

NATIONALISM AND ETHNICITY AS IDENTITY POLITICS IN EASTERN  
EUROPE AND THE BASQUE COUNTRY

by

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## **Abstract**

This thesis demonstrates the powerful relationship between ethnicity, culture, nation and state in the Basque Country and the Former Yugoslavia. In placing Basque and Yugoslav sub-state nationalism in comparative relief this study argues that political state or autonomy seeking behavior on the basis of an ethnically defined or imagined community continues to have powerful contemporary salience. Furthermore when situated within the literature on nationalism, these two cases suggest that the theoretical literature needs to be reworked beyond the positions of Anthony Smith and Ernest Gellner. The endurance of cultural claims to a political state suggests that the connection between ethnicity and the nation is stronger than many contemporary observers have suggested. It is argued that the cultural, political and territorial rights of sub-state nations are likely to remain highly divisive sites of historical, cultural and political contestation. As a force, nationalism is by no means relegated to the past by cosmopolitanism or a 'post-national' shift as a number of high profile commentators in the contemporary social sciences have argued. Rather, it remains an active and powerful idea that will continue to shape the socio-political landscape of human societies into the twenty-first century as it has the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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## **Preface and Acknowledgments**

This thesis is a synthesis of influences, scholarly and personal. The preparation and revision of the following work began first as a project interested in the politics of identity in Central and Eastern Europe, originally looking at the construction of one of Europe's historical victims, the Roma or 'Gypsies' as an outsider group excluded from the body politic of the 'core' nation – with little or no claim to political, legal or social rights– in post-communist transition states. As I began my research, the literature and a small but growing body of personal narratives recounting the experiences of the Roma community across both Eastern and Western Europe increasingly opened up new perspectives and raised seemingly yet unresolved questions about how communities define themselves and their membership, and more importantly, how communities define others and the basis for exclusion.

While the original study was confined to the Roma in the Czech and Slovak Republics following the 'Velvet Divorce' of the common Czechoslovak state it quickly took on geographic significance as I grappled with the rhetoric invoked by both states and their members to define their non-nationals – which, in turn, opened up larger questions about the state as a territorial and political entity (the expulsion of the German population from the Sudetenland for example). This geographic and descriptive process led me to consider how nations define themselves and how the totalizing enclosure of the 'ethnic' and multi-ethnic nation deals with difference (or as Heather Rae has placed emphasis, on the tendency of the political state to engage in a process of cultural homogenization). This led to Ernest Gellner's definition of nationalism as a principle that cultural and linguistic boundaries should not cut across political boundaries; but rather that these two

things should be coterminous. In light of the increasingly ethnically defined basis for the exclusion of the Roma from Czech and Slovak citizenship this inevitably led to Anthony Smith's work on ethno-symbolism. Research during my course work led to considering how European societies have come to terms, or more accurately not come to terms, with the increasing presence of Muslims and their cultural and religious practices within the larger European political polity and the territorial state. This raised questions for me about the pliability of the national community's cultural markers. Arriving at the work that follows in these pages naturally followed.

Several diverse scholarly influences played important roles in shaping my thinking, challenging my conceptual frameworks during my time at the University of British Columbia's Institute for European Studies. This thesis would be incomplete without acknowledging my intellectual debts to several key figures at the Institute. I am grateful to Dr. Heiko Henkel for his many observations and criticisms. Heiko's influences are tangible throughout this work and in my efforts to come to terms with how groups are defined externally and to the degree that they can be representational of larger debates. Secondly, but certainly none-the-less, my deep thanks go to my research supervisor, Dr. Dietmar Schirmer. Dietmar provided more than just direction and a friendly ear for discussing my work, or conceptual challenges. I am grateful to him for the innumerable fifteen-minute coffee conversations that ended hours later. Our conversations invariably ranged far and wide and off in unintended directions providing fuel for future lines of inquiry. I leave UBC having benefited greatly from all Dietmar brought to this project and my general intellectual development, though much to his chagrin, I still find Anthony

Smith compelling – admittedly, less so now. I am grateful for the intellectual camaraderie and the friendship.

I must also express my deep gratitude to my second reader, Dr. Michel Ducharme of the History Department who after a long series of intriguing discussions that ranged far and wide, and often shared strange connections with my thesis research, took my surprise request to be the second reader with his characteristic good grace and dedication.

Michel's willingness to take this work to task with vigor and keen observation has made this work far the better. His critical eye and far reaching interests in intellectual history sent me back to the drawing board a number of times – often with Charles Tilly's admonition regarding the clarity of terms ringing in my ears – much to my consternation and delight. I am deeply grateful for everything, academic, personal and intellectual.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Kurt Hübner, the Director of the Institute for European Studies. Kurt's support for my research, and that of the other graduate students in the institute is a shining example of his commitment to supporting the graduate students of the institute which goes far beyond the call of duty. Kurt made the institute more than a department but a home for me. Many evenings were spent in Vancouver and Amsterdam over coffee and wine engrossed in interesting conversation. I have come to value his counsel and his friendship.

This has been a long journey and I am grateful to the many who have contributed to the broadening of my intellectual horizons during this journey, particularly Robert Brain and John Roosa of the History Department who provided great intellectual space for fascinating exchanges. My thanks go to my dear friend Mason Tattersall, who has accompanied and contributed greatly to my intellectual adventures. Our overlapping and

shared interests in the history of ideas, long dead philosophers, esoteric Germans and European history have provoked many a late afternoon coffee conversation; late night exchanges and shared excitement for each other's work. Mason's friendship and intellectual companionship has made this a fun, if not enjoyable pursuit. These acknowledgments would be incomplete without mention of Eva, who suffered, almost cheerfully, through long and endless nights of my obsessive rewriting; out-loud formulations and reformulations of arguments, 3:00 am caffeine fueled inspirations that led me to my laptop to write for hours the newest reformulation of an argument and general intellectual masochism. Her willingness to aid and abet the circumvention of Simon Fraser University Library's loans policy and hijack their Basque collection is much appreciated.

This thesis reflects their combined strengths and influences and any weaknesses, oversights or omissions within this work are of course, mine and mine alone.

JRY

Vancouver, 2008.

## Chapter One: Thinking through nation, event and contingency

The consequences of un-imagining a political or cultural community during the last two decades has become all too familiar. Yugoslavia, the Former Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia are all examples of states that have dissolved into separate states for their respective nations.<sup>1</sup> Generally speaking, the basis for such un-imaginings has been ethnic difference. Ethnicity is an inherently slippery subject. Ethnicity as a cultural marker, distinguishing one community from another matters in contexts that range from distinguishing one group's origin myths, to distinctions between dialects and orthographies. Ethnicity provides a common identity, a means to communicate through a shared language and cultural traditions/frames of reference, and reinforces members of a group's sense of a shared identity, which, in turn, further serves to define that ethno-cultural identity as distinct from other ethno-cultural identities.<sup>2</sup>

Ethnicity can be a highly volatile force able to polarize and mobilize communities, turn neighbours against one another and justify horrific acts of violence. The term 'ethnic cleansing' has come to symbolize the all-too-human realities of conflict between cultural, linguistic and religious group identities.<sup>3</sup> We can observe this in communal violence in India, the widespread use of state-directed territorial and population redistribution and political violence in the former Yugoslavia, and genocide in

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<sup>1</sup> Key studies of the break up of these states into separate titular national states are Valerie Bunce, *Subversive institutions: The design and destruction of socialism and the state* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Mark Beissinger, *Nationalist mobilization and the collapse of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Lenard J Cohen, *Broken bonds: Yugoslavia's disintegration and Balkan politics in transition* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995); Jiri Musil, *The end of Czechoslovakia* (New York & Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995);

<sup>2</sup> Adrian Hastings, *The construction of nationhood: Ethnicity, religion and nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Roger D. Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, hatred, and resentment in Twentieth-century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-2.

Rwanda.<sup>4</sup> The depths of ethnic identity and ethnic loyalty suggest that ethnicity is a powerful form of identity that not only signifies kinship and community but also carries with it conflict and violence and responds to some sort of basic need.<sup>5</sup> Ethnicity is first and foremost an identity marker although it is by no means the sole form of identity. Ethnicity is closely linked, and often interwoven with another dominant form of identity in the modern era: the nation. As Ariel Roshwald put it, “[i]dentity is by its very nature a subjective experience, and national identity is no exception to this pattern. People may latch onto any set of shared characteristics as a basis for claiming nationhood and the right territorial self-determination associated with it.”<sup>6</sup> It is the intersection between ethnic identity and national identity that I am most interested in.

### **Defining Terminology**

With this in mind, I want to begin framing three important concepts: ethnicity, the nation and nationalism. This is by no means easy, for as Eric Hobsbawm writes of nationalism, “we know what it is when you do not ask us, but we cannot very quickly explain or define it” and Benedict Anderson has remarked, “[n]ation, nationality, nationalism –all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone analyze”.<sup>7</sup> The same can easily be said for ethnicity, for we have difficulty articulating the ties that bind, and

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<sup>4</sup> Milovan Djilas’ accounting of the polarization of ‘Montenegrin’ and ‘Muslim’ identities in a revenge killing is particularly compelling and informative of the power of ethnic identities as solidarity. Quoted in Roger D. Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 4-5.

<sup>5</sup> Donald L. Horowitz, “How to begin thinking theoretically about Soviet ethnic problems,” In *Thinking theoretically about Soviet nationalities: History and comparison in the study of the USSR*, ed. Alexander J. Moytl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 10.

<sup>6</sup> Aviel Roshwald, *The Endurance of Nationalism: Ancient Roots and Modern Dilemmas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 5.

<sup>7</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism* Revised Ed (London: Verso, 1991), 3.

social scientists confront a complicated, if not impossible, task in establishing objective criteria for ‘ethnicity’ that will withstand even a cursory challenge.

Ethnicity is probably the most problematic term to define. It has been the subject of much academic and polemical debate. Derived from the Greek *ethnos*, which is defined as those “of particular tribes”; “a band of comrades”, and as peoples of a nation (a subdivision of *ethnos*), ethnicity represents a bond between individuals from a common descent and of a location.<sup>8</sup> For the purposes of this thesis I will define ethnicity as a shared set of cultural, linguistic and/ or religious markers that are fused into political symbols or cultural markers, which sharply demarcate the boundaries between groups. There is little debate that ethnic communities exist; the transition point between a named population which shares “ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity” as a community into what we would now identify as a nation is however a point of significant scholarly debate.<sup>9</sup>

This historical debate among social scientists over what constitutes a nation is tangibly in the work of two early observers, Friedrich Meinecke (1862-1954) and Ernest Renan (1823-1892). How they defined nations has in large measure become the two primary definitions that persist in the modern literature, one on the basis of ethnicity and the other on the basis of a civic or voluntary association. Writing in 1907, Meinecke asked, “[w]hat distinguishes individual nations from each other within the totality of human history?” Meinecke’s question, in essence, is a response to the somewhat famous

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<sup>8</sup> “Ethnos” In, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Henry George Liddell & Robert Scott, Comp. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 480.

<sup>9</sup> Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer, *Power and the nation in European History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 13, 15; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

problematic posed by his contemporary Ernest Renan thirty years prior: *what is a nation?*

In *Cosmopolitanism and the Nation State*, Meinecke writes:

[w]e can see at a glance that nations are large, powerful communities that have arisen in the course of a long historical development and that are involved in continual movement and change. For that reason the character of the nation has something indeterminate about it. A common place of residence, a common ancestry or, more exactly, since there are no racially pure nations in an anthropological sense, a common or similar mix of blood, a common language, a common intellectual life, a common state or federation of similar states—all of these things can be important and essential elements of a nation, but that does not mean every nation must possess them all to be a nation. However, a natural core based on blood relationship must be present in a nation.<sup>10</sup>

As we can see, Meinecke's definition emphasizes ethnicity or blood connections between an ethnic community and a nation. In contrast, Ernest Renan, in his 1882 lecture at the Sorbonne, flatly rejected the blood definition of the nation; Renan asked, "[h]ow is it that Switzerland, which has three languages, two religions, and three or four races, is a nation, when Tuscany, which is homogenous, is not one?... In what ways does the principle of nationality differ from that of races?" In Renan's words, a nation is,

... a large-scale social solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future. It presupposes a past; it is summarized, however, in the present by a tangible fact, namely consent, the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life. A nation's existence is, if you pardon the metaphor, a daily plebiscite...<sup>11</sup>

Renan's definition embraces what has become a civic definition of the nation, which emphasizes the constitution of a nation by choice whereas Meinecke's definition emphasizes the constitution of a nation by direct descent. Anthony Smith writes a "nation is a named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all memories."<sup>12</sup> An equally influential definition of a nation comes from

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<sup>10</sup> Friedrich Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the Nation State*. Trans, Robert B Kimber. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 9.

<sup>11</sup> Ernest Renan, What is a nation? In, *Nation and narration*, Ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 12; 19.

<sup>12</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *National identity: Ethnonationalism in comparative perspective* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 16.

Benedict Anderson's landmark study *Imagined Communities*; Anderson writes, a nation "is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."<sup>13</sup> Miroslav Hroch writes of this debate over the existence of nations or national identities, "one cannot ignore the fact that from a certain point in the history of modern Europe there have existed large groupings of people who are integrated by a combination of several kinds of relationships (economic, historical, political, linguistic, cultural... and by their subjective perception of a collective consciousness of belonging together." Hroch points out that of the myriad of connections between individuals three key elements stand out as distinctively nation constituting: a memory of a common past and a sense of a shared destiny – or *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*, a community of fate –, a density of linguistic, cultural and or religious ties that enable a deeper form of social communication *within* the group than *outside* the group and a conception of equality among members of the group organized as a civil society. Hroch, in a critique of Marxist historians disparaging of the concept of nation as an artificial and invented category of identity, notes that because "members of these groups term themselves as a 'nation'...is no reason to doubt the existence of these groups".<sup>14</sup>

Drawing on Smith, Anderson and Hroch, for the purposes of this thesis I will define a nation as: a large social solidarity of individual members who are connected

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<sup>13</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6

<sup>14</sup> Miroslav Hroch, "Real and constructed: The nature of the nation" In, *The state of the nation: Ernest Gellner and the theory of nationalism*, ed. John A Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 93-94; The Marxist critique is best advanced by Eric Hobsbawn, *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 9-11; Eric Hobsbawn and Terrence Ranger, *The invention of tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

through shared linguistic, religious and cultural markers, and distinguish themselves as a distinct community and who feel that they are a nation. 'Nation' is an inherently open referential category and much of the historiographic debate has turned on defining the prerequisites a 'nation' must have in order to be a 'nation'. I do not think that this debate moves the study of nationalism or nations any further along. For every set of objective criteria one can ascribe to a nation, numerous examples are readily at hand to chip away at such a list.<sup>15</sup> Let me advance an important proposition at this stage: if a group calls itself a nation, whether on the basis of shared ethnic identity or self-conceptualization, because they believe the term nation to have meaning they are in fact, a nation. Efforts to deny a group such status, either as a discourse or as a cultural identity, paradoxically, can crystallize or reinforce the nation-constituting groups particular claim to being, in fact, a nation.

In common usage the nation has been connected with a territorial and political claim on behalf of the nation as a bound community. This conflation, by nationalists and practice alike, is the product of a political ideology: nationalism. As Rogers Brubaker has argued, nationalism, in its reification of the principle of self-determination, or the moral right of nations to direct their own affairs and form their own states elevates the national and the political, providing not just philosophical but structural arguments for, elevating cultural identities as political forms of identity and redrawing existing political maps.<sup>16</sup> I will adopt the definition of nationalism provided by Ernest Gellner, who defines

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<sup>15</sup> See for example the critique of such criteria made by Anthony D. Smith in Anthony D. Smith "Were there nations in antiquity?" In, *Power and the nation in European history*, Eds. Oliver Zimmer and Len Scales (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 34-46; Hroch, *Social preconditions of national revival in Europe*, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Rogers Brubaker, "Myths and misconceptions in the study of nationalism" In *The State of the nation: Ernest Gellner and the theory of nationalism*, Ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 274.

nationalism as principle that cultural and linguistic boundaries should not cut across political boundaries; nationalism holds that these two things should be coterminous.<sup>17</sup> Nationalism further posits that this coterminous unit and loyalty to it should triumph all other obligations.<sup>18</sup> Nationalism, as John Breuilly has framed it in his influential *Nationalism and the State*, is a political movement that builds upon three key assertions: that a particular nation, unique from other nations, in fact, exists; that the values and interests of the nation take precedence over all others, including individual, and that the nation must be as independent as possible from other nations, which often requires political sovereignty.<sup>19</sup> Nationalism, argues Andrew Vincent, offers no necessary explanation to social or political problems on its own, it is in its contingent relationship with liberal, conservative or fascist political ideology, which offer models of “being and acting in the world” that nationalism gains its particular strength as an emotional and organizational principle.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> This definition, for example is that held by one of the leading modernist theorists, Ernest Gellner. See also Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological perspectives* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2002) Chapter 1.

<sup>18</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism*, 9; I would also point out the argument made by Michael Billig on the symbolism and everyday presence of the nation as such a binding or loyalty demanding ideal. Billig argues that nationalism as a force shapes not only discourse but also historical consciousness and identity by its routine representations and manifestations of the nation into everyday visual and discursive fields. Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995), 6; 1-50.

<sup>19</sup> John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the state* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993 [1982])

<sup>20</sup> Andrew Vincent, *Nationalism and particularity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6; It is worth allowing Vincent, a political theorist, to set out his position on nationalism. Vincent argues that nationalism is in effect, a set of “sovereignty discourse, focused on individual and particular identity which provides the driving energy for the nation. Without it, the nation would have little interest of significance. The nation parasitizes upon the language of individuality and identity, that is, notions of indivisibility, unified purpose, common interest and unified action... Nationalism itself is a vacuous theory and without its use of sovereignty language it would be utterly bankrupt... Terms such as cultural identity or regional self-determination, when deployed by nationalist writers, are just loose surrogates or stop-gaps, which try to avoid sovereignty language.” Vincent, *Nationalism and particularity*, 34-35.

This unit of both personal and political identity is often referred to as a Nation-State. British historian Adrian Hastings succinctly captures the relationship between space, identity and the body politic, writing,

A nation-state is a state which identifies itself in terms of one specific nation whose people are not seen simply as 'subjects' of the sovereign but as a horizontally bonded society to whom the state in a sense belongs. There is thus an identity of character between state and people. ... In it, ideally, there is a basic equivalence between the borders and the character of the political unit upon one hand and a self-conscious cultural community on the other.<sup>21</sup>

Nationalism however, does not inherently mean a redrawing of political maps along the lines of ethnicity or culture; nationalism can manifest in cultural dynamics, such as the preferencing of a particular languages usage within a specific territory; it can indeed have a darker side, namely making on the basis of ethnic community an “uncompromising homogenization claim towards internal minorities” and efforts to create a cultural monotype and drives to purge minority cultures”.<sup>22</sup> But as Michael Billig has shown, it can also manifest as calls to patriotism, sacrifice and the physical defence of the group who term themselves a nation.<sup>23</sup>

Ethnic definitions of the nation tend to draw sharp distinctions between in-groups and out-groups, with the borders being less permeable than civic conceptions. Therefore in referring to Ethnic Nationalism, or ethno-nationalism I mean the defining of a nation as a sharply delineated cultural and linguistic community, who on the basis of these traits, are distinctive and separate from other groups, and as a group this community understands itself to possess deep historical bonds that can not be easily shed for another

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<sup>21</sup> Adrian Hastings, *The construction of nationhood: Ethnicity, religion and nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [2006]), 3.

<sup>22</sup> Jason R. Young and Oliver Schmidtke, “Redefining Europe – Islam, secularism and diversity: The search for Europe’s future: Nations, religions and politics” *Review of Russian and European Affairs*, 4:2 (2008), 2; Craig Calhoun, *Nations matter: Culture, history and the cosmopolitan dream* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 41.

<sup>23</sup> Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).

political or cultural category of identity. It is, as Meinecke defined it, a community bound by blood or race.

### ***The argument***

As Miroslav Hroch observed, “not every oppressed nationality formed itself into a nation, awakened to national life”; this raises the question of what are nations in the first place, as the observations of Meinecke and Renan above has suggested and how do they mobilize?<sup>24</sup> I do not differ substantially from the position advanced by modernists in their view that nationalism is substantially an eighteenth and nineteenth century phenomena, however like Anthony Smith, I stress continuities and connections between pre-existing ethno-symbols, modern nations, and the political and territorial projects of nationalisms. Eric Hobsbawn and Ernest Gellner are certainly correct that the majority of modern nationalisms have produced the nation within the state during the modern period, where I differ is in the position that a significant number of nations predate the modern ‘state’ and these identities can correspond to nations that oppose the state or resist the state’s nation-building project. It is these connections and historical legacies that modern nationalisms, particularly ethno-nationalisms understand as forming legitimate, self-actualizing basis for developing existing, or reviving pre-existing cultural nations as political nations.

I will argue in this thesis that political state or autonomy seeking behavior on the basis of an ethnically defined community matters and is likely to continue to do so for the foreseeable future. I hold that the connection between ethnicity and the nation is stronger than many contemporary observers have assumed; ethnicity provides a form of exclusive identification and when mobilized as a political category provides a ready-made social

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<sup>24</sup> Miroslav Hroch, *Social preconditions of national revival in Europe: A comparative analysis of the social composition of patriotic groups among the smaller European nations* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2000), 11.

solidarity. In an age when nation and state have become discursively synonymous, hence the appellation, nation-state, ethnic markers serve as a form of formal political and cultural recognition, either as polity upgrading or politic-seeking behaviors. As Rogers Brubaker writes of ethnic nationalism, the key elements are the intersection of culture and politics which intertwine to form “the sense of “ownership” of the state *by a particular ethnocultural nation that is conceived as distinct from the citizenry or permanent resident population as a whole...*”<sup>25</sup> As one recent observer commented, “[i]t might be wholly wrong to think of unified nation-states as the world’s basic political units or even as a feasible goal, but as myth and an ambition they are alive and well”.<sup>26</sup>

I will show in the two case studies presented in this thesis, the Basque Country and the Former Yugoslavia, that, in contrast to an expanding literature on cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism, the connections and relationship between ethnicity, nation and state continue to matter in the present age.<sup>27</sup> As Adrian Hastings noted in the introduction to his 1996 *Wiles lecture*, “Nation, ethnicity, nationalism and religion are four distinct and determinative elements within European and world history. Not one of these can be safely marginalized by either the historian or the politician concerned to understand the shaping of modern society.”<sup>28</sup> Juxtapose Catalonia with Serbia, or the Basque Country with Estonia or Latvia and it becomes apparent that for many, “[n]ations are understood as real entities, as communities, as substantial, enduring

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<sup>25</sup> Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism reframed*, 103-104. Emphasis added

<sup>26</sup> Scott L. Greer, *Nationalism and self-government: The politics of autonomy in Scotland and Catalonia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 1.

<sup>27</sup> See for example Yasemin Soysal, *The limits of citizenship: Migrants and Post-national citizenship in Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents and Citizens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>28</sup> Adrian Hastings, *The construction of nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.

collectivities.”<sup>29</sup> They have relevance both as political communities and as identity markers that go beyond merely imagined communities. They have the power to bind individuals to fictive and real narratives. To borrow the title of Craig Calhoun’s book: *Nations matter*.<sup>30</sup> What these case studies reveal is that the political and the individual uses of cultural symbols and ethnic markers can easily and rapidly move from the benign to the critically important. What this thesis attempts to do that other studies have not done is place the Basque and Yugoslav examples in comparison, beginning in the nineteenth century to demonstrate commonalities and dissimilarities. This thesis is not meant as an original contribution to knowledge but as a theoretical effort to identify actual processes and existing theoretical models they correspond to, or fail to correspond to.

#### *The historical debate and leading contributors*

Having framed a few key definitions; laid out my central contention, and identified the case studies in the thesis it is worthwhile to shift focus at this juncture to sketch out some of the contributions made by particular thinkers. This will not be an exhaustive list by any means, nor a detailed investigation of their thinking for reasons of space and duplication of a very large body of literature that does just this but rather will highlight those whose contributions I feel most serve to frame the debate. I want to draw particular attention to Anthony Smith’s Ethno-Symbolist work, Ernest Gellner’s *Nations and nationalism*, Benedict Anderson’s highly influential *Imagined Communities*; and Czech historian Miroslav Hroch, as key texts and thinkers. I want to further suggest that Hroch’s work represents a theoretical contribution through which the frameworks of

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<sup>29</sup> Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the new Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 13.

<sup>30</sup> Craig Calhoun, *Nations matter: Culture, history and the cosmopolitan dream* (London & New York: Routledge, 2007)

ethno-symbolists such as Anthony Smith and modernists such as Ernest Gellner can converge.

The first key theorist therefore is Anthony D. Smith, who represents the ethno-symbolist or perennialist position. Smith argues that ethnic cores (*ethnies*) are the roots of modern nations pointing out, correctly, that ethnic communities undoubtedly predate the state as forms of social closure, and that the term nation can be found in common usage far before the rise of the modern nation as a state seeking or state forming enclosure.

Quoting Smith at length:

...the nation, unlike the state, is a form of human community which is conceptually a development of the wider phenomenon of ethnicity...particular nations originated as specialized and politicized subvarieties of one or more ethnic categories, networks and communities (or *ethnies*)...*Ethnies* can be defined ideal-typically as named human communities, with myths of common descent, shared memories and one or more elements of common culture such as language, religion and customs, and a sense of solidarity, at least among the elites.<sup>31</sup>

For Smith modern nations have taken pre-formed ethnic solidarities and their markers and deepened them. Smith points out connections between ethnic solidarities and modern nations, particularly their modern political manifestations as nation-states,

myths, symbols and memories and values are “carried” in and by forms and genres of artifacts and activities which change only very slowly, so *ethnie*, once formed, tend to be exceptionally durable under “normal” vicissitudes, and to persist over many generations, even centuries...”<sup>32</sup>

Smith is not arguing for the unbroken transmission of ethnic identity to modern states or state seeking projects but rather stressing the historical nation forming processes of divisions and coalescing of ancient societies. He argues that modern communities should be studied with their ethnic backgrounds in mind in order to discern the origins of modern nationalism.<sup>33</sup> Smith points toward four mechanisms for the durability of ethnic communities: religious reform; cultural borrowing, popular participation and the last,

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<sup>31</sup> Anthony D. Smith, “Were their nations in antiquity?” In *Power and the nation in European history*, Ed, Oliver Zimmer and Len Scales (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 38-39.

<sup>32</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *The ethnic origins of nations* (Oxford & New York: Blackwell, 1986), 16.

<sup>33</sup> Smith, *The ethnic origins of nations*, 12-14.

which is centrally important for the study of the Basque in the following chapter, the myth of ethnic election.<sup>34</sup>

If Anthony Smith has a polar opposite, it is Ernest Gellner, who falls into the methodological grouping of modernists, or the group of scholars who argue that states make nations and nationalisms and not that nations invented states. Unlike Smith, Gellner writes, “Nations as a god-given way of classifying men...are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes *pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations*, sometimes invents them, *and often obliterates pre-existing cultures...*”<sup>35</sup> In his *Nations and Nationalism*, Gellner adopts a break down of society into three broad periods; Hunter-gatherer, agro-literate and lastly and most important for his analysis, the industrial. Rejecting Anthony Smith’s *ethnie*, Gellner argues that the second period lacks the cultural communication and cultural similarities at root in the definition of nation advanced previously – “a large social solidarity of individual members who are connected through shared linguistic, religious and cultural markers, and distinguish themselves as a distinct community and who feel that they are a nation” –. Rather Gellner argues that differentiation in these societies was *within* society rather than *between* cultural societies.<sup>36</sup> Industrial societies for Gellner, however, differ in important ways; it is here that the cultural homogenization contained in the doctrine and discussion of nationalism set out previously becomes essential. For Gellner the standardization of societies by economic development and the rise of mass education become essential for industrial and technological growth.<sup>37</sup> The

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<sup>34</sup> Smith, *National identity*, 34-36.

<sup>35</sup> Gellner, *Nations and nationalisms*, 48-49. My emphasis.

<sup>36</sup> Gellner, *Nations and nationalisms*, 9-11.

<sup>37</sup> Anthony Giddens makes an important and similar argument here in Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism Vol 2. The nation-state and violence* 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981); Gellner, *Nations and nationalism*, 18-19; 48, 50-52.

standardization and centralization of the ‘state’ and the spread of what Gellner terms a ‘high culture’, which replaces local and regional variants of culture with one uniform, set of cultural reference points, propagated through economic specialization and mass education into a national identity. Gellner sketches out a short and detailed schematic of the transition process in his *Culture, identity and politics*, in which he demonstrates the shift from agrarian to industrial society and its effect as a driver for cultural homogenization where previously large degrees of differences existed. I will point to these locations where Gellner details his analysis in greater depth and not sketch out Gellner’s argument in further detail here with the exception of pointing out some important elements of Gellner’s thought: 1), Gellner argues that nationalism produces the nation and 2) the mechanism through which it does so is the shift from agrarian societies to industrial society and the consolidation of multiple and diverse segments of a society into a single ‘nation’ through economic and technological shifts, which in turn demand standardization and homogenization.<sup>38</sup> In essence, Gellner’s thesis turns on industrialization, literacy and mass education and the creation of a community through standardization. As we can further see, Gellner’s argument locates the rise of nations very late in the historical record.

A third key contributor to the study of nations and the phenomena of nationalism is Benedict Anderson, whose *Imagined communities* is rightly located among the literature as a core text. I will briefly sketch out Anderson’s argument here. Anderson argues that nations, or “nation-ness” is a cultural artifact of a particular kind.<sup>39</sup> Recalling Anderson’s definition of the nation quoted previously, Anderson further goes on to say

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<sup>38</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Culture, identity and politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1993 [1987]), 14-18.

<sup>39</sup> Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 6.

that the nation “is conceived as a deep, horizontally comradeship.” It is this sense of community that motivates its members to be willing to sacrifice themselves for the community.<sup>40</sup> This elaboration confronts the Marxist notion of the artificial-ness of the nation and a key criticism leveled at Gellner’s functionalism, which asks why do individuals feel such deep bonds and willingness to sacrifice in the name of an essentially invented community?

Anderson’s analysis picks up on the cultural origins of nationalism suggesting that “nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that proceeding it, out of which- as well as against which- it came into being.”<sup>41</sup> Anderson points out three key shifts that occur with the decline in religious and divine regimes; the dislocation of sacred “script-languages” as containers of divine knowledge, the dislocation of monarchs as appointed by some sort of “divine dispensation” and lastly, the changing in conceptions of temporality which brought the cosmological and historical worlds together and forced the search for new means of creating and organizing imagined “sociological entities.”<sup>42</sup>

These shifts opened up new conceptualizations of time and individual identity into which capitalism and the rise in mass publishing, or what Anderson terms ‘print capitalism’ stepped into, creating new print languages which served to articulate new communities through “unified fields of exchange and communication”; fixed the rise of new vernaculars as historical subjects and furthermore by standardizing certain vernaculars as privileged administrative languages served to create conditions for the rise

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<sup>40</sup> Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 7.

<sup>41</sup> Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 12.

<sup>42</sup> Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 24-36.

of linguistically homogenous and differentiated regions.<sup>43</sup> The displacement of Latin and Greek as sacred languages had the effect of opening up vernacular languages to study by their speakers, which served, Anderson argues, to reinforce linguistic standardization – which as we will see demonstrated in both the Basque and Yugoslav cases – served as vital tools for imagining a community into existence, demonstrating its historical rootedness and its legitimacy.<sup>44</sup> The rise of mass printing also served to open up the national as a category by seeking markets beyond merely Latin or the vernaculars, opening up a wider market of differing linguistic communities as markets while simultaneously serving to standardize linguistic communities (which would become national communities) and differentiating communities. As Anderson argues, the rise of newspapers served to provide bonds between individuals through the relation of experiences and the simultaneity of experience. Novels and other literatures served to reinforce this sense of identification among peoples who would never meet, by uniting them through the dissemination of common- and thus shared- experiences. This served to form a sense of bond between otherwise disconnected individuals.

These forces simultaneously served to create a new historical conception of place, time and memory. Anderson shows that museums and the maps played a central role in propagating these newly formed imaginatives in his discussion of anti-colonial nationalism. While museums provided space classifications – similarly to the role played by print media and language standardization – the map, as mass printing spread

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<sup>43</sup> Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 40-41; See for Instance the effect of German in the Czech lands as an administrative language and the reemergence of Czech language and the rise of a Czech language publishing industry in the Czech lands at the end of the nineteenth century. Miroslav Hroch, “From ethnic group toward modern nation: The Czech case” *Nations and nationalism* 10: 1-2 (2004), 97. Consider the emphasis that Fichte (1806) places on the German language and German cultural identity in his “Addresses to the German Nation.”

<sup>44</sup> Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 71; 72-75.

increasingly served to establish and reinforce visual representations of a world divided into territorial nations further building upon the fixity of language Anderson points out. These reconfigurations and ruptures of the historical past further brought elites and commoners together.

I will not dwell on Anderson's powerful analysis of anti-colonial nationalism, nor the substantial debate between scholars such as Partha Chatterjee and Anderson, except to point out that they exists.<sup>45</sup> What I want to draw from Anderson's work is the role of vernacular languages, the rise of a print industry for disseminating that language and for archiving it, or as Anderson argues, for giving it a fixed quality by producing it in hard copy. Museums, maps and cultural artifacts had important functions in producing the nation as a bonded and bounded community; the propagation of local languages and traditions served to differentiate communities and unite them.

The final contributor I want to briefly look at is Miroslav Hroch and the three phases of national revival identified in his influential work *The Social Preconditions for National Revival in Europe*. Hroch stresses Phase A) the importance of historians in rediscovering the historical record of the nation; Phase B) elites who then begin to embody and mobilize this historical consciousness into its final form; Phase C) a mass political mobilization. Hroch's study begins with the numerous "non-dominant ethnic groups" which lack their own ruling elite, their own state and the continuation of their cultural traditions in their own language; these groups are also political subordinate to or dominated by another ethnic group (for instance Austrians or Hungarians in the case of

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<sup>45</sup> I am grateful to Dr. John Roosa in the Department of History for opening up the debate between Anderson and his critics in a graduate reading seminar on nationalism he direct in Fall 2007. A particularly important contribution is Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its fragments* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

the Serbs and Croatians, Germans over Czechs).<sup>46</sup> Hroch argues eventually an educated segment within these societies begins to conceive of itself as a distinct cultural community, as constituting a nation, yet an “unconscious nation” that needs to be awakened, and to be recognized as a nation by other nations.<sup>47</sup> This educated segment begins investigating their cultural identities, histories and traditions. This ‘national movement’ has three key and distinct phases. This early investigation into the past or ‘Phase A’, begins when amateur and professional historians, philologists, and cultural activists, like Sabino Arana in the Basque case, and the archeologists Anderson would point to in his imagined communities, begin serious inquiry into the ancient past, and rediscover the nation and its history. It is important to note those undertaking these early cultural, linguistic and historical investigations do not articulate political demands but rather are interested in propagating the cultural, linguistic, historical and social attributes of the non-dominant nation.

The political mobilization of these traits discovered and propagated in ‘Phase A’ takes new significant in ‘Phase B’ when a new set off activists emerge who agitate for the realization of these traits of the nation more formally. This second phase is not explicitly secessionist or seeking independence Hroch argues, but rather is interested in institutional demands, such as political rights – autonomy or parliaments-, cultural and linguistic rights such as the use of vernaculars in literature and routine politics, law and ordinary communication – take for example the efforts of the Hungarian Crown to forcible spread the use of Magyar in its Balkan possessions that will be noted in the third chapter -; and social demands such as the emancipation of the peasantry or access to education, in the

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<sup>46</sup> Hroch, *Real and constructed*, 94.

<sup>47</sup> Hroch, *Real and constructed*, 95.

vernacular.<sup>48</sup> The second phase is marked by the efforts of this new group of activists to gather their fellow cultural community members under the banner of the nation through institutions and identity markers such as the poetry contests and celebrations of Basque identity which will be highlighted in Chapter Two of this thesis to the universalizing Yugoslav identity container in the Illyrian movement that Chapter Three will show. Hroch notes two key commonalities among small state national movements of ‘Phase B’; the groups possess their own elites and could point to the possession of their own states or cultural identities deep in the historical record.<sup>49</sup> It is here that the connections between Gellner’s argument *vis-a-vis* the modernity of nations and Anthony Smith’s point about the historical and cultural foundations of nations meet. ‘Phase C’ for Hroch is the transformation of the elite mobilization and spread of cultural and social institutions to a mass mobilization that aims at the attainment of political sovereignty. Hroch points out the shifts or transitions between these phases are usually closely connected to political crises such as the reforms and institutionalization of the state in the reorganization of the Balkan provinces under the Napoleonic regime or the failures and political catastrophes of the Spanish state building experience.<sup>50</sup>

### **My Study**

This brings us back to the opening of this chapter and the difficulty of achieving a consensus on what *nations* are, defining a nation, or its attributes or even how they develop. There is a substantial body of theoretical work that has been written by a diverse group of scholars. This work has resolved neither the historiographic debate over

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<sup>48</sup> Hroch, *Real and constructed*, 97.

<sup>49</sup> Hroch, *Real and constructed*, 97.

<sup>50</sup> Hroch, *Real and constructed*, 98.

nationalism nor the theoretical debate among scholars on the importance, form and content of nationalism. As Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer ably capture,

The assumption of strict continuities between proto-nationalism (let alone pre-modern ethnicity) and modern nationalism is...highly questionable in most cases. The same caution is warranted with regard to alleged continuities between pre-modern manifestations of patriotism and modern nationalism. 'Patriotism' – whether defined as 'love of country' or 'loyalty to one's fatherland and institutions' – undoubtedly represents a sentiment much older than nationalism. ... Nationalism was not simply a continuation of patriotism with other means, although in late eighteenth-century Europe the two movements were often closely related. Perhaps the cardinal reason why some of us think it necessary to explore the links between pre-modern and modern nationhood concerns the question of public resonance.<sup>51</sup>

It is possible for ethnic communities and ethnic nations to dissolve; be reconfigured or recreated; neither Anthony D. Smith nor I would contest that. What I want to suggest here is that the distance between ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism is not so great and that the civic nation can be dissolved into ethnic particularism quite easily. The historical markers that symbolize a nation or a national myth and the myths connection or salience to the present must be educated, and propagated, for if the nation is a daily plebiscite as Renan observed, it is also a plebiscite that can be lost. As the Spanish state under Franco demonstrates ethnic markers can be suppressed, quite violently. Ethnic cleansing, state institutions and efforts to reconfigure the national imaginative can have decidedly powerful impacts. It is perhaps equally accurate, yet nevertheless often overlooked, that if nations can be 'imagined' into existence through such tools as print media, museums, linguistic distinction and common origin myths they can similarly be unimagined.

National adversaries and other non-national communities can likewise be 'imagined' into form, given content and force through the power of politics, myth and

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<sup>51</sup> Scales and Zimmer, *Introduction*, 19.

narrative.<sup>52</sup> This is the paradox of ethnicity and nationalism, that multiple ethnicities and social closures – constructed or imagined – can co-exist quite peacefully within the boundaries of one state until the necessary and sufficient forces are brought to bear and then mobilize ethnicity as a set of exclusive identities. This is perhaps the tragic irony of Yugoslavia, where nationalism failed to create an enduring *Yugoslav* national identity that displaced the titular republics as the core basis for individual identity while in a sense simultaneously also succeeded in preserving and institutionalizing Croatian, Serbian, Slovenian cultural identities and reinforcing the primary relevance of ethnic and cultural identities as political identities.<sup>53</sup> Producing ethnic and cultural homogeneity within the territorial borders was a key element of Croatian and Serbian campaigns in the lead up to the collapse of both Yugoslavias. The example of Spain is as complex as that of Yugoslavia. The construction of a centralized Spanish state during the seventeenth century brought regional, and in the case of the Basque, ethnic and cultural identity into conflict with efforts to centralize identity and political loyalty under a Spanish flag. In many ways, the imagining of Spain as a political and cultural space was undermined and resisted by pre-existing imagined regional communities who saw themselves as communities of fate, bound by language, culture and geopolitical realities.

The grand historical narratives of the constituent nations, and their national, cultural and linguistic ‘histories’ have been covered elsewhere, and simply turning to those histories as justification for their nation-ness contributes little to our understanding of the national, nationalism and ethnicity. What are important and what provides a launch pad for thinking about the nation are events that connect the nation narrative with politics

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<sup>52</sup> John Lampe, “The failure of the Yugoslav national idea” *Studies in East European thought* 46 (1-2), 71.

<sup>53</sup> Heather Rae, *State identities and the homogenization of peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 40.

and memory to commemorate or enact the national. These connect Renan's question "*what is the nation?*" to a question another scholar has put forward, "*when is the nation?*" with, in my view, an equally important question: when is the nation no longer? The study of nationalism requires social scientists to return to the field and concentrate on nationalism as a set of events. If my first contention – that nations matter and will continue to matter – is correct, nationalism, and the claim made by groups who understand themselves as nations to a state, will continue to occupy an important place in the future for citizens, victims and scholars alike.

## Chapter 2: Regional autonomy and the ‘nation’ as state

The Basque Country and Catalonia share more than just their legal status as constituent units of a larger political state – Spain. They also share a drive for greater independence from that political unit. Both autonomy/independence movements locate the origins of their respective ‘nations’ in the historical record prior to the founding of the Spanish state, with the antecedents of the Basque nation dating to sometime around the seventh century and Catalonia between the tenth and thirteenth centuries. That historical record provides, especially in the case of the Basque, the basis for the claim to increased political autonomy, self-rule and potentially independence.<sup>1</sup>

In both cases, the cultural/political nationalist projects from which the twentieth century political independence movements would evolve emerged in the latter half of the nineteenth century. There is a key difference between the two nationalisms, while Catalonia has achieved a wide degree of regional autonomy short of succession and has found a *modus vivendi* in the post-Franco Spanish state through the recognition of regional autonomy in the 1978 Constitution the more radical strains of Basque nationalism and ETA in particular continue to pursue complete independence from Spain.<sup>2</sup> There is something particular to Basque nationalism that merits further scrutiny, for of the potential nationalisms and nationalist movements in Europe, Basque nationalism makes a claim to a community of fate that is perhaps the quintessential *ethnic nationalism*, with all of its political, territorial, linguistic and cultural claims to sovereignty.

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<sup>1</sup> Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: alternative routes to national mobilization* (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 46.

<sup>2</sup> M.K. Flynn, “Constructed identities and Iberia”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24:5 (2001), 710.

The Spanish regional autonomy movements are striking examples of a western European sub-state nationalism that go beyond merely the Spanish example. They suggest that the ‘national question’ is not restricted to the so-called ‘primordial hatreds’ or unsettled territorial disputes of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and that nationalism as a political doctrine continues to have a political and social salience in a era of European political integration This is especially true if one considers the drive for independence in Scotland and the potential repercussions of a failure to find a political compromise to social tensions in multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Belgium.<sup>3</sup> With the 1978 Spanish constitution and the establishment of regional autonomies, the Basque nation imagined by Sabino de Arana-Goiri in the nineteenth century is, at the levels of rhetoric and at the level of geopolitics a compelling but problematic conception in the twenty-first century. ETA’s continued appeal, as with that of the political party *Herri Batasuna* (“Unity of the people” in the Basque language), often considered the political face of ETA, and their electoral share of between 10-20 percent of the Basque vote suggests that nationalism is far from consigned to the scrap heap of ideas.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter looks at the historical development of Basque nationalism and situates its growth in relationship to changes within the internal structure of the Basque

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<sup>3</sup> Montserrat Guibernau, “Spain: Catalonia and Basque Country”, *Parliamentary Affairs* 53:1 (2000), 55. Stephen Tierney, “Reframing sovereignty? Sub-state national societies and contemporary challenges to the Nation-State” *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 54 (Jan, 2005), 161.

<sup>4</sup> Jan Mansvelt Beck, “Geopolitical imaginations of the Basque Homeland” *Geopolitics* 11:3 (2006), 508; British Broadcasting Corporation News, World Edition “Profile Batasuna” August 27, 2002. Available online <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2211696.stm> (Accessed February 16, 2008). The 1998 results, for instance return 17.91% of the seats in the Basque parliament for Batasuna (under the name Euskal Herritarrok, or “We Basque citizens” in Euskara) while in 1999 Basque autonomous community elections the party garnered 20.04% with 228,528 votes of 1.1 million votes. The party boycotted the 2000 election, while in 2001 the party garnered 143,139 votes amidst voter disenfranchisement with political violence. Batasuna has changed its party name three times to avoid bans. The party, in its last incarnation as Batasuna (“Unity”) was banned for its links to ETA in March 2003 from Spanish politics by the Spanish Supreme court. Basque election result are available online from the Basque Autonomous regions government <http://www9.euskadi.net/q93TodoWar/q93Desplegar.jsp> (Accessed March, 3, 2008)

Country as well as changes within Spain. The nineteenth century is particularly important for it was during this period of tremendous social, political and economic change that tensions dating back to the seventeenth century evolved into a nationalism that emphasized the ethnic markers of the Basque as morality, social order and politics. Divergent political movements and interests from rural and urban communities were fused into a coherent Basque nationalism. Three Carlist wars, a contest for political power within the Basque territory, and the crystallization of fundamental divides between liberals and conservatives; the rural and the urban and between Catholicism and secularism all occurred within an era of rapid industrialization and social dislocation.<sup>5</sup> For Basque nationalists like Arana, Madrid symbolized all that was wrong with industrialization and centralization. Moreover, in the view of Basque Nationalists Spain's loss of her colonies was symbolic of her lack of morality. For Basque Liberals, it reflected Spain's backwardness and reinforced a push for the restoration of Foral order.

The events I want to emphasize the presence of nationalism in this chapter are a combination of physical, political and social events. Symbolically and structurally, they reflect significant social and economic changes that served to reinforce distinctions between segments of society that were conceptualized as distinct moral communities. They served to reinforce and solidify pre-existing closures while simultaneously resurrecting new boundaries. In the Basque territory social and economic change exacerbated tensions within a society rapidly stratifying along social and economic lines. In this respect, modernists have a great deal to contribute to understanding Basque nationalism. Nationalism, aimed at forging a coherent Basque nation across the Basque provinces –four Spanish and three French– into a “moral community”, was certainly a

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<sup>5</sup> Hieberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 60.

nineteenth century project.<sup>6</sup> Class interests, if one frames them as such, played important roles in shaping the emergence of an overt nationalism. Where ethno-symbolist's perspective are important will become immediately clear in the discussion of the *fueros*, the Basque language and their respective importance for Basque nationalism as understood and articulated by nationalists such as Sabino de Arana-Goiri.<sup>7</sup> Jeff Pratt has argued that Basque nationalism, as seen in the Carlist Wars and the ideology of nationalism articulated by Arana reflects a subtle fusing of Catholicism and racism, or distinguishing of the Basque as a moral and cultural community distinct from Spaniards both in the historical context and the modern context.<sup>8</sup> The strength of Basque nationalism was its identification of an external enemy, its singling out of internal forces responsible for economic and social change and its provision of a political agenda that provided historical and social context around which differing segments of society marginalized from political and economic power could congregate. Religion, language, culture morality were intertwined as the pillars of a larger imagined Basque nation. The creation of a unified Basque nation as advanced by Basque nationalists is, admittedly, a distinctly modern project that sought to build an imagined community, however, it is one whose roots lies in and built upon a distinctly pre-modern cultural community.<sup>9</sup>

I argue that the Basque constitute an ethnic nation spread across multiple regions (or a cultural nation spread across political states to borrow Meinicke's notion) and that Basque nationalism as a political programme developed to, first, preserve Basque

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<sup>6</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, ch. 5.

<sup>7</sup> It is particularly interesting to note from a theoretical perspective that the two major accounts of Basque nationalism were projects conceived under the supervisions of Anthony Smith and Ernest Gellner (Conversi and Heiberg respectively).

<sup>8</sup> Jeff Pratt, Pratt, *Class, Nation and Identity: The anthropology of political movements* (London: Pluto Press, 2003), 108.

<sup>9</sup> Pratt, *Class, Nation and Identity*, 102-103.

autonomy from incorporation into a Spanish state and, second, to preserve Basque cultural and linguistic markers from Spanish centralizing efforts. The markers of Basque independence and cultural identity, likewise, shape modern day Basque political identity—particularly its violent face.

There are two key conceptions of Basque history that underlie Basque nationalism; anthropologist Marianne Heiberg provides an excellent assessment of these two strands and it is worthwhile to recreate that here. The first position reflects what can be broadly described as the ethno-symbolist position; this position holds that the Basques are a culturally and linguistically distinct people, and are a nation whose existence represents a struggle to defend itself, its political autonomy and its cultural heritage. In this narrative, the *fueros* represents a contractual relationship between the Basques and the Spanish crown, willingly entered into by the Basques, but a contract able to be cancelled at any time by the Basque people, as their sovereignty was never transferred or surrendered to Spain.<sup>10</sup> This position points to the continuation of the *fueros* under first, the Castilian Crown and later the unified Spanish crown. For Arana, the Basque

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<sup>10</sup> Quebec's nationalists like Jacques Parizeau make a similar argument to that of Basque nationalists; in his stating of the case for a sovereign Quebec he makes a similar point that is worth keeping in mind. The abrogation of the *fueros* can be compared to the *Night of the long knives* in which the Canadian Constitution was repatriated. Writing in *Foreign Policy*, Parizeau argues "the contract that links Quebec to the rest of Canada was changed in 1982 by the federal government and nine English provinces. A new constitution was imposed upon Quebec against its will, and it reduced Quebecer's ability to govern themselves on matters such as language and education." Jacques Parizeau, "The case for a Sovereign Quebec" *Foreign Policy* 99 (Summer, 1995), 69; The *fueros* had far-reaching implications for the very structure of Basque society, laying out laws for both the private sphere, (such as inheritance, domestic economic relationships, dowries and the transmission of properties to heirs) to public law, governing the relationships both among communities and with the Spanish state. In essence, the *fueros* represented a constitutional order. Foralism represented a system of localized assemblies "within which all community members across the social spectrum expressed their interests", and granted individuals as well as town and regional councils political autonomy. This Foralist legacy represented a reciprocal relationship between the sovereign, the provincial assemblies and the peoples, while granting the Spanish crown certain powers it also required the local representatives to implement (and validate) the monarch's decisions.<sup>10</sup> This in essence sketches out the main outlines of the Basque-Spanish political relationship from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Michael Keating, *Nations against the state*, 142; Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 20-23; Greer, *Nationalism and self-governance*, 16; Kate Flynn, *Ideology, mobilization and the nation* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 2000), 109-110.

possessed original sovereignty and had never been under the power of a foreign ruler, nor had they been the subjects of a personal ruler. The Basque were characterized by sharing equality among Basques rather than class or political differentiation.<sup>11</sup>

The second position is important for it represents the view held by centralists and Franco, and holds that the Basque, and particularly a small elite within the community, enjoyed certain concessions and privileges granted by the Castilian Kings.<sup>12</sup> This understanding of Spanish history sees the Basque, like the other regions as increasingly integrated into the Spanish state as it developed into a unified political entity and correspondingly rescinded regional autonomies granted by the Crown.<sup>13</sup> This position offers up the institution of the *Corregidor*, or the king's representative to the provinces, which oversaw the provincial assemblies to ensure that agreements contrary to the Crown's interest were not concluded as evidence as of the Basques subordinate status. In essence, it holds that the *fueros* were tolerances given by the Crown, and that institutions such as *el pase foral* (the foral pass) that required the consent of provincial assemblies reflect the crown's good faith rather than recognition of the Basque as equal or autonomous.<sup>14</sup>

These two conceptions of Basque nationalism are important, especially the later position in light of the failure of Spanish nationalism. Luis Moreno has contended, “[u]nquestionably, there is a noticeable strengthening of local, regional, and national (sub-state) identities, which has coincided with an increasing challenge to the model of a

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<sup>11</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 55.

<sup>12</sup> The discovery of nationalism by Arana and his brother Luis provides an interesting point. The story accounts for how the Arana brothers were accosted by a traveling companion for a lapel marker proclaiming the defence of the *Fueros*. The account holds that when accosted for demanding something no other Spaniard had a right to the Arana brothers are alleged to have discovered they were not Spaniards but Basques. Recounted in Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 56.

<sup>13</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, xi.

<sup>14</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 22-23.

centralized unitary state.”<sup>15</sup> Moreno’s observation is important in light of Juan Linz, who writing on the cusp of Franco’s death and the end of authoritarian rule observed, “Spain today is a state for all Spaniards, a nation-state for a large part of the population, and only a state but not a nation for important minorities.”<sup>16</sup> What both Linz and Moreno reflect is Marianne Heiberg’s critical observation that “Spanish nationalism was a failed nationalism. It was incapable of overriding regional and local identities.”<sup>17</sup> Spain’s failed efforts at forging a centralized national identity in the form of the one-nation—one-state formula served to reinforce the identities of distinct imagined cultural and political communities within its borders. This sentiment of a nation being destroyed by a state and an idealist representation of the past underlies a core aspect of Basque nationalism from the end of the nineteenth century forward; its salience was certainly reinforced during the Franco era.<sup>18</sup> Nostalgia, as John Armstrong notes,

can be defined, from a socio-historical viewpoint, as a persistent image of a superior way of life in the distant past. It is therefore a kind of ‘collective memory’ with intense emotional implications. As a social form, nostalgia expresses the yearning to return to a Golden Age, to halcyon days before corruption and equivocation permeated civilized life.<sup>19</sup>

The plight of the peasants, the effects of industrialization and the rise of a new, largely foreign work force all crystallized into nostalgia for the past and simultaneously provided fuel for an emerging political ideology aimed at rectifying this situation: Basque-ness. Regional nationalisms, as Donald Horowitz has suggested in the broader

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<sup>15</sup> Luis Moreno, *The federalization of Spain*. (London: Frank Cass, 2002.), 15.

<sup>16</sup> Juan Linz, “Early state-building and late peripheral nationalisms against the state: the case of Spain” In, *Building states and nations* Vol 2. S.N.Eisenstadt and Stein Rokkans, Eds. (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1973), 99. Quoted in Gerson Shaffir, “Relative Overdevelopment and alternative paths of nationalism: a comparative study of Catalonia and the Baltic Republics.” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 23:2 (1992), 107.

<sup>17</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque Nation*, 45.

<sup>18</sup> As Walker Connor observed, nation building might be more accurately referred to as “nation-destroying” in that the effort to forge a unified nation within the borders of the state to a large degree requires suppressing smaller regional or minority cultures. Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: the quest for understanding* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 42.

<sup>19</sup> John Armstrong, *Nations before nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 16.

sense, draw both strength and legitimacy from propagating a sense of fear that an imagined cultural (and national) community would disappear altogether unless regional identity and institutions counteract this threat and preserve distinctive regional customs, traditions and institutions.<sup>20</sup> In contrast to Catalan regionalism, Basque nationalism increasingly developed along ethnic lines, distinguishing Basque bloodlines as untainted by corrupt Spanish culture, blood and values, coming to serve as an “anti-Spanish” nationalism.<sup>21</sup> Culture would become an important tool in the creation of this anti-Spanish nationalism.

### **The Spanish state and the Basque nation: The importance of the past**

In order to understand how the dramatic shifts in the nineteenth century emerged it is important to briefly turn to the emergence of the Basque Country within the context of Spain. The Basque can claim a cultural history that significantly predates the founding of the modern Spanish state. The Basque Provinces enjoyed a constitutional autonomy in the form of *fueros*, or local charters that guaranteed the “precedence of specified rights of a determined population over external legal codes and political claims.”<sup>22</sup>

The history of the Basque regional autonomy begins with the late fifteenth century marriage between Isabela of Castille and Fernando of Aragon uniting the five Hispanic kingdoms into a loosely co-federal unified Spanish crown under which the *fueros* were recognized and maintained by the Crown in exchange for allegiance to the

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<sup>20</sup> Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic groups in conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 179.

<sup>21</sup> Mary .K. Flynn, “Constructed identities and Iberia” *Ethnic and Racial studies* 24:5 (2001), 703-718.

<sup>22</sup> William Douglas, “A western perspective on a eastern interpretation of where north meets south: Pyrenean borderland cultures” In, *Border Identities: Nation and state at international frontiers*. Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, Eds (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 66.

monarch.<sup>23</sup> Even though the Spanish crown initiated a program of increasing centralization both the Basque Country and Catalonia enjoyed wide autonomy, including exemption from taxation and obligations to support the Crown's defence as well the recognition of the region's distinct languages, the granting of their own administrative systems and coinage.<sup>24</sup> For the Basque Provinces, the *fueros* had important economic and military rationales; the granting of local autonomy and freedom from conscription was meant to both spur economic development and serve a military and regulatory necessity. In exchange for autonomy the Basque pledged to defend their own territory (situated along a traditional invasion route from France) in order to buy time for the larger Spanish kingdom's army to mobilize; and secondly to rein in conflict among the heads of local families and establish a form of political order.<sup>25</sup> The Foral order simultaneously placed natural resources and rural lands under municipal control and enshrined the local communities as separate and autonomous legal and political orders. The Spanish Crown, like other European monarchies, was increasingly interested in centralizing the Spanish state, and "rationalizing the taxation system by removing Estates and parliaments that impeded taxation and fragmented public administration" was one of the key objectives of this project.<sup>26</sup> The Spanish state, from its own weaknesses and strategic necessity reinforced the Basque's autonomy, and thus, in turn, not only failed to incorporate the Basque into Spain but also provided a powerful external enemy against which Basque nationalism would orient itself. In the aftermath of the nineteenth century Carlist Wars, efforts to remove the *fueros* were seen by many in the Basque country as a direct assault

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<sup>23</sup> Stanley G. Payne, "Catalan and Basque Nationalism" *Journal of Contemporary history* 6:1 (1971), 15; Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 20.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Keating, *Nations against the state*, 142.

<sup>25</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 20-23.

<sup>26</sup> Greer, *Nationalism and self-governance*, 16.

by an alien power upon both themselves and their covenant with god.<sup>27</sup> This locked the centralizing goals of the crown into conflict with the regions and their autonomy as symbolized by the *fueros*. These forces came together at the opening of the eighteenth century during the Wars of Spanish Succession between Bourbon and Habsburg claimants to the Spanish throne. The Catalan provinces aligned themselves in support of the Habsburg claimant, believing that a Habsburg monarch would respect the *fueros* and the regions' autonomies while Basque supported the Bourbon claimant.

### **The decline of Catalan autonomy and the continuance of Basque independence**

The conclusion of the Wars of Spanish succession (1701-1714) saw the Bourbon ruler, Phillip V ascend to the Spanish throne and with his accession came the reassertion of the state centralizing project with the proclamation in 1716 of the *Nueva Planta*, revoking Catalan autonomy, marginalizing the Catalan legal system to the private sphere, banning the Catalan language and proclaiming Castilian as the sole and official language of the Spanish kingdom.<sup>28</sup> This proclamation rescinded the grant of authority to pass local laws and customs granted under the *fueros* (which would become increasingly important during the eighteenth century and the industrialization of Catalonia), closed the local parliament and imposed central administration as punishment for Catalan support for the Habsburg claimant to the throne.<sup>29</sup> It is worth noting that the rescinding of Catalonia's autonomy closed the very institutions that Hroch pointed out were the goals activists in 'Phase B' of national revival sought to obtain. For many Catalans the decree of the *Neuva*

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<sup>27</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 56-57, fn, 26.

<sup>28</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 11

<sup>29</sup> Michael Keating, *Nations against the state*, 142-143; Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 11.; Stanley G Payne, "Catalan and Basque Nationalism" *Journal of Contemporary history* 6:1 (1971), 16. It is important to note that the *fueros* of Aragon, Vallencia, Cataluna and Mallorca were also suspended. Ludger Mees, "Between bullets and votes: Conflicting identities in the Basque country" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24:5 (2001), 800.

*Planta* represented a national disaster and the suppression of their cultural and ethnic identity; this would become a key element of the mid-nineteenth century cultural revival from which Catalan nationalism emerged. Unlike Catalonia and the other regions, the Basque Country enjoyed the continuation of the *fueros* in part as reward for their support of the Bourbon claim to the throne.<sup>30</sup>

Reinvigorated efforts to advance centralism laid open the path to conflict among supporters of absolutist rule, regional autonomy or a centralized co-federal state.<sup>31</sup> Rural Catalan towns, like their counterparts in Southern and Eastern Spain, supported the maintenance and even expansion of local autonomy and regionalism, while the emerging middle class supported a program of anti-clericalism, centralization and rationalization of government.<sup>32</sup> In the Basque Country a new class of small landowners emerged alongside the growth of a Basque state administration, comprised of ethnic Basques who tended towards collaboration with Castile rather than conflict. The growth of an administrative class among Basque society increasingly displaced the *Parientis Mayores* or the heads of villages, as sources of political power in the Basque Provinces and was accompanied by economic growth that led to the rise of a mercantile class in Basque coastal communities.

This new class began to replace the old aristocracy, acquiring land and pushing for the liberalizing of land available from municipal holdings, further breaking up the political *status quos* of traditional Basque society. The Foralist order maintained the monopoly over natural resources enjoyed by the municipal villages and the restrictions of the internal Spanish market placed liberal ideas on a collision path with the traditional political order with the Basque Country, bringing the rural and the urban into conflict,

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<sup>30</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 3; 20.

<sup>31</sup> Siobhan Harty, "the institutional structure of substate national movements", 198-199.

<sup>32</sup> Payne, "Catalan and Basque nationalism", 17.

and simultaneously the regions (and traditional autonomy) into conflict with a centralizing and liberalizing state.<sup>33</sup> The social order of the Basque country was changing and with it, the ordering of political power.<sup>34</sup> The displacement of the traditional order would have important implications for the articulation of the staunch religiousness and cultural absolutism of Basque nationalism articulated by Arana. Greed and the loss of traditional values, the rise of economic and social changes would come together in a nostalgia-oriented nationalism, which adapted to include industrialization, though a Basque only industrialization.

### **Political crisis and cultural revival (1800-1876)**

Social and economic conflict deepened with yet another controversy over succession to the Spanish throne following the death of Ferdinand VII in 1833 and the eruption of the First Carlist War (1833-1839). The Carlist wars were essentially Civil wars fought in Catalonia and the Basque Country between those who had prospered under early periods of modernization and stood to emerge economically and political powerful in the nineteenth century and large rural segments of Catalonia and the Basque country who saw themselves as the victims of industrialization.<sup>35</sup> Stanley Payne argues, the fight was two-fold, first to restore the tradition order and force Spanish liberalism to “compromise more broadly with Catholicism than was the case in other Catholic countries during the period, and also to help preserve a portion of the institutional autonomy of Navarre and the Basque provinces (the strongholds of Carlism)” against

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<sup>33</sup> Heiberg, *The Making of the Basque nation*, 35-37.

<sup>34</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 20-29.

<sup>35</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 36.

Castile.<sup>36</sup> A majority of rural Basques supported the brother of Ferdinand and pretender to the throne Don Carlos María Isidro believing that the Carlists would restore the old traditional order, for Catalan Carlists this included the re-recognition of the *fueros* eliminated in 1716 while for rural Basques this meant the “defence of common lands and protection from state taxes.” In contrast to the rural villages and their primarily agrarian orientation urban cities were notably anti-*fueros*, anti-Carlist and bastions of liberalism.<sup>37</sup> Change was fiercely opposed by the old political order that opposed the breaking up of rural land holdings and integration into a Spanish national market; the church, who feared both subordination and loss of social status; and peasants who feared a flood of cheap imports would increase competition and depress prices.<sup>38</sup> The Basque peasantry sided against the liberals out of obvious self-interest while the political elite behind the Carlist position pursued a more sweeping agenda: the religious reunification of Spain under Catholicism.<sup>39</sup> In essence, “the Carlist wars were Basque civil wars. The liberal, anti-*fueros* urban centers were pitted against the Carlist, pro-*fueros* rural areas.” The First Carlist War ended essential in a stalemate within the Basque Country; the Carlist forces were neither able to expand beyond the Basque country nor conquer Madrid while Spanish forces, due to intense support among the peasantry and geographical reality were unable to penetrate the Basque country.<sup>40</sup> The Embrace of Vergara (1839), ending the war entrenched the symbolic importance of the *fueros* by recognizing their continuation, though the Law of 1839 undercut those promises and laid the foundations for the Third

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<sup>36</sup> Stanley G. Payne, “Nationalism, regionalism and micronationalism in Spain” *Journal of Contemporary History* 26:3/4 (1991), 481.

<sup>37</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 36-37.

<sup>38</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 36.

<sup>39</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 37.

<sup>40</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 37.

Carlist War (1872-1876) by adding a provision that the *Fueros* were reaffirmed unless they were prejudicial the constitutional unity of the monarch.<sup>41</sup> The conclusion of the First Carlist War simultaneously saw both the defeat of the Carlists as well as the failure of the monarchy's administrative reorganization. It also marked the beginning of a cultural and political renaissance in Catalonia followed shortly by a Basque cultural rediscovery in Viscaya. The politicization and mobilization of the rural peasantry as an effect of changes to rural life symbolically became a key feature of the Basque nationalist program that began to develop from the 1880s forward.

### **The Cultural Revival**

Daniele Conversi notes that in Catalonia this renaissance was quickly seized upon by multiple sectors of Catalan society from the rural intelligentsia who “reviled urbanization, sensing the threat it posed to their traditional lifestyles and customs” to urban poets and philosophers, such as Francesc-Xavier Llorens i Barba who exposed to influences as diverse as German idealism introduced new ideas to Barcelona's intellectual circles. Among those influences was Johann Gottfried von Herder's notion of *Volksgiest*.<sup>42</sup> Herder's notion that language forms the nation gave not only intellectual but also cultural strength to Catalan and Basque intellectuals conceptions of the larger imagined national community.<sup>43</sup> The imbalance between economic power and political power was at the core of this cultural renaissance and one of the main goals was to revive the prestige of Catalan as a language and as a culture and to counteract the spread of Castilian culture and suppression of Catalan identity by a century of start-and-stall

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<sup>41</sup> Hieberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 38.

<sup>42</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 15.

<sup>43</sup> Miguel Strumbell, “Language, democracy and devolution in Catalonia” *Current issues in language and society* 5:3 (1998), 149.

centralism.<sup>44</sup> The 1833 publication of Bonaventura-Carles Aribau's poem, "*La Pàtria*" and the collected anthology of poems by Joaquim Rubio i Ors published as "*Poises*" in 1841 marked the rise of an explicitly Catalan cultural identity that would be come know as the *Renaixença* (renaissance).<sup>45</sup> Echoing Hroch's argument, alongside the promotion of the Catalan language came a rediscovery of Catalan historiography and the promotion of a romantic vision of Catalonia in the middle-ages (i.e. pre-Spanish crown). This phase "A" was important given its scope – reaching into theatre (though initially in Castilian), poetry, painting and architecture – and its geographic reach, spanning all the Catalan regions.<sup>46</sup> Stanley Payne argues that this rediscovery of arts and culture coupled with the embracing of pre-Spanish Catalan historiography through a romantic celebration of the past portrayed the decline of Catalan language and Catalan culture, especially in light of the centralizing efforts of the Crown and the eighteenth century royal proclamation abolishing the Catalan language as a conspiracy against a Catalan nation by Aragonese and Castilians.<sup>47</sup> The priest and poet Jacint Verdaguer was emblematic of this period, fusing "popular and high culture" into a poetic and political lament for the loss of Catalan traditions.<sup>48</sup> Amidst this renaissance a brief and quickly put down Second Carlist War (1848-1849) erupted.

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<sup>44</sup> Guibernau, *Spain: Catalonia and the Basque Country*, 56; Payne, "Catalan and Basque Nationalism", 18.

<sup>45</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, The Catalans and Spain*, 14.

<sup>46</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, The Catalans and Spain*, 15. The literature suggests a debate over the scope and importance of the renaissance. Conversi makes the argument that this renaissance was far reaching and inherently political whereas Stanley Payne argues it was limited in reach, and confined to a small elite and not widely circulated concerned essentially with esthetics and restricted primarily to poetry. Keating notes that this renaissance was part of a widespread romantic rediscovery underway in Europe, from which literature and arts was essential in manufacturing traditions, including the creation of a Catalan national anthem and flag forging traditions into political symbols. Payne, "Catalan and Basque nationalism" *Journal of contemporary history*, 18. Keating, *Nations against the state*, 144.

<sup>47</sup> Payne, *Catalan and Basque nationalism*, 18.

<sup>48</sup> Cited in Conversi, *The Basques, that Catalans and Spain*, 15-16

The rediscovery of the vernacular by Catalanian intellectuals combined with the romanticizing of the past added a distinctive cultural dynamic; the revival of the poetry contests, the *Joc Florals* (Floral games) in 1859 added further national symbols to this rediscovery of Catalan culture providing not just an outlet for the rediscovery of Catalan history and poetry and its eulogizing of Catalan tradition but also for the development of new cultural production as part of an emerging cultural nationalism. While most Catalans retained the use of Catalan in domestic use, in culture, politics, commerce and government Castilian had replaced Catalan, a process exacerbated by the eighteenth century revocation of Catalan's distinct language and cultural institutions.<sup>49</sup> Part of the cultural project was also the modernization of the Catalan language by a new generation of philologists such as Pompeu Fabra who sought to standardize the Catalan language for the purposes of modern society.<sup>50</sup> This period of modernization and cultural rejuvenation was accompanied by the rise of a Catalan printing industry which provided an outlet for not just traditionalists but also liberals who had become disillusioned with the impacts of modernization, namely violence, social and political instability as well as giving voice to grievances against the monarchy. The shift from a backwards-looking cultural revival to a modernist cultural nationalism marked an important shift, bringing those disconnected from the conservative cultural nationalism of the renaissance together with a forward looking political agenda of restoring Catalan autonomy. The cultural nationalisms developing elsewhere in Europe were fused into this revival of Catalan cultural and political tradition. The journal *L'avenç* (*Progress*) for instance, began to translate European ideas into Catalan during the 1870s, simultaneously providing an important

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<sup>49</sup> Stanley Payne, "Catalan and Basque nationalism" *Journal of contemporary history*, 18.

<sup>50</sup> Keating, *Nations against the state*, 144.

forum for discussion as well as for the beginnings of a standardized Catalan orthography. This period was further distinguished by the push for the recognition of Catalan as a co-official language, alongside Castilian and the restoration of Catalan government.<sup>51</sup> This Catalan cultural and political revival was critically important for a young Sabino Arana was studying law in Barcelona at the heights of this revival.

Following the end of the Third Carlist war (1872-1876)– in which the Basque Country again supported the Carlists to preserve their autonomy – the changing political landscape and industrialization brought about an end to self-rule.<sup>52</sup> Both as a real and symbolic instrument, the repudiation of the *fueros* came amidst a period when the physical and cultural face of Basque society was changing. The *fueros* represented a historical record of unbroken sovereignty, the purity of Basque bloodlines and most importantly, the maintenance of a staunch Catholicism, and the equality, in rhetoric at least, of all Basques– this was most symbolically represented in the recognition of all Basques as being of noble blood.<sup>53</sup> The repealing of the *fueros* saw the introduction of Spanish taxes in the Basque Provinces, which disproportionately taxed land and live stock over industry, which, in turn, emphasized differences between various segments of society.<sup>54</sup>

It is here that a cultural revival for the Basque nation finds its roots. The unprecedented social and political dislocation occurred at the same time that the Basque language was increasingly falling from usage, especially in the urban environment. The introduction of Spanish language teaching in 1876 further reinforced the decline of the

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<sup>51</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, The Catalans and Spain*, 19, 21-22.

<sup>52</sup> Stanley Payne, “Nationalism, regionalism and micronationalism in Spain” *Journal of Contemporary History* 36:3/4 (Sept, 1991), 481.

<sup>53</sup> Pratt, *Class, nation and identity*, 107.

<sup>54</sup> Pratt, *Class, nation and identity*, 104.

Basque language among urban residents, which was falling into disuse not only as a result of the spread of Spanish but also from a sense among many urbanites that the Basque language was backwards or outdated especially in the context of the intense industrialization occurring in Vizcaya. Industrialization and related urbanization played a vitally important role in shaping the material conditions from which Basque – and Catalan – nationalism would rise. Conflicts between the rural peasantry, an urbanized and liberalizing Basque elite and a disenfranchised middle class disconnected from the peasant community by economic reality yet excluded from real political influence, reinforced their position as vessels of ‘Basque’ political traditions as they searched for a political ideology. They confronted a society dominated by staunchly anti-clerical liberals who supported increased centralization and industrialization, the very forces responsible for this social strata’s economic and political situation. This middle class who were either increasingly driven out of business by large industrial concerns or not engaged in industrial pursuits rapidly turned to the professions, becoming writers, teachers and lawyers. Lamenting their own displacement, they began a cultural resurrection and a cultural/political project of preserving, as Sabino Arana termed it, the Basque race and Basque culture from corruption or destruction.<sup>55</sup>

The peasant communities of the Basque Country likewise felt the pressures of urbanization in the form of pushes for disentanglement of village-held community land. Land was the lifeblood of the Basque village, forming the basis on which individual Basque families both survived and sold for profit. The effect of inheritance laws pushed many Basques from the village (*basserias*), especially as land grew scarcer, to the urban

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<sup>55</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, The Catalans and Spain*, 7-8. In essence, this forms the beginning point of cultural nationalism in the Basque territory.

center and urban employment, particularly in expanding metal working industries and mills, while the encroachment of an urban elite (the holders of political power) on traditional life through the push for expansion of private property and the conversion of agricultural land to industrial usage added immense social and corresponding cultural pressures to rural life. Basque workers, particularly young Basques, moving to the urban environment found themselves competing with mostly Castilian speaking immigrants from outside the Basque country for employment. Identified as part of the forces disrupting traditional life and as an outsider group, they were excluded from Basque society. This group of Spanish speaking laborers, marginalized in Basque society would come to form the support base for a new force in Basque politics at the end of the nineteenth century: the socialists. For peasants, increased pressure and physical changes in the Basque province of Vizcaya as a result of industrialization reached a high water mark with the elimination of the *fueros*.

It was to Vizcaya that Arana returned from Barcelona as a small cultural renaissance developed in Navarre among a small circle of the intelligentsia denied access to political power by rife corruption among the economic elite. The focus of this small circle, the *renacimiento euskerista* was the *fueros*, the Basque language and history. The Navarrese intelligentsia is important for they were comprised of teachers, professors, liberals and priests. It was into this circle that Arana would emerge as the father of Basque nationalism.

### **Sabino Arana**

Arana, the son of a prominent Carlist took from the Catalan revival the necessity and importance, culturally and symbolically of reviving and preserving the Basque

language. Raised fervently Catholic and Carlist Arana grew up fundamentally opposed to Spain as a political institution and to liberalism as a political ideology: two forces that were having significant impacts on Vizcaya.<sup>56</sup> It was Arana who gave Basque nationalism its form; combining nation building, in that it sought to unify the independent Basque provinces into a Basque nation as a moral and political community, by forging a long standing ethno-cultural community which enjoyed historical and political existence (the ethno-symbolist position) with a society responding to significant industrial and social change and a political doctrine of foralism.

Arana conceptualized the Basque as a moral community, in essence as an elect nation; a key element of maintaining that moral community was linguistic distinction and culturally distance. The emphasis on the Basque language as a moral marker is tangible in pre-nationalist conceptions of the Basque language as that spoken by the creator. Religion strongly informed the connection between the Basque language and morality, the Basque clergyman, Abbé Dominique Lahetjuzan declared Basque to be the first spoken human language, while another Abbé proclaimed Euskara the language spoken by God himself.<sup>57</sup> The fruits of the Catalan revival can be quickly seen in his political agenda and his publishing of a book on Basque grammar in 1885. Heiberg argues that Catalan regionalism provided the inspiration for Arana's own Basque revival. Arana, given his Carlist upbringing, had a visceral rejection of industrialization and the radical transformation of Basque society wrought by it. The restoration of cultural and political symbols in Catalonia left an impression on Arana and shaped his nationalism. His Carlist upbringing brought together not just foralism but also religion and language with an

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<sup>56</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 49; Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 56.

<sup>57</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 64

explanation for the social and economic dislocation widespread with Vizcaya into a coherent political strategy: independence.

The barriers to Basque equality sovereignty were the corruption of Basque purity and innocence by industrialization, symbolized by the industrial elite and their embrace of liberalism and anti-Catholicism and the corresponding invasion of the Basque lands by the *maketos*— as Spanish immigrants were derogatorily referred to fulfill the labour force demands driven by industrialization. These two groups represented not only the fracturing of the rural but also the rejection of Catholic values, such as caring for the poor. The industrialist push for disentanglement of community lands and focus on economic interests or greed in Arana's view represented the antithesis of Carlism and Catholic teaching. The motto of Basque nationalism is particularly telling of Arana's fusion of cultural nostalgia, Carlism and Catholicism as identity markers distinguishing Basques from non-Basques; *Janungoikua eta Lagizarra*, or God and the old laws (JEL).

This represented nostalgia for an imagined Basque egalitarianism in the face of rapid social change, the flood of immigration and the dilution of Basque nobility. The key markers of Arana's revival were therefore markers that distinguished the Basque as a moral community; these were distinctly racial and religious. The religious element was an essential aspect for it provided a future horizon; Basque-ness was not just a way of being, and the Basque the chosen people, but also a vehicle through which to reverse the tides of liberalism and industrialization. The ethnic boundary served a key element for a cultural upgrading and the exclusion of Spaniards from Basque society.<sup>58</sup>

Arana's nationalism embodies the ethnic conception of nation that I argue underlies Basque nationalism. Arana described these core racial – and moral-

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<sup>58</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 61.

characteristics that distinguished Basque and Spaniards in his essay, *Que somos?* (Who are we?):

The Basque is intelligent, noble and masculine; the Spaniard inexpressive, sullen and effeminate. The Basque is capable handling all types of work; the Spaniard inept at even at the most simple tasks. The Basque is a learner, born to be his own master. The Spaniard never learns and is born to be servile. The Basque is generous even to his enemies. The Spaniards is avaricious even towards his brothers. The Basque character degenerates from foreign intermingling<sup>59</sup>

From Arana's characterizations we can extract two important characterizations: the Basque represent moral virtue, hard work and honour, while simultaneously advancing a romantic depiction of the Basque village as hard working and industrious while the Spaniard represents the dislocation of these values by greed. Arana's condemnation of marriage between Basques and non-Basques can be placed within the political and moral context of his ethnic nationalism. Basque-ness could be corrupted through the breaking of the religious covenant between the Basque and God, as his chosen people and thus intermarriage between Basques and *Marketos* imperiled the Basque race.<sup>60</sup> More so, the barrier between Basques and non-Basques was essential for Arana if Basque values and culture were to be defended and preserved from the onslaught of Spaniard's greed and moral turpitude. Likewise, the urban-rural divide was symbolized by the idea of corruption through intermingling.

The abrogation of the *fueros* had further effects for it removed the immigration controls between villages within the Basque community, upsetting the social order and political balance. The Foral order restricted the right of residence to those who could prove their Basque nobility and was underwritten by an elaborate series of practices for affirming this status. As a telling example of the impacts of both industrialization and the displacement of the Foral order, the population of Bilbao increased from 35,505 in 1877

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<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 54.

<sup>60</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 60

to 83,306 at the turn of the century; 80% of the population of Bilbao came to be made up by immigrants.<sup>61</sup>

The Basque language had an important role in defending these values and Basque culture. An amateur philologist and historian, Arana's perspective on the Basque language built upon centuries-old folklore. One popular tale held that the devil once came to the Basque territory to learn the language and convert disciples but quickly returned to hell in frustration after several weeks, learning only the Basque words for *yes* and *no*.<sup>62</sup> As a Stone-Age language with no connection to any modern European language the Basque language represented both an ethnic barrier as well as a historical marker. Hence, Arana's position on refusing to allow immigrants to learn the Basque language had important ethnic and historical importance for differentiating Basques from non-Basques. Symbolically the language of God, allowing foreigners to learn the language would introduce the very forces Basque nationalism opposed into the language as well as open the Basque moral community to foreign influences and corruption.

The Basque language increasingly became one of the key institutions of this project and the creation of a network of schools that provided instruction in Euskari to Basque, the *ikastolas*, during the early twentieth century were an essential part of reinforcing Basque-ness through cultural and racial markers of Basque identity.<sup>63</sup> As Thomas Eriksen argues, the role of educational systems, such as the Basque *ikastolas* are especially important for providing and facilitating abstract identifications among people who are neither directly related kin nor who are likely to ever meet to learn about the ethnic community to which they belong and its cultural characteristics. They produce a

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<sup>61</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 196-197.

<sup>62</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 60.

<sup>63</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 76.

standardized account of culture and history, in effect confirming and legitimizing ethnic identity.<sup>64</sup> Here echoes of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined communities* are immediately tangible.

Eriksen notes that mass-produced cultural identities and histories of “our people” and “our culture” are important tools for fashioning ethnic identity with cultural continuity. The teaching of Basque and the reification of Basque culture were important tools for arresting a decline in Basque identity markers – particularly the linguistic– and for reasserting ‘Basque’ as a political and cultural category. The Basque language –like the difficulty of learning it – was a particularly important cultural defence, and as Basque nationalism evolved the cultural markers became important distinctions between Basque nationalists, immigrants and Spaniards and the Basque political elite. Basque nationalism reveals that culture, language and tradition are more than just ephemeral notions espoused by the rhetoric of a nationalist movement or romanticized by intellectuals, but represent real cultural symbols and identity markers that are mobilized to reinforce or forge as well as maintain a social as well as political community.<sup>65</sup> As Jean Laponce observed, “the excluding role of a language is particularly obvious in ‘flag’ or ‘recognition’ languages, since they serve less as instruments of communication than means of recognition and assembly.”<sup>66</sup> The Basque language would also become a

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<sup>64</sup> Eriksen, *Ethnicity and nationalism: Anthropological perspectives*, 91

<sup>65</sup> Catalan culture, language and even Catalonian geography formed important elements of a Catalan regionalism that developed in the later half of the nineteenth century. Popular poets, plays, paintings, literary discussions circuits and even the philharmonic provided the infrastructure for a Catalan regional identity focused on replacing a romantic conservatism with a modernism which saw regionalism as a vehicle for progress. Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 22-27.

<sup>66</sup> Jean Laponce, *Languages and their territories*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 27

symbol adopted by ETA in the face of Franco' repression of Basque culture in the 1960s.<sup>67</sup>

Language played an important role in identifying Basques from non-Basques, as did names. Taking a page from the Catalan cultural revival Arana set up a bi-weekly magazine the *Bizkaitarra* (The Vizcayan), which contained articles on Basque history, grammar, ethics and local politics.<sup>68</sup> The founding of the political and cultural Basque Society (*Euskaldun Batzokija*) in 1894 in Bilbao was logically the next step for Arana. Staunchly catholic and culturally essentialist, the Basque society's membership was open only to those who were Catholic in faith and could prove their Basque-ness.<sup>69</sup> Its political doctrines were strictly anti-Spanish and organized along a hierarchy based on racial purity as a precondition for access to political power: Original members were required to possess four Basque surnames whereas supporter members required at least two Basque surnames. Only original members could be elected to office and vote on all society matters. Furthermore Spanish language books were strictly prohibited.

Reflective of the egalitarian image of Basque society romanticized by Basque nationalism, political office in the society was meant to rotate among its members, and candidates for office were to be randomly selected by lottery. Furthermore, the society's rule prohibited a member from succeeding himself in office and established annual elections of new members. Membership in the society was drawn from urban artisans, merchants and professionals among Bilbao's middle class, the very group pushed to the margins by industrialization, excluded from village life and urban political and economic

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<sup>67</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 111.

<sup>68</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 56-57.

<sup>69</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 61; Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 61-62.

power.<sup>70</sup> Race followed by language and combined with God, was the central markers of an ethnically exclusive Basque political community.

Arana was centrally involved in the effort to reassert the Basque language as a marker of Basque identity, undertaking an effort to revise the Basque orthography by purging non-Basque neologisms, going so far as to create an alphabet with a different ordering. Arana's nationalism therefore appealed to a pre-existing social community, defined by its independence in the *fueros* as well as linguistically, to a pre-existing linguistic community whose language was marked as one of the most difficult to learn. The creation of the Basque society can be seen as the beginning marks of Hroch's 'Phase B' of national revival. The staunchly Catholic orientation of the Basque society made the connections between purity of bloodlines, religion, territory and nationalism. In Arana's words, "...there is no solution without Christ. Have the Basque nationalists fastened onto a religious theme? Yes, and this is clearly demonstrated in their motto "For God and the Old Law" ...My patriotism is rooted ...in my love for God, and its aim is to connect God to my blood relatives, to my great family, the Basque Country."<sup>71</sup> The *Jus Sanguinis* markers of Basque nationalism as ethnically defined are readily discernable. The key element in defining Basque-ness for Arana was a blood connection between culture and nation such as that stressed by Meinecke. In his *La Patria*, Arana wrote,

The patriarchal family, that is to say, the *patria* is the union of individuals of an historic race for whom time has formed customs and language and on whose behalf history has created a patrimony of liberties which all generations (of that race) have the perfect right to enjoy.<sup>72</sup>

The mission of the nation, or the Basque nation and race as elect are likewise tangible in Arana's thought as he extolled Basques, "before the Fatherland there is God; but in

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<sup>70</sup> Hieberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 61-63.

<sup>71</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 62-63.

<sup>72</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 52.

practical and temporal life here in Vizcaya, in order to love God it is necessary to be a patriot, and in order to be a patriot it is necessary to love God; this is what the Fatherland is all about.”<sup>73</sup>

For Arana, the Basque constituted a nation chosen by God, and if the nation broke faith with God, one to be rejected. Protecting the nation and its covenant therefore involved defending the nation as a social and moral closure, both religiously and ethnically. For a deeply religious rural population and for a dislocated urban environment, religion, meaning, and traditions signifying better times provided a political agenda that diverse groups could unite behind, and whose inclusion required adopting a self-glorifying image based on markers already understood. In effect, Basque nationalism was directed at producing a modern political in-group by defining its opposite group as an oral and potentially physical threat. Religion served to provide a sense of cultural and moral superiority around which to reverse the tide of Spanish assimilation.<sup>74</sup> Basque identity provided symbols for not just exclusion and moral differentiation but for a nation. Indeed, among nationalist circles a subtle switch began to emerge which suggests how deeply connected language, culture and politics were as identity markers, this shift was the defining of ones identity in introductions as “*ueskalduna naiz*” or “I am a Basque speaker” rather than as a specific locality or province.<sup>75</sup> Language, morality, history and politics combined under the overarching category of the Basque race. For Arana, language and race were closely related in politics; Arana asked of native Basque speakers, “[i]s not Euskara the language of your race and of your blood? Is it not the language of your fatherland? If a people loses its tongue, it is because it has become

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<sup>73</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 62-63.

<sup>74</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 53.

<sup>75</sup> Cited in Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 66.

the slave of another people. Do you want to be the child of an enslaved people?” Arana further called on Basques to defend the language warning, “[g]reat damage can be done to the Fatherland by one hundred *marketos* who do not know Euskara. Even worse is the damage that can be done by only one *marketo* who knows it.”<sup>76</sup>

Race and religion were the core bases of Basque ethnicity for Arana; the Basque language, as has been suggested above provided a defence against infiltration of Spaniards into Basque culture via the difficulty of acquiring the language. The language served as a flag, but it was not a firm social closure. This is, in part, reflected in Arana’s refusal to allow non-Basques to learn the language. Indeed, both the role of language and its potential permeability were acknowledged by Arana in his own writing; Arana telling declared,

If we had to choose between a Bizkaya populated by *marketos* who spoke only Euskera and a Bizkaya populated by Bizkainos who spoke only Spanish, without a doubt we would select the latter...Bizkainos are as obliged to speak their national language as they are not to teach it to the *marketos* or Spaniards. Speaking one language or another is not important. Rather the differences between languages is the means of preserving us from the contagion of Spaniards and avoiding the mixing of the two races. If our invaders learned Euskera, we would abandon it, carefully storing away its grammar and dictionary, and dedicate ourselves to speaking Russian, Norwegian or some other language unknown to them.<sup>77</sup>

Here the political significance of language as differentiation is directly emphasized; the Basque language serves as both an ethno-cultural barrier as well as a territorial border. It reinforces an underlying sharp ethnic distinction as well as a political and moral boundary. The prohibition, both socially and morally against teaching the language to the outsiders is rooted in the preservation of an ethnic core of a nation. The language held further importance for Basque nationalism as an oral and religious national marker that relied on oral transmission rather than dissemination through print media as in Catalonia,

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<sup>76</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 176-177.

<sup>77</sup> Heiberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 53.

or the print capitalism that figures prominently in Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. One reliable study places the total number of books published in Euskari between the sixteenth and nineteenth century at 600 in contrast to Catalonia where the figure numbers several thousand.<sup>78</sup>

This cultural and ethnic distinguishing of the nation was an essential reservoir for nationalists, as the guardians of the nation, during periods of political repression. This brings the story of Basque nationalism and Basque society to the close of the nineteenth century, the Spanish-American War and the emergence of Basque nationalism as an overt political movement. From this departure point, the rise of Basque nationalism in the twentieth century is immediately tangible. Three key markers underwrite this transformation. The first is the barrier between Basques and non-Basques, linguistically and culturally and the maintenance of moral and physical distances between the two groups; the second is the moral narrative that is cast as part of this reinforcing of barriers; the third is the underlying concept of Basque-ness as an independent nation.

In 1895, the secessionist rebellion in Cuba led to the banning of all separatist parties and organizations, including the Basque society started by Arana. Quickly, the Basque society was reinvented as the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco*, or Basque National Party (PNV). The 1898 provincial elections saw the PNV field Arana as a candidate, who stood for and subsequently was elected to the Provincial assembly of Vizcaya. In line with Arana's sharp delineation between Basque morality and Spanish avarice the loss of Cuba was viewed as further testament to the impurity of the Spanish state, and thus served to reinforce the sharp delineation between the two communities that lies at the heart of Basque nationalism. Indeed the PNV publicly praised Spain's adversary, the

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<sup>78</sup> This study by Ibon Sarasola is cited in Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 168.

United States. It is at this junction that the diverse segments of Basque – particularly Vizcayan – society fused with the PNV. Unlike most Spanish parties, the PNV was “much more than just an electoral machine. It was the integrative expression of the Basque soul, the guardian and revealer of Basque culture and tradition.”<sup>79</sup> The PNV attracted those wanted to counter the threats of liberalism, socialism and the moral degeneration fostered by industrialization and increased Spanish immigration. More importantly the PNV emerged at a time when Spain as a state groped for political alternatives in the wake of the war with the United States and the widespread discrediting of Spanish nationalism. Liberals in the Basque country, like the radical nationalists, grew disenfranchised with the Spanish state and turned to pursuing greater regional autonomy that protected them and their interests from the intrusions of an inept and corrupt Madrid government.

This latter group, isolated by the Basque oligarchy’s control over politics, was slowly pushed from a foralist position to one that was increasingly nationalist. Although by no means did they embrace the radical nationalist position advanced by Arana, decimated politically, these liberals nonetheless put their support behind Arana’s PNV. This awkward fusing of Liberal foralists with the nostalgic nationalism of Arana was a major step for Basque nationalism. It represented the combining of the modernizing interests and economic orientation of the urban middle class with the ideological nationalism and rural nostalgia of Arana into practical political nationalism. This brought the two often-contradictory streams of political ideology together into one political movement aimed at obtaining political hegemony in the Basque Country, simultaneously

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<sup>79</sup> Shlomo Ben-Ami, “Basque nationalism between archaism and modernity” *Journal of Contemporary History* 26: 3/4 (1991), 498.

servicing to moderate the more radical nationalism of Arana with a practical economic reality. As Marianne Hieberg remarks this fusion changed Arana's nationalism from reversing industrialization to controlling it and harnessing it to maintain Basque religious and cultural values.<sup>80</sup> Shortly following this fusion Arana would be imprisoned for a letter written to the US president congratulating the United States for its liberation of Cuba from slavery. Arana would die the following year; his legacy however was born.

Political upheaval continued to rock Spanish politics, with abdications and assassinations combining with the fallout of Spain's loss to the United States driving widespread instability. Uprisings in Catalonia in 1909, the emergence of significant anarchist and socialist movements, the First World War (in which Spain was neutral), a major outbreak of influenza, widespread economic contraction as a result of the end of the First World War and uprising in Spain's North African colonies contributed unrest during the first two decades of the twentieth century. During this period the Basque Nationalist Party succeeded in forming a majority provincial government for the first time in Bizcaya (Vizcaya) and shortly thereafter, with the exception of one seat, dominated the election of deputies to the national parliament.<sup>81</sup>

Sharp divisions between the right and left, especially in Catalonia undermined negotiations of autonomy statutes for Catalonia and the Basque Country in 1919 and as political tensions increased with the North African colonies autonomy fell out of favour with Madrid. The North African uprisings in particular ushered in the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923-1930) and the subsequently outlawing of Basque and Catalan political nationalism. Basque nationalism again returned to the cultural sphere, though

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<sup>80</sup> Hieberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 65.

<sup>81</sup> Ludger Mees, "Between votes and bullets: Conflicting ethnic identities in the Basque country" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24:5 (2001), 806

flourishing. It was during this period that Basque nationalism as a political community was forged, becoming as Hieberg argues, a political fact.<sup>82</sup> The cultural institutions that emerged under Arana and endured with his successors reinforced a nation's awareness of itself that has endured efforts at forcibly incorporating the Basque into a Spanish state.

The Second Republic (1931-1939) offered a brief opportunity for the realization of Basque autonomy with referendums on autonomy statutes for the Basque Country (1933), Catalonia (1932) and Galicia (1936); the Spanish Civil War interrupted any further evolution of a co-federal Spanish state and brought the Second Republic to a close.<sup>83</sup> The rise of the Franco dictatorship while deeply repressive did not succeed in incorporating the Basque Country into Spain culturally, though it did so politically. Moreover, the Franco dictatorships effort to repress Basque nationalism served to reinforce its main arguments *vis-a-vis* the nature of Spain and the centrality of escaping Spain's orbit. The highly symbolic and infamous bombing of the Basque town Guernica in 1937 during the Spanish Civil War reinforced the moral differentiation at the heart of Arana's nationalism. Under Franco the ban on Euskara led to clandestine efforts, among social organizations such as hiking clubs and dance groups, the church and the *ikastolas*. The result was that Basque cultural nationalism worked harder to preserve the language.<sup>84</sup> Franco's regime even went so far as to ban naming children with Basque names.<sup>85</sup> The cultural institutions that were key in articulating Basque nationalism under Arana succeeded in creating a cultural nationalism, which could survive without formal political status. ETA's 1960 *White book* proclaimed, "A people that do not know their different

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<sup>82</sup> Hieberg, *The making of the Basque nation*, 77

<sup>83</sup> Moreno, *The federalization of Spain*, 89.

<sup>84</sup> Diego Muro, "Nationalism and nostalgia: the case of radical Basque nationalism" *Nations and nationalism* 11: 4 (2005), 578-580.

<sup>85</sup> Paddy Woodworth, "Why do they kill? The Basque conflict in Spain" *World policy Journal* 4 (2001), 4

characteristics can hardly establish a nation because they are not aware of the benefit of forming one. Once this is accomplished, a collective appreciation of these values, of these differences and peculiarities must follow, which determines the desire to reali[z]e and perpetuate a nation.”<sup>86</sup> For ETA, Arana and Basque cultural nationalism was essential for they brought together what Muro has term the Basque nationalist triad: a) the myth of a golden age, b) the myth of its decline and c) the myth of its rejuvenation.<sup>87</sup> The continuity between ETA’s ideology from the 1960s to the present and that generated by Arana in the 1880-1903 period is apparent. As the father of an imprisoned ETA member articulated, “If Sabino Arana considered Euskadi to be an occupied country, Francoism made that occupation real and effective.”<sup>88</sup>

Basque nationalism directly questions and challenges the existence of a Spanish state to say nothing of a Spanish nation that includes Basques. Echoing Linz, quoted at the opening of this chapter, “Spain today is... only a state but not a nation for important minorities” Arana forged the primordialist or essentialist concept of the Basque nation, which to this day underscores the political goals of Basque nationalism. Building upon real pre-existing social and community markers during a period of sharp social, economic and political change Arana, more than any other force, defined the Basque nation as both a social unit though his emphasis on race, territory, and religion, and, to a lesser extent language; and as a corresponding political unit. It is, as Moreno and others have commented, a nation that has endured nation-building and nation-destroying. The enduring legacy of political violence during the twentieth century and the use of political terrorism and assassination by ETA further marks Basque nationalism as distinct from

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<sup>86</sup> Quoted in Muro, “Nationalism and nostalgia: the case of radical Basque nationalism”, 578.

<sup>87</sup> Muro, “Nationalism and nostalgia: the case of radical Basque nationalism”, 581

<sup>88</sup> Woodworth, “Why do they kill? The Basque conflict in Spain” 5

other autonomy movements.<sup>89</sup> Basque nationalism is autonomy seeking, ethnically and culturally essentialist, and focused on maintaining traditional Basque identity, language, and culture to the exclusion of competing cultures and languages. As Moreno argues, in many respects, twentieth-century regional autonomy drives represented a crisis of legitimacy between what the Spanish state claimed to be and what it actually was, between who the state claimed to represent and its actual political membership.<sup>90</sup>

As Daniele Conversi has argued, “cultural symbols, artifacts and values and changing state structures played a pivotal role” in shaping the continual political crisis that is Spanish state-building. This was equally true of seventeenth century as it is for post-Franco Spain.<sup>91</sup> The historical record, a popularization and politicization of a particular set of cultural markers can crystallize into a political project that makes nation seeking or nation building claims, or in Brubaker’s terms, polity seeking or polity upgrading. Basque nationalism, first under Arana and later ETA, emphasized the place of the nation in contemporary events; for Arana it was Carlism combined with the social, economic and political effects of rapid industrialization, immigration and the rediscovery of the Basque nation. For ETA, it was a continuation of these events in the shadow of a strong centralizing state under a dictatorship. Nationalism provided not only a explanation for the repression of the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic identity markers emphasized by Sabino Arana and the Basque nationalist movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; it also provided a historical identity, a political agenda, and most importantly a political and cultural horizon: a sovereign nation.

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<sup>89</sup> The parallel with the Kosovo Liberation Army and Kosovo’s drive for independence from Serbia is noticeable.

<sup>90</sup> Moreno, *The federalization of Spain*, 52.

<sup>91</sup> Daniele Conversi, “The smooth transition: Spain’s 1978 constitution and the nationality question” *National identities* 4 :3 (2002), 224.

### **Chapter 3: A study in the death of the state and the rise of nations**

Yugoslavia's break-up and descent into internecine ethnic warfare is one of the most enduring case studies for the importance of ethnicity as the basis for a social community and its linkage with nationalism as an ideology. The death of Yugoslavia represents not only the failure of state building but also the triumph of national identity markers within the republics. It offers a number of questions for students of nationalism; firstly, about the strength of state-making national constructions that seek to set aside or forge previously sharply distinguished ethnic identities in multi-ethnic states in favour of a unified 'national' identity, especially for those with complex historical legacies. Secondly, it raises important questions about the reasoning and the mechanism through which individual identities can be reframed on the sole basis of ethnicity or 'nation-ness' and the speed at which this process can take place.

One such question raised by the failure of the Yugoslav nation-building project is why did Yugoslavia – and, similarly, the Former Soviet Union –institutionalize the very ethnic identities that would provide the basis for their respective dismemberments? What is it about ethnicity as identity that authoritarian states believed, in one instance, to be necessarily legitimating, albeit outdated and backwards, and in the other instance, untouchable? How is it that the territorial map of Serbia (historically imagined) and orthodox monasteries and graveyards in Kosovo, to name one example, continued to possess ethnic 'Serbian national' markers in light of – and spite of – a Yugoslav national idea?

Perhaps most striking is that on the eve of Yugoslavia's collapse, a substantial level of support for the Yugoslav idea could be found among the population of

Yugoslavia. American researchers Steven Burg and Michael Berbaum found in a 1989 study that self-declaration as ‘Yugoslav’ had actually increased from 273,077 persons in 1971 to 1,219,024 in 1981. This increase corresponds to the period when Yugoslavia’s constitution affirmed the ethnically defined republics’ rights and status, marking a shift away from ethnic pluralism to a co-federal state. Citing another study, Burg and Berbaum point out that 36 percent of youth in Yugoslavia indicated their inclination to identify as ‘Yugoslav’ as opposed to a titular republic-linked identity.<sup>1</sup> What this suggests is that the nineteenth century idea of Yugoslav had not lost its appeal by the heights of the twentieth century among common Yugoslavian citizens but rather was increasing in its appeal. A telling indicator of the rationale for such a growth in ‘Yugoslav’ identification during this period is the rebirth of the national character of the republics during this period, beginning in Croatia and Serbia. As an ethnic exclusivist agenda emerged in Yugoslavia those whose family and employment relationships crossing republic (nascent national) boundaries risked losing everything. A telling indication of this comes from sociologist Gordana Rabrenovic, who reflects,

For 27 years I lived in a cosmopolitan city—Belgrade...My mother is a Serb, my father was Montenegrin; his two best friends and godparents to his children were Croatians. His brother’s wife was from Bosnia. One of his nieces married a Slovenian, another a Hungarian.... When my cousins and I were asked about our ethnic identity, we identified ourselves as Yugoslavs. We did not want to choose between our mothers’ and our fathers’ ethnic groups. We became the losers in this war....<sup>2</sup>

Table 1, below provides a quick snapshot of the ethnic dispositions of three constituent units of Yugoslavia: Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo and the province of Vojvodina.

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<sup>1</sup> Steven L Burg and Michael Berbaum, “Community, integration and stability in multinational Yugoslavia”, *American Political Science Review* 83:2 (1989), 535

<sup>2</sup> Gordana Rabrenovic, “The dissolution of Yugoslavia: Ethnicity, nationalism and exclusionary communities” *Dialectical Anthropology* 22 (1997), 95

Table. 1. Ethnic identification in Yugoslavia.

	1971	1981	1991
<b>Bosnia</b>			
Serbian	37.3	32.3	31.4
Croatian	20.6	18.4	17.3
Muslim	39.6	39.5	43.7
Yugoslav	1.2	7.9	5.5
<b>Croatia</b>			
Serbian	14.2	11.6	12.2
Croatian	79.4	75.1	78.1
Muslim	No data	No data	No Data
Yugoslav	1.9	8.2	2.2
<b>Kosovo</b>			
Serbian	18.4	13.3	10
Yugoslav	No Data	No Data	No Data
Albanian	73.7	77.5	90
Montenegrins	2.5	1.7	No Data
<b>Vojvodina</b>			
Yugoslav	No Data	8.2	No Data

Source: Statistics in this table are drawn from official Yugoslav stats provided in John Lampe, *Twice there was a country: Yugoslavia as History* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 337 and Gordana Rabrenovic, “The dissolution of Yugoslavia: Ethnicity, nationalism and exclusionary communities” *Dialectical Anthropology* 22 (1997), 96.

Rabrenovic’s account and the statistics provided above raise questions about the so-called ‘primordial ethnic hatreds’ explanation for Yugoslavia’s demise. The Yugoslav idea carried real as well as symbolic weight to remediate ethnic tensions. Ethnicity became the primary leitmotif of Yugoslavia’s demise, but ethnicity, as politics still required an impetus to crystallize into sets of exclusionary binary relationships. This chapter is concerned with explaining Yugoslavia’s demise and attempting to provide an explanation for the centrality of ethnicity as politics while so doing. The identification with a Yugoslav identity during the 1980s is not discontinuous with the identification with a Yugoslav identity in the 1800s.

Conventional wisdom holds that the very idea of Yugoslavia is wrought with historical weight in terms of real events and imagined events; as Joseph Rothchild observed, “by virtually every relevant criterion – history, political traditions, socioeconomic standards, legal systems, religion and culture – Yugoslavia was the most complicated of the new states in interwar East Central Europe, being composed of the largest and most varied number of pre-1918 units.”<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, Yugoslavia endured through two separate constitutions. It was able to come together as a political community despite difference between Croats and Serbs, first as the Kingdom of Serbs, Slovenes and Croats (1921-1941) and later as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1946-1991).

Yugoslavia differs substantially from the Basque Country; Yugoslavia was not the quintessential ethnic nationalism that I have argued Basque nationalism constitutes, but rather was a political program that attempted to fuse separate ethnic communities into a common state, largely under the aegis of either Serbia or Croatia by stressing linguistic and ethnic similarities. As with the Basque, ethnic markers would grow in their significance as a response to geopolitical realities. These markers gained increasing importance as forms of cultural and political differentiation from larger political units. The origins of a common South Slav state idea formed under the conditions of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, through the idealism of Serbian and Croatian intellectuals and politicians seeking to find an alternative to the imperial order. While ethnicity mattered, it was not a single ethnic nationalism (though ethnic particularisms

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<sup>3</sup> Joseph Rothchild, *East Central Europe between the two world wars* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 205 quoted in Boriana Marinova-Zuber, *The rebirth of nationalism in the Balkans in the 1990s: Causes, consequences and possible solutions* (Zurich: Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zurich, 2007), 6.

lay submerged just beneath the surface), but opposition to the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires through which the southern Slav national project was formed. Yugoslav nationalism, and to a considerable degree Serbian and Croatian nationalism during the nineteenth century was geared toward integrative functions rather than exclusionary functions previously noted with Basque nationalism.

Both Croatian and Serbian nationalisms were geared towards fusing distant communities under one common banner. This is immediately tangible in the address of the Prince Regent of the Kingdom of Serbia following the declaration of the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs stating their desire for a common state in the post-First World War era,

In accepting this announcement, I am convinced that by this act I am fulfilling my duty as ruler, for I am thereby only at last carrying out that for which the best sons of our blood, of all three religions, all three names, on both sides of the Danube, Sava and Drina, began to work even during the reign of my grandfather.<sup>4</sup>

This state - or, as the Regent suggested, 'nation' - represented the bringing together of three religious and cultural communities that shared a common "ethnic fraternity" in order to achieve autonomy and independence.<sup>5</sup> The underlying cultural and political nationalisms that developed during the nineteenth century would, however, play important roles in the failure of the first Yugoslavia, the rise of ethnic cleansing in the Second World War, and the ultimate collapse of Tito's Yugoslavia.

In this chapter, I first sketch out the birth of the Yugoslav idea during the middle of the nineteenth century and the creation of an imagined Yugoslav cultural/political identity. This is followed by a short look at the First and Second Yugoslav states. Yugoslavia during the Second World War had important repercussions for understanding

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<sup>4</sup> Pankovic, *The fragmentation of Yugoslavia*, 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 39.

Yugoslav nationalism's failure and the reemergence of Croatian, Serbian, and Slovene identities during the 1960s. The fractures to the Yugoslav idea wrought by ethnic cleansing and the construction of the Croatian fascist state in the wake of a Royal Yugoslavia dominated by Serbs dealt body blows to the Yugoslav identity Tito would try to salvage. By then, ethnic particularism had been deeply entrenched in the collective memories of Yugoslav citizens. The last incarnation of Yugoslavia as an idea failed precisely because it institutionalized separate ethnicities into its core political structure. A civic nationalism, of the type that the Illyrian movement attempted to build throughout the nineteenth century was by that point fractured beyond repair. The legacy and fear of other ethnic group's nationalist projects provided Serbian and Croatian ethnic nationalism with its core function: sharp distinction.

### **The Birth of the Yugoslav idea and the importance of nations (1800- 1900)**

The birth of the Yugoslav idea has two roots: the first, in the French military administration of the 'Illyrian Provinces' under Napoleon, which sought to reorganize the social and political order and introduce a unified administration of government. The introduction of the Napoleonic Code, the construction of roads, and the levying of taxes were accompanied by the introduction of a "fledgling school system" that sought to introduce one standardized dialect of what would become Serbo-Croat. This was accompanied by encouragement from French – and local – administrators to use the standardized linguistic script in local publications.<sup>6</sup> The defeat of Napoleon's Russian campaign ended the French administration and marked the resumption of Habsburg rule. Simultaneously, a cultural elite that would form the core of the Yugoslav movement was

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<sup>6</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 43.

being educated in Vienna and Prague. The second root is this latter group of intellectuals, whose efforts to forge a common Slavic cultural identity in opposition to the imperial powers would have important implications for the South Slav idea.<sup>7</sup> It is to this second group I will now, for they reveal the slippery connections between Serbian, Croatian and Yugoslav national ideas. I argue that the Yugoslav idea represented a real effort to forge a common South Slav nation in the heart of the imperial division of Europe. In effect, it represented an effort to imagine a broadly defined nation into existence. This idea, however, also provided a covert vehicle for the realization of larger Croatian and Serbian territorial goals. It is therefore somewhat tricky to tease out an authentic Yugoslav nationalism from its close relationship with Serbian and Croatian nationalist goals.

The first step is the work of the Serbian writer Vuk Stefanovic Karadzic who undertook a standardization and reform of the Serbian language during the early 1800s. The publication of his dictionary of Serbian Grammar in 1814 and a general dictionary four years later occurred during the period of the First Serbian Uprising (1804-1813) and the subsequent uprisings through which the Ottoman Empire would grant limited autonomy to Serbia. The political dynamics around which he wrote were unmistakable. What is particularly striking, however, is not that his dictionary emerged in the canon of Serbian nationalist writing but rather the important inroads that his work made towards the creation of a common Yugoslav linguistic dialect through its emphasis on the dialect spoken among peasants in both Serbia and Croatia rather than that spoken among church elites and intellectuals. Although in general, exclusively Serbian rather than Yugoslav per se, Karadzic's conception of a 'Serb' was quite broad, framed in terms of dialect rather

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<sup>7</sup> Andrew Baruch Wachtel, *Making a nation, breaking a nation: Literature and cultural politics in Yugoslavia* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1998), 25.

than politics, religion, or self-definition. Here we can begin to discern echoes of Benedict Anderson's discussion of the functions of print capitalism and the standardization of language. The deliberate standardization effort of the dictionary appealed not just to elites but also the commoner; the common orthography provided imaginative functions by opening up the possibilities of horizontal bonding between social strata.

This first period of literary and linguistic reform was primarily interested in resurrecting individual cultural self-awareness and confidence, and therefore was also one where firm barriers for defining the identity of a population spread out across both the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires was likewise difficult to establish. At the same time as this linguistic standardization and cultural revival was occurring in Serbia a similar process was transpiring in Croatia. This process was doubly important for Croatian intellectuals in the face of the gradual suppression of Croatian culture. Alongside this were efforts to forge unified territories under the aegis of their respective cultural umbrellas. This is important for imperial borders and administrative regions severed both Croatian and Serbian imagined geographic homelands and each had populations spread out across these demarcations. It is here that the Illyrian movement provided a key base for the rise and dissemination of a Yugoslav idea. The restoration and reforming of Croatian and Serbian orthographies opened up movements among key intellectuals to integrate the Southern Slavs as one people, with a common external enemy under the Croatian or Serbian national umbrella. They also arose as the imperial order underwent significant crisis and change.

Karadzic's work on his Serbian dictionary and book of grammar occurred concurrently with his work on the cultural dimensions of Serbian and South Slav identity.

With the help of the Viennese Court's Censor of Slavic and Modern Greek, the Slovene Jernej Kopitar, he published a collection of epic songs and patriotic poems in 1814-15. These songs and epic poems were essentially transcriptions of oral histories and mythologies drawn from across the South Slav lands, Montenegrin, Serbian, Slovene, and Croatian alike.<sup>8</sup> These volumes contained the nucleus of a common Yugoslav culture, reflecting what Karadzic and his collaborator considered the best and most heroic. Some of the stories illustrated shared cultural commonalities between the South Slav peoples and immortalizing the sacrifices they made in battles against foreign foes. The theme of sacrifice and foreign oppressors recurs continually throughout both Croatian and Serbian cultural revivals.<sup>9</sup> As Andrew Wachtel points out in his seminal study of Yugoslav culture, the poets and writers of East Central European societies were immortalized because they succeeded in "express[ing] the nation's collective self", in this case sacrifice and resistance to foreign oppression and the durability and honour of the nations of East-Central Europe.<sup>10</sup> Transforming oral narratives into written histories and narrative therefore had powerful community forming functions. This common thread of celebrating national narratives and accomplishments, including heroic sacrifice and stoic honour during national tragedies both immortalized the nation as an idea worth sacrificing for and also provided a common thread for uniting the South Slavs to unite as a people to free themselves from foreign oppressors. Wachtel writes, "the idea that all Yugoslavs are united by a heroic attitude towards life [would] remain more or less a constant throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, even as it undergoes a complicated evolutionary

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<sup>8</sup> Wachtel, *Making a nation, breaking a nation*, 32.

<sup>9</sup> Wachtel, *Making a nation, breaking a nation*, 35-37.

<sup>10</sup> Wachtel, *Making a nation, breaking a nation*, 39.

development.<sup>11</sup> These stories disseminated not just particular ‘nations’ narratives but also illustrated commonalities other named communities could recognize in another named community’s stories.

The poems collected and published by Karadzic not only communicated Serbian tragedies but also emphasized the sacrifice of the Serbian people to defend their lands – and the lands of all South Slavs –from external enemies. One such poem published in this collection was titled “The down fall of the Serbian empire.” The poem tells how the Serbian army under the banner of King Lazar was offered a choice in the 1389 Battle of Kosovo by “Elijah, [the] Holy one”: defeat the Turkish army in battle and enjoy a Kingdom on earth, or battle and defeat on earth but be rewarded for the sacrifice with a Kingdom of Heaven.<sup>12</sup> Kosovo thus becomes a moral story, a national mission and a historical explanation for the loss of the nations independence, and a symbolic confirmation of the Serbian Nation as an elect nation. The Serb army would indeed be defeated, marking the end of the Serbian Kingdom; what the poem does is sanctify the defeat at Kosovo as a tribute to the Serbian nation’s chosen-ness or election. Here Anthony Smith’s point, made in the introductory chapter, about the myth of the elect nation resonates remarkably clear for both during the nineteenth century and the modern day debate over the status of Kosovo. The myth of national sacrifice provides an ethno-symbolist link between medieval Serbia and the Serbian national revival.<sup>13</sup> Reviving or

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<sup>11</sup> Wachtel, *Making a nation, breaking a nation*, 42.

<sup>12</sup> Wachtel, *Making a nation, breaking a nation*, 34.

<sup>13</sup> As Anthony Smith writes “The failure to relate the “construction” of modern nations to the existence of pre-modern ethnic communities (*ethnie*) is central to the “modernists” misreading of the western experience of nation-formation. Anthony D. Smith, “Ethnic Identity and territorial nationalism in comparative perspective” In, *Thinking theoretically about soviet nationalities*, ed Alexander J. Moytl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 48-49. Kosovo is part of, indeed rests at, the core of Serbian origin myths. The incorporation of Kosovo into another state or sensitivity to the disposition of Kosovo reflects the interrelation of deep historical event with modern political and cultural identity. It further

realizing historical territorial claims is therefore part of a biblical narrative of sacrifice and redemption of which the restoration of the nation and righting of historical injustices is connected to the nation's cultural narrative.

On the political front, negotiations between Serbian leaders and the Ottoman Empire in the wake of the second Serbian uprising (1814-1815) led to the granting of increased rights, including limited autonomy to Serbia. Further agreements in the 1820s reduced the population of Turks and Bosnian Muslims, while at the same time, immigration of ethnic Serbs from Bosnia-Herzegovina increased Serbia's population to 700,000 from 450,000 in 1815.<sup>14</sup> With the granting of limited autonomy, Serbian statesmen began playing a game of geopolitical chess to expand that autonomy. Ottoman losses in the war with Russia in 1828 seemed to offer yet another opportunity to increase Serbian autonomy – and territory, one Serbian politician successfully pressed for greater concessions including the return of six provinces lost in 1813, the departure of all Turkish citizens, and the right to a small standing militia.<sup>15</sup>

Imperial changes also had important implications as well for Croatia. For Croatia the revival, as in Serbia, emphasized the rights of Croats, their sacrifices and the historical injustices done to the cultural nation by foreign opponents and occupiers. With the Yugoslav idea in mind, the efforts to link all Slavs in the Balkans as a common community was also engaged in demonstrating their connectedness to a particular nation. Ante Starcevic, for example, argued that the Bosnia Muslims and Serbs in Bosnia, like the Serbs living in the military border between the empires, were orthodox Croats and

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reflects the sense of the nation as elect and the nation as a deep historical reality. Kosovo is undoubtedly a part of an origin myth deployed by modern age politicians and historians but its context pre-dates modern nations as states.

<sup>14</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 49.

<sup>15</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 50.

members of a common Croatian cultural nation, who would embrace their Croatian identities once it was shown to them.<sup>16</sup> His writing also contained notions of Serbian inferiority, suggesting that Serbs were spiritually inferior, needing Croatian tutelage and leadership.<sup>17</sup> The cultural element therefore had important political implications; implications politicians in Croatia and Serbia were not ignorant to. In essence, Starcevic's writing emphasized the mission of the Croatian nation and advocated for the expansion of a Croatian territorial and linguistic identity. Here we can observe key elements of the Hroch's 'Phase A', the rediscovery, defining and popularizing of the 'nation', its history and traditions among a small core. The genealogical identification of the Croatian nation that took place in the first phase of the Croatian national revival congealed into the formalizing expansion of the nation that transpires under 'Phase B'. It would however not proceed towards 'Phase C' (mass mobilization) as a decidedly different national process was concurrently emerging: a Yugoslav national idea.

### **The move towards a Yugoslav identity**

The dialect that Croatian linguistic reformers selected to standardize out of the three common dialects in use, was the same one used by influential Croatian renaissance writers of the humanist tradition and by historical coincidence, and to some degree intention, happened to be very close to the dialect Serbian linguistic reformers were concurrently standardizing.<sup>18</sup> As with the Serbian effort, resurrecting the Croatian language –like the Basque and Catalan linguistic and cultural revivals discussed in the previous chapter– was part of a cultural revival slowly developing with distinctly political

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<sup>16</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 61.

<sup>17</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 62.

<sup>18</sup> Wachtel, *Making a nation, breaking a nation*, 26-27.

objectives that related to the Habsburg Empire.<sup>19</sup> The introducing of a language law in 1827 that made Hungarian the language of administration and government in the Hungarian controlled part of the Habsburg Empire dramatically reduced the rights of nobles, including Croats, giving further fuel to the preservation of a non-Hungarian identity. It is precisely this environment that gave rise to a push for common language, beliefs and institutions. Intellectuals in both Serbian and Croatian circles were aware of their common foe (the imperial powers) and of the potential advantages of a common cultural identity.

The linguistic reforms begun at the opening of the century, via this previously mentioned historical convergence, provided a common means for a shared literary tradition and orthography. The journal *Danica Ilirska*, for example, was launched explicitly as a forum for the construction of a common literary tradition, through which the Herderian notion of a common nation through a common culture could be built.<sup>20</sup> This was part of the larger geopolitical context in which Illyrian, Serbian and Croatian nationalist movements operated within. Croatian national claims in the view of Ante Starcevic, for instance, were made in relief to the predatory nature of the Austrian Crown,

In the name of our three-hundred-and- forty-year history within Austria, I tell you: Austria is always one and the same; she never changed, nor is she changing... Despotisms do not improve, they are instead reduced to ruins.<sup>21</sup>

The Illyrian movement that was emerging therefore had both cultural and political objectives. The work of writers who were part of the Illyrian movement contained mixing and matching of different cultural nationals as protagonists, with stories of a single nation

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<sup>19</sup> Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1984), 76-77.

<sup>20</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a nation*, 43-44.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Banac, *The national question in Yugoslavia*, 85.

dispersed across the Slavic lands by foreign forces as a common theme. In turn, their emphasis on heroic deeds served to erect a moral boundary between south Slavs as a people and their imperial oppressors. These themes, and more importantly, the emergence of the Illyrian idea in Serbian and Croatian intellectual circles is readily noticeable in Karadzic's 1836 essay "*Srbi svi i scvuda*" (Serbs All and Everywhere) which appealed to this linguistic unity, arguing that the language in fact bound all speakers, regardless of the confessional as a common people (Serb).<sup>22</sup> This opened up the social closures of Serb, Slovene and Croatian to broader inclusion under the larger grouping of South Slav.<sup>23</sup> Sharply resembling the processes identified by Anderson and Hroch as well as Anthony Smith we can witness some degree of the uniting of South Slavs through common narratives of loss and suffering and historical origins through the transmission of common cause, ancestry, language and common community. Karadzic's essay struggles to show that the South Slavs are a common community, dispersed, who could be united or shown their cultural origins as long lost Croatians or Serbians – part of the same community of people.

Another telling example is contained in Croatian writer Ljudevit Gaj's "Proclamation of the year 1836," which refrained, "The discordant strings of this lyre are Carniola, Carinthia, Istria, Kranj, Styria, Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia.... Let's stop each strumming on his own string and tune the lyre to a single harmony": Yugoslav.<sup>24</sup> The Croatian journals *Danica Ilirska* (The Morning Star) and *Novine Horvatzke* (Croatian News) became vehicles for the pan-Yugoslav sympathies of Gaj and those involved in the Illyrian movement. These sympathies were readily discernible in these two

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<sup>22</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 61.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Wachtel, *Making a nation, breaking a nation*, 27.

publications selection of poetry that praised Slavic patriotism, emphasized other Slavic cultures and letters from subscribers (presumably possessing similar views). Karadzic's reforming of the Serbian language from that favoured by the conservative and the orthodox hierarchy to one more in common with that spoken by the average Serbian peasant had distinctly nationalizing effects, simultaneously uniting Serbs across the Ottoman and Habsburg lands as one cultural nation linguistically as well as providing a linguistic matrix in which to broaden the Serbian nation, while displacing the church – and religion – as the core institution of Serbian-ness with language. This expansive definition of Serbian-ness concluded that the Serb nation was not defined exclusively in terms of the orthodox religion, but that “as long as they spoke Stokavian, common to Croats and Serbs,... Catholics and Muslims had to be Serbs.”<sup>25</sup>

The Illyrian movement was not without its national challenges. Some members of the Serb intelligentsia saw hostile Croatian designs in the Illyrian movement, fearing it was a coded effort to denationalize Serb identity and the gains made towards a Serbian state. Others objected to the Latin script, insisting that Cyrillic was the only truly *Slavic* script.<sup>26</sup> These criticisms were not without merit, for among significant leaders of the Illyrian movement in Croatia were those who viewed the Illyrian movement as the basis for uniting the southern Slavs under the banner of a Croatian state, which made historical claims to the major portion of the western Balkans, and a Croatian ethnic nation of which Serbs and Slovenes were genetically lost branches, as the best option for resisting Magyar and German nationalizing projects.<sup>27</sup> The Serbian politician, Ilija Garasanin, similarly provides a telling connection between historical past, language and culture, opining in

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<sup>25</sup> Banoc, *The national question in Yugoslavia*, 81.

<sup>26</sup> Banoc, *The national question in Yugoslavia*, 79.

<sup>27</sup> Banoc, *The national question in Yugoslavia*, 91.

1848, “our present will not be without a tie to our past, but it will bring into being a connected, coherent and congruous whole, and for this Serbdom... stands under the protection of sacred historical right.”<sup>28</sup>

What we have seen thus far, is that by the 1830s-1840s, two dominant national cultures, Serbian and Croatian had emerged as challengers to the imperial order; alongside these two contenders were efforts to carve out a political and cultural space within the empire both as enlarged Serbian and Croatian ‘states’ as well as to bring the other Slavic groups within the overarching umbrella of a Yugoslav identity. Progress towards a formal fusing of the two national movements under the Yugoslav banner took major steps forward with a conference held in Vienna in 1850, attended by major Croatian, Serbian, and Slovenian writers. There, an agreement was reached that included a five-point program on reducing idiomatic differences between the three linguistic cultures. Moreover, the conference reached an agreement on standardizing the dialects into one common South Slav ‘national’ dialect. The conference boldly declared, “that the Serbs and Croats were one people, and therefore, should have a single literature, which also requires a common literary language.”<sup>29</sup>

The second major step took this common literary standard, an essential part of imagining a Yugoslav nation into existence, and began institutionalizing it. This step came under the auspices of the Bishop Josip Strossmayer, the principle founder of Yugoslavism. Relying on this period of revival between the turn of the century and the humanist traditions of prior Croatian and European-intellectuals, Strossmayer, argued that

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<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Ilana R. Bet-El, “Unimagined communities: The power of memory and the conflict in the former Yugoslavia” In, *Memory and power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the presence of the past*, Ed, Jan-Werner Muller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 210.

<sup>29</sup> Wachtel. *Making a nation, breaking a nation*, 28.

South Slav nation-building project had to be inclusive of more than just Croatians, rigidly defined, but rather all South Slav kin in order to resist Hungarian denationalizing efforts.<sup>30</sup> This cultural emphasis on Slavic unity was developing at the same time as exclusive national projects and the expansion of national projects in Croatia and Serbia in response to changes within the imperial division of Europe.<sup>31</sup> Strossmayer put force behind the goal of unifying the South Slav in financial terms, using revenues from Diocesan lands to fund the creation of a Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1866. Heavily influenced by Herder, Strossmayer believed in “the political promise of “freedom through culture”; achieving that promise required the forging of a common identity that included, and to some extent incorporated, both Serbs as well as Slovenes with Croatians.<sup>32</sup>

The most striking effect of the creation of the Yugoslav Academy was its explicitly pan-Slavic face; electing a Croatian historian as its first president, academics and writers from both Serbia and Croatia as officers and assigning its most ambitious project, the creation of a *Dictionary of the Croatian or Serbian Language* to a Serbian linguist, who though a speaker of a different language, was willing to surrender his own language for the creation of a common South Slav language.<sup>33</sup> This suggests that the Yugoslav idea had intellectual as well as emotional weight behind it.

The other face of the Illyrian movement was explicitly political, its confrontation with the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian imperial systems. Here the Illyrian movement, and the political and cultural goals we have seen of forging a common south Slav state –

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<sup>30</sup> Banoc, *The national question in Yugoslavia*, 89.

<sup>31</sup> Banoc, *The national question in Yugoslavia*, 91.

<sup>32</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 59; Banoc, *The National question in Yugoslavia*, 89-90.

<sup>33</sup> Wachtel, *Making a nation, breaking a nation*, 29.

both as a cultural entity in its right and under the aegis of an overarching Serbian or Croat state – met the changing international and internal political situation. Strossmeyer, now the leader of the Croatian National Party, would propose a formal political union with Serbia, though a union of a unified Croatian land– in its historical imagination – and a co-federal relationship with Serbia the state. The *realpolitik* was obvious in his willingness to cede Bosnia to Serbia in exchange for achieving the union of Croatia and its historical territories.<sup>34</sup> The following two decades saw increased pressures on Croatia through intensified Magyarization efforts while Serbia’s Foreign Minister Garasanin was engaged, secretly, in negotiating alliances with Croatia, Greece, and Montenegro in order to bring about a military confrontation with the Ottoman empire in order to expel the Ottomans from Bosnia and expand Serbia. Garasanin’s objective was to rebuild the territorial state of Serbia after 500 years of Turkish interruption.<sup>35</sup>

The *Ausgleich* of 1867 split the monarchy, while the *Nagodba* between Croatia and Hungary the following year granted the recognition of a Croatian nation and its attendant state symbols. The Croatian state however was reduced to in-name-only.<sup>36</sup> Competing programs for the realization of Croatian autonomy slowly began to fuse during this period; one camp, under Starcevic and the Party of Croatian Rights opposed any and all cooperation with Austria and viewed Serbs as simply a wayward sect of the Croatian nation. The other, under Strossmeyer and his cultural project worked to build rapprochement and common institutions under the Yugoslav banner. The vehicle for the realization of this project was Josip Frank, who believed that the achievement of Croatian

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<sup>34</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 60; Banoc, *The national question in Yugoslavia*, 90.

<sup>35</sup> Mormir Krizan, “New Serbian nationalism and the Third Balkan War” *Studies in East European Thought* 46:1-2 (1994), 50.

<sup>36</sup> Banoc, *The national question in Yugoslavia*, 91.

rights could only be accomplished through the imperial structure and cooperation with Austria (especially given increased tensions between Vienna and Budapest). Frank saw these tensions as an opportunity to convince Vienna to create a united South Slav domain – under Austrian dominion, of course. The *quid pro quid* of such a bargain was Croatian support against Hungarian claims and a means to control the unstable – and increasingly internationally active Serbia.<sup>37</sup> Amidst this movements was Starcevic, who while increasingly reclusive, nonetheless reemerged to powerfully condemn the Illyrian movement; in its place, he articulated a vision of a Greater Croatian state that would incorporate the lesser community of Serbs into a superior Croatian cultural and political state.<sup>38</sup> The 1878 Congress of Berlin would ultimately confer independence on Serbia while Croatia would remain a trapped nation within the Habsburg Empire.

Above, we have seen the emergence of three distinct threads of nation building projects, which in turn, have their own unifying thread. Both Serbian and Croatian nation-building projects grew during the cultural revival of the early 1800s; both national projects were conscious of and shaped by the imperial structure of Europe and both nation-building projects took from the cultural revival connections between themselves and other groups. The Yugoslav idea provided a common thread for not only uniting historical claims with present day political circumstances, but also providing the means for incorporating other national projects and opposing the common external imperial order. The Yugoslav idea provided not only a linguistic and cultural matrix for Serbian nationalism to bring Serbian cultural diasporas in neighboring regions under the common banner of Serbia; it also provided a cultural community, bound by a common set of social

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<sup>37</sup> Banoc, *The national question in Yugoslavia*, 94-95.

<sup>38</sup> John Lampe, “The Failure of the Yugoslav national idea” *Studies in East European Thought* 46 (1994), 76.

closures and cultural identities, even if some of those groups had yet to realize their inherent Serbian identity. For Croatians, the Yugoslav banner provided a similar means of redressing the affects of the imperial order and for bringing together Croatia as an overarching national and territorial community. While Serbian and Croatian nation-building projects emerged as coherent state seeking entities, the imperial order of Europe changed dramatically.<sup>39</sup>

### **Yugoslavia in the twentieth century: The first incarnation.**

Upheavals from change in the imperial order continued into the twentieth century, culminating in the First World War. I will not delve into the imperial and internal politics that brought Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia from 1903 to the First World War except to comment that this was a period of intensifying geopolitics, radicalism and imperial intrigues. Sharp tensions between Serbia and Austria broiled over into open war and international mediation while Europe's collapsing empires struggled to maintain their rule and authority amidst a period of intensifying national and international conflicts. The situation of the Yugoslav idea is worth mentioning, however, for by end of the first decade, Serbia had emerged as a politically active state working concertedly to construct a Greater Serbia, of which the Crown Jewel was the eviction of the Ottoman empire and the return of the spiritual symbol of Serbian statehood: Kosovo.

The First World War brought further territorial and political change to the Balkans but would not extinguish the Yugoslav idea among Serbian and Croatian intellectuals. As the post-war peace was being negotiated, the idea that Serbs, Slovenes, and Croats were one people continued to spread; as the London-based Yugoslav

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<sup>39</sup> See *Jonathan Sperber, The European Revolutions, 1848-1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

committee (made up of exiled Serbs, Croats and Slovenes), articulated in 1917, and on the cusp of the Corfu Declaration that made the idea of a common Yugoslav state a reality, “The Southern Slavs or Yugoslavs who include Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, are one and the same people, known under three different names.”<sup>40</sup> The formalizing of the South Slav State was plagued by some of the same problems that the nation-building projects of the nineteenth century have illustrated, mainly differences in defining the cultural identity of the nations as a fusion of Serbian and Croatian identities, orthographies and cultures into a new blended Yugoslav national culture or the emergence of a state in which one of the communities cultural identities and institutions played the role of lead culture.

Precisely these issues accompanied the declaration of the united South Slav state and would continue to dominate the political landscape during the construction of a shared constitution. The constitutional debate reflected some of the same challenges that blocked efforts during the 1860s to construct a co-federal arrangement. The debate turned upon a) the name of the state; b) the recognition of the various religious communities; c) the creation of a bicameral parliament; and d) the organization of local administration.<sup>41</sup> In the end, the 1903 Serbian Constitution became, in large measure, the constitution of the new South Slav state, along with the hereditary Serbian monarchy. As Wachtel has argued, the legacy of Serbia’s political and military success during the First World War also brought, alongside euphoria for a united state a sense among some that Serbia’s sacrifice should guarantee her a privileged position in the new state.<sup>42</sup> John Lampe suggests, however, that intellectuals and the Prince Regent were very much aware of the

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<sup>40</sup> “The Southern Slav Program” quoted in Wachtel, *Making a nation, breaking a nation*, 70.

<sup>41</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 126.

<sup>42</sup> Wachtel, *Making a nation, breaking a nation*, 74.

potential for the new constitution to be viewed as the assimilation of the other communities by Serbia and recognized the precarious balancing act involved in building a Yugoslav identity during the nineteenth century.<sup>43</sup>

The economic situation was particularly grave given Yugoslavia's primarily agricultural structure; rural over-population exacerbated regional tensions in a country where approximately eighty percent of the population derived their incomes from agriculture. Local interests therefore play an important role.<sup>44</sup> Likewise, the main political parties were not Yugoslav parties but were, rather, regionally based and organized around national units. The Croatian Peasant Party (the Radicals) under Stepan Radic, for example, openly questioned the legitimacy of the parliamentary assembly, while the Serbian parties were unable to gain a majority government.<sup>45</sup> The Croats were deeply suspicious of the Serbian parties' efforts to gain a majority, fearing that they harboured a hidden agenda for engineering the domination of the new Yugoslavia by Serbs. This was further exacerbated by fears that senior army leadership around the new sovereign, in turn, held plans for a Greater Serbia. By the end of the Yugoslavia's first decade, major differences between Croatian and Serbian politicians' preferences for the constitutional organization of the new state were magnified by a series of weak governments, external pressures- specifically from Italy- significant economic problems and a general atmosphere of mistrust. Croatian fears were further exacerbated by the disproportionate overrepresentation of ethnic Serbs through out the new state administrative apparatus. Ethnic Serbs held all 13 positions in the office of the Premier, 30 of 31 positions in the Royal Court, 113 of the 127 positions in the Ministry of the Interior and dominated the

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<sup>43</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 129.

<sup>44</sup> Pankovic, *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia*, 26.

<sup>45</sup> Petersen, *Understanding ethnic violence*, 214.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs with 181 of 219 positions. In education, ethnic Serbs were overwhelming in control of the administration of educational policy, controlling 150 of 156 positions.<sup>46</sup> This was increasingly important both structurally and symbolically given that the territorial organization of the new state reflected historical boundaries, organized into districts under the authority of a prefect.

These districts; six in Croatia, two in Slovenia, four in Bosnia, and Kosovo and Vojvodina, were headed, not by an ethnic Croatian or a Bosnian Muslim, but instead by Serbs.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, violence in the 1924 elections targeting Croats appeared to have involved the Serbian dominated Interior Ministry, to which Croats in turn retaliated. Both groups, fearing the rigging of the vote, targeted Bosnian Muslims.<sup>48</sup> In short, for many Serbs, the First Yugoslavia was the seen as the continuation of the Serbian state while for many Croats the experience of the First Yugoslavia was one of perceived subordination to and attempted assimilation by Serbia. As we will see shortly, this theme would play out again in the demands made during the 1960s by Croatian cultural and political elites for the restoration of Croatian history and cultural (i.e. nation) symbols.

In the cultural fields that were so important for giving birth to the Yugoslav idea in the nineteenth century and its nurturing into a unified state, the first Yugoslav state experienced a sharp turn towards ethnically exclusive themes among major literary journals. The reopening of the Serbian cultural journals *Letopis Matice Srpske* (The Chronicle of the Serbian Cultural Society) and *Srpski Knjizevni glasnik* (The Serbian Literary Gazette) for instance saw a marked shift to national particularism, shifting to

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<sup>46</sup> Roger Petersen, *Understanding ethnic violence: Fear, hatred and resentment in twentieth-century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002),213.

<sup>47</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 133.

<sup>48</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 137.

publishing in Cyrillic, and from an enthusiastic embrace of a Yugoslav culture to non-opposition. There was also saw a sharp decrease in the mention of Croatian or Slovene writers.<sup>49</sup> The tragedy of successive weak governments and weak coalitions undermined the functioning of the parliamentary assembly and led to repeated and failed efforts to form a stable and lasting government. The marginal numerical advantage held by the Serbian bloc in parliament was insufficient to rule as a majority, and the Serbian Parties thus had to form coalitions with other parties who often opposed to, or simply walked out of Parliament.<sup>50</sup> These events reflected overall trends towards national particularism, which culminated in the dissolution of the parliamentary assembly and a royal edict banning ethnically based political parties ten years after the proclamation of the new state.<sup>51</sup>

The period of royal dictatorship was one of forced Yugoslavism that instantly intensified the nationalist cleavages through its ban on all ethnically-based parties and organizations. Cultural organizations and political parties alike felt the brunt of Yugoslavia's failed multiethnic parliamentary experiment. Regional grievances soon became articulated in demands for regional cultural autonomy as the centralizing administration stamped out regional organizations that might undermine the construction of a Royal Yugoslav state. Linguistically, the First Yugoslavia saw a marked shift to the Serbian, or Stokavian dialect by elements of the Serbian elite, in effect it marked the rejection of the 1850 language agreement noted previously.<sup>52</sup> Croatian representatives

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<sup>49</sup> Wachtel, *Making a nation, breaking a nation*, 82-83.

<sup>50</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, Chapter 5 "Parliamentary Kingdom, 1921-1928".

<sup>51</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 162; 164.

<sup>52</sup> Robert Greenberg, "Language, nationalism and Serbian politics" *Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars Newsletter* #182 (1999), NP available on line [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic\\_id=1422&fuseaction=topics.publications&doc\\_id=18839&group\\_id=7427](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1422&fuseaction=topics.publications&doc_id=18839&group_id=7427)

and Belgrade were deadlocked in a struggle that persisted until the outbreak of the Second World War. Royal Yugoslavia was the polar opposite of the Yugoslav idea; forged by force rather than cultural cooperation and a shared imagined national identity. Royal Yugoslavia served to reinforce regional differences; these exploded on October 9, 1934 with the King felled by bullets fired by an assassin from the Ustasha, a Croatian revolutionary organization that had dedicated itself to the overthrow of Aleksandar's Yugoslavia.<sup>53</sup>

### **Yugoslavia and the Second World War**

National differences aggravated by the period of royal rule provided increased momentum for disintegrationist forces. By the end of the 1930's the geopolitical map of Europe had once again shifted quite dramatically. Yugoslav efforts to steer clear of the now-initiated Second World War would fail with the 1941 invasion of Yugoslavia by Hitler's armies. Yugoslavia was immediately divided between Germany, Fascist Italy, and the German-puppet Ustasha state installed in Croatia. The legacy of the Second World War (mainly ethnic cleansing) would reverberate in the 1990s conflict when Yugoslavia as an idea would finally be buried. For Serbia, the cost of the Second World War was steep; the occupation of Serbia proper by two German divisions; the Gestapo, and the Ustasha saw the use of mass executions (several hundred a month) and concentration camps. In terms of historical legacy, the concept of racial superiority of Croats over Serbs advanced the Ustasha regime resulted in truly horrifying atrocities against Serbian civilians. Within a week of Royal Yugoslavia's formal surrender, the Cyrillic alphabet was banned and Jews were ordered to wear identifying arm patches. Within a month the infamous One-Third policy with regard to Serbs was introduced.

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<sup>53</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 176.

One-Third of Serbs were to be deported; one-third forced to convert to Catholicism and one-third killed.<sup>54</sup> In Bosnia, the Ustasha initiated a policy of rounding up Serbs, Jews and Gypsies alike and herding them into concentrations camps.<sup>55</sup> If pre-existing tensions between the national communities plagued the First Yugoslavia, the scale of violence and the sharp cleavages produced between the national communities by Ustasha and Chetnik ethnic cleansing in the Second World laid the foundations for the cultural memory of violence that exploded in Yugoslavia's dismemberment in the 1990s.<sup>56</sup> This was the legacy post-war Yugoslavia would confront.

### **Tito's second Yugoslavia**

The early nineteenth-century Yugoslav idea returned front and center to a post-war Yugoslavia violently split by war and ethnic violence. Tito's Partisans came to power in 1946 through the realities of Great Power politics, however, they also came to power making an important claim to unity: Tito and the Yugoslav communists claimed that only they represented all of Yugoslavia's now battered nationalities. Neither the remnants of the former Royal government, nor any of the national forces (particular Serbian and Croatian) could make a credible claim to the Yugoslav mantle given their failure either as a representative government (the Royals), or their complicity in ethnic cleansing (Croatia, Serbia and Bosnian Muslims). The first constitution of the new Yugoslavia in 1946 therefore offered salve for open ethnic fractures in its promise of equality among the nationalities, its guarantee that one national group could not dominate another (a key fear

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<sup>54</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 209; Petersen, *Understanding ethnic violence*, 215.

<sup>55</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 211.

<sup>56</sup> Ilana R. Bet-El, "Unimagined communities: the power of memory and the conflict in the former Yugoslavia" In, *Memory and Power in Post-war Europe: Studies in the presence of the past*, Ed. Jan-Werner Müller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 211-213; Lampe, *Twice there was a Country*, 298.

of Croatia and Slovenia), and its extension of the formal recognition to Serbs, Montenegrins, Croats, Slovenes, and Macedonians as ethnic nations. The constitution also proclaimed the equality of the ethnic nations efforts to aid the Partisans.<sup>57</sup>

This last clause was an effort to move past the assignment of blame to any one ethnic nation for the Yugoslavia's experiences during the war. What the constitution did, however, was re-institutionalize the primary importance of the ethnic nations and ethnic identity in the second Yugoslavia by constituting the republics as belonging to their respective nations. This, in conjunction with an effective ban on both explicitly national histories or serious debate on either the events of the Second World War, or the series of political crises that led to the collapse of the First Yugoslavia laid the foundations for an unstable political and historical construction of the second Yugoslavia.<sup>58</sup> The Yugoslav idea under Tito intrinsically linked the national question with socialism by emphasizing the role of the partisan in liberating the respective nations from occupation and despotism; by continuing to celebrate the place of nations in the second Yugoslavia the communist state simultaneously created an the necessary conditions for an ideological vacuum within which nationalism remained in an uneasy stasis. When the socialist state began to falter the seeds of nationalism germinated.<sup>59</sup> National identity remained highly relevant within Tito's Yugoslavia and ensuring that no one ethnic nation could dominate another ethnic nation involved a complex management of the national question through managing appointments and representation within the larger Yugoslav state on the basis of ethnicity. This led to ethnically defined clientele networks – based in the ethnic

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<sup>57</sup> Lampe, *The failure of the Yugoslav national idea*, 84.

<sup>58</sup> Heather Rae, *State identities and the homogenization of peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 175.

<sup>59</sup> Pankovic, *The fragmentation of Yugoslavia*, 44-45.

republics –or nations –that would, somewhat ironically, serve to disadvantage those who identified themselves as Yugoslavs in the first instance.<sup>60</sup>

The Partisan’s slogan, “Brotherhood and Unity” has strong similarities with that of the Illyrian movement, making the claim that all South Slavs were brothers, and members of the same extended family, echoing the view adopted by the 1850 Vienna Agreement, the views voiced by the Yugoslav committee on the cusp of the Corfu Declaration and the Regents speech creating the First Yugoslavia. The 1950s, not surprisingly, echoed the Yugoslav nation-making efforts of the nineteenth century by institutionalizing a dual nation concept- titular, or ethnic nation and Yugoslav.<sup>61</sup> Culturally, the 1850 literary agreement was revisited in 1954 with an agreement between influential linguists, writers and public intellectuals from across the national spectrum who reached a ten-point agreement in a meeting in Novi Sad that spelled out a new Yugoslav orthography drawing equally from Croatian and Serbian orthographies.<sup>62</sup> Echoing the 1850 agreement, significant points of the 1954 Novi Sad agreement included, the declaration that, “Serbs, Croats and Montenegrins share a single language with two equal variants that have developed around Zagreb (Western) and Belgrade (Eastern)”; and “the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets have equal status, Serbs and Croats are expected to learn both in school.”<sup>63</sup> However, as Pankovic points out “[a]part from an official orthography guide, based on the agreement, the campaign for a common

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<sup>60</sup> Pankovic, *The fragmentation of Yugoslavia*, 64.

<sup>61</sup> My focus is not on the economic or geopolitical relations of Yugoslavia with the ideological divide or its neighboring states. I will not therefore look at the Stalin-Tito split, nor Yugoslavia’s movement into the non-aligned camp. I will therefore make only passing comment on Yugoslavia’s internal economic situation as it pertains to the reemergence of ethnic particularism. For a detailed study, see Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, Chapters 9 and 10.

<sup>62</sup> Robert D. Greenberg, *Language and identity in the Balkans: Serbo-Croatian and its disintegration* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 30.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

Yugoslav culture produced nothing of lasting value; no common Yugoslav school textbooks or curricula were ever produced in Yugoslavia.”<sup>64</sup> This failure of this effort is indicative of the foundations for the maintenance of ethnic distinctions that were laid at the close of the Second World War and emphasized by the policies of managed ethnic relations under Tito. These policies ensured that there was little overlap between Serbian and Yugoslav institutions, which explicitly were designed with the legacy of the Kingdom of Serbs, Slovenes and Croats and Royal Yugoslavia in mind, and preventing Serbia from emerging as a Russian-style “elder brother” to the other republics while ensuring ethnic parity between the dominant groups – Serbs and Croats.<sup>65</sup>

Managed ethnic relations and the Yugoslav idea under Tito were seen among a number of intellectuals and nascent nationalists as a threat to their national identities from early on. The 1960s witnessed the dramatic emergence of explicitly national *histories* that challenged the established history authored by the communist state. A 1963 exchange between Croatian historians, including Franjo Tujman, the future President of the Croatian Republic, and a Serbian historian is telling of this view. In a similar assertion to that made by Basque nationalists, the Croatian historians asserted that Croatia had “always had a distinct and unique sovereignty” which endured in the communist systems federal organization of the titular republics into a federal state.<sup>66</sup> In essence they made the same arguments as Basque nationalists with regard to the Spanish state; they argued that the federal state was a contractual agreement in which the Croatian nation continued to enjoy sovereignty – and thus the right to secede. This group pushed for the restoration of

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<sup>64</sup> Pankovic, *The fragmentation of Yugoslavia*, 62.

<sup>65</sup> Veljko Vujacic, “Perceptions of the State in Russia and Serbia: The Role of Ideas in the Soviet and Yugoslav Collapse” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 20:2 (2004), 166.

<sup>66</sup> Pankovic, *The fragmentation of Yugoslavia*, 63.

Croatian institutions and symbols and for a Croatian history distinct from the official party history. As Michael Mann rightly points out, it is often forgotten that federal Yugoslavia, in legal terms, was a federation of *nations* and not merely republics: it was nations and not merely the republics of the federation that had the right to secede.<sup>67</sup> At this juncture the seeds of Yugoslavia's disintegration, laid in 1946, are palpable: the maintenance of the ethnic nations as political symbols and as marks of differentiation.

A further force for national (ethnic nation) differentiation was the status of religion within socialist Yugoslavia. Guaranteed legal status in the 1953 constitution, the Orthodox and Catholic churches continued to operate in Yugoslavia with some degree of freedom; a concordat concluded between the Vatican and the state in 1966 opened the door to the education of priests and the publication of religious weeklies for the Catholic Church and similar held for the Orthodox Church. Religious publications flourished throughout the 1960s and both dioceses reopened seminaries and expanded their publications; this was particularly true of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which "was able to build 181 new churches and restore another 841 by the end of the decade."<sup>68</sup> While John Lampe points out religious observance was declining among Serbs and Croats, slipping to seventy percent, I want to point to the flagging features of institutions and symbols made by Michael Billig in his *Banal Nationalism*.<sup>69</sup> Both Churches are strongly tied to their respective 'nation' myths; their continued operation and the expansion of their presences during the 1960s corresponded to the period when national identities were being reasserted. Following Billig, the churches served as subtle markers of national

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<sup>67</sup> Michael Mann, *The Dark side of democracy: Explaining ethnic cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 362.

<sup>68</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 294.

<sup>69</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 294; Michael Billig, *Banal nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995)

identities that would emerge forcefully in the 1970s and 1980s. This reemergence of both subtle and explicit national references came in a period where a profound shift was taking place. By 1964 the League of Yugoslav Communists' platform had dropped any reference to a common Yugoslav culture. The dropping of mention of a Yugoslav culture was closely followed by the removal of the Serbian leader of the secret police and ardent opponent of decentralization of power from the Federal state to the republics, Aleksandar Rankovic in 1966 for abuse of power and spying on other members of the party's leadership.<sup>70</sup> Rankovic notes many, communists and non-communists alike, viewed his removal from power as ending a Serbian effort to capture control of the Party.<sup>71</sup> Rankovic's downfall was quickly followed by more tensions within Yugoslavia between Croatian and Serbian ethnic (national) identities as details of secret trials and purges organized by the Serbian Secret police in Kosovo emerged. This internal tension was exacerbated by the necessity of economic reform, which only, foreshadowing the collapse of the Soviet Union two decades in the future, served to undermine the Party's authority and increased the salience of the ethnically constituted republics for everyday life.

The exchange between the Croatian historians, writers and linguists mentioned above was equally met by their Serbian counterparts following a 1967 declaration by a number of Croatian cultural organizations repudiating the Novi Sad agreement and calling for the separation and protection of a separate Croatian cultural (i.e. national) identity. The Croatian repudiation of the agreement was triggered by the publication of the first two volumes of the common Serbo-Croatian dictionary the Novi Sad agreement

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<sup>70</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 289-290.

<sup>71</sup> Rankovic, *The fragmentation of Yugoslavia*, 64-65.

committed to publish. The two volumes revealed that the Serbian variants of common words were consistently chosen, and in the wake of Rankovic's removal this was taken as indication of a more sinister intention: Serbian domination and the marginalizing of Croatian culture. The Cultural dynamic continued to worsen and the row opened between Croatian and Serbian public intellectuals revealed how fragile the Yugoslav concept was. The Croatian's Serbian counterparts responded to the Croatian *demarche* demanding the formal recognition of the Croatian language and its public use by all officials with insistence that the Cyrillic alphabet be used in television and media in Serbia and that Serbs in Croatia be entitled to use the Cyrillic alphabet.<sup>72</sup>

Language, like the church became another covert flagging of the nation, in Serbia and for Serbs disconnected from their nation in the other Yugoslav republics. This debate was important in light of increasing urbanization and literacy rates that led increased migration within Yugoslavia – often bringing family groups with still powerful memories of the Second World War and ethnic violence into close communal relationships.<sup>73</sup> The Croatian bi-monthly publication *Kolo* published a piece by the head of the Croatian Literary Society, Peter Segedin that captures the tensions between Yugoslav, Croatian and Serbian nationalisms. Segedin listed ten grievances of the Croatian people, the most telling of which was the claim, “Croatian interests are subordinate to the interests of Serbia,” “Belgrade is attempting to assimilate the Croats that is, to Serbianize Croatia,” “Croatia has lost everything essential to the preservation of its culture,” and “The Serbs have a definite program designed to assimilate Croatian youth and to cause the Croatian nation to disappear without a trace”. Echoing Herder, Segedin noted ominously, “To lose

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<sup>72</sup> Pankovic, *The fragmentation of Yugoslavia*, 63; Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 305-206.

<sup>73</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 298.

one's language is to lose one's ethnic identity."<sup>74</sup> As the influential Croatian social organization *Matica Hrvatska* would sum in its adoption of a resolution for amending the Croatian Constitution,

[The] S[ocialist] R[epublic of ]Croatia is the national state of the Croatian nation. National sovereignty –one indivisible, inalienable, and imperishable – belongs, in SR Croatia, to the Croatian nation, and it realizes it through its deputies and by direct expression of its will.<sup>75</sup>

The same period held important symbolic changes for Serbia after uprisings by ethnic Albanians in Kosovo led to the granting of the right to fly the Albanian flag in the spiritual heart of Serbia and the creation of an autonomous university. The removal of Rankovic and the waves of oppression orchestrated under his rule against ethnic Albanians had done little to change the shifting demographic reality of life in Kosovo, except heighten resentment against Serbs by Albanians.<sup>76</sup> Kosovo officially became a *Yugoslav* province in 1968 as fears of Serbian nationalism were emerging from Rankovic's removal and Croatian national claims were reemerging, in part fueled by fear of Serbian hegemony. What we have seen is the emergence of two distinct nationalisms in post-war Yugoslavia based on the constitutionally defined right of ethnic nations to their separate republics and nationalism, predominantly Serb and Croatian, which rose to challenge the second Yugoslav as a political order, as a cultural ideal and as a historical construction. This in part explains the failure of the Novi Sad agreement to produce a tangible Yugoslav culture. It was at this volatile juncture that Yugoslavia embarked on her final constitutional reform.

By 1974, the managed ethnic balance of the co-federal state – and its failing to provide the basis for a common Yugoslav identity to take deep root – had led to the

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<sup>74</sup> Quoted in Petersen, *Understanding ethnic violence*, 218.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Petersen, *Understanding ethnic violence*, 220-221.

fourth constitution, which institutionalized the titular republics as the core units of the federal state, effectively decentralizing the state to its titular republics and leaving only a weakened central bureaucracy and the army at the federal level. Economic policy, language and the ever-present issue of ethnic identity were left to the titular republics (much to the delight of an emerging cadre of party members whose basis for power was not the federal Yugoslav state but rather the republic based Leagues of Communists). The constitution contained a powerful affirmation of the nations position within the federal Yugoslav state. The basic principles of the 1974 constitution affirmed:

The nations of Yugoslavia, *proceeding from the right of every nation to self-determination, including the right of secession*, on the basis of their free will expressed in the common struggle of all nations and nationalities in the National Liberation War and Socialist Revolution, and in conformity with their historic aspirations, aware that further consolidation of their brotherhood and unity is in the common interest, have, together with the nationalities with which they live, have united, in a federal Republic of free and equal nations and nationalities...<sup>77</sup>

In essence the constitution affirmed that Yugoslavia's existence was, to borrow from Renan, a daily plebiscite. The same constitution also contained the poison pill: it split Kosovo and Vojvodina into Socialist Autonomous Regions (SAR), under their own representatives on the basis of "special ethnic composition" – in the case of Kosovo 90 percent ethnically Albanian – rather than under Serbian administration. The constitution also established Kosovo distinct status from Serbia by noting its equality with Serbia, noting that "[t]he provinces [Kosovo and Vojvodina] are autonomous socialist self-managing democratic socio-political communities with a special ethnic composition and other specificities... The territory of the Socialist Autonomous Region of Kosovo may not be altered without the consent of the provincial assembly."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Document 1.1 "The constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, 1974," in *The Kosovo crisis and International Law: an analytical documentation, 1974-1999*. Ed, Heike Krieger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 2. My emphasis.

<sup>78</sup> *The constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, 1974*. 5,7.

The Constitution also enshrined the cultural identities of the nations in Article 245 which noted, “The nations and nationalities of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia shall have equal rights” and laid the basis for Milosevic’s defence of ethnic Serbs in the neighbouring republics a decade later in Article 246, which declared,

The languages of the nations and nationalities and their alphabets shall be equal throughout the territory of Yugoslavia. In the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia the languages of the nations shall officially be used and the languages of the nationalities shall be used in conformity with the present constitution...

The realisation of the equality of the languages and alphabets of the nations and nationalities regarding their official use in areas populated by individual nationalities shall be ensured and the ways of and conditions of its realisation regulated by statute...<sup>79</sup>

While Article 247 entrenched the cultural rights of the ethnic nations and nationalities,

In order to ensure that its right to express its nationality and culture shall be realised, each nationality shall be guaranteed the right freely to use its language and alphabet, to develop its culture and for this purpose to set up organisations and to enjoy other constitutionally-established rights...<sup>80</sup>

The constitution effectively gave ethnic Albanians *de facto* control over the symbolic heart of Serbia and in line with the demographic shift for Kosovo were changes that saw over two-thirds of Kosovo’s communist party membership and three quarters of the police in comprised by ethnically Albanians by the 1980s.<sup>81</sup> Symbolically ethnicity was important given that ethnic Albanians in Kosovo were reproducing at a rate of 27 per 1,000.<sup>82</sup> The birth rate of Albanians in Kosovo were shaping the face of Kosovo as the same time ethnic Serbs were streaming out of the province, lured to Belgrade by opportunities for employment as Kosovo’s economy slowed down. Each republic was in effect, a sovereign state in institutions, economics and national identity and with an Albanian flag flying over a Kosovo, populated and controlled by ethnic Albanians for many in Serbia the end result of the 1974 constitution was the second loss of Kosovo and

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<sup>79</sup> *The constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*, 1974, 3

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic violence*, 221.

<sup>82</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 339.

symbolically Serbia. What the 1974 constitution began was completed with Tito's 1980 death: the removal of the last Yugoslav identity markers.

Decentralization under the 1974 constitution opened the door for significant economic difference between the regions; this was particularly acute for Serbia. Unemployment in Belgrade continued to rise throughout the economic slowdown in Yugoslavia during the 1980s. The symbolic importance of Kosovo to the Serbian national myth, for as we have seen, the defeat at Kosovo represented the ultimate sacrifice by the Serb nation and therefore its status as an elect nation in the nation myth, added to a sense among some Serb elites that Serbia was being victimized by the other republics. The severing of Kosovo represented for them the denationalizing of the Serb nation and indeed the denial of the Serb nation's essence. With the constitutional changes introduced in 1974 Kosovo obtained the same power as the other national republics, including the power to veto legislation. The Yugoslav system was by this point transformed into eight distinct republic based parties with distinctly different ideas about how the Yugoslav state should be run. Nationalists in Croatia and Slovenia opposed to recentralization of the Yugoslav state – and fearful of Serb domination – were offset by Serbian desires for a stronger federal state. The sole force able to keep Yugoslavia together, the iconoclastic and unquestionable leader Tito, died in 1980. With his death, the post-Tito era began in earnest in the heartland of Serbian nationalism: Kosovo with open attacks on Tito in the Serbian press for his alleged anti-Serbian leanings, of which no greater proof could be offered than the separation of Kosovo and his permitting of ethnic Albanians to run the spiritual heart of Serbia.

This sense was exacerbated by a 1982 letter from the clergy of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo to the Patriarch of the Church noting widespread desecration of Orthodox churches and graveyards in Kosovo by ethnic Albanians. The church alleged that Serbian interests, culture and identity, guaranteed under the constitution, were being harmed in Kosovo. The church, no friend of communism, leveled their charges at a time of increasing economic and national tensions. Public criticisms of the situation would quickly follow in Belgrade, leading to the restarting of church restoration in the capital city.<sup>83</sup> The vulnerability of Serbia's symbolic markers came amidst an economic crisis in the early 1980s saw unemployment skyrocket in Yugoslavia (indicative of the crisis' scale was unemployment rates among Kosovars at around 25.7 percent and growing).<sup>84</sup> As a result, ethnic Serbs increasingly migrated to Serbia to seek employment while ethnic Albanians remained behind. Worsening ethnic relations began igniting with the death of ousted Serbian Rankovic in 1983 when some 100,000 Serbs, facing an economic crises, large migration and media sensationalism over the still open wounds of the 1974 constitution turned out in memorial and protest.<sup>85</sup>

The liberalization of the communist regime was reflected in culture and the resurgence of the types of national stories of sacrifice and injustice we have seen in the nineteenth century. One such example was the staging of Serbian nationalist playwright Jovan Radulovic's anti-Croatian '*The Pigeon Cave*'; a reference to the site of a Second World War Ustasha massacre. The message was clear to many Serb intellectuals reeling from economic change and the psychological loss of Kosovo: what the Ustasha had

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<sup>83</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 343-344.

<sup>84</sup> Rogel, *Kosovo: where it all began*, 167.

<sup>85</sup> Rogel, *Kosovo: where it all began*, 168.

attempted and failed at was taking place again: the elimination of the Serb culture and identity.<sup>86</sup>

A series of forces combined; as Serbs and Albanians alike were increasingly competing for limited employment in Kosovo, throughout Yugoslavia the effects of the economic crisis had reduced one-quarter of Yugoslavia's families to beneath the poverty line.<sup>87</sup> Rankovic's funeral therefore provided an outlet for ethnic Serbs, economic migrants and nationalists alike, to protest the changing dynamics of Kosovo and general economic situation at the same time that sensationalist reports of migration by Serbs fleeing Albanian violence began circulating, (one survey of 500 Serb families in 1985 reported that most were fleeing violence from ethnic violence rather the economic reasons).<sup>88</sup> A highly publicized account of Albanian targeting of Serbs came from a Serb farmer in Kosovo who alleged being sexually assaulted by two Albanians. This only reinforced rumours of widespread rapes of Serb women by ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.<sup>89</sup>

Economic crisis, the churches complaints and large-scale migration coupled with the reemergence of nationalists discourses on top of the severing of Kosovo from Serbia and an increasingly Albanian face (of approximately 90 percent of the province) reinforced a sense among many in Serbia that Serbia was the victim of a conspiracy among the other republics. It was at this point that discontent with Yugoslavia among Serbia's intellectual community boiled over into nationalist sentiments.

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<sup>86</sup> Rae, *State identities and the homogenization of peoples*, 177-178.

<sup>87</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 338-341.

<sup>88</sup> Lampe, *Twice there was a country*, 348.

<sup>89</sup> Rogel, *Kosovo: where it all began*, 168; Rae, *State identifies and the homogenization of peoples*, 182.

## The SANU Memorandum

In the midst of this period of increasing tensions between intellectuals and the party and between republics the ethnic spark that would ignite the ethnic cleavages still simmering after the Second World War. Ethnic Serbs in Kosovo upset by the changing demographic face of Kosovo combined with allegations of discrimination by ethnic Albanian staged a series of protests during the mid-1980s heightened tensions over not just the economic crisis but the symbolic crisis of Yugoslav national identity in the wake of Tito's death. It was the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU) Memorandum in 1986, however, that would reveal how deeply interwoven - and yet, conflicting - the Yugoslav idea was with Serbian and Croatian nationalisms. As Rae argues, the SANU Memorandum was the Serbian version of the claims made by Croatian intellectuals during the Croatian crisis (1970-71). On January 21, 1986, 216 members of the Belgrade-based Serbian Academy sent a letter to the Serbian and Yugoslav assemblies that placed the migration from Kosovo in the same context as the actions of Fascist Croatia during the Second World War, arguing that the ethnic Albanians were carrying out genocide against Serbs. The memorandum forcefully placed the situation in national terms:

No nation willingly gives up its right to exist and the Serb nation is not and will not be an exception. In the last twenty years, 200,000 people have been moved out of Kosovo and Metohija [the place of churches], more than 700 settlements have been ethnically 'purged', the emigration is continuing with unabated force, Kosovo and Metohija are becoming 'ethnically pure', the aggression is crossing the borders of the province... As is known from historical science, from still unextinguished memory, the expulsion of the Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija has already been going on for three centuries. Only the protectors of the tyrants have changed: from the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy, Fascist Italy, and Nazi Germany have been replaced by the Albanian state and the ruling institutions of Kosovo.<sup>90</sup>

While dismissed by Serbia's League of Communists as backwards nationalism, the stage was set for a new class of political leadership to mobilize ethnicity as politics amidst

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<sup>90</sup> The memorandum is quoted in Petersen, *Understanding ethnic violence*, 222

Yugoslavia's decline, and to parlay Serb sympathies for the loss of status in Kosovo into a renewed manifest destiny for the Serb nation and the Serbian state into the defender of Serbs everywhere.

### **Kosovo Pojle: The end of the ideal**

In April 1987, Serbian Communist Party official Slobodan Milosevic arrived in Kosovo amidst both a deepening economic crisis and a growing conflict between nationalist Serbs like Miroslav Solevic and the local communist party, dominated by ethnic Albanians. In a series of local speeches, Milosevic proceeded to denounce ethnic nationalism, remarking, "Exclusive nationalism, based on national hatreds can never be progressive."<sup>91</sup> A concerted effort by ethnic Serbs, mobilized by Solevic and other nationalist leaders, led to a series of three days meetings between protestors and Milosevic. The BBC documentary "Death of Yugoslavia" makes the claim, backed up with interviews with Serb nationalist leaders, that Milosevic and Kosovar Serb nationalists choreographed the protests at the meeting that would erupt into violence, with Serbs fighting the Albanian constituted police. The violence had been staged from the onset of the meeting, with Serb nationalists parking "two truckloads of stones" outside the meeting, "just in case" though knowingly for the purposes of attacking the police.<sup>92</sup> Serb nationalists began pelting the police with the pre-positioned stones bringing Solevic and Milosevic - fresh from accounts of Albanian rapes, torching of Serb homes and desecrations of orthodox monasteries and graveyards - outside where, in a powerful image, an old man confronts Milosevic: "The police attacked us, they hit women and

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<sup>91</sup> British Broadcasting Service, *The death of Yugoslavia*. Part 1 "Enter nationalism" (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1995)

<sup>92</sup> The BBC documentary provides a powerful videographic record of the meeting and protest as well as Milosevic's infamous declaration. BBC, *The death of Yugoslavia*, "Part 1: Enter nationalism"

children. The Albanians got in among us. We were beaten up.” It was at this moment Milosevic emerged as the savior of Serbs proclaiming, “You will not be beaten again!”<sup>93</sup> On April 24, 1987, Milosevic vowed to turn the tide on the economic migration (and real, imagined, and manufactured ethnic violence) proclaiming to the crowd of Serb nationalists in Kosovo:

First I want to tell you, comrades, that you should stay here. This is your country, these are your houses, your fields and gardens, your memories ... You should stay here...Otherwise you would shame your ancestors and disappoint your descendants. But I do not suggest you stay here suffering and enduring a situation with which you are dissatisfied. On the contrary! It should be changed...<sup>94</sup>

Within three days Milosevic went from denouncing nationalism to proclaiming himself the defender of not just Serbs in Kosovo, but Serbs everywhere. In political terms, the republic-based institutions, from the regional communist party organization to republic-wide media and cultural institutions such as the Academy of Sciences and republic militias, provided Milosevic a ready-made Serbian nationalist agenda. A year later, Milosevic proclaimed to a large rally in Belgrade on November 19, 1988, “We will triumph. At home and abroad, Serbia’s enemies are massing against us. We say to them: We are not afraid. We will not flinch from battle... We enter every battle to win.”<sup>95</sup> The reabsorbing of Kosovo and Vodvojina into Serbia on the strength of the claims of abuse made by Kosovar Serbs gave the now openly nationalist Serbian leader, the aura of being the prophet of a Greater Serbia to observers in Croatia and Slovenia. The match that was Kosovo burst into open flame with efforts by Milosevic to leverage Serbian influence to re-centralize Yugoslavia. Milosevic managed to replace much of the central party apparatus with his supporters under the guise of failure to solve the economic crisis. The

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<sup>93</sup> BBC, *The death of Yugoslavia, “Part 1: Enter nationalism.”*

<sup>94</sup> Bet-El, *Unimagined communities*, 208.

<sup>95</sup> BBC, *The death of Yugoslavia, “Part 1: Enter nationalism.”*

former President of Serbia, Ivan Stambolic, who was deposed by Milosevic largely on the strength of his claimed unwillingness to forcefully resolve the Kosovo issue, recalls Milosevic's larger agenda of a Serb dominated Yugoslavia from the start; he quotes Milosevic as stating, "we will impose our will on the rest of Yugoslavia."<sup>96</sup> For Slovenia, and particularly Croatia, these actions and Milosevic's June 1989 speech declaring the role of Serbia as the protector of Serbs across all republics sounded the final alarm bells. Efforts to recentralize Yugoslavia, with the federal level of government effectively in Serbian hands and the Yugoslav National Army whose senior leadership was dominated by ethnic Serbs carried the implied threat of the building of a Greater Serbia. For Croatians, it was history repeating itself and the spectre of a second Yugoslavia dominated by Serbs.

The rise of ethnicity as the preeminent political category of identity was not born from the primordial hatreds often attributed to the Balkans,<sup>97</sup> but rather, as Michael Ignatieff has observed, "consciousness of ethnic difference turned to nationalist hatred only when the surviving communist elites, beginning in Serbia, began manipulating nationalist emotions in order to cling to power."<sup>98</sup> It reflects, as Vujacic has argued, "the selective reactivation" of historical legacies by cultural and political elites within a particular political and economic context. As Milosevic reactivated the Greater Serbia idea, the historical legacies of the First Yugoslavia, ethnic cleansing during the Second World War and the individual nation's sense of having lost and been denied its history,

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<sup>96</sup> Ivan Stambolic interviewed in BBC, *The death of Yugoslavia*, "Part 1: Enter nationalism."

<sup>97</sup> The most emblematic characterization of this sort comes from Robert Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts*. On the creation of the Balkans as a backwards or anti-modern space see Maria Toldova, "The Balkans: From invention to discovery" *Slavic Review* 53:2 (1994), 43-482. See also on the Yugoslavia's death as the future shape of international relations Valerie P. Gagnon, "Ethnic nationalism and international conflict: the case of Serbia" *International Security* 19:3 (Winter 1994-1995), 130-131.

<sup>98</sup> Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the new nationalism* (Toronto: Penguin, 1994), 25.

particularly in Serbia and Croatia, culminated in the implosion of the Yugoslav idea. The question of Kosovo's political and ethnic status, for example, touched "on the very core of the Serbian national myth and provided Serbian nationalism with a concrete grievance in the 1980s," while the spectre of a Greater Serbia, as the Croatian crisis in the 1960's reflected, raised fears for the preservation of Croatian culture.<sup>99</sup> Those who chose to be, or even saw themselves as Yugoslav, such as Rabrenovic in the opening to this chapter, were forced to choose sides: Croatian, Serbian, Muslim, Slovene, or Macedonian as Yugoslav ceased to exist as an idea. On June 2, 1991, Yugoslavia as an idea and as a nation was pronounced dead with the declaration of Slovenian independence. Croatia quickly followed Slovenia's exit, lest she remain in a Yugoslavia dominated by Serbia, again. Renan's plebiscite had been lost. Meinecke's nation had won.

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<sup>99</sup> *Vujacic, Perceptions of the state in Russia and Serbia, 167.*

### **Conclusion: Finding a path forward**

The two cases examined in the preceding chapters illustrate some striking commonalities. In a historical sense, both Spain and Yugoslavia were failed nationalisms; neither was able to incorporate the various regional and ethnic communities into a common national identity. By placing the Basque and Yugoslav examples alongside each other, we notice some conspicuous similarities.

First and foremost are the synchronicities between the two cases; the cultural revival projects in Catalonia, Serbia, and Croatia all began in the early nineteenth century, rising to their peaks in the 1830-1850 period. This period was one of increased efforts at centralization by both the Hapsburg Empire and the Spanish state. These revival projects utilized and stressed cultural and moral distinctions between the subordinate nation and the imperial powers under whose rule these nations fell. Basque nationalism drew heavily on the cultural renaissance that emerged in Catalonia during the 1830s and was fueled by Spain's internal collapses and failures, while Serbian and Croatian national revivals took place within the changing imperial order of Europe, the weakening of the Ottoman Empire, and reforms of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Both examples reveal the close links cultural and linguistic markers and political identity and the functions of these markers for determining both membership and exclusion in the particular national closure. Serbian, Croatian and Basque nationalisms developed as political programmes that aimed to both preserve their respective cultural identities from political and cultural assimilation as well as to increase their presence and ultimately to have the ethnic nation recognized as a political nation. In Serbia and Croatia, much of the cultural project drew on an expansive and assimilationist definition

of the nation and defining the other south Slav communities as relatives or lost branches of a particular national community, often through language and for purely territorial reasons. In the Basque case, Arana, in contrast, sharply demarcated membership in the Basque nation on the basis of bloodlines; in this instance, language formed an impermeable boundary between Basques and non-Basques while also seeking to bring the other Basque provinces into a common political home.

In both of the cases examined here, the respective national projects had external and repressive ‘others’ against which to orient against; for the Basques, this was Castilian Spanish, Spain, and industrialization; while for Croatia, it was Hungarian, the Magyarization project, and, toward the end of the nineteenth century, Serbia. Hungarian efforts to eliminate Croatian cultural and linguistic distinctiveness have similar overtones to those attempted by Royal Yugoslavia and efforts by Franco’s Spain to do the same with Catalan and Basque culture and languages. The Basque, Croatian, and Serb national projects similarly defined their respective nations as elect nations with special missions to perform. For Serbia, it was to bring the South Slavs into a common state, redress historical injustices, and deliver the Slavic peoples from Muslim predation based on a founding myth of historical sacrifice. For Croatia, it was territorial and cultural reunification. The same holds true for the Basques; Arana conceptualized the Basque as a moral community whose mission was to preserve the language and culture of the Basques from corruption. The Yugoslav idea, in turn, had similar overtones, oriented towards liberating the South Slavs as one common peoples or nation (*narod*) from foreign domination.

The twentieth century holds some equally intriguing synchronicities; during the 1930s, the Basque were subjected to cultural assimilation in Franco's Spain, which banned Basque – and Catalan – cultural, political, and social organizations and prohibited the use of the Basque language. Concurrently, we witness similar efforts by ethnic Serbs in Royal Yugoslavia to suppress and assimilate Croatian political and cultural identity into a Yugoslav state under Serbian hegemony. National- or ethnic-based parties were banned, the Serbian orthography achieved a dominant position, and ethnic Serbs controlled all significant levers of state and cultural power. Furthermore, Yugoslavia attempted and failed to build a federal state that recognized the constituent nations as equal members. The Basque conception of the Basque nation as an equal and sovereign nation closely lines up with the ideological position adopted in the Yugoslav constitution, which recognized the nations and nationalities as sovereign nations that voluntarily constituted the Yugoslav state, *ala* Renan's plebiscite. Indeed, both Croatian and Serbian nationalists elites pushed for the recognition of their inherent sovereignty in the 1974 Constitution.

The 1974 Yugoslav Constitution is therefore notable for two reasons; first, it provided the basis for the ethnic nations to reassert their national identities by recognizing the ethnic nations and their respective republics as sovereign communities with inherent rights to protect and advance their languages, alphabets and cultures. Secondly, it ultimately led to the reassertion of ethnic differences and decentralizing of the Yugoslav state. The 1978 Spanish Constitution engaged in something similar, recognizing the regions, regional identities, and the regions' historical rights as distinct and significantly decentralized the federal state to the regions. These processes opened

the doors to powerful social and political change. The leaders of national communities – particularly Serbian and Croatian – would eventually rip Yugoslavia apart while this has not yet come to pass in Spain. Further similarities include the presence of ethnic violence in both the Yugoslav and Spanish cases, particularly in Kosovo and political violence in pursuit of Basque independence by ETA.

The Basque and Yugoslav examples also reveal some noticeable differences that raise important questions about the theoretical models that seek to explain nationalism, particularly ethnic nationalism. While culture was an essential element, all the cases have distinctly different trajectories. The standardization of the Serbian and Croatian orthographies, a vibrant intellectual community, and the widespread print industry were essential tools for the spread of Serbian, Croatian, and Yugoslav nationalisms. Basque nationalism, in contrast, featured a primarily oral tradition with a very small print industry. Moreover, the number of Basque speakers was relatively small, and only toward the end of the nineteenth century did a standardized written form of the Basque language start to gain traction. Benedict Anderson's argument in *Imagined communities*, particularly his discussion of print capitalism, helps to understand the origins and spread of Croatian, Serbian, and Yugoslav nationalisms, but does not apply in the same way to the Basque experience. Whereas Serbian and Croatian nationalism represented relatively permeable boundaries, Basque nationalism maintained a singular and strongly defined boundary between Basques and non-Basques. A further notable difference is the 1850 Vienna Agreement and the 1954 Novi Sad linguistic agreements, which represented efforts at providing a mechanism for creating a common south Slav national identity in contrast to Franco's heavy-handed efforts at linguistic homogenization.

Both Spain and Yugoslavia (under the Croatian Ustasha) were Fascist states during the Second World War, yet the important difference is Yugoslavia's historical legacy of genocide; the Basque have no comparable experience. Yugoslavia entrenched hyphenated identities (Serb-Yugoslav, Yugoslav-Serb, Yugoslav-Croatian) under both the first Yugoslavia and Tito's Yugoslavia whereas Franco's Spain permitted a sole identification (Spanish) and engaged in a systematic repressing of the Basque language, culture, and identity. Both Franco and Tito drove national symbols to the sidelines, yet simultaneously preserved their importance as cultural and national 'flags'; Tito, explicitly in the constitution and through the system of managing the distribution of political power among the ethnic nations; and Franco, via his repressive policies. The difference between the written languages in Yugoslavia and the still-predominantly oral traditions of the Basque were therefore important. The Basque language persevered because of its oral traditions while perhaps only ethnic Albanians in Kosovo experienced similar pressures from ethnic Serbs in the post-war era. While the Basque Country was highly industrialized Yugoslavia was not; ethnic nationalism emerged the strongest in economically underdeveloped Serbia, yet it was economically overdeveloped Slovenia that was first to declare independence and secede from Yugoslavia.

Serbian, Croatian, and Basque orthographies were refined and standardized by key individuals, yet they differ in their intent significantly. Arana's reforming of the Basque orthography was meant to purge the Basque language of contamination from other languages, whereas the standardization effort of Serbo-Croatian was driven by the goal of unifying the two dialects into one standard language to promote a common linguistic and national identity. The Yugoslav idea, in turn, sought to subordinate Serb

and Croatian nationalisms to a greater ideal: freedom from imperial domination and a common south Slav identity. This brought discord between Croatian, Serbian, and Yugoslav identities. As the Yugoslav idea opened new political potentialities, it also opened space for new types of conflicts, including the fear of ethnic domination and the pursuit of ethnic cleansing. These crystallized into the politics of ethnicity under which Yugoslavia as a state and as idea would twice die. In contrast, Arana's definition of the Basque nation had far-sharper focus on the territorial and political autonomy of the Basque peoples and on excluding non-Basques from the language, the culture, and the territory.

Nationalisms in the Balkans and in the Basque Country were powerful social, territorial, and political projects that emerged primarily among intellectuals. Miroslav Hroch's framework for national revivals matches quite closely the historical record when applied to the Yugoslav and the Basque cases. It is perhaps somewhat ironic that the Yugoslav idea came closer to the achieving the transition to 'Phase C' than did the Serb or Croatian national projects. Serbia and Croatia would, of course, become titular states in the 1990s, however, the identification made with the respective states in the end was driven more by fear of ethnic others and ethnic violence than mass mobilization.

The idealism of both the Basque and Yugoslav projects share several goals that invoke the definitions of the nation laid out in the introductory chapter; they conceptualized a large social solidarity of individual members who shared linguistic, religious and cultural markers. In both cases, these markers formed boundaries by which members of the community could tie themselves together as a particular named community (Basque, Serb, or Croatian nations) while distinguishing themselves from

members of other nations. I have argued that Basque nationalism is the quintessential ethnic nationalism whereas Yugoslavia quite clearly is not. Sharp ethnic distinctions would emerge in Yugoslavia's demise when political and cultural elites mobilized the cultural and linguistic traditions of their respective communities as firm boundaries and played up fears of competing claims and historical events to close those boundaries. Genocide, persecution, and political violence became key markers of that process. Yugoslavia as an idea during the nineteenth century fits better with the frameworks laid out by Benedict Anderson and Miroslav Hroch than those of Anthony Smith or Ernest Gellner, despite the primordialist explanation for Yugoslavia's dismemberment so frequently advanced. Yugoslavia was a political program that attempted to fuse separate ethnic communities into a common state and a common identity, largely under the aegis of either Serbia or Croatia, by stressing linguistic and ethnic connections. The Yugoslav national idea was an imagined community that in the end was unimagined in favour of ethnic specific nations over a pan-slavic or super-national Yugoslav idea. Ethnic symbolism played an important role, it tapped into pre-existing symbolic markers (defined by a name, a set of practices and territorial claims) as the shards that remained from the fracturing of the Yugoslav idea were formed into separate states comprised of separate ethnic communities of fate and how these states defined membership and belonging.

Even when the threads from these scholars are interwoven, they still do not provide a complete picture of either the nationalisms examined in this thesis. There is no grand theory of nationalism that completely captures all national movements. Neither the Basques nor Yugoslavia are textbook examples of either Benedict Anderson's *Imagined*

*communities* or Anthony Smith's *Ethnic origins of nations*. Neither can they be satisfactorily explained by Ernest Gellner's work, though elements of his arguments are perhaps tangible in some dimensions of Yugoslavia and the emergence of a Basque nationalist elite. Indeed, the rise of small state nationalism addressed in this thesis suggests that rather than being fueled by industrialization they were the reverse of his argument. The spread of a high culture as a result of increasing standardization and the co-committal spread of a standard high culture along existing ethnic cleavages was not did not forge a nation from nothingness but rather instead increased the salience of regional identities and cultures. Moreover, with the obvious exception of Catalonia, nationalism was strongest in the rural and non-industrialized regions of the Basque Country while in the urbanized centers nationalism is decidedly at its weakest. Slovenia and Croatia were demonstrably economic advanced regions yet it was in Serbia, economically underdeveloped and primarily agrarian, that nationalism blossomed – the main point of contention was not for a regionally advanced region in Serbia but over a region even more economically disadvantaged, Kosovo. Slovenia's exit from the Yugoslav federal state was driven by fears of being subordinated in a Yugoslavia dominated by Serbia. This raises important questions for future study and points in the direction of Tom Nairn and his work on peripheral nationalism and the work done by Michael Hechter and his formulation of the 'internal colonization' thesis.<sup>1</sup>

What we see in Catalonia and Slovenia, namely efforts by an economically overdeveloped region to reform an underperforming and backwards state points scholarly attention to ways in which ethnic markers are mobilized and imagined (*ala* Anderson) in

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Nairn, *The break up of Britain* (London: New Left Books, 1977); Michael Hechter, *Internal colonialism: The Celtic fringe in British national development*. (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975 [1999]).

relationship to other factors such as economic and social tensions within societies.<sup>2</sup> As I have argued in this thesis, the Czech historians Miroslav Hroch's work comes the closest to explain the mechanisms through which national revivals take place but not for how nations are unimagined. What they do suggest is that if a comprehensive history of nationalism is to be compiled, it will have to cross the theoretical divide between ethno-symbolist and modernist explanations and broaden the case studies in order to arrive at a more complete history of the nation and nationalism. A detailed look at specific events in comparative perspective may shed additional light on the processes by which nations are spoken of, identified with, and imagined.

Renan's question "*what is a nation?*" is strongly connected to the question "when are nations no longer?" The study of nationalism requires social scientists to return to the field and concentrate on nationalism as a set of events. If my first contention – that nations matter and will continue to matter – is correct, nationalism, and the claim made by groups who understand themselves as nations to a state, will continue to occupy a important place in the future for citizens, victims and scholars alike. The continued salience of nationalism and ethnic definitions of national culture raises some powerful questions about nationalism as a historical and present-day process, especially in light of the immigration debate in Europe and in Quebec. The speed at which the fear of cultural loss or subordination can crystallize into ethnic politics should come as a particularly powerful warning for present day observers of Quebec nationalism and its linkage with language and culture. Yugoslavia rapidly failed as a state, driven by ethnic fears, the restored importance of ethnic identity and politicians who manipulated ethnic fears and

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<sup>2</sup> My thanks go to Dietmar Schirmer for his tireless efforts to convince me of the weaknesses of Anthony Smith and to think about ethnicity as a set off political and situational discourses.

hopes. It did so with a shocking level of violence. It would be wrong to assume that violence that targets immigrants is distant from ethnic cleansing in state dismemberment: the two can be powerfully linked by the underlying concept of the ethnic nation as imperiled. The lessons of Yugoslavia's dismemberment have been seemingly forgotten except as reminders of socialism's failed legacy.

The similarities between Yugoslav and Basque nationalism should raise questions about how true those assumptions in fact are. Belgium and Canada, as examples, reveal the emotive potential cultural markers possess and the relative ease of which they can be mobilized as exclusive ethnic distinctions and to break apart established multi-ethnic political states. Two referendums on sovereignty in Quebec within the space of a generation suggest that nations can very well be a literal as well as metaphorical plebiscites that can be lost and that nations as ethnic communities have demonstrated a powerful ability to endure through long periods of time and quickly crystallize into state-seeking movements. Theories of nationalism are still, if not increasingly relevant for social scientists seeking to anticipate and understand these forces for as historian Jerry Muller put it in a recent article in the journal *Foreign Affairs*, “[i]ncreased urbanization, literacy and political mobilization; differences [consider Kosovo here] and economic performance of various ethnic groups; and immigration will challenge the internal structure of states as well as their borders. Whether politically correct or not, ethnonationalism will continue to shape the world in the twenty-first century.”<sup>3</sup> As a force, nationalism is by no means relegated to the past by cosmopolitanism or a ‘post-national’ shift as a number of high profile commentators in the contemporary social

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<sup>3</sup> Jerry Z. Muller, “Us and Them: The enduring power of Ethnic Nationalism” *Foreign Affairs* 87: 2 (March-April 2008), 20.

sciences have argued. Rather, it remains an active and powerful idea that will continue to shape the socio-political landscape of human societies into the twenty-first century as it has the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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