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**European Integration and Sub-State Nationalism:  
Flanders, Scotland, and the EU**

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### Abstract

In this thesis, the author investigates the link between the process of economic and political integration within the European Union and the phenomenon of nationalist assertion. By examining the cases of Flanders and Scotland, it is argued that increased nationalism is a normal and predictable outcome of the process of integration in general, and of the EU more specifically. By analysing four factors — economic incorporation, system-wide policies, systems of transfer payments, and political isolation — the author finds two trends within the nationalist movements. The first is that the nationalist groups seek to acquire several of the powers currently held by the states of which they are currently part, Belgium and the United Kingdom respectively. The second is that these sub-state groups see themselves as part of a new order in which states are losing their significance. Neither of the theories associated with these observations on their own, however, satisfactorily explains the link between integration and increased nationalist assertion in the nationalist movements studied. The conclusion is that the nationalist groups accept the concept of an authority above the level of the state, nation, or region, but emphasise the necessity of a large degree of regional autonomy and a real voice for these regions in the decision-making process of this authority. Since the European Union is and always has been an exclusive club of member states, nationalist groups consider, within the framework of current institutional arrangements, that full statehood may be the only way to achieve their goals.

### Résumé

*Dans ce mémoire, nous étudions la liaison entre le processus d'intégration économique et politique au sein de l'Union européenne et le phénomène de la revendication nationaliste. En examinant les cas de la Flandre et de l'Écosse respectivement, nous argumentons qu'un accroissement de nationalisme est un résultat normal et prévisible du processus d'intégration en général, et de l'UE en particulier. En analysant quatre éléments — l'incorporation économique, l'ampleur des politiques Étatiques, les systèmes de paiements de transfert et l'isolation politique — nous trouvons deux tendances au sein des mouvements nationalistes. La première c'est que les groupes nationalistes œuvrent à s'octroyer plusieurs des pouvoirs exercés par leurs États respectifs, soit la Belgique et le Royaume-Uni. La deuxième c'est que ces groupes sous-Étatiques se voient partie d'un nouvel ordre dans lequel les États sont en train de perdre leur importance. Cependant, seules, les théories liées à ces observations n'expliquent pas la relation entre l'intégration et la croissance des revendications nationalistes des deux mouvements nationalistes qui font l'objet de cet étude d'une façon satisfaisante. Nous concluons que les groupes nationalistes acceptent le concept d'une autorité au dessus du niveau de l'État, de la nation, ou de la région, mais, en même temps, ils soulignent la nécessité d'une large marge d'autonomie régionale et d'une voix déterminante dans le processus décisionnel de cet autorité. Étant donné que l'Union européenne a depuis toujours été un club exclusif d'États-membres, des groupes nationalistes estiment que dans le cadre des actuelles dispositions institutionnelles, devenir un État proprement dit pourrait être la seule façon à réaliser leurs buts.*

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## Introduction

Prior to an official visit to Paris in late March 1994, the minister-president of the Flemish government, Luc Van den Brande, declared "Je veux présenter la nouvelle Belgique à la France. Il me faut faire comprendre aux Français que celle-ci n'est pas uniquement la Belgique qui est leur voisine, mais que la Flandre est aussi, au sens politique, une voisine directe"<sup>1</sup>. During the 1992 Olympics, magazine readers across Europe were asked to identify where Barcelona was found. "In Catalonia, of course", replied the second page of the advertisement run by the government of Catalonia. "Catalonia", it continued, "a country in Spain", with its own "language, culture, and identity".<sup>2</sup> Even within international contexts, the state can no longer assume to stand alone on the world stage.

While the state has been the unquestioned constant in the political arena since 1648, increasing economic, political, and even social co-operation has brought the practicality of state sovereignty into question. As many European countries join ever closer, it is easy to assume that sovereignty in Europe is being transferred in only one direction; it is the surrender of state sovereignty to some supra-state "Europe". One might easily think, therefore, that nationalist claims from stateless groups amount to nothing more than an opposition to the *Zeitgeist*, or simply an aberration in Europe's political development. This, however, could not be further from the truth.

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<sup>1</sup>Luc Van den Brande quoted in de la Guérivière, 6.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, *The Economist*, 18 July 1992, following pages 35, 36.

## Statement of Thesis

At first glance it may seem paradoxical that European integration is responsible for much of the resurgence of nationalist sentiment from within the member states of the European Union (EU). This is a result not only of the specific evolution of the EU and its institutions, but also of European integration *per se*. Access to larger markets, economic protection, systems of transfer payments, and a growing number of relevant economic system-wide policies are no longer afforded by the state, but by "Europe". Therefore, membership in a larger state is becoming less and less necessary or desirable for sub-state groups. Furthermore, statehood has become an entrenched prerequisite to representation within the institutions of the EU. No organisation other than the state government currently has any direct voice in the formation of "Europe"'s policy, and sub-state groups, already largely excluded from government, are apprehensive about being further marginalised by this transfer of power. At the same time, however, sub-state groups already seeking to increase the sovereignty of their particular territory must now contend not only with the state, but also with the supra-state, i.e. "Europe", as potential barriers. Thus, nationalist claims are a logical and explainable part of the prevailing political current of Europe.

The crux of the problem is how to determine which level of government ought to have which responsibilities. There is an ongoing power struggle between the EU on and the states on one side, and between states and sub-state groups on the other. For many important issues — most prominently those touching on political sovereignty —, the leaders of states draw the line at the level of the state. Several sub-state groups, however, question this. Many feel that the line ought to be drawn at some lower level than that of the state as it exists today. Increasingly, states and sub-state groups, as well as simple administrative regional bodies, are adopting the policy of subsidiarity. This policy states that higher levels of government should only concern themselves with those matters which cannot be better dealt with at a lower

level. While the existing states use this concept to protect their powers from encroachment by Europe, sub-state groups have argued that the logical extension of this principle means that the state should abandon a large number of its responsibilities in favour of more regionalised governments. If, however, the principle is to apply only to the relationship between the state and an increasingly powerful EU, then the important powers will be distributed only between these two levels of government. The sub-state groups, explicitly excluded and "dis-empowered", may seek statehood as a means of inclusion. In doing so, they seek to enter into the real power struggle, that between the EU and the state. This concept lies at the heart of both nationalist movements to be studied in this thesis.

There have been two broad changes which have led nationalist groups to question the status quo regarding the distribution of powers. One change is in the economic structure. With increasing internationalisation, the traditional incentives that have kept sub-state groups more or less loyal to their respective state have been changed as economic powers are redistributed in the international system. Individual states no longer have the power to entice their constituent groups with promises of a greater markets and protection from outside competition, favourable transfers, or other economic benefits. Much of this power has been transferred to a supra-national level, to "Europe". Secondly, the political arena has changed. Many sub-state groups have traditionally felt themselves to be at the periphery of the state which is unjustly dominated by some other constituent group, often with the aid of local quislings and "Uncle Toms". As states increasingly co-operate and surrender their powers to a newly designated centre, they are empowering those institutions in which state governments maintain direct and exclusive power. Sub-state groups are not directly represented in most of these institutions, and feel left out. The one institution in which they can find representation, the European Parliament, is largely overlooked when it comes time to increase the powers of the various EU institutions. Sub-state groups are left with the sense that the "state" is deliberately moving to further marginalise the political voice of sub-state groups within this new structure. It is not

simply that sub-state groups have to share in a new decision-making system with more members, but, it can be argued, that the states are deliberately exploiting the "European" structure to underline their own power base often at the expense of the sub-state groups.

### **Political Significance**

When the EU expanded its membership from a relatively small group of well-to-do countries to a larger group with mixed economic fortunes, the poorer member states demanded a regional policy, in essence a system of transfer payments, to moderate the effects, first of the common market, and then of the single market.<sup>3</sup> By 1996 the EU had expanded to include all of Western Europe, with the notable exceptions of recalcitrant Switzerland and Norway, and lonely Iceland perched on Europe's fringe. Any further expansion will in all probability be eastward, rather than southward, taking in the formerly communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. While these states are clamouring to be part of "Club Western Europe", this expansion will again lead to calls for a more developed regional policy to mitigate the economic dislocations of integration, and to make manageable the delivery of services.

Despite nominal and symbolic tinkering by Europe's leaders, those EU institutions which are most powerful are also the most élitist and bureaucratic. Europe's only democratic check, the European Parliament, remains largely irrelevant, if enthusiastic, on the sidelines of the decision-making process. As the leaders of the EU's institutions and its member states move forward to define a new Europe, they will have to cede some of their decision-making prerogative to the peoples who are directly affected by these changes. Recent events, particularly the referenda on Maastricht in France and Denmark in 1992, are clearly showing that the people will

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<sup>3</sup>Doutriaux, 3.

no longer tolerate that "Europe", built along the personal visions of its architects, have no input from the mass of people it affects. As "Europe" becomes more relevant in the lives of its citizens, their concern with how these decisions are made increases. The EU's member states will find it increasingly difficult to make decisions on Europe to their own ends if they hope to maintain the electoral backing of their domestic constituents.

As citizens in an individual context feel more and more excluded from the European level of political decision-making, sub-state groups are feeling the same sentiments in a collective context. If the pressures of integration push collectivities to demand, and eventually to attain, statehood, this will undoubtedly profoundly affect the political distribution of power within the institutions of the EU. This is so since, as will be discussed, statehood is the key to any significant power within the EU, regardless of population, economic, or military strength.

Nationalist causes in this context have found a new vitality across Western Europe. Marc Lambinet, far from exhausting all the possibilities, lists amongst the contemporary regionalist movements in the EU of twelve member states, the Occitan, Catalan, Corsican, Basque, Breton, Alsatian, Flemish, Frisian, Irish, Cornish, Friuli, Galician, Welsh, and Scottish.<sup>4</sup> For quite some time, Europe was built with no heed paid to nationalist assertions. With the double pressures of an expanding regional policy as well as the gradual, if grudging, transfer of at least some power to the people, the heads of government can no longer pretend that their decisions with regard to Europe are not having an effect on regionalist movements that in turn are making claims on the European process. More significantly, the EU continues to be a project centred around the authority of states, as will be argued later. The continuous building-up of the EU around this state-centric vision, may be sowing the seeds of its own undoing.

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<sup>4</sup>Lambinet, 61.

## Methodology

To show this, two sub-state groups will be examined more closely, Flanders and Scotland. The two have been chosen since in each case a nationalist movement exists that enjoys a large measure of public support and several participating organisations, as well as a particularly stable, long-term, and relatively strong presence in the political arena of their respective states. Furthermore, in each case, the movement is collectively represented by an electable political party or parties, supporting a claim for greater recognition of the sub-state group. In Flanders, these parties are the *Volksunie* and the *Vlaams Blok*, while in Scotland it is the Scottish National Party. In the case of Flanders, the *Volksunie* will be the main subject of enquiry. This is because of the two parties, it represents most "purely" the nationalist claims. The *Vlaams Blok*, while arguably enjoying more popularity than the *Volksunie*, and more stridently promoting nationalism, includes Flemish nationalism as only one plank of its platform, making up just one, and not even the most important, of many elements in its broadly anti-Establishment message.<sup>5</sup> In both Flanders and Scotland, the parties are represented in both the assemblies of their respective states as well as in the European Parliament.

From a methodological point of view, Stein Rokkan and Derek W. Urwin suggest a model which places economic strength of a region and cultural distinctiveness on two axes. Regions which score highly on both may have potential for possible independentist affirmation.<sup>6</sup> This basic division of the economic and the cultural will be expanded in two ways. First, the concept of cultural distinctiveness will be widened to include political-cultural distinction, emphasising both a cultural

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<sup>5</sup>See Gijssels as well as Vlaams Blok, "Hoog tijd", "We gaan toch geen Brussel", and "Grote kuis!".

<sup>6</sup>Rokkan and Urwin, 135.

and political divide. Furthermore, distinction will be studied from the point of view specifically of "apartness" and isolation.

Secondly, economic strength will be understood to mean economic benefit. That is, that strength will be understood to mean that a sub-state group would be better off, or perceives that it would be, outside its existing state. Mario Polèse's work on nationalism provides a useful framework for economic analysis of nationalism within larger political-economic entities. He concentrates on three key economic elements: the level of economic integration or disintegration, the importance or absence of system-wide economic policies and institutions, and the level of inter-regional transfer payments. While his research is drawn from an extra-European case, his framework is applicable to other cases. What is particularly useful about his framework is that it forms a cupola under which other research and theories can be put.<sup>7</sup>

Using this structure as the foundation for the study, the interaction between the various elements will be examined. Each of the elements will be analysed, bringing not only the state and the region into focus, but also the European dimension. Firstly, the interaction between the economic elements will be looked at. As will be discussed later, the effects of the interaction between these elements is somewhat more complicated than might be imagined at first glance. Secondly, the interaction between the economic factors and the political ones will be investigated.

The objectives of this study are threefold. First, to examine and explain the resurgence of nationalism within the context of the European Union, using the cases of Flanders and Scotland. The second objective is to examine the role of four independent variables (economic integration, system-wide policies, system of transfer payments, and political isolation) on the dependent variable (desire to participate

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<sup>7</sup>Polèse, 110.

directly in either in the state or in the European Union). It this second element which will be concentrated on most with an aim to showing the strong effect that European integration has had in promoting nationalist causes. The third element of the study will be to examine the interaction between the various elements, with the assumption that they are not necessarily mutually reinforcing.

## **Current and Previous Research**

Several works have examined the existence and politics of regions within the European Community. Few treat specifically the connection between European integration and sub-state nationalism, and even fewer focus on this exclusively. Research in this field is nascent and, as yet, remains largely undeveloped and unfocussed.

Three authors in particular have contributed directly to this field of study, James G. Kellas, Michael Keating, and Barry Jones. While each of these authors deals most particularly with the phenomenon in the United Kingdom, they do situate their work within a broader European setting. Each of these three particularly emphasise the economics of the question, with special attention being paid to the comparative transfer payment mechanisms within the state and the EU structures.

There are also a number of works on the European regional question and subsidiarity more generally studied. Of particular interest is Marc Lambinet's *Les Pouvoirs régionaux en question*, which deals with several aspects of this complicated question as it relates to sub-state entities in the EU. By examining both nationalist and non-nationalist regions, he brings up several interesting points concerning the role of geographically-based, as opposed to issue-based, sub-state actors.

Another important body of work relates to the process of integration in Europe. Although many works deal with European integration in general, a number

of books dealing specifically with the politics surrounding the Single European Act and the Treaty of Maastricht are also appearing. Geoffrey Garrett and Andrew Moravcsik have each published articles which conclude that these two treaties were negotiated from a statist vantage point; that they were projects not only to further integration, but to ensure the primacy of the state in so doing. Derek W. Urwin's *The Community of Europe: A History of European Integration since 1945* traces the development of this trend within the larger history of the EU.

Finally, the work of Hudson Meadwell has been useful from a comparative approach. While his work is a thorough examination of an extra-European case, his theories also provide a broader application suitable to the movements examined in this study. His research deals more closely with political mobilisation and the development internally of the sub-states' relations with the central state and provides a good basis for explaining differences between the Scottish and Flemish approaches to independence in Europe.

## Sources

The primary sources used in this thesis can be grouped into three categories; official party sources, partisan literature, and media sources. Official party sources can at the same time provide the most concise look into party claims, but can also be encumbered with party politics that if taken at face value can mislead the reader. For example, during the 1970's devolution debate in the United Kingdom, the Scottish National Party endorsed the UK government's proposal for a Scottish parliament, not out of an ideological belief in a sort of watered-down lopsided British federalism, but rather, because it saw it as an institutional stepping stone to full independence.

A number of *Volksunie* documents were useful such as its election programme for the May 1995 general election, *Met hart en ziel voor Vlaanderen*<sup>8</sup> as well as its programme for the 1994 European Parliament elections. Also useful were its general congress report, *Vitaminen voor Vlaanderen*<sup>9</sup>, the election pamphlet *Vlaanderen zonder de Volksunie? 300.000 Maal nee!*<sup>10</sup> and the collection of speeches and essays by former VU leader, Hugo Schiltz, *Macht en onmacht van de Vlaamse Beweging*<sup>11</sup>. Another rich complementary source of contextual information was an interview with the secretary-general of the *Volksunie*, Willy Kuijpers.

As concerns the SNP, *Scotland: A European Nation and Independence in Europe — Make It Happen Now!*, the party's programme for the 1992 general election were used. Other documents, namely *The Scottish Budget for an Independent Parliament*, as well as a selection of party head Alex Salmond's speeches in *Horizons without Bars* were useful sources of official party information.

As concerns partisan literature, here again, one is faced with a double-edged sword. While these sources tend generally to be free of the party politicking that may, through compromise, have distorted party programmes, it is difficult to ascertain whether these authors, be they organisations or individuals, actually speak for the movement, let alone for the individual members of the sub-state group which they claim to represent. Furthermore, without the constraints that electoral success places on them, these authors may take an extreme position in order to pull their particular movement somewhat in one direction or another, without actually expecting to go quite to the extreme that they propose.

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<sup>8</sup>With Heart and Soul for Flanders

<sup>9</sup>Vitamins for Flanders

<sup>10</sup>Flanders without the *Volksunie*? 300 000 Times No!

<sup>11</sup>Strength and Weakness of the Flemish Movement

A particularly useful book in the Flemish case is Jan Jambon and Peter de Roover's *Vlaanderen staat in Europa*. It is published by the *Davidfonds*, a society dedicated to the protection and promotion of Flemish culture, with Liberal roots but today more closely associated with elements within the more culturally conservative Flemish Christian Democratic Party. The organisation generally takes a more strident approach than does the *Volksunie*, as evidenced by the fact that the VU signed the St. Michael's Accord of Constitutional reform in 1990, which is denounced by the *Davidfonds*. Like the VU, the *Davidfonds*, does not necessarily see independence for Flanders as the only answer to Flanders's grievances. It does, however, establish strict preconditions to remaining within a Belgian confederation<sup>12</sup>; preconditions which, by the admission of its proponents, are unlikely to be agreed to by either the non-Flemish population of Belgium or its political representatives.<sup>13</sup> The book itself is recent, published in 1994, and deals specifically with the issue of Flanders and its possible role as a full and independent participant in "Europe". It is difficult to know what the "average" Fleming feels with regard to this issue, but even taking into consideration the conservative tendency when voting, electoral behaviour would indicate this work to be calling for more than would the "average" Flemish citizen. Another source, linked to the VU, without carrying the official party line shows a more heterogeneous and varied face of Flanders's self-image, *Hersens op z'n Vlaams: Bekende Vlamingen over het Vlaanderen van morgen*, though this collection of essays is less specifically related to Flanders's position in Europe.

Similarly, on the part of Scotland, Paul H. Scott has written a book, *Scotland in Europe: Dialogue with a Sceptical Friend*, which is strikingly parallel to that of .

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<sup>12</sup>Its three main conditions to remain within a Belgian confederation are: (1) that the confederation be one of duality, between Flanders and Francophone Belgium without a separate role for Brussels; (2) that the confederation have only those powers conferred upon it by the two states; and (3) that Brussels belong, in the capacity of capital city, to the State of Flanders.

<sup>13</sup>O.Al. "Le Davidfonds".

Jambon and de Roover. Although Scott does have links to the SNP, his book is not an SNP publication nor does it endorse a strict SNP line. The publication is not obviously linked to any particular political group, and it too specifically treats the question of a fully independent Scotland as an EU member state. Scott also highlights explicitly the concerns and arguments of what an "average" Scot may feel. Indeed, as he himself points out, his book addresses many of the concerns voiced by voters while he was canvassing a Tory riding for the SNP.

Finally, news articles and reports were considered. These provided a perspective from outside academia and the political scene. Appealing to a broader, more general audience, the issues raised would tend to focus somewhat more on those of the public at large.

In sum, the materials used consist of general discussions of the history and politics of the nations and states in question as well as of the EU. This is supplemented by academic work linking the phenomenon of nationalist assertion and integration within the context of the EU. Finally, primary sources, particularly party programmes, policy statements, and partisan literature are used to provide material for further discussion and argumentation.

### **Definition of Important Concepts**

The study of nationalism in Europe is made difficult by terminology that is far from standardised or consistent. These terms, or at least some of the different conceptions of them, are outlined below.

In this work, the distinction between the concepts of "nation" and "state" is quite important. "Nation" should be understood to mean a "large number of people of mainly common descent, language, history, etc., usually inhabiting a territory bounded by defined limits and forming a society under one government."<sup>14</sup> Gellner's definition, based on two points, though somewhat cumbersome, is worth citing here:

1 Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating.

2 Two men are of the same nation if and only if they *recognize* each other as belonging to the same nation. In other words, *nations maketh man*; nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities. A mere category of persons (say, occupants of a given territory, or speakers of a given language, for example) becomes a nation if and when the members of the category firmly recognize certain mutual rights and duties to each other in virtue of their shared membership of it. It is their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind which turns them into a nation, and not the other shared attributes, whatever they might be, which separate that category from non-members.<sup>15</sup>

Other words used to describe similar concepts include "nationality" and "people".

While an in-depth discussion of what constitutes a nation, or how precisely it should be defined, is beyond the scope of this work, suffice it to say that the two nations that will form the focus of this work are Flanders and Scotland.

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<sup>14</sup>Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "nation".

<sup>15</sup>Gellner, 7.

"State", for the purposes of this work, should be understood to mean the following:

The "state" is that institution or set of institutions specifically concerned with the enforcement of order (whatever else they may also be concerned with). The state exists where specialized order-enforcing agencies, such as police forces and courts, have separated out from the rest of social life. They *are* the state.<sup>16</sup>

This definition is rather specific to the modern Western Europe reality, and it is neither universal nor normative. None the less, it will do for the purposes of this work. The states which will be studied in this work will be the Kingdom of Belgium and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

### *Region*

The definition of "region" is unclear. Constitutionally-defined units such as provinces, departments, or *Länder* of the Netherlands, France, and Germany respectively, are relatively straightforward within the context of the state. This is not entirely so tidy for Flanders and Scotland. While Flanders is recognised as a Region within Belgium, there exists the difficult situation of Brussels, to be discussed later. As for Scotland, whatever its cultural, historical and political richness and uniqueness, it is institutionally, barely more than an administrative concept within a unitary state. A distinct border between England and Scotland serves to delineate the competencies of the Scottish Office in adapting UK law to Scotland's distinct legal and educational system.

What constitutes a "region" on an EU scale, however, remains poorly defined in much of the literature. There is a central problem with the EU's definition of "region". As Lambinet points out, the regions "ont été élaborées dans le cadre propre

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<sup>16</sup>Gellner, 4.

et étroit des États et non celui plus large de l'Europe ou de la Communauté!"<sup>17</sup> That is to say that "regions", as defined by the various member-states, and accepted by the European Union, do not follow any coherent, consistent set of criteria.<sup>18</sup> In some cases, such as in Scotland and Savoy, today's regions are yesterday's states. In other cases, regions represent historic nations which have not yet formed states since states became recognised as relevant political actors, such as Flanders and Catalonia. In the majority of cases, however, regions, such as the French Centre, East Anglia, and Lisbon-and-Tage-Valley are simply economic or administrative units to facilitate the provision of services by the state.<sup>19</sup> When considering Scotland a region, the EU is using the UK's cultural criterion. However, when it considers Brussels a region, it adopts Belgium's economic, as opposed to its cultural division. Barry Jones points out the conflict present between what he calls "small, historic, and cultural" nations and "economic" regions.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, it is ridiculous to imagine Free-State Bavaria, the Capital Region of Copenhagen, and Rhône-Alps to be at the same politically relevant level.<sup>21</sup>

This is much more than a trivial point. In the absence of strong regional pressures, it is unlikely that states would draw regional boundaries to their own detriment. Furthermore, as is highlighted by Michael Keating and Barry Jones, "It [The Scottish National Party] . . . rejected the model of 'Europe of the regions' put forward by some of the peripheral movements on the continent on the grounds that

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<sup>17</sup>Lambinet, 27.

<sup>18</sup>Lambinet, 17–32.

<sup>19</sup>Lambinet, 293–294 and Rokkan and Urwin, 143.

<sup>20</sup>Barry Jones, 89.

<sup>21</sup>Based on maps and data in Romus.

Scotland is not a region but a nation comparable in status to the twelve member states [of the EC]."<sup>22</sup>

### *"Europe"*

In general, "Europe" will refer broadly to the collective institutions since the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 by the Treaty of Paris. The EEC will refer broadly not only to the European Economic Community, but also to the ECSC and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). Globally, the institutions of "Europe" between 1965 and the Treaty of Maastricht effective as of 1 November 1993, will be referred to as the European Community (EC). After that point, the term European Union (EU) will be used. In any case, the reader should be aware that when a significant difference is implied by the use of "EEC", "EC", or "EU", this will be explicitly highlighted.

### *Dutch, Flemish*

"Dutch" will be used to refer to the language official in and common to both the Netherlands and Flanders. The language is broadly grouped into two collections of dialects, that spoken in the five Flemish provinces of Belgium, and by a minority in Brussels, and the Hollands dialect, spoken in the Netherlands. It is, perhaps, pertinent to point out that this is a political, rather than a rigorous linguistic distinction. Any distinction implicit in these terms will be explicitly emphasised when appropriate. Otherwise, when reference is made to Flemish, it implies generally the Dutch language.

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<sup>22</sup>Keating and Jones, "Nations", 317.

## *Subsidiarity*

As Andrew Scott, et al. point out, "There exists no universal, all encompassing definition of subsidiarity. Like the term 'federalism', subsidiarity is open to a number of alternative definitions and competing interpretations of those definitions."<sup>23</sup> In principle, it means that "decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen"<sup>24</sup>. In the Treaty of Maastricht, it is spelled out as follows:

The Community shall act within the limit of the powers conferred upon it by this Treaty and of the objectives assigned to it therein.

In areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Community shall take action, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and can therefore, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved by the Community.

Any action by the Community shall not go beyond what is necessary to achieve the objectives of this Treaty.<sup>25</sup>

While governments such as those in the UK and Denmark, have seized upon this procedural criterion as a brake to the centralising forces of the EU, movements in such as the Scottish and the Flemish, like others in Spain and Germany, have focussed on it as a general principle to argue that they ought to be afforded a more prominent place in the decision-making process.<sup>26</sup> This contradiction will be further discussed.

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<sup>23</sup>Andrew Scott, 49.

<sup>24</sup>European Communities, *Treaty on European Union*, preamble.

<sup>25</sup>European Communities, *Treaty on European Union*, Title II, Article G, B.(5).

<sup>26</sup>Scott, 52.

# Historical and Political Background

## Belgium, the Flemish Movement, and the *Volksunie*

In order to understand the economic and political factors that have pushed Flemish nationalism within the European Union, it is important to understand the historic reasons underlying that nationalism. Of particular importance, is to understand why Belgium became a federal state and why it did so in the late 20th century. It is also important to understand what forces were behind the founding of the *Volksunie*, and what political events have shaped the party since then.

Belgium is a small country of some 30 000 km<sup>2</sup> on the North Sea, wedged between the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, and France. It is a mostly low-lying and flat country, although it becomes somewhat hilly in the southeast Ardennes region. Of the approximately ten million Belgian citizens, 5.8 million live in the five northern Flemish provinces<sup>27</sup>, 3.2 million live in the southern Walloon provinces<sup>28</sup>, and approximately one million live in the Region of Brussels-Capital, which is surrounded on all sides by the province of Flemish Brabant. Amongst this population are four distinct groups. Although precise figures are contested, estimates put the Flemish population at approximately six million (the population of Flanders plus an estimated 15% of Brussels); the Walloons at just over three million; Francophone Brusselers, who do not consider themselves Walloons, including a small but vocal minority in the Flemish localities which "belt in" Brussels, are just over 850 000; and a small pocket of 65 000 German-speakers live in the Eastern Cantons around the cities of Eupen and Sankt-Vith against the border with Germany.

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<sup>27</sup>West Flanders, East Flanders, Antwerp, Limburg, and Flemish Brabant.

<sup>28</sup>Hainaut, Liège, Namur, Luxembourg, and Walloon Brabant.

After being traded amongst many European rulers, including the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs, the French, and the Dutch, Belgium won its independence in 1830 after a revolt against the Dutch rulers of the time. Its borders have changed little since that time, except for the absorption of a few small parcels of German territory after the First World War.

It is important to realise that for the first century of Belgium's existence, a French-speaking bourgeoisie ruled the country, including the Flemish north. This did much to ensure that the unitary nature of the country was not seriously brought into question until well into the 20th century. French served not only as the *lingua franca*, but also as a social marker, an indispensable resource for anyone aspiring to a position in society. This led to an influx of Flemings from elsewhere in Flanders into the administrative capital, Brussels. As the Flemish speakers inevitably became Gallicised, earning the name of *Franskiljons*<sup>29</sup>, Brussels, like a large part of its population, despite its Flemish origins, became Francophone too. Outside of this small isolated élite, however, the overwhelming majority of Flemings continued to speak their own language.<sup>30</sup>

The Flemish Movement in itself is nothing more than a loose grouping of individuals and organisations who associate themselves with the generally accepted principles of the Flemish Movement. According the Encyclopaedia of the Flemish Movement, the Movement is defined by three central elements. The first is the struggle for language, "the recognition of the native Dutch language of the Flemings"<sup>31</sup>. The second is the national consciousness, "awakening the consciousness of the Flemings of being a nation, and making this existence as a nation recognised by

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<sup>29</sup>or in French, *Fransquillons*.

<sup>30</sup>Delmartino, 35–36.

<sup>31</sup>"de erkenning van de Nederlandse moedertaal der Vlamingen"

opponents"<sup>32</sup>. The third is cultural and material ascendancy, "the intellectual development and the economic and social well-being of the Flemish regions"<sup>33</sup>. This leaves a rather large margin for interpretation.<sup>34</sup>

The first concrete expression of Flemish assertion can be found in the royal commission on the Flemish question established 27 June 1856. This commission, largely comprised of Flamings (unconditional supporters of the Flemish Movement), established what it considered the main grievances of the Flemish people. According to the commission, these included the charge of *lèse-langue* against the Belgian state and called for the official recognition of Flemish as a language in its own right instead of as a low German dialect, recognition of its equality with regards to French, and its adoption in the schools. It is significant that economic grievances were not yet part of the roster. These proposals, moderate as they sound today, went further than the Flemish population at large would have been ready to insist upon, and its ideals remained dormant until the First World War.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, until the First World War, the grievances of the Flemish Movement remained essentially linguistic and cultural, always conceived within the framework of a unitary Belgian state. This began to change with the Great War. By the beginning of the War both Flemish and Walloon politicians were toying with the idea of an administratively separated Belgium along linguistic lines.<sup>36</sup> During the War, there

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<sup>32</sup>"de bewustmaking van de Vlamingen een volk te zijn, en om dit volksbestaan door de tegenspelers erkend te zien."

<sup>33</sup>"de intellectuele ontplooiing en de economische en sociale welvaart van de Vlaamse gewesten"

<sup>34</sup>J. Deleu et al., *Encyclopedie van de Vlaamse Beweging*, Lannoo, 1973, 14 as cited in Jambon, 23 and in Vandenberghe, 77.

<sup>35</sup>Clough, 85-91.

<sup>36</sup>Clough, 117.

were questions about whether to seek the Occupier's help to establish that which the Flemish wanted. There certainly was some collaboration, but its long-term significance is doubtful. Under German occupation, Belgium was administratively split and in 1916 the University of Ghent was "Neerlandicised", becoming the first university of Belgium to offer higher education in Dutch.<sup>37</sup> The real impetus for the politicisation of Flemings, however, was the losses suffered during the War by an army of mostly Flemish enlisted men commanded by a largely Francophone officer corps. This was exacerbated when universal conscription was introduced in 1919. Flemings could no longer tolerate laying down their lives for a state which would not address them, the majority, in their own language. Progressively, first in 1932 and again in 1963, reforms were introduced, delineating the territory of Flanders and bringing Dutch into the state administration, the legal system, and both secondary and higher education.<sup>38</sup>

As elsewhere in Europe, right-wing organisations sprang up in Europe during the inter-war years. Most prominent amongst the Flemish groups was *Verdinaso*<sup>39</sup>, which also found a small following in the Netherlands. During the Occupation, it was again hoped that collaboration with Hitler's Germany might bring about the nationalist goals of the Flemish. There was willing co-operation on the part of a number of Flemish nationalist leaders with the Nazi Occupiers, and this collaboration included the persecution of the Jewish population.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Gijssels, 16.

<sup>38</sup>Delmartino, 36.

<sup>39</sup>An acronym for *het Verbond van Dietse nationaal-solidaristen* (the League of Pan-Netherlandish National-Solidaritists).

<sup>40</sup>Gijssels, 18–38.

After the Allied victory in the Second World War, many of the Flemish collaborators were in the uncomfortable position of having sided with a vanquished occupier. Many of them fled the country, and there was even a failed attempt to set up a Flemish government in exile in Germany. It was a blow to the Flemish nationalist movement which would take until well into the 1950's to recover from. In 1954, after repeated failures, a Flemish nationalist party, the *Volksunie*<sup>41</sup>, was once again established thanks to the efforts of the lawyer Frans van der Elst. The VU was set up by a number of prominent members of *Verdinaso* and started its existence as a Flemish-nationalist anti-"repression"<sup>42</sup> party. Not unusual for a Flemish nationalist party, its success concentrated mainly around the city of Antwerp, Flanders's cultural capital. The existence of a militant organisation, the VMO<sup>43</sup>, linked to the party, only kept the party image associated to that of a neo-Nazi party.<sup>44</sup>

In 1961, however, with election of five deputies in the parliament, the VU found it expedient to gradually take a more moderate stance. In 1963 the party officially severed all links with the VMO, nominally for their refusal to renounce violence and their Fascist-inspired grey shirts. The party changed its statute in 1967 so that it was a pluralistic, and no longer Christian, party. In 1968, a VU deputy of the House of Representatives, Daniël Deconinck proposed that the *Volksunie* soften its line by adopting a platform of federalism rather than nationalism. Although this was still too much for the VU to swallow, and Deconinck was pushed out of the party, the tempering and democratisation of the party was well under way. In 1970, Karel Dillen, a right-wing member, decided that the VU's turn to the left had gone too far

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<sup>41</sup>the People's Union.

<sup>42</sup>"The Repression" was the euphemism used to refer to the state's pursuit of collaborators after the War; a process many Flemish nationalists saw as a pretext to persecute the Flemish nationalist movement.

<sup>43</sup>*Vlaamse Militantenorganisatie* (the Flemish Militants' Organisation)

<sup>44</sup>Gijssels, 38–45.

and quit the party. He would go on to be the central figure, indeed leader-for-life of the *Vlaams Blok*<sup>45</sup>, a right-wing xenophobic anti-Establishment party that embraces elements of Flemish nationalism. In 1974 Van der Elst was replaced by Hugo Schiltz as chairman of the party, symbolically but definitively breaking the VU from its right-wing extremist past. It was a democratic, or as its detractors termed it, "pragmatic", Flemish nationalist party, willing to work within the confines of parliamentary democracy to achieve its goals.<sup>46</sup>

In the meanwhile, there had been a significant change in the socio-economic and political distribution of power. During the nineteenth century, Wallonia was the main beneficiary of Belgium's industrialisation, and there was even a certain degree of temporary Flemish settlement in this area. After the Second World War, as Wallonia's industrialised infrastructure grew obsolete, Flanders experienced a more modern industrialisation, partly due to its advantageous position on the Belgian coastline. Since the First World War, it had been Flanders putting the unitary nature of Belgium into question, largely for linguistic and cultural issues; now, in the post-World-War-II era, Walloons, too, but for their own reasons, were eager to see autonomy for their own region. The Belgian government is Constitutionally guaranteed to be half Flemish and half Francophone, with the exception of the prime minister, who is usually a Fleming. The parliament, on the other hand, is based on population, and therefore majority Flemish. Wallonia, and to a lesser degree Brussels, wished to see some form of socio-economic autonomy to protect its declining economic prosperity from the ravages of the largely free-market orientation of Flanders. While Wallonia tended to vote for the Socialist Party, Flanders voted

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<sup>45</sup>the Flemish Bloc.

<sup>46</sup>Gijssels, 38-81.

Christian Democrat and Liberal. What developed, then, were three mutually reinforcing cleavages: linguistic, socio-economic, and party-political.<sup>47</sup>

It is within this framework that Belgium's slow march from a unitary to a federal state must be understood. It is a complex process which, none the less, requires examination in order to understand the development of Flemish nationalism. Belgium, unlike other notable federations such as the United States and Switzerland, has undergone a federalism of dissociation; it was a unitary state that federalised, rather than various states coming together to form a federation. In 1963, the so-called linguistic frontier separating Flemish Belgium from the Francophone was established. What logically followed was to give this division political meaning. In 1970, the prime minister Gaston Eyskens declared in a report to Parliament that "l'État unitaire . . . est dépassé par les faits"<sup>48</sup>. Within the same year, Parliament passed a law recognising, but in no way empowering, four linguistic regions (Flemish, French, German, and bilingual French-Flemish), three cultural communities (Flanders, French-Speaking Belgium, and German-Speaking Belgium), and three economic regions (Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels). Two cultural councils, with limited linguistic and cultural competencies, were also established, one Francophone, and one Flemish.<sup>49</sup>

In 1980, the so-called Egmont Pact established Flanders and Wallonia as regions, each with a parliament and a government. In the same year, the two "cultural" councils were given responsibilities for social aid and health. Brussels, with its triple mandate as capital not only of Belgium and the Francophone Community, but also of Flanders, despite the city's Francophone majority, was so

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<sup>47</sup>Delmartino, 36-37 and Hooghe, "Belgian Federalism", 137-38.

<sup>48</sup>Gaston Eyskens cited in Pierre Bouillon, "Vingt-trois ans".

<sup>49</sup>Bouillon, "Vingt-trois"

sensitive that no settlement could be arrived at. Its official territory was limited to 19 central communes, but beyond that, as Belgian parlance has it, the issue was put "in the icebox". Its importance as the capital of Europe, too, makes it an important prize which neither side was likely to sacrifice easily, either for its economic-political benefits, or for the symbolism. It was left in the hands of an executive formed by three federal ministers.<sup>50</sup>

The negotiations began in the late 1970's, and the *Volksunie*, playing by the rules of parliamentary democracy, signed on with the Flemish and Francophone Christian Democrats, CVP and PSC<sup>51</sup>, the Flemish and Francophone socialists, the SP and PS<sup>52</sup>, and the Brussels Francophone-promotion party, FDF<sup>53</sup>. This pact was heavily criticised by Flamings, the resolute supporters of the Flemish Movement, who opposed the non-dual nature of the evolving federalism. Though a definite solution had yet to be found for Brussels, it was clear that it was unlikely that the federalist structure would evolve into an institutionalised dialogue between only Flemings and Walloons: Brussels was clearly going to gain a voice of its own. This two-against-one arrangement ran counter to one of the most basic claims of the Flemish Movement which considered both Wallonia and Brussels to be essentially Francophone political voices and should, therefore, not be accorded two separate institutional representations. Furthermore, Flamings were upset that Brussels was evolving not as a bilingual capital, but as a Francophone city with protection for its Flemish-speaking minority. Putting its name to this pact did much to isolate the right wing of the *Volksunie* and threatened segments of its electorate. Although the party

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<sup>50</sup>Bouillon, "Vingt-trois"

<sup>51</sup>*Christelijke Volkspartij*, and *Parti social-chrétien* respectively.

<sup>52</sup>*Socialistische Partij* and *Parti socialiste* respectively.

<sup>53</sup>*Front démocratique des Francophones*

countered by giving a number of anti-Egmont right wingers a prominent place, it continued to lose ground, particularly to the more right-wing *Vlaams Blok*.<sup>54</sup>

In 1983, a German-speaking council was also established to deal with the cultural matters of that linguistic group. In 1988 the Regions' powers were expanded to include all issues related to territory, such as environment, public works, housing, etc. At the same time, the cultural Communities were given authority over education. From this point, the principle of an asymmetrical federalism, based on territorially-understood economic Regions and "personalisable" cultural Communities becomes well rooted.<sup>55</sup>

In 1989, Brussels was finally taken out of the icebox and given its own assembly. It was the first of the federalised entities to have a directly-elected parliament as opposed to an assembly made up of members of the federal House of Representatives exercising a "dual mandate". This was reconfirmed in the St. Michael's accords and passed into law in 1993. It also provided for the direct election of all the federated assemblies, largely abolishing the dual mandates of the federal parliamentarians<sup>56</sup>. The federated entities were, furthermore, largely permitted to establish their own procedural processes. The responsibilities enjoyed by the federated entities were further broadened and their definitions refined. Of particular importance is the possibility given to the federated entities to act on an international scale, and thus conclude treaties with foreign governments. The largely administrative, and politically unimportant, provinces were further reduced in their

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<sup>54</sup>Gijssels, 81-88.

<sup>55</sup>Bouillon, "Vingt-trois"

<sup>56</sup>While this is so, a number of Brussels representatives sit in the Flemish and Francophone cultural assemblies, while the three cultural Communities send representatives (one from the German-speaking Community, and ten each from the Flemish and Francophone) from their assemblies to the federal Senate.

powers. Belgium's only bilingual province was divided into two unilingual ones, Flemish Brabant and Walloon Brabant. Brussels, the last remaining zone in Belgium where both Dutch and French are recognised, was not made part of any of the now unilingual provinces, and has its provincial services provided by the Regional government of Brussels-Capital.<sup>57</sup> This accord is an enormous step forward for the autonomy of the various constituent populations of Belgium.<sup>58</sup> Although many, especially in Francophone political circles, see this as the culmination in Belgium's Constitutional development, others, most notably amongst the Flemish political class, see this as just the most recent of many steps.<sup>59</sup>

Despite the bitter experience of the Egmont Pact, the *Volksunie* signed its name to this next set of Constitutional reform. The Saint Michael's Accord was a great leap for Flemish autonomy, especially thanks to its elected parliament and right to negotiate treaties with foreign powers.

Furthermore, the social security system of Belgium was gradually becoming the centre of much controversy. Transfers from the richer Flanders to the poorer Francophone parts of the country were increasing to the extent that the net income of Wallonia was greater than that of Flanders. In exchange for the VU's signature, Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene promised to deal with the problem of unjust transfers in the social security system. This deal was not part of the Accord itself, but would be independently dealt with. The VU found itself under pressure from various elements in the Flemish Movement to show which concrete results for

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<sup>57</sup>Dehaene, 7–8.

<sup>58</sup>Huygebaert, 14.

<sup>59</sup>Flemish Government, *Discussienota*.

Flanders justified its participation in the federalisation process. The VU has continued to pressure the federal government on this issue.<sup>60</sup>

In summary, then, there are three "tiers" of government in Belgium, the federal government, the Communities, and the Regions. The Communities deal with "personalisable" issues, such as language, culture, and education. There are three Communities, the Flemish, the Francophone, and the German-language. The Regions deal with territorially-bound issues, mostly economic. There are three Regions, Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels-Capital. The federal government deals with most international affairs, defence, monetary policy, and, of course, "European" affairs. Each have a parliament and an assembly, with the exception of the Flemish who have combined their institutions so that both Community and Regional policy are determined by a single parliament and executed by a single government.

It may seem odd that Belgium has federalised in such complicated terms. It is a settlement that is certainly controversial amongst the various groups involved. It is, however, important to note that Belgium "devolved" into a federation, unlike other prominent federations which were formed by various separate states joining together, or decreed into existence. In the United States and Switzerland, in contrast to Belgium, small groups of ruling élites were able to make federal arrangements on behalf of the state that they represented. In Belgium, on the other hand, a complex history of socio-economic and political entanglements and compromises led to a system which reflects the conflict that made it. As Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene aptly stated,

It is . . . self-evident that the breakthrough in the Saint-Michael's agreement [the most recent evolution to a federal system] has only been made possible by having the structures in Flanders and in Wallonia

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<sup>60</sup>Huygbaert, 14-17.

develop asymmetrically, as the Flemish think in terms of community, while the French-speakers think rather along regional lines.<sup>61</sup>

This process of political change has produced several important factors. Firstly, since the First World War, Flanders has been able to assert itself more and more effectively not only culturally but also politically and economically. Secondly, it is important to note that the federated entities have acquired significant powers, especially in the case of Flanders which has combined its cultural Community and economic Region into a single legislature and administration. Furthermore, many of the powers left in federal hands, most notably monetary policy, are fields which the Belgian state is shedding in favour of the EU.

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<sup>61</sup>Dehaene, 11.

## **The United Kingdom, Scotland, and the SNP**

While the story of Flanders is that of a majority progressively staking its claim on the institutional structure of the state, the Scotland's history is that of a self-perceived nation administered within a centralised state. Scotland has not had the demographic, electoral, or political weight to make it an active partner in negotiating any evolution in the constitution of the state. Since any significant relationship with the European Union must pass through the state, the development of Scotland and Scottish nationalism within the political and economic context of the UK is pertinent.

The United Kingdom, situated off the western coast of Europe is composed of the island of Britain and six counties in the northern part of the island of Ireland. Of a total population of some 55 million, 45.6 million live in England to the south, 2.8 million in Wales to the west, 5 million in Scotland to the north, and 1.6 million in Northern Ireland.

The first king to rule over most of what is today understood as Scotland, was the somewhat mythical Duncan I whose reign began in 1034. In 1320, the Declaration of Arbroath was sent to the pope by Scottish barons declaring that they would never bow to the English. For the next 400 years, Scotland was racked by power struggles with the English, invasions, and the internal strife common to all European countries of the time. In 1707, the Scottish parliament voted for Union with England with, as a backdrop, a failed attempt at Scottish colonial expansion, military defeat, and bribery by Unionists. The Unionists argued on behalf of the protection of Protestantism, the trade benefits of Union with England and its Empire, the freedom and liberty of England, and the mutual security afforded by tying two antagonists together<sup>62</sup>. With the exception of religion, these have been the main

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<sup>62</sup>A modern parallel might the tying of France and Germany together in the  
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Unionist arguments up to this day. Although some sort of federal Britain had been hoped for, what essentially happened was that 45 Scottish MP's were admitted to the English parliament, which as a whole then exercised sovereignty over Scotland as well as England. Scotland, however, was permitted to maintain its own system of law, education, and its Presbyterian religion. None the less, there were riots throughout Scotland protesting the Union. Despite early dislocations of the Scottish economy, over the next 200 years Scotland was to benefit from the effects of a wider market.<sup>63</sup>

Modern Scottish Nationalism can be traced from the end of the 1800's. As the movement for Home Rule in Ireland was flowering and enjoying some success, many saw a similar arrangement for Scotland on the horizon. The Scottish Office was set up in 1885, giving Scotland its "own" minister and state secretaries, responsible for such policies as education, health care, justice, the environment, industry, transportation, culture, tourism, and housing. In August 1914, a bill on Scottish Home Rule was abandoned during its second reading in Parliament because of the War.<sup>64</sup> During the inter-war years, Scotland experienced an acute economic downturn, much worse than that felt in England. This economic downturn did much to sap the vigour out of the Scottish movement. As one Labour Home-Ruler wrote, "What purport would there be in getting a Scots parliament in Edinburgh if it has to administer an emigration system, a glorified Poor Law and a graveyard?"<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>(...continued)

European Union which has made a fourth war between the two continental powers unthinkable.

<sup>63</sup>Marr, 9-22.

<sup>64</sup>Marr, 50-51 and Neefs, "Britten worstelen"

<sup>65</sup>Tom Johnston cited in Marr, 56.

After successive failures on the part of both the Liberal and Labour parties to carry through promises of Home Rule, the National Party of Scotland was founded in 1928. It was a party that could only be described as motley, bringing together both extremes from a number of spectra; socialists and the right wing, "separatists" and "Imperialists", extremists and moderates, labourers and the intelligentsia.<sup>66</sup> In 1934 it joined with the more clearly right-wing Scottish Party to form the Scottish National Party.<sup>67</sup>

The cause of Scottish nationalism faded somewhat during the late inter-war years. As the Second World War approached, however, a resurgence occurred. Scots were beginning to question whether it was just that Scottish conscripts should fight England's wars. The SNP, however, had evolved to be reasonably left-leaning and definitely opposed to any form of fascism, and finally accepted the war and conscription. This issue was to provide the pretext for a split in the party when in 1942, during a party congress, a crisis broke out, nominally over the War, but chiefly over strategy. The debate was over how the SNP could best advance its goals of Home Rule for Scotland, by challenging the other parties electorally, or by working together with them, and sometimes within them, to bring about a wide consensus of political support.<sup>68</sup> As Andrew Marr stated,

If the SNP took the low road of party politics, opposing itself to the rest of the Scottish political parties, it risked the ghetto. It had to face the fact that although most Scots wanted Home Rule of some kind, they rarely thought it the most important thing. They were not oppressed, and they were just as concerned as English voters about

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<sup>66</sup>Marr, 63–67.

<sup>67</sup>Marr, 70.

<sup>68</sup>Marr, 88–92.

Britain's standing in the world, the Cold War and Britain's post-war economic crisis.<sup>69</sup>

The split eventually led the SNP into near obscurity while leader John MacCormick went on to lead the Scottish Convention, which brought about the signing in 1949 of a Covenant by representatives of virtually every sector of Scottish society. The signatories pledged themselves "in all loyalty to the Crown and within the framework of the United Kingdom, to do everything in [their] power to secure for Scotland a Parliament with adequate legislative authority in Scottish affairs"<sup>70</sup>. In all, two million names were collected. On the whole, though, Scottish nationalism suffered from an upsurge in "British" nationalism brought on by the post-War victory elation. It suffered even further in the late 1950's when Scotland's economy was again in decline, and fears of "going it alone" resurfaced.<sup>71</sup>

The SNP's first real electoral success came in 1966 when they won 15 % in the seats that they contested. A modest start, certainly, but a foretaste of what was to come. The party was becoming more organised, better run, and, most importantly, attracting progressively more members and voters. In 1967, in the traditionally Labour electoral seat of Hamilton, the SNP won its first parliamentary seat in a by-election. It was Winnie Ewing, today's Madame Écosse in the European Parliament, who won 46% of the popular vote and brought the SNP exposure the likes of had only been dreamed of only a year earlier. The traditional parties, Conservative and Labour, scrambled to take the wind out of the SNP's sails. "In London, at least, no one seemed to be able to remember quite why a Scottish parliament was so

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<sup>69</sup>Marr, 88-92.

<sup>70</sup>As cited in Marr, 47.

<sup>71</sup>Marr, 95-106.

unacceptable."<sup>72</sup> This is what catapulted Devolution onto the political agenda as a serious issue.<sup>73</sup>

The 1970's were for Britain the years of Devolution, a term vaguely referring to an increased autonomy for Scotland and Wales within the structure of the British state. Politicians seriously examined the issue of a Scottish parliament, but as Andrew Marr puts it, "[Prime Ministers] Wilson and Heath decided that a bit of Home Rule, a toy parliament, albeit with working and satisfactorily noisy parts, would end the Scottish tantrum."<sup>74</sup> To its fullest extent, however, it has been understood to be a federalism *à la britannique*<sup>75</sup>. In Scotland, some saw Devolution as a tinkering, irrelevant to the larger running of the United Kingdom, while others saw it as a stepping-stone to full Scottish independence.<sup>76</sup>

The debate over Devolution in Scotland, though, must be understood within the political context of 1970's. Three "other" big issues were confronting the people during these years: oil, Europe, and jobs. In 1970, British Petroleum struck oil in the North Sea off the Scottish coast, the revenue of which London was unwilling to earmark for Scotland. By 1976, British Petroleum was pumping 11.5 million tonnes of oil, which by 1979 had come to 76.5 million. The SNP quickly caught on with slogans such as "It's Scotland's Oil" and "Rich Scots or Poor Britons?". As Britain's membership in the European Community came up, the SNP campaigned against it largely, though not exclusively, on the grounds that EC membership for Scotland ought to be negotiated and decided by Scotland itself and not on its behalf from

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<sup>72</sup>Marr, 120.

<sup>73</sup>Marr, 106–120.

<sup>74</sup>Marr, 122.

<sup>75</sup>"Devolution, federalisme op zijn Brits" in Neefs, "Nationalisten zwepen".

<sup>76</sup>Marr, 107–130.

London.<sup>77</sup> The SNP campaigned with the slogan, "No — On Anyone Else's Terms". Although some elements in the SNP, as in Scotland in general, were hostile to and suspicious of "Europe" in and of itself, many leaders were in fact pro-EC.<sup>78</sup> As for unemployment, Scotland's heavy industry was rapidly becoming obsolete. In this respect, Scotland was suffering from the socio-economic and political cleavage which has already been noted on the part of Wallonia in Belgium.<sup>79</sup>

In 1975, a White Paper was produced on Scottish Devolution, one which made the Scottish parliament subject to overrule by London and gave it only very limited tax-raising powers. In Scotland, politicians considered it a sell-out. In London, however, it was an accomplishment that even this much was permitted. The SNP, however, grudgingly agreed to work in favour of the Devolution plan, seeing it as the best they could hope for from the London government at the time. At the same time they pledged to continue the struggle for a "real" Scottish parliament. As the political temperament became hotter, the SNP leadership made calls to underline the party's moderation and its loyalty both to the Crown and to the Commonwealth.<sup>80</sup>

After February 1977, when a Wales and Scotland bill was defeated in Parliament, a new Scotland bill was introduced to separate the issues of Wales and Scotland and redefine the powers to be granted to the latter. Separate Welsh and Scottish Devolution bills gained Royal Assent on 31 July 1978, setting the stage for a referendum which had to win the approval of at least 40% of the Scottish electorate. Although more Scots voted for Devolution on 1 March 1979 than voted against<sup>81</sup>,

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<sup>77</sup>Marr, 131-135.

<sup>78</sup>Harvie, 190.

<sup>79</sup>Marr, 131-135.

<sup>80</sup>Marr, 141-152.

<sup>81</sup>1.23 million in favour, 1.15 million against.

because voter turnout was a low 63.8%, the required 40% was not attained. Much of the negative vote came as a result of the unpopularity of the government in London, as the whole country lived through the infamous "winter of discontent" of labour unrest and lapses in the provision of public services and utilities.<sup>82</sup>

Under the Thatcher years of the 1980's, questioning Scotland's place within the United Kingdom was strictly taboo. Perhaps the most striking issue to confront Scotland was the hated poll tax, debated towards the end of the decade. The Conservative government in London was under pressure to replace an unpopular system of tax rates. Its solution was the now notorious poll tax, a flat tax imposed by local councils on all its residents. What outraged Scots was that this poll, eventually at the heart of Thatcher's downfall, was "tested" a year earlier, 1989, in Scotland than in England and Wales. In their haste to abolish an unpopular tax, however, London politicians ignored all indications from Scotland concerning reaction to such a tax. The poll tax was so wildly unpopular that many people simply refused to pay. As a result, local councils could barely come up with 75% of their budget needs. Although the tax was eventually applied throughout the whole of the United Kingdom, its unpopularity resonated particularly strongly in Scotland where it was imposed a year earlier than elsewhere and by a party, the Tories, who were a minority in Scotland.<sup>83</sup>

During this period, the SNP went through a particularly trying time as it attempted to pick up the pieces after the Devolution débâcle. As a result of its reorientation, it positioned itself more clearly as a centre-left party and reformulated its policy on Europe. Realising, somewhat late, the strategic possibilities, the SNP enthusiastically embraced a policy of "Independence in Europe". This policy was

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<sup>82</sup>Marr, 151-163.

<sup>83</sup>Marr, 164-180.

overwhelmingly adopted in the conference of 1988. In the same year, a broad coalition of Home Rulers, the so-called Convention, met to draft "The Claim of Right" in July 1988. The SNP eventually pulled out because it did not want to work alongside Labour, and because, "[t]here is no such thing as a unilateral declaration of devolution."<sup>84</sup> All in all, the 1980's were a dormant, but regenerative time for Scottish nationalism.<sup>85</sup>

With the SNP having regained its strength, its supporters looked to the 1992 general election to see their aspirations answered. All predictions were that there would be a "hung" parliament, in which no one party would an overall majority, or that Labour would win. In either case, Scottish nationalists felt sure that Home Rule was just around the corner. When it came to election day, of the Scottish electorate, 52% (58 of 72 seats) voted for Home Rule parties (Labour and Liberal Democrat), 20% (3 seats) voted for the SNP, and 25.6% (11 seats) voted Conservative. But the UK as a whole went Tory — no hung parliament, no coalition, no party-political deals, no Home Rule.<sup>86</sup>

In sum, Scotland, while economically, if not culturally distinct from England, has none the less been subject to laws made in London by an overwhelmingly English parliament. This parliament and government have often been regarded by Scotland as ignoring the effects of its decisions north of Hadrian's Wall. Scotland has no government or administration of its own, aside from the Scottish Office. The Office, however, serves the UK government rather than any specific Scottish constituency. The SNP has tried to capitalise on these elements, presenting them as evidence of outside rule, but its success has been tempered by a number of factors. Amongst

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<sup>84</sup>attributed to the SNP in Marr, 209.

<sup>85</sup>Marr, 189–209.

<sup>86</sup>Marr, 210–240.

these are domestic politics, the single member district plurality electoral system of the UK, as well as the party's own erratic stance on Scottish independence and Europe.

## European Integration

The situation of Flanders and Scotland, however, is not limited to their institutional status within their respective states. Progressively, another order of administration and government, with both political and economic ramifications has made its presence felt. This is, of course, the European Union, which has had dramatic effects in such domains as monetary policy, trade, health standards, and foreign policy as much for states as for sub-state entities. The place of Scotland and Flanders within this new order, does, however, result directly from their place within their respective states. What makes this so, is the evolution of the Union, constantly torn between the opposing trends of federalism and inter-governmentalism. The nationalism of the areas studied in this thesis cannot be understood without understanding how and to what degree the reigns of power in the EU have remained in the hands of the internationally-recognised states.

Some kind of project of European integration is a concept that has a long history. The Roman Empire, the Holy Roman Empire, the Napoleonic Empire, and the Third Reich were all projects to bind Europe together in some form of union or another. What is perhaps unique about the current project, is that it is more or less willingly undertaken by its participants. Of course, this is not to say that no opposition exists, but this opposition falls into what is normally considered the parameters of willing participation. For the purposes of this thesis, what is important is to trace the development of the most recent project, the European Union, and its decision-making process.

The series of events leading to the creation of the European Union go back at least as far as the end of World War II, with the Marshall Plan and Cold War tensions rising. The first real institutional thread, however, can be drawn from 1951. In response to a shortage of coal and an oversupply of steel in the post-war years, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was brought into existence by the

signatures of six countries, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Germany, and Italy, on the Treaty of Paris on 18 April 1951. Two of its most important proponents were Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet, today recognised as the grandfathers of the European Union. Over the years, it worked effectively to create a single market in these industries. It was not perfect and it often came into conflict with the individual interests of the member states, but on the whole it was able to eliminate much of the trade discrimination between the countries and within eight years, trade had significantly increased in the affected sectors for each of the member states.<sup>87</sup>

Over the years, there were several failed attempts to integrate further. In many cases, the negotiations ran aground due to difficulties incorporating Germany and Italy, who were still remembered by their neighbours all too well for their roles during the Second World War. However, in 1957, the ministers of the ECSC countries were able to establish the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) and the European Economic Community (EEC), and hopes emerged that it would be possible for countries outside the founding Six to join into these arrangements. The hope was that economic co-operation would spill over into political co-operation. The Treaty of Rome, which established these Communities, opened a new way for integration to proceed forward and remains the core document of the European Union today.<sup>88</sup>

The immediate goals of the EEC were to progressively harmonise "the economic policies of the Member States"<sup>89</sup> to improve the standard of living, promote economic growth, and generally bring relations closer between the participants. A

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<sup>87</sup>Urwin, 43–57

<sup>88</sup>Urwin, 58–75.

<sup>89</sup>Treaty of Rome as cited by Urwin, 78.

European Social Fund, a European Investment Bank, and a European Development Fund were established. A Commission was set up to serve as the "quasi-executive" arm of the EEC. It was to recommend policy and administer the Treaty of Rome. True executive power, however, lay with the Council of Ministers, the decisions of which the Commission is required to carry out. It was in this body, whose members were representatives of the governments of the member states, where decision-making power was centred. As Derek W. Urwin states, "[T]he Treaty of Rome ultimately rested the future of the EEC in the member governments"<sup>90</sup>.

An Economic and Social Committee was also set up as a strictly advisory body. The Parliamentary Assembly, which was to meet in Strasbourg, was established, but "its suggestions and amendments could safely be ignored with impunity by the Council"<sup>91</sup>. Finally, a Court of Justice, "temporarily" sitting in Luxembourg where it still sits today, was to ensure that the EEC institutions as well as its member states were fulfilling their respective obligations. On the whole, the EEC was successful in liberalising trade and removing trade restrictions and quotas amongst its member states in a large number of economic sectors. In 1965 it was decided to coalesce the ECSC, Euratom, and the EEC into a single European Community, with a common Assembly, Court, Commission, and Council, a process which was complete by 1970.<sup>92</sup>

In 1960, Britain, along with several other non-EEC countries formed the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which was to serve as a counter-weight to the EEC and was to remain a purely trade-oriented economic arrangement, not a political one. In 1961, however, the Conservative UK government of Harold

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<sup>90</sup>Urwin, 81.

<sup>91</sup>Urwin, 83.

<sup>92</sup>Urwin, 76–87.

Macmillan declared that it would apply for membership in the EEC, less than two years after the creation of EFTA. Britain's potential membership was important since it remained the only major Western European state outside the Community. The application, though, was thwarted by France, concerned with Britain's lack of commitment, and overseas obligations, as well as a possible challenge to French influence in Europe. Furthermore, French president de Gaulle feared that given the "special relationship" shared by Britain and the US, British membership to the EEC would effectively open a back door to meddling from the US in European affairs.<sup>93</sup>

In 1965, however, a crisis emerged over two issues that would continue to define the structure of Europe's project of integration. The first was the Commission's desire for an independent source of funding, which it suggested could be raised through revenue from tariffs from non-EEC countries. The second issue was that the Parliament, still unelected and without any significant powers, was anxious to become a true legislature. The issues were linked by the argument that a Commission with its own source of revenue would need a real democratic check on how this revenue was spent. This was coupled with the scheduled move to majority voting within the Council of Ministers. France, however, would not cede to such an erosion of the principle of intergovernmentalism and paralysed the EEC's activities by boycotting all Council meetings of any substance. As Urwin states, "All these disputes were about the same theme: the nature of the Europe that the Six wished to construct and the proper relationship between the Community and the member states."<sup>94</sup>

It was clear that de Gaulle in particular wanted to maintain a "Europe of the States", and in the end, the so-called "Luxembourg Compromise" was struck which

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<sup>93</sup>Urwin, 96-100, 117-126.

<sup>94</sup>Urwin, 113.

essentially continued the practice of unanimous decision making. The Treaty of Rome had provided for the replacement of this system by bringing in majority voting on a larger scale. The states, however, realising that the whole project of European integration could be in jeopardy, agreed that individual states could invoke the rule of unanimity by citing special circumstances for the interests of their state. This crisis was pivotal in the future development of "Europe". As Urwin states, "The effect of the crisis and its resolution through the Luxembourg Compromise was that the future development of the EEC would be much more as an intergovernmental union of independent states".<sup>95</sup>

During the first decade of its existence, the EC functioned with the Council of Ministers forming the nucleus of decision-making power while other EC institutions complied with the decisions it took. That was until December 1969 when the heads of state and government met for the first time in The Hague to discuss the various pressing issues facing the EC. It paved the way for further development of the Common Agricultural Policy, so close to the heart of France, provided for some independent funding for this via the EC, gave the Parliament some say in budgetary matters, and embraced the concept of enlargement. This led to a new form of decision-making which would leave a lasting mark on the EC. Major decisions and broad guidelines were to be taken by the heads of state and government at summit meetings. The principle of state dominance was asserting itself ever stronger. As Urwin notes, "The fact that the green light was given by the collectivity of the heads of government symbolised where power in the Community essentially lay . . ."<sup>96</sup>

In 1970, the Davignon Report, submitted by a Belgian diplomat of the same name, encouraged co-operation in the field of foreign policy in those areas where the

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<sup>95</sup>Urwin, 101-115.

<sup>96</sup>Urwin, 138.

EC's member states already had common interests. It proposed a Political Committee, with the foreign ministers of the member states meeting quarterly and support groups meeting monthly. Notably, co-operation in this field, too, was to be voluntary and take place in an intergovernmental context, outside of an institutional framework.<sup>97</sup>

In 1972 and 1973, three states joined the EC, making a Community of the Nine. The main difficulties lay in Britain's membership as France's traditional reservations again resurfaced. It took a personal meeting in 1971 between President Georges Pompidou and the UK's new prime minister, Edward Heath. Again, it was negotiations between the states that provided for progress, not the workings of the EC's institutions. Thanks largely to Britain's membership, Ireland also joined. Denmark and Norway, also strong trading partners of Britain, were also accepted as members, although, ultimately, Norway could not join because 53% of its voters chose against EC membership in a referendum.<sup>98</sup>

In 1970 in the Treaty of Luxembourg, the EC countries agreed to give the Community some of its own funding. This would come in the form of tariffs on imported manufacturing goods supplemented by a maximum of 1% of VAT revenue raised by the member states. This was for the purposes of funding the CAP and for Commission expenditure in general. In response, the Parliament's powers over budget were somewhat increased, to serve as a check.<sup>99</sup>

Despite these modest gains, however, the European Community grew all the more focussed on the concept of intergovernmentalism during the 1970's. The

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<sup>97</sup>Urwin, 147-149.

<sup>98</sup>Urwin, 139-144.

<sup>99</sup>Urwin, 153-154.

Commission was seen at best as partner to the states, who only grudgingly, if at all, gave it access to various intergovernmental forums. Commissioners were still appointees of the member states and the Commission president, aside from providing initiative, had no power over the distribution of portfolios amongst the Commissioners or over their dismissal. The Parliament's powers remained very limited and its members appointed until 1979. Even then, its powers were not increased. When in 1982 it refused to pass a budget, the EC simply moved along with a monthly budget one-twelfth that of the previous year. The Parliament's so-called budgetary control consists only of the one-fifth of the budget that is earmarked for non-compulsory spending.

Furthermore enlargement of the EC membership put a further emphasis on the principle of intergovernmentalism. Discussions in the Council become more complicated and, in an effort to avoid a repeat performance of the 1965 crisis, negotiations behind the scenes became more intense. It therefore became necessary for the heads of government to play a more active role.<sup>100</sup>

In 1974, the European Council was set up as a complement to the Council of Ministers. It was a forum for the heads of government, plus the Commission president, to meet three times a year, formalising the emerging practice of summits. The presidency would work on a rotating basis, each country holding it for six months. This was important especially for smaller states as it allowed them to host a European summit, and set its agenda, once every few years. The EC became all the more a club of states. Urwin quotes British prime minister Margaret Thatcher who in 1981 declared that "there is no such thing as a separate Community interest; the Community interest is compounded of the national interests of the Ten member

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<sup>100</sup>Urwin, 164–172.

states"<sup>101</sup> It is important to note that until 1986, the European Council was not formally part of the EC's institutions, meaning that issues other than EC ones were discussed. It also essentially insulated the states in their decision-making power from potential outside meddling from the Commission or the Parliament.<sup>102</sup>

In 1981 Greece and in 1986 Spain and Portugal joined the EC. These new members were significant, because their economies were considerably different from those of the other members and they lacked a real tradition of democracy. Kept outside the EC, and European politics in general, because of their authoritarian dictatorships, the installation of democracy in the mid-1970's opened the door for their entry.<sup>103</sup>

While European Political Co-operation in terms of foreign policy has known some success, Urwin underlines the very important point that,

the fact remains that EPC remains outside the EC structure as an essentially intergovernmental and voluntary operation. As such, it does not in the end involve any erosion of national sovereignty where the member states, most of whom have to reconcile EPC with other foreign policy concerns, do not wish to be associated with any EPC action.<sup>104</sup>

From the mid-1970's through the 1980's, several proposals were put forward to broaden the EC's competencies and improve its effectiveness. In 1976, the report on European Union, known as the Tindeman Report, was issued, followed in 1979 by the report of the committee of the so-called "Three Wise Men". Each of these produced more or less federalist proposals that would have empowered the EC's

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<sup>101</sup>Margaret Thatcher quoted in Urwin, 175.

<sup>102</sup>Urwin, 172-175.

<sup>103</sup>Urwin, 206-211.

<sup>104</sup>Urwin, 217-218.

institutions at the expense of the member states. Both of these initiatives were promptly ignored after being received with appropriate politeness.

In 1981, the Genscher-Colombo Report proposed a much more measured approach, which by the time it was accepted by the European Council had been boiled down to merely an endorsement of current practices. In 1984, the European Parliament overwhelmingly adopted a federalist Draft Document on European Union, known as the Spinelli Report, which was subsequently ignored by the rest of the EC institutions. In the same year, the Dooge Report, initiated by the European Council, proposed another measured approach of strengthening the Commission and the Parliament and streamlining the procedural workings of the European Council and the Council of Ministers. When being discussed in 1985 at the European Council, it was unexpectedly joined by two other reports, the Howe Report from Britain calling for "a code of good behaviour" in decision-making and a French-German proposal to strengthen co-operation between the EC and NATO. With such a variety of proposals pulling in so many different directions, the question relegated to an intergovernmental conference (IGC).<sup>105</sup>

During the discussions of the IGC, the primary focus was to complete the single market for free movement of persons, goods, and capital, which the Treaty of Rome had foreseen completed by 1970. The Single Europe Act (SEA), adopted at the IGC, planned for the single market to be achieved by 1992. It could be thought that this was merely the realisation of the articles of the Treaty of Rome, but it implied much more than that. The full scope of systems of taxation and law, standards and regulations, social welfare and security systems of the member states would all be affected. The ramifications were immense.

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<sup>105</sup>Urwin, 218-228.

With this, came the sense of that the decision-making process had to be revised. Qualified majority voting was instituted for all but new membership applications and the establishing of new policy domains. Purely state interests were somewhat diluted by the introduction of "qualified majority" voting within the European Council and the Council of Ministers. A certain number of votes were attributed to each country, more for bigger states, fewer for smaller ones. A particular number of votes were required to pass a motion, meaning that vetoes for each and every member state have been got rid of. The power of the European Parliament was increased, but only slightly. Any decision by Council which was taken by qualified majority was subject to be rejected or amended by the Parliament, and any parliamentary changes could only be overruled in the Council by a unanimous decision. The SEA also expanded the powers of the European Court, the European Council was formally incorporated into the EC framework, and there was a call for member states to work more closely in the field of a common foreign policy.<sup>106</sup>

Qualified majority effectively meant that for a number of issues, "a single member state, even a big one, can no longer hold back EC legislation on its own."<sup>107</sup> While this is definitely a restriction on the sovereignty of the member-states, it in itself does not imply a transfer of this sovereignty either upwards to the supra-state, nor downwards to the regions, but simply a new distribution amongst member states. It facilitates decision-making between the states, without taking power away from that level.

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<sup>106</sup>Urwin, 230–234.

<sup>107</sup>"[é]én lidstaat, zelfs een grote, [niet langer] op eigen houtje EG-regelgeving [kan] tegenhouden." in Verstraete, 9.

With the passing of the SEA the powers of the EP were indeed expanded, but were still not commensurate with the new powers with which were endowed the other institutions of the EC, in particular the Commission and the Council:

Grâce à l'*Acte unique européen*, on peut dire que le Parlement européen a cessé d'être une assemblée *consultative*, sans toutefois être encore devenu une assemblée *législative* à part entière . . . .

[L]e Parlement européen n'a cessé de dénoncer le 'déficit démocratique' de la Communauté, dû aux transferts des compétences des parlements nationaux, non pas vers lui comme d'aucuns le croient, mais vers le Conseil qui peut ainsi légiférer sans contrôle.<sup>108</sup>

When the European Council met in 1991 to again discuss European Union, the same tensions resurfaced. Two proposals, the so-called Luxurious Tree and the Temple with Pillars, dominated. The Dutch proposal of September 1991, proposed a federalist vision of Union much like a tree with many branches. Currency, foreign and defence policy, justice and internal affairs, were all to be offshoots of a single tree. The European Commission and the European Parliament were to gradually expand their responsibilities and for most issues within the Council of Ministers, the simple majority vote would replace the policy of unanimity. This Luxurious Tree model was flatly rejected by the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, and Portugal. The UK was felt particularly strongly about the use of the much-despised "F-word": federal.<sup>109</sup>

The Dutch proposal rejected, the Twelve moved to adopt the Luxembourg proposal which laid out a Union analogous to a temple with three pillars. The existing European Communities would form the first "supranational pillar, in which majority voting would be in effect. It would be fleshed-out with new powers, such as currency, the environment, consumer protection, and education. Foreign relations

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<sup>108</sup>Burban, 108-9.

<sup>109</sup>Verstraete, 9-11.

and defence would form the second pillar, while internal affairs and justice would be the third. Of the three, the latter two were to remain very much intergovernmental. The agreement, known as the Treaty of Maastricht did again slightly increase the powers of the European Parliament.<sup>110</sup>

With the passing into law of the Treaty of Maastricht more responsibility was again conferred on Europe's assembly. However, it was excluded from a number of significant fields, including changes to treaties, legislative competencies, foreign policy, security, and justice.<sup>111</sup> "In fact, the powers of 'Europe' are expanding faster than the check provided by the [European Parliament]. The democratic deficit is widening."<sup>112</sup>

It is clear that the EU has developed, or, rather, has been made to develop, in such a way as to underline the role of the member states at the expense of interest groups, nations, sub-state groups in general, and the people of Europe more broadly. In other words, the Union has developed such that member states, rather than any of the EU's institutions or sub-state political entities, have both the first and last say. In the words of James G. Kellas, "The EC has yet to determine if it can act independently of individual state interests in favour of territorial minorities, including those seeking separate representation in the institutions of the Community. On present form, it is unlikely to do so, as it is still essentially a club of state governments."<sup>113</sup> MacFarquhar agrees that any devolution of power within the EU from member states to regions would be a significant departure from the traditional

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<sup>110</sup>Verstraete, 10–11.

<sup>111</sup>Verstraete, 33.

<sup>112</sup>"In feite breiden de Europese bevoegdheden zich sneller uit dan de controlemacht van het EP. Het democratisch gat wordt nog groter." Verstraete, 33.

<sup>113</sup>Kellas, "European Integration", 238.

European federalist viewpoint which has regarded Europe as a federation of member-states.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup>MacFarquhar, 23–24.

# Analysis of Significant Factors

## Context

Given the historical antecedents, it is necessary to draw from these the relevant political factors and elements. Most importantly, the relationship between the sub-state nations and their respective states must be examined within the context of a greater European institutional structure. While certain factors may fuel the grievances of a sub-state nation vis-à-vis the state, it is important to see how these elements influence that same nation's attitude towards the European Union. Generally, the nation's perception of the Union and its place in it, is a result of the relationship it has had with the state. The newly emerging relationship then in turn influences the nation's perception of its place within the state.

Much traditional work on nationalism is constructed around the notion of a world system of states without any significant super-state structures, and this analysis revolves around a simple examination of whether a region will be more or less inclined to make some sort of assertion for political independence from the state. Through this analysis, one imagines some central "pole", the state, which either attracts or repels a "particle", the sub-state region, somewhat like a charged particle in a magnetic field. In this analogy, "repulsion" would correspond to a desire for greater regional independence while "attraction" would refer to a lessening of such sentiment. While this research has explained much of the "nationalist question", it neglects a very significant factor in western European states: the presence of the "EU-factor".

Traditional thought can easily be adapted to the realities of states functioning within a super-state structure, that is, with two "poles"; two separate actors which independently attract or repel the "particle". In such a case, the state would form one

pole, and "Europe" would form the second. In such an expanded analogy, the regions, as "particles" could be more attracted to one, or to the other, or repelled by both. Of course, for the moment, the regions are members of both their state and the European Union. The relevant distinction to be drawn is that independent membership within Europe may provide certain attraction apart from independence outside the European Union or continued participation in the Union by way of the current member state. It is within this model that four independent variables will be examined, namely economic incorporation; the presence of system-wide policies; the degree and nature of transfer payments, and the degree of political isolation.

This analysis, however, is based on the assumption, implicitly and explicitly held by nationalists, that an independent Flanders or Scotland would easily, if not automatically, enjoy membership within the EU<sup>115</sup>. The intention here is not to ignore this issue entirely, but rather, to emphasise that it has not been a serious concern for the nationalist movements. Nor has it been significantly deployed by their detractors. While an in-depth discussion of this is beyond the scope of this work, there are three issues that deserve to be treated briefly for the sake of context. The first issue is that of international law, which grants successor states all the rights and obligations that the previously existing state enjoyed. This is supposedly the view held by "[s]enior European legal authorities"<sup>116</sup>, in particular, former Commission Secretary-General, Professor Émile Noël, former President of the European Court, Lord Mackenzie Stuart, and French advocate Xavier de Roux<sup>117</sup>. The second issue is economic. With

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<sup>115</sup>Jambon, 53, 59–61; Volksunie, *Met hart en ziel*, 3; Volksunie, *Vitaminen voor Vlaanderen*, 4; Scott, 41–43; Scottish National Party, *Scotland: A European Nation*, 16; Scottish National Party, *Independence in Europe*, 3.

<sup>116</sup>Marr, 192.

<sup>117</sup>Scottish National Party, *Scotland: A European Nation*, 16 and Keating and Jones, "Nations", 98.

possibly as much as 80% of Europe's oil in Scottish waters<sup>118</sup>, and with Flanders's strong economic position<sup>119</sup>, it is unlikely that the rest of the EU would want to keep these resources outside a Fortress Europe. Finally, there is the question of precedent. How quickly France, Germany, Spain, and Italy admit Flanders and Scotland may depend on how soon they also want to admit Corsica, Basque Country, Catalonia, Free-State Bavaria, Padania, or Friulia<sup>120</sup>. In the case where international law and precedent are unclear, political will, influenced by economic and domestic considerations, may tip the scales.

As already outlined, the EU began as a means for various states to co-operate in the economic domain. This began with the key sectors of the industrial economy, coal and steel, then a customs union, a common market, and perhaps, if the articles of the Treaty of Maastricht are fully realised, it will become a true economic and monetary union with harmonised if not unified monetary, fiscal, and economic policies. Though the EU has begun to manoeuvre on a political level, as was inevitable, its main accomplishments and consequent effects have been economic. Because of this, economic factors, rather than purely political ones, will be discussed in greater depth.

The ideological approach towards economics is, of itself, not significantly more regionalist or statist. Whatever the prevalent economic ideology, it has edged on the state in remaining the centre of all power. More centrally planned economies have, by definition, suffocated the initiatives of the region, and more market-oriented economies have tended to simply "legitimise" the differences between richer and

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<sup>118</sup>Scott, P. 33.

<sup>119</sup>Romus.

<sup>120</sup>Marr, 192 and Keating and Jones, "Nations", 98.

poorer regions.<sup>121</sup> As Keating points out, "[M]odernisation, urbanisation and industrialisation may promote political participation and encourage the emergence of stable mass organisations but there is no *a priori* reason to believe that these should be either Jacobin or regionalist."<sup>122</sup> Regionalism, Lambinet points out, was originally associated with the reactionary right, rejecting the Jacobin ideas of the French Revolution, which abolished the old provincial system and ushered in a centralised France. More recently, however, it has gone hand-in-hand with a repudiation of the nation-state, and has been an argument of the left, and in some cases, the extreme left.<sup>123</sup>

Lambinet is careful to highlight that there is more than a simple folkloric ideal to which groups want to return. While it is indeed a struggle for language and culture, nationalist groups are also vying for economic survival. Lambinet sums up the question well by saying that it encompasses, "tout ce qui fait réellement la vie d'un peuple."<sup>124</sup> There is, therefore, a need to look at specific economic factors rather than broad economic ideologies. As Rokkan and Urwin emphasise, "No matter what their cultural strength, economic weakness can easily provide the basis for arguments against the credibility and viability of self-sufficiency."<sup>125</sup>

A framework based on the economic cost/benefit analysis that a regional group may undergo in determining where its fortunes lie will be used here. Within the

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<sup>121</sup>Lambinet, 63.

<sup>122</sup>Keating, *State and Regional Nationalism*, 13.

<sup>123</sup>Interestingly, though, in a number of cases, it is precisely the anti-system *extreme right* which has flown the regionalist banner. Take for example, the extreme right-wing party, the *Vlaams Blok*, which has made of Flemish nationalism one of the most controversial components of its message.

<sup>124</sup>Lambinet, 62.

<sup>125</sup>Rokkan and Urwin, 134.

general heading of economic incentives, three factors will be investigated; (1) the degree of economic integration; (2) the presence of system-wide policies; and (3) the degree of transfer payments between different regions.<sup>126</sup> To this will be added a fourth factor, political isolation.

## **Four Factors**

### *Economic Incorporation*

Economic incorporation can be understood as the ties that bind a region to a political entity by virtue of its political-economic relationship. This is defined by two central concepts: (1) the integration of the region within the state in terms of economic markets; and (2) the protection that the state gives this region with respect to so-called third parties.<sup>127</sup> Regions that are strongly tied to their state with regard to economic markets are less likely to put the link to this market in question. A state that has provided a profitable market to an internal region, whether through colonies or a large, protected internal market, will more easily command the region's loyalty. On the flip side of the coin, states can also provide protection from outside competition. If a certain region has enjoyed certain privileges in or access to a particular market guaranteed by that region's state, it will find it harder to dispense with the state, and, as a consequence, that privileged protection.

### *System-Wide Policies*

System-wide policies can be understood as the combination of (1) the importance of the economic decisions made at the state level (i.e. how centralised and

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<sup>126</sup>Polèse, 110.

<sup>127</sup>Polèse, 110.

interventionist the state is); and (2) the impact of such centrally-decided policies with regard to the specific region. When state economic policies are trivial and have little effect on the region, the cost of breaking the few existing economic links to the state is minor, but there is also little *economic* impetus to forego the state. In situations in which a region's key segments of the economy remain largely unaffected by state policy, this would neither drive the region away from the state, nor give it much impetus to continue the relationship. On the other hand, when important economic policies set by the state have a profound and negative effect on the region, that region may wish to shake free of the yoke put upon it by the state.<sup>128</sup> For example, a region may perceive itself to be unduly bearing the burden of a particular onerous taxation system. Similarly, if a region is rich in a certain industry or resource, it may resent active and intrusive management on the part of the state.

### *Systems of Transfer Payments*

The third factor to be examined is that of transfer payments amongst regions. It is likely that regions which are net contributors within the state structure would tend to favour independence as a means of releasing themselves from these payments.<sup>129</sup> This has certainly been the case for both Flanders and Scotland.<sup>130</sup> It is here where the effects of participation in the EU are most vague. This is due to the dual nature of transfer payments within the EU.

On the one hand, the Structural Fund is based on a state level while the European Regional Development Fund is organised on a regional level. In the case of the latter, payments are targetted specifically to depressed regions rather than to the

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<sup>128</sup>Polèse, 120-22.

<sup>129</sup>Polèse, 122-124.

<sup>130</sup>Keating, *State and Regional Nationalism*, 4.

state as whole. However, as Paul Romus writes, "A tous les échelons et à tous les moments . . . doit être respecté le principe dit du partenariat, ce qui implique la participation des régions comme entités politiques. Évidemment, dans les États où de telles régions n'existent pas politiquement, ce partenariat se limite aux autorités nationales [Étatiques]." When discussing these regions which exist as relevant political entities, though, he admits that these are few: "Il en va ainsi dans quatre États de la Communauté: l'Allemagne avec ses *Länder*, l'Italie avec ses *Regioni*, l'Espagne avec ses *Comunidades Autónomas*, la Belgique avec ses *Régions*. D'autres pays pourraient les suivre comme la France et le Portugal avec leurs régions. Un courant existe au Royaume-Uni en vue de la reconnaissance des *nations* réunies sous la couronne royale."<sup>131</sup> Therefore, regions can expect to receive these funds, whether or not they remain as constituent parts of their respective states.

However, there have been some problems with this. As Lambinet points out, the regions are given ERDF transfers with the understanding that they are to supplement existing state transfers. In many cases, however, the state has simply withdrawn its own transfer payments, letting European transfers substitute.<sup>132</sup> Jones, for example, shows the limited and ambiguous effects that the ERDF had in Wales.<sup>133</sup>

On the other hand, the newly-formed Cohesion Fund, which was a concession to poorer EC countries as part of the Treaty of Maastricht, is given to the states directly and then only indirectly to the regions, if at all. At this point, regions would certainly see the advantages of receiving not only ERDF payments, but also, Cohesion Fund payments by virtue of being an independent member state. In any case, the Fund is aimed at the poorest member states, and it is unlikely that an

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<sup>131</sup>Romus.

<sup>132</sup>Lambinet, 232 and Keating and Jones, "Nations", 109.

<sup>133</sup>B. Jones 99–105.

independent Flanders or Scotland would qualify. Analysis of this conflict within the scope of national independence movements has, as of yet, not been a topic of significant study.

### *Interaction between Economic Factors*

Several of the economic factors may interact in such way as to reinforce or weaken one another. If a region's economy is largely integrated into the state as a whole, it is unlikely that this would significantly influence the effect of system-wide policies. On the other hand, it is likely that an economy which is oriented outside the state borders may make the effects system-wide policies more acute. That is to say, that the effect of an intrusive and unwelcome state would be even more so when a region's economy is reliant on the state as such. Similarly, such a region may be more likely to dispense with the state if it plays very little role in the economic management of that region.

A region that is strongly economically integrated into the state may be less "vulnerable" to the effects of transfer payments, whether negative or positive. For instance, a region which benefits from privileged access to markets within the state may be willing to shoulder the burden of being a net contributor to a system of transfer payments as the price of its privileged access. On the other hand, a region whose economic fortunes lie outside the state, would be even less willing to bear the costs of the net contributor. Economic integration tends to reinforce the effect transfer payments may have.

Finally, a region which experiences an active and unwelcome state hand in the management of the regional economy, may consider being a net contributor to a transfer payment system an extension of this unwelcome hand. However, when this state intervention is considered positive to the region, it may be less likely to be influenced by effects of transfer payments.

For the three economic factors, then, there is some interaction between elements as shown in the two tables below. The first table shows the interaction when one variable is an incentive to direct participation in the state or Europe. In this case, some of these variables cause a heightened (+) effect on the second variable, increasing how much the second variable encourages or discourages this same incentive. Other variables cause a dampened (-) effect on the second variable, reducing how much the second variable encourages or discourages the incentive. The second table shows the effect when the first variable *discourages* nationalist sentiment.

First variable is a *disincentive* to direct participation in the state or Europe

	economic integration	system-wide policies	transfer payments
economic integration	N/A	+	+
system-wide policies	+	N/A	+
transfer payments	+	+	N/A

First variable is an incentive to direct participation in the state or Europe.

	economic integration	system-wide policies	transfer payments
economic integration	N/A <sup>1</sup>	0	+
system-wide policies	0	N/A	-
transfer payments	+	-	N/A

## *Political Isolation*

Political isolation implies that a sub-state group enjoys a political role less than what it may feel appropriate. This isolation can be with regard to the state, or in the examples discussed here, with relation to some entity beyond the state, such as the European Union. The "role" in question can be any that is deemed politically relevant, whether in the legislative or executive process or with respect to any of the various administrative arms of the state such as, for example, the military, state enterprises, and patronage.

It is perhaps political isolation that is the most intuitively obvious cause of nationalist assertion as well as the easiest to sell to one's constituents. The advantage of casting the issue as a quasi-imperialist one is its appeal on both an intellectual as well as emotional level. Even those with only a basic idea of political processes, will easily be swayed when it is perceived that their collective political voice is being ignored. Furthermore, it can also function as a stream, fed by the tributaries of many economic grievances. "Were it not for our political isolation", the argument often goes, "we would not be subject to these unfair economic conditions. If only we could be heard, our grievances could be addressed."

For the purposes of this thesis, political isolation will focus on the access or lack of the same that sub-state groups have to the European decision-making process. While in Spain, Germany, and Belgium the state has given the regions significant responsibilities, this is not a tendency that they have followed at the EU-level. What representation exists for sub-state groups within Europe and to what degree does the state accommodate sub-state groups when it comes to Europe? How have the member states and the European bureaucracy developed the role of sub-state groups within the EU institutions themselves?

## Flanders

### Economic Incorporation: Flanders's Emphasis on International Markets

Flanders, much like Belgium as a whole, is reliant on trade with its neighbours and has been for quite some time. According to the VU's own figures, international trade accounts for approximately 45% of Flanders's Gross Regional Product, which corresponds closely to independent figures.<sup>134</sup> For this reason, access to Walloon markets is of secondary importance to the Flemish, as these markets are relatively small compared with such traditional partners as Germany, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, which alone account for over 60% of Belgium's foreign trade and over a third of its GDP in 1994.<sup>135</sup> Flanders has always had to look outside the limits of the state to trade, whether the "state" was the Holy Roman Empire, the Spain of the Habsburgs, France, the United Netherlands, or the Kingdom of Belgium. The state, aside from ensuring good relations with its neighbours, has not significantly provided markets for Flemish economic activity.

Rokkan and Urwin make a point of considering regions in the context of greater economic networks and underline the role of economic-geographic periphery. They discuss "Interface peripheries" that link various international markets and tend to have thriving economies very much economically independent of their respective Centres. The Low Countries have been called the hinge of Western Europe, acting as the entryway to the Continent from Britain and America, wedged between the powerhouses that are France and Germany, and serving as a cultural meeting point

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<sup>134</sup>Volksunie, *Met hart en ziel*, 14 and Economist Intelligence Unit, "Belgium", 29-32.

<sup>135</sup>Economist Intelligence Unit, "Belgium", 29-32 and Atlaséco, s.v. "Belgique".

between Europe's Germanic North and its Latinate South. This makes Flanders very much the "interface periphery".<sup>136</sup>

Protection from outside competitors has also been a big concern of the Flemish Movement. While Flanders remains open to foreign products, especially those fitting in with its value-add industries, there exists a concern over foreign control of the means of production. It is a concept referred to in Flanders as "anchoring", which is generally accepted, both in nationalist and non-nationalist circles, that, "one wants to keep [the] decision-making power [within a market economy] at least partially, and in a minimal number of cases, in one's own country"<sup>137</sup>. There is a concern that the Flanders is suffering the consequences of decisions made elsewhere. "The profits of production are a part of our cultural heritage", says VU-member, Willy Kuijpers. He worries about the social repercussions "when General Motors comes to Antwerp and then somewhere in the United States they decide to take the plant elsewhere to Africa or Asia."<sup>138</sup> This is of particular concern in the domains of media, telecommunication, energy, transportation, construction, banks, and insurers; economic sectors which newly-developed Flanders specialises in. According to one supposed memo from the office of the minister-president of Flanders, "in all sectors in which the Belgian [federal] government has a strategic power of decision, most of the companies are already under French control."<sup>139</sup> There is a pronounced concern amongst Flemings that their Francophone compatriots are insensitive to this wave of

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<sup>136</sup>Rokkan and Urwin, 134.

<sup>137</sup>"Met 'verankering' wil men die beslissingsmacht, tenminste ten dele en in een minimaal aantal gevallen, in eigen land houden" in Jambon, 36.

<sup>138</sup>Kuijpers, interview.

<sup>139</sup>"in alle sectoren waarin de Belgische overheid een strategische beslissingsmacht heeft, de meeste bedrijven reeds onder Franse controle zijn" quoted, without reference, in Jambon, 37.

French control of their means of production.<sup>140</sup> The VU's election platform highlights this sensitive point amongst Flemings,

In terms of economic development, Belgian policy decisions have even been a real danger ([the Belgian airline company] Sabena, Distrigaz, [the High Speed Train network] . . . , [the Belgian telephone company] Belgacom...)

Again and again, the side of the old Belgian establishment is chosen, with its roots firmly in French decision-making centres.<sup>141</sup>

In this case, it is not a question of seeking better protection from another, more local, centre of power, but, rather, the feeling that protection currently does not exist. This is not to imply that "Europe" would somehow be more inclined to bar French companies from the economy of Flanders. Although the European Court does have some say in the purchase of large companies by foreign interests, most policy in this domain remains firmly in the hands of the state. Even where the European Court can play a role, it is usually after a request has been submitted by a member state.

Flanders enjoys a high degree of economic incorporation, both with respect to Belgium and "Europe" when it comes to access to markets. In terms of protection from outside threats, Flanders certainly feels that the Belgian state has not provided significant protection. As for Europe, it is not in a position to afford much protection because this domain of policy-making remains in the hands of the individual member states. Flanders as a member of the European Union, but not of the Belgian federation would, therefore, be empowered to take its own measures to ensure protection from outside economic threats.

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<sup>140</sup>Volksunie, *Met hart en ziel*, 12-13.

<sup>141</sup>"Voor de economische ontplooiing zijn de Belgische beleidskeuzen zelfs een reëel gevaar (Sabena, Distrigaz, HST, Waals bussendossier, OKI's, Belgacom...)

Altijd opnieuw wordt de kant gekozen van het oude Belgische establishment dat met zijn vezels verbonden is aan Franse beslissingscentra.", Volksunie, *Met hart en ziel*, 2.

### *System-Wide Policies: Market Orientation vs. the Interventionist State*

As has already been seen, within Belgium, Flanders has tended to be less interested in the socialist bent of the welfare state. Due in part to its economic fortunes, it has followed a path tending more towards free-market solutions. The next section will discuss grievances specific to the Belgian system of transfer payments, but this section will focus on other concerns related to system-wide policies in general. Flanders has not, on the whole, been a strong ideological backer of socialist policies, unlike Wallonia. While this issue has been somewhat diffused by the federalisation of the country, Flanders still feels that it has cause for concern.

Flanders, like the other federated entities of Belgium does not have any fiscal powers. Given its free-market penchant, Flanders has felt that it has been denied a necessary policy instrument to further develop its economy. This comes through clearly in the Flemish government working paper on state reform, where it is written,

Of note is that in relation to economic policy, *market-oriented* instruments have remained federal. This means that Flanders can provide subsidies, but cannot take any measures for fiscal support. Business-oriented fiscal obligation is an indispensable instrument within the framework of an economic policy. It can be used to promote certain kinds of investment. By way of the fiscal road, furthermore, certain forms of activity can be advanced. . . . The use of fiscal obligation is also essential in a regional policy.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>142</sup>"Opmerkelijk is dat inzake economisch beleid de marktconforme beleidsinstrumenten juist federaal zijn gebleven. Zo kan Vlaanderen wel subsidies verstrekken, maar geen fiscale steunmaatregelen nemen. De vennootschapsfiscaliteit is echter een onmisbaar instrument in het kader van een economisch beleid. Het kan gebruikt wordt om bepaalde investeringen te bevorderen. Via fiscale weg kunnen tevens bepaalde vormen van activiteit bevorderd worden. Denken we maar aan de distributiecentra. Ook voor het streekbeleid is fiscaliteit onmisbaar." *Discussienota*, III.4.10. [italics added]

While it is not true that Flanders is lacking substantial economic powers, it feels that it does not possess those powers, the fiscal ones, which it feels are needed to effectively develop its economy. This is all the more so as Flanders tries to attract foreign investment from abroad, and encourage local investors to keep their investment francs at home.

Given that Flanders, true to its market orientation, is more apt to encourage business development rather than to underwrite it, it is likely that Flanders would feel more comfortable in "Europe" than in Belgium. The EU does not in any significant way directly raise taxes, but rather receives money from the member-states for the largest part of its budget. In this very important aspect, there are invasive and unwanted system-wide policies in Belgium which are not present at a European level.

Monetary policy, usually an important issue with respect to state sovereignty, however, has played a negligible part in the case of Flanders. Belgium has been part of the monetary union with Luxembourg for decades and lived with the post-World War II reality of a monetary policy formulated in Frankfurt rather than in Brussels. This situation would be as real for an independent Flanders as it is today for a sovereign Belgium. Indeed, aside from a brief mention of the necessity for a European monetary policy and single currency, the VU's election programme makes no mention of monetary powers. This is a case of insignificant state control over a key item of the economy. It is precisely the important position of Europe in this field that pushes Flanders to seek whatever representation a society of six million can have at the European level.<sup>143</sup>

Flanders, therefore, is subject to what it perceives to be a considerably interventionist state, whose presence is largely considered a nuisance. This is heightened because Flanders sees very little economic benefit coming from the central

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<sup>143</sup>Volksunie, *Met hart en ziel*, 65.

government. The fact that it is also a net contributor in a system of transfer payments, as will be discussed later, makes this all the more difficult to stomach. Europe, on the other hand, can carry out only a limited degree of intervention, and that only with the approval and complicity of the member states.

*System of Transfer Payments: Belgian or European Solidarity?*

One of the thorniest problems in Belgium is the question of transfers of wealth between the constituent groups of the state. The social welfare system of Belgium is one of the state's functions which has not been federalised. "The basis of the social security system is *interpersonal* solidarity, the solidarity between persons, between individuals"<sup>144</sup> rather than between regional governments. Taxes are collected from individuals by the federal government which then redistributes the sum at a personal level. This is in contrast to other federations such as Germany which have programmes explicitly aimed at balancing the prosperity of specific regions, rather than the population as a whole. Within the Belgian context, this presents two problems. The first problem is that this concept of social security does not enjoy a consensus between Flemings and Francophone Belgians. The second is that supposedly interpersonal transfers have inevitably reflected regional differences.

Although it is clear that the recent Walloon economic situation is one of prolonged crisis, as has already been discussed, their attachment to the social security system is much more than a mere economic dependency. Similarly, while Flemings are certainly fed up with paying for the perceived inefficiencies of their southern compatriots, there is more than a simple miserly bent in their scepticism of the system as it exists today. As the Francophone economist Pierre Reman aptly sums up,

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<sup>144</sup>"Aan de basis van de SZ ligt de *interpersonele* solidariteit, de solidariteit tussen personen, tussen individuen." Huygebaert, 7.

Derrière une histoire de gros sous se cachent deux conceptions idéologiques radicalement différentes de la Sécurité sociale, et c'est pour cela que le débat ne s'apaisera pas. Les Flamands veulent constituer une communauté de citoyens et mettent en évidence une citoyenneté fondée sur la langue et la culture, beaucoup plus que sur le travail, à l'inverse des Wallons. Pour ces derniers, la Sécurité sociale est une évidence, un patrimoine auquel on ne touche pas. Ce n'est pas le cas du côté des Flamands, ce qui est d'ailleurs à leur honneur, car cela prouve que le débat social est chez eux plus important. Mais comme la Wallonie est en crise, quand les Flamands parlent de toucher à la Sécurité sociale, c'est comme s'ils touchaient à l'Etat protecteur et portaient atteinte à l'histoire des Wallons. Là-dessus, il y a une incompréhension totale de part et d'autre.<sup>145</sup>

As for the transfers reflecting the regional differences, there are two tiers to this. First is the question of "unjust" payments, or "overcompensation" by the system. Secondly, there is the question of whether one society ought to be supporting the inefficiencies of a neighbouring one, even within the same state.

The most obvious and most often cited problems of the social security system was the so-called "income paradox"<sup>146</sup> by which until 1990, the average Fleming had a higher gross income than the average Walloon, but a lower net income.<sup>147</sup> While this situation was rectified, it was only the most blatant perceived inequity of the system.

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<sup>145</sup>Beaugé, 7.

<sup>146</sup>See for example, Jambon, 27, 28.

<sup>147</sup>According to a study by Paul Van Rompuy of the *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven*, these figures in 1985 were as follows:

average in	gross income (BEF)	net income (BEF)
Flanders	423 000	360 000
Wallonia	393 000	373 000

As cited in Huygebaert, 16.

To this complaint is added a sense of frustration. As Jan van Doren editorialises, "The solidarity from the North [Flanders] does not seem to be helping the South [Wallonia] to move ahead structurally, leading to a vicious circle of solidarity."<sup>148</sup> Jan Jambon and Peter de Roover make a biting analogy: "It [the current system of 'solidarity'] can be compared with paying the expenses for a wheelchair for a patient, while that patient with appropriate rehabilitation therapy could learn to walk again."<sup>149</sup>

### *Results of the Economic Factors*

With these three elements in mind, it may be useful to investigate how, as independent variables, they combine and what results might be expected on the dependent variables. Flanders has a high degree of economic incorporation within both Belgium and the European Union. Because, as a member state of the European Union, Flanders would be somewhat more empowered to protect itself from outside economic threats, the "attraction" towards the European pole can be considered stronger for this factor. As for system-wide policies, the Belgian state structure has been the more interventionist, despite the EU's expansion into a number of domains. In this sense, the more free-market orientation of Flanders would predict that it would be much more strongly attracted to Europe. Concerning transfer payments, this has been the focal point for nationalist discontent with the current order. The EU system of transfer payments is much less developed than is the Belgian social security system. Whether for purely economic reasons or for philosophical reasons, as stated

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<sup>148</sup>"De solidariteit van het Noorden blijkt het Zuiden structureel niet vooruit te helpen, wat tot een spiraal van solidariteit leidt.", Jan van Doren, "Over solidariteit", *Financieel Economische Tijd*, 17 June 1993, as cited in Jambon, 28.

<sup>149</sup>"Ze kan vergeleken worden met het bekostigen van een rolstoel voor een patiënt, terwijl die met juiste revalidatieoefeningen opnieuw zou kunnen leren lopen." Jambon, 32.

by the VU, the pole of "Europe" provides a much stronger attraction than does the Belgian one. What reactions, then, have been the political results of this?

Broadly speaking, the result has been a Flemish call to separate the economic burdens and responsibilities of Flanders and Wallonia, whether inside or outside the context of the Belgian federation, across all three economic factors discussed so far. In terms of economic integration, there has been a real recognition of the key role that access to outside markets plays for Flanders. This has been emphasised when proposing alternate political arrangements. Jambon and de Roover point out that "Flanders is not smaller than Belgium"<sup>150</sup>, in that "No modern state can exist alone economically, and this includes Belgium."<sup>151</sup> As is stated in the VU's programme for the 1994 European Parliament elections, "We do not wish as Flanders to become an island in Europe, in the world. That is why Flanders must demand and take on a real place in a new Europe".<sup>152</sup> In its 1995 general election programme, it states that they say no to "a Flanders closed in on itself, surrounded by walls"<sup>153</sup>. As Kuijpers says, "You have to look to a European construction. We need co-operation. It is impossible that only the Walloons or the Flemings, or the Basques, Frisians, Irish, and so on have their economy on their own. That's impossible. You need the European construction."<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>150</sup>"Vlaanderen is niet kleiner dan België", Jambon, 70.

<sup>151</sup>"Geen enkele moderne staat kan economisch alleen bestaan, ook België niet...", Jambon, 72.

<sup>152</sup>"We wensen als Vlaanderen geen eiland te vormen in Europa, in de Wereld. Daarom moet Vlaanderen een echte plaats eisen én opnemen in een nieuw Europa", Volksunie, *Programma Europese Verkiezingen 12 juni 1994*, 3.

<sup>153</sup>"Geen op zichzelf teruggeplooid Vlaanderen met muren er omheen...", Volksunie, *Met hart en ziel*, 1.

<sup>154</sup>Kuijpers.

As for protection from outside competitors, the VU has called for immediate action so that the Flemish economy be better "anchored".

Measures must urgently be taken. ...

There are different possibilities. Following a Dutch example, the pension funds of Flemish civil servants can be applied within the framework of the "anchoring" of profitable sectors.<sup>155</sup>

For this, however, they point out that further federalisation of responsibilities is required and that control be taken into the hands of Flanders.<sup>156</sup>

For this factor, economic integration, both the unwelcome interventionist hand of the state and the fact that Flanders is a net contributor to the system of transfer payments, has only made its effects more poignant. They have only highlighted the effect that Flanders's economy is outward oriented. This factor does favour a more direct participation in the EU, but the lack of European system-wide policies do not heighten the effect that economic integration plays. On the other hand, the fact that there would be minimal transfer-payment burdens in the EU, makes Flanders's strong integration into this market all the more attractive. In this case, though, it is important to keep in mind the pivotal role that the transfer payments system plays in Flemish political thinking. This effect may, in fact, be more a benefit perceived by comparison to the current Belgian situation.

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<sup>155</sup>"Er moeten dus dringend maatregelen worden genomen. ...

Er zijn verschillende mogelijkheden. Naar Nederlands voorbeeld kunnen de pensioenfondsen van de Vlaamse ambtenaren aangewend worden in het kader van de verankering van nutssectoren. Federalisering van o.m. OMOB dringt zich daartoe op." *Volksunie, Met hart en ziel*, 14.

<sup>156</sup>*Volksunie, Met hart en ziel*, 14.

First variable is a disincentive to direct participation in the Belgian state

	system-wide policies	transfer payments
economic integration	+	+

First variable is an incentive to direct participation in the European Union

	system-wide policies	transfer payments
economic integration	0	+

As for system-wide policies, there are calls for the state structure to reflect the differences between Flemings and Francophone Belgians with regard to the state's role. Jambon and De Roover prefer to see an independent Flanders, solely responsible for its debt, but within Belgium, they call for the federalisation of the state public debt<sup>157</sup>. This sentiment is echoed by the Flemish government which laments that it cannot take effective control of its own finances since its revenues are controlled at the federal level. This means that regardless of Flanders's financial prudence — or laxness — its revenues will be constrained by the debt and deficit of its neighbours.<sup>158</sup> This is for instance what happened in 1994. In the Court of Audit's report for that year, it mentioned that while Flanders had largely kept to its budget, Wallonia on the other hand, "unnecessarily" loaned out 16 billion Belgian

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<sup>157</sup>Jambon, 34.

<sup>158</sup>Flemish Government, *Discussienota*, IV.1.

francs, the maximum permitted. The result was "an excessive increase of the debt of the *collective* Belgian governments".<sup>159</sup>

In the words of the VU, "Flanders must carry out its own dynamic economic policy."<sup>160</sup> The Flemish government has called for a number of economic powers to be further devolved from the federal level. These include corporate taxation, income taxation, and value-added taxation.<sup>161</sup> With these powers, Flanders hopes to be able to carry out a more consistent economic policy, which includes not only policies of subsidies, but, more importantly for Flanders, also a fiscal policy.

As predicted, the effect of system-wide policies has made participation in Europe more attractive than in the Belgian state. Furthermore, this effect has been heightened by a Flemish sentiment that Flanders's prosperity lies largely away from other elements of the Belgian state, a state which it feels to be burden. Similarly, feeling itself to be on the "losing side" of the system of transfer payments, has further increased Flanders's disenchantment with the overbearing intervention of the state.

On the other hand, the fact that Flanders is very much economically integrated into the EU, seems to have had little, if any, effect on making the Union's absence of system-wide policies any more attractive to Flanders. Furthermore, the fact that there is no real Euro-centric system of transfer payments to speak of, has actually reduced the stakes, and reduced the importance of system-wide policies at the European level.

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<sup>159</sup>"een overbodige verhoging van de schuld van de gezamenlijke Belgische overheden." [italics added] Court of Audit Report on the 1994 budget, as reported in "Rekenhofrapporten".

<sup>160</sup>"Vlaanderen moet een daaraan beantwoordend eigen dynamisch economisch beleid voeren.", Volksunie, *Met hart en ziel*, 14.

<sup>161</sup>Flemish Government, *Discussienota*, IV.3.1.

For this element, system-wide policies, Flanders fits the proposed model. While it clearly provides Flanders with a strong reinforced disincentive with regard to Belgium, the European option remains simply that; an option. The option may be preferable, but the effects of economic integration on the effects of the system-wide policies are negligible. As for transfer payments, they effectively dampen the effects of system-wide policies since a low degree of transfer payments would imply a low degree of system-wide policies, so it is no great benefit that system-wide policies would be few.

First variable is a disincentive to direct participation in the Belgian state

	economic integration	transfer payments
system-wide policies	+	+

First variable is an incentive to direct participation in the European Union

	economic integration	transfer payments
system-wide policies	0	-

It is the social transfer system, however, that has been the focus of most of the outcry. This has led to calls to disentangle Flanders's wealth from the "onerous" Belgian system. The VU made their support for the Saint Michael's accords contingent on the federal government reconsidering the social security system<sup>162</sup>, and

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<sup>162</sup>Huygebaert, 14.

in its election programme calls for a federalisation of the this system.<sup>163</sup>

Jambon and de Roover, in the absence of an independent Flemish state, demand that the social security system be federalised<sup>164</sup>. They go on to say that,

For decades now, there has been an insistence that rich countries should allot at least 0.7% of their GNP for development aid, a figure which is actually attained in less than a handful of countries. For years Flanders has been allocating about 15 times as much on development aid, but for the most part directed to Wallonia, a country that on a worldwide scale should be amongst the rich and a net donor rather than a receiver of development aid.<sup>165</sup>

This argumentation is repeated at a more moderate level, by the VU. It has stated that, "The VU, on the other hand, is striving towards a European solidarity system, in which agreements are made concerning minimum-income supplements and minimum standards in terms of labour relations."<sup>166</sup>

Says Kuijpers,

Concerning the social security system, by applying the concept of federalism, we have to make a distinction between those parts of the system related to capital and those related to labour. These are the two paths. Those parts that are related to labour should be federalised.

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<sup>163</sup>Volksunie, *Met hart en ziel*, 16-17.

<sup>164</sup>Jambon, 34.

<sup>165</sup>"Al decennia lang wordt erop aangedrongen dat de rijke landen tenminste 0,7% van hun BNP zouden besteden aan ontwikkelingshulp, een cijfer dat in minder dan een handvol landen echt wordt bereikt. Vlaanderen besteedt al jarenlang ruim vijftien keer zoveel aan ontwikkelingshulp, maar dan voor het grootste gedeelte gericht op Wallonië, een land dat op wereldschaal tot de rijken behoort en netto-gever in plaats van ontvanger van ontwikkelingshulp zou moeten zijn." Jambon, 31, 32.

<sup>166</sup>"De VU streeft daarentegen naar een Europees solidariteitsstelsel, waarbij afspraken gemaakt worden over inkomensvervangende minimumuitkeringen en over minimumnormen op het vlak van arbeidsverhoudingen." Volksunie, *Met hart en ziel*, 16.

There are also those sections related to capital and here it is important to include a dose of solidarity. We argue in favour of a European social security programme. That implies a sense of community between Sicily and Scandinavia. On the other side, we say that there is a certain degree of responsibility. If Wallonia wants another policy in terms of family allowance... That's their right. We argue in favour of a common European project and within that, each region can develop what it wants. The solidarity mechanism should be at a European, not a Belgian level. And that makes a lot more sense. How many so-called Belgians now live and work outside the state borders and how many foreigners are here in Flanders? Quite a few.<sup>167</sup>

It is, however, important to note that this issue is not the exclusive domain of nationalist sectors of Flemish society. In 1992, secretaries-general of the Flemish administration, the highest ranking civil servants, requested that the Flemish government look into the feasibility of such a move. The Department of Welfare, Health, and Culture has also declared the current system unworkable and has pleaded for coherent federalised policies. In 1994, the results of a survey were published in which Flemish doctors made similar claims.<sup>168</sup> Flemish minister-president, Luc Van den Brande, of the Christian Democratic Party has called for the drastic division of the social security system, especially in health care and child support, on repeated occasions, including at the beginning of 1993 and again on 11 July 1994, "The

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<sup>167</sup>"Wat de sociale zekerheid betreft, door de toepassing van het federalisme moeten wij een onderscheid maken tussen de kapitaal-gebonden delen van de sociale zekerheid en de arbeid-gebonden. De twee wegen. De arbeid-gebonden, die moeten gefederaliseerd worden. Er zijn ook kapitaal-gebonden en daar moet een stuk solidariteit in spelen. Wij pleiten voor een Europese sociale zekerheid. Dat wilt zeggen, een gemeenschappelijkheid tussen Sicilië en Scandinavië. Aan de andere kant zeggen wij dat er een deel verantwoordelijkheid is. Wilt Wallonië een andere politiek in zaken kinderbijslag... dat is hun recht. Dus wij pleiten voor een Europese gezamenlijk oeuvre en daarboven ontwikkelt iedere regio wat zij wilt. Het solidariteitsstelsel moet op Europees en niet op Belgisch vlak. En dat is ook logischer. Hoe veel zogenaamde Belgen leven en werken niet buiten de staatsgrenzen en hoeveel buitenlanders zitten niet bij ons? Dat is enorm." Kuijpers, interview.

<sup>168</sup>Huygebaert, 27, 28; see also Volksunie, *Met hart en ziel*, 16.

Golden Spurs", Flanders's day of national awareness .<sup>169</sup> Indeed, in his government's working paper on state reform, such measures are again called for.<sup>170</sup> It is hard not to conclude that Flanders may feel more comfortable in a European than in a Belgian system of wealth redistribution precisely because the former will demand a lesser price than does the latter currently.

While a federalisation of the social security system may seem a moderate claim, a simple administrative tinkering, many observers have highlighted the profound significance that the system has for continued existence of the Belgian state. Says Florence Beaugé,

Chacun l'admet: si on régionalise la Sécurité sociale, comme le réclament à intervalles réguliers certains hommes politiques de Flandre sous prétexte que la Wallonie, avec sa population plus âgée et son taux de chômage plus élevé, est plus coûteuse et plus dispendieuse, ç'en est fini de l'Etat belge.<sup>171</sup>

Perhaps more than any of the other factors, the system of transfer payments has been made all the more acute by the other economic factors. Indeed, both the comparatively small space that Belgium plays in Flanders's overall economic integration, and the perceived negative effect of the system wide policies have made being a net contributor to a system of transfer payments an even more bitter pill to swallow.

As regards Europe, Flanders's favourable position of economic integration makes the de facto absence of transfer payments only more attractive. On the other hand, due to the fact that there are also very few system-wide policies, the effect of

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<sup>169</sup>Huygebaert, 17.

<sup>170</sup>Flemish Government, *Discussienota*, III.4.2.

<sup>171</sup>Beaugé, 7.

having few transfer payments is somewhat reduced. Not paying to get nothing in return is not in any way enticing.

The first variable is a disincentive to participation in the Belgian state

	economic integration	system-wide policies
transfer payments	+	+

The first variable is an incentive to participation in the European Union

	economic integration	system-wide policies
transfer payments	+	-

### *Political Isolation: Towards a Flemish Voice in Europe*

Political isolation has already been alluded to in a number of the other factors. While the economic concerns are important, at the root, many of them come down to simply not having the desired or necessary control over the economic levers. None the less, it is a question of more than economics, for Flanders also yearns for greater political recognition.

An example will serve to show two aspects of political isolation which lie at the heart of Flemish concerns. First, that state governments can and do take actions which run counter to the interests of a sub-state group, even when, in the case of Flanders, it forms a majority. Secondly, that the sub-state group often has no recourse through the structures of the state to redress this.

When the European Bureau of Trademarks was established with its official languages being only English, French, German, Spanish, and Italian, there was much commotion over this, especially in Flanders. The Belgian federal government, led by a Flemish prime minister accepted this without any contest. Thus, even though the Flemish comprise 60% of the population, they still feel that their interests are left undefended.<sup>172</sup>

The VU brought a plea to the Council of State, a consultative body that pronounces on the constitutionality of laws without having the power to actually block any legislation it considers in contravention to the Constitution. The VU hoped for a decision requiring the federal government's ratification of the linguistic policy of the Bureau to be nullified, even if such a ruling would carry more moral than legal weight. The Council of State, however, declared the appeal inadmissible, arguing that it lay outside the Council's competencies.<sup>173</sup>

The fact that Flanders has no voice at the European level is not lost on the VU. "In the European decision-making process, Flanders currently plays no role. In Europe, Flanders is represented by a stepmother, through the Belgian organs."<sup>174</sup> With Flanders as a federated entity taking on important new powers, and the European Union expanding its competencies, there has developed a feeling that Belgium is more an unnecessary obstacle to the European discussion table. According to the VU, "[t]he dynamic of an elected Flemish parliament will *transfer supplementary powers to the Regions and Communities*. The taking over by Europe of those powers

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<sup>172</sup>Ma. D. "Privilégier la voix".

<sup>173</sup>Ma. D. "Privilégier la voix".

<sup>174</sup>"In de Europese besluitvorming speelt Vlaanderen op dit ogenblik geen rol. Vlaanderen wordt in Europa op stiefmoederlijke wijze vertegenwoordigd via de Belgische organen." Volksunie, *Met hart en ziel*, 3.

that have remained federal, means that this step to independence in Europe is almost inevitable."<sup>175</sup> In the words of Kuijpers,

The Belgian state system is right now almost an empty shell. What is still Belgian? The king? Sure. Occasionally [Belgium's soccer football team] the Red Devils. An order of french fries. Foreign policy is already in European hands. Through the medium of the federal government, granted. I see [Flemish minister-president] Van den Brande and many more on foreign trips, developing contacts in South Africa and Croatia. We already have powers in foreign relations. Justice, and the Schengen accords are also largely European. We will see 20 years of powers transferred to Europe and then to the regions.<sup>176</sup>

One would expect then that Flanders would make a marked move away from the Belgian pole in favour of the European. This has indeed taken place, as Flanders moves to shake itself free of those "Belgian constraints" which it considers encumbering.

The VU has striven to bring the voice of Flanders closer and more directly to Europe, within Belgium if possible, outside if necessary. Unsuccessful in having the decision relating to the question of the European Bureau of Trademarks overturned, the VU spoke up in the federal Senate. It proposed that the federal government not be permitted to make decisions in the Council of Ministers in the EU until after

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<sup>175</sup> "De dynamiek van een eigen gekozen Vlaams parlement zal *bijkomende bevoegdheden naar de gewesten en gemeenschappen overhevelen*. De overname van federaal gebleven bevoegdheden van België door Europa brengt met zich mee dat deze stap naar zelf-standigheid in Europa er haast onvermijdelijk komt." Volksunie, *Met hart en ziel*, 3.

<sup>176</sup> "Het Belgisch staatsstelsel is op dit ogenblik bijna een lege doos. Wat is nog Belgisch? De koning? Ja. Af en toe de Rode Duivels. Een zakje friet. Buitenlands beleid zit al Europees. In de handen van de federale regering, ja. Ik zie dat Van den Branden en noem maar op, dat zij naar het buitenland trekken, met Zuid Afrika, met Kroatië contacten sluiten. Wij hebben al een buitenlandse bevoegdheid. Justitie, de Schengen akkoorden zijn grotendeels al Europees. We gaan 20 jaar bevoegdheden zien overstappen naar Europa en aan de regio's komen." Kuijpers, interview.

approval from the parliaments of each of the major linguistic communities. As was commented in the Belgian daily *Le Soir*, "En fait, ce qu'exige la VU, c'est la participation directe des Communautés à la prise de décision européenne. Ce qui, pour les matières fédérales, n'est pas possible actuellement, seuls les États étant compétents." The VU went on to propose that Belgium's five votes in the council of ministers be split to reflect the make-up of the country, three votes reflecting the Flemish position, two for the francophone.<sup>177</sup> It is significant to note that Flanders has recognised the importance, and difficulty, not only of defending its interests within the Belgian state structure, but also, by extension, within the European.

Furthermore, during a New Year's luncheon of the *Volksunie*, party chairman Bert Anciaux criticised the EU's institutions, complaining about expansion from above. Referring to the framework of the EU, Anciaux stated that "[e]ach people must be able to decide . . . for itself."<sup>178</sup> Anciaux, however, was not complaining about the lack of democracy *per se*, but rather, that the current structure leaves several nations, particularly Flanders, without a voice. This was further underscored when he called for the Council of Ministers to be transformed into a Senate of the States while preparing to become a senate of the nations.<sup>179</sup>

The VU is quite clear, however, that Belgium can exist as a temporary intermediate link so long as it continues to provide some kind of added value to Flanders. Under the heading "A Programme for Flemish State Formation"<sup>180</sup>, it has stated, "The VU wants Flanders to be recognised by the international community as a

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<sup>177</sup>Ma. D. "Privilégier la voix".

<sup>178</sup>"Ieder volk moet dit voor zichzelf kunnen uitmaken." "VU heeft kritiek op Europese Unie", *De Standaard*, 1 February 1995, 3.

<sup>179</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup>"Een programma voor Vlaamse staatsvorming"

fully-fledged partner. This requires Flemish membership in the European Union, the United Nations, and other international organisations."<sup>181</sup> It has also called for the Flemish parliament to pass a motion that "Flanders, as a fully-fledged member state, should be respected in its language and culture, and must be party to all decisions of the European Union."<sup>182</sup>

Therefore, Flanders fits the proposed model very well and is representative of a nation that is drawn more towards the European pole than to the Belgian on almost every count. Its high economic integration within Europe and perception that the state is not providing protection for the Flemish economy from foreign competition; the intrusiveness of the Belgian state compared with the relative undeveloped interventionism from the EU; the continued transfer of wealth from Flanders to the South; these are all elements that have economically made Flanders, and the Flemish movement in particular look towards a direct participation in Europe. This coupled with erosion of powers from the Belgian state towards both Flanders and toward the European Union has led Flanders to question whether Belgium is simply an obsolete impediment to participation and a newly emerging relevant centre of power, the European Union.

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<sup>181</sup>"De VU wil dat Vlaanderen als volwaardige partner wordt erkend door de internationale gemeenschap. Dit vergt het Vlaamse lidmaatschap van de Europese Unie, de Verenigde Naties en andere internationale organisaties.", Volksunie, *Met hart en ziel*, 3.

<sup>182</sup>"Vlaanderen als een volwaardige lidstaat, gerespekteerd in zijn taal en zijn kultuur, betrokken moet worden bij alle beslissingen van de Europese Unie.", Volksunie, *Met hart en ziel*, 3.

## Scotland

### *Economic Incorporation: British Empire to European Market*

Remote peripheries, Rokkan and Urwin point out, unlike interface peripheries, tend to rely on remote markets, giving them little leverage with respect to subsidies or trading concessions, causing them to rely heavily on the Centre. This is very much the case for Scotland, perched on Europe's northwestern fringe.<sup>183</sup>

Although exports account for only a quarter of the UK GDP, the question of who its trading partners are remains a central issue. As has already been stated, one of the principal arguments for the English-Scottish union, was, and to a certain degree still is, that Scotland was able to trade within a larger market, i.e. England and its Empire. Within the context of 1707, this made a lot of sense as England's empire was continuing to extend its reach while Scotland's own colonial attempts remained, on the whole, abortive. Indeed, incorporation into the UK, or more specifically, into the Empire, provided Scotland significant economic gain.<sup>184</sup>

This is, however, not necessarily the case at the end of the 20th century. Much as Britain as a whole has had to refocus its trading patterns on Europe,<sup>185</sup> so has Scotland. Focussing on the progressive dismantling of the British Empire following the Second World War, MacFarquhar writes the following:

Historically, the Scots went in with the English in order to gain commercial access to their colonial possessions. Now that the British Empire has been wound up after 250 years of successful 'trading', the original justification for the merger has disappeared and it is only

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<sup>183</sup>Rokkan and Urwin, 134.

<sup>184</sup>Keating and Jones, 311-12.

<sup>185</sup>Urwin, 118.

natural that some Scots should question whether there are any other reasons for maintaining the partnership.<sup>186</sup>

Marr follows the thread explicitly linking yesterday's choice of Empire with today's choice of "Europe". He writes that:

[S]ome (like John Buchan, the Tory novelist) favoured Scottish Home Rule inside the Empire, part of the creation of a worldwide imperial block surrounded by tariff walls. Its effect was not so different from the current fashion for 'independence in Europe'; like the European Community, the Empire would provide a bigger, warmer grouping, protecting Scotland from the chilliness of total separation.<sup>187</sup>

Until the Second World War, the majority of Scotland's trade was with other Empire countries. Today, however, according to SNP figures, 58% of Scotland's trade is with other EU countries.<sup>188</sup> On the level of the UK, it can be seen that of its nine top trading partners, one is the USA, the remaining eight are EU members. In 1994, these eight markets within the EU alone provided for over 60% of the UK's trade.<sup>189</sup>

With the entrance of the UK, and thus of Scotland, into the Common Market in 1973, it is hardly surprising that Scotland should question whether it need be tied to England, politically or economically to reap the benefits of this new market across the North Sea. Whereas access to the markets of the Empire depended on Scotland's continued existence within it, and by consequence, in union with England, this is not the case with Europe. Thanks to the realisation of the Single European Act in 1993 and the Treaty of Maastricht, Scotland enjoys virtually unhindered access to EU

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<sup>186</sup>MacFarquhar, 21.

<sup>187</sup>Marr, 52.

<sup>188</sup>Scottish National Party, *Scotland: A European Nation*, 12.

<sup>189</sup>Economist Intelligence Unit, "United Kingdom".

markets. It is membership in the EU, enjoyed for the moment by virtue of being part of the UK, which grants these privileges. As much as Glasgow was part of Scotland in 1707, it was the fact that Glasgow was British, rather than Scottish that gave it access to the Empire. Today, Scotland can enjoy access to EU markets either within or outside the union with England. As for access to English markets, this is equally guaranteed by EU-membership as with participation in the UK, just as Wallonia has full access to French markets, Flanders to Dutch markets, or Austria to German markets.

However, as might be expected, Scotland has had to face new threats from outside competition. In 1974, as the UK was progressively integrating its economy with that of the EC, the Scots had significant concerns with respect to a number of industries, such as steel, hill farming, but most importantly, fishing.<sup>190</sup> While Scottish fishermen were now given access to all the EC's waters, all the EC's fishermen were also given access to Scotland's waters. With access to a profitable stock of fish off their coast, the Scots had previously enjoyed the protection of the British state against foreign competitors. In this sector, they were much less interested in access to foreign waters than they were fearful of encroachment into their waters.<sup>191</sup> A Common Fisheries Policies allowed free access to EC waters to all EC countries, within a 200-mile limit. Countries were only permitted to practise traditional methods of exclusion up to a maximum 12 miles.<sup>192</sup> To use an apt metaphor, Scotland went from being a big fish in a small pond, to being one of many big fish in a large lake. While the UK was able to extract some fishing concessions from the EC at the time of its entry, the SNP feels that the London government has not done enough to defend interests specifically Scottish.

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<sup>190</sup>Keating and Jones, "Nations", 93.

<sup>191</sup>Keating and Jones, 315.

<sup>192</sup>Urwin, 182.

Therefore, though Scotland does not rely as much on foreign markets as does Flanders, its trading relations are strongly oriented towards Europe and no longer towards the British Empire. A relative newcomer to "Europe", it is likely that Scotland, like the whole of the UK, will continue to be more and more oriented towards their EU partners. As for protection from outside, however, the UK was better able to protect Scottish markets from outside competition when it was not a member of the EU. Within the framework of the European Union, it is doubtful that Scotland will find protection for its fishing or oil resources either inside or outside the UK. With this in mind, Scotland would be more attracted to "Europe" and neutral with respect to the United Kingdom in terms of access to markets, but repulsed by "Europe" and neutral with respect to the UK in terms of protection from outside competition.

*System-Wide Policies: Scottish Consequences of English Decisions*

While the United Kingdom has traditionally been one of Europe's less interventionist economies, where recourse to the state is significantly less than in other EU countries, the modern state cannot but have an economic impact. As Christopher Harvie writes, "the Scottish economy was the product of substantial, if not always sensitive or successful, political intervention."<sup>193</sup> Indeed, it is important to recognise that public spending has played a bigger part in the Scottish than in the English economy, by some 20%.<sup>194</sup> What is perhaps also important is that these powers of intervention were increasingly centralised on London during the Thatcher years.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>193</sup>Harvie, 118.

<sup>194</sup>Keating and Jones, "Nations", 90.

<sup>195</sup>Keating and Jones, "Nations", 95.

During the recession of the early 1990's, this issue become contentious for Scottish nationalists. Scotland's economy had already been depressed by drop in the price of oil during the mid 1980's and it did not share in the soaring economic success of England during the late 1980's. Nevertheless, Scotland was as much affected by the monetary policies employed to cool down an overheated English economy undertaken by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Scotland's economy, already trailing England's, entered into recession, leading some to speculate that the policy was based more on narrow English interests at the expense of Scotland's.<sup>196</sup>

For the moment, there is no European Monetary Union, and thus no European Central Bank (the so-called "EuroFed"). By joining Europe as an independent member state, therefore, Scotland would currently gain control over monetary policy. When a single European currency does become a reality, however, Scotland may find that it will have to contend with an ill-fitting monetary policy tailored not to England, but to Germany and France.

Therefore, Scotland is very much at the mercy of economic policy decided in London, which often neglects Scottish realities, with predictable results. Recently, it has been monetary policy that has had a particularly harmful effect on Scotland. Indeed, it may be this very lack of policies to deal specifically with the problems of Scotland that has caused discontent. This factor can be expected to lead to a greater repulsion from the pole of the state, the UK.

#### *System of Transfer Payments: Thatcher's Cuts and Scotland's Oil*

From the 1960's the relative economic weakness of most of the UK with respect to the English South-East, a number transfer programmes were established.

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<sup>196</sup>Alex Salmond, *Horizons Without Bars*, 12; Scottish National Party, *Scotland*, 11; and Scott, P. 16.

Amongst its beneficiaries was Scotland. In the 1980's the economic division grew deeper as Scotland still relied heavily on traditional industrial sectors which were becoming less and less economically relevant. At the same time, transfer flows dried up with the Thatcher ministry hostile to such schemes and English parliamentarians no longer tolerating the higher levels of spending heading out of England.<sup>197</sup>

MacFarquhar emphasises the failings of the redistribution channels within the UK state structure. The government addressed certain inequalities with subsidies to disadvantaged sectors of the economy which have been concentrated, though not exclusively, in identifiable regions.<sup>198</sup> However, transfer payments play a significantly smaller part in the country's political philosophy than in other EU countries.

In a certain sense, oil can be seen as a negative social transfer, and it certainly is by Scottish nationalists. Wealth which Scotland deems its own is being regulated by London, which certainly does not require that revenue from these operations return to benefit Scotland. By not having control over this resource, there is an effective transfer of wealth southward. This is compounded by the fact that Scotland, with the EU's greatest oil supply, as a northern nation pays a disproportionately high rate on heating.

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<sup>197</sup>Keating and Jones, "Nations", 91, 92.

<sup>198</sup>MacFarquhar, 21.

### *Results of the Economic Factors*

Here, too, it may be useful to pause to review some of the results that have been recorded of these situations.

The SNP is very aware of the fact that its markets are guaranteed by Brussels, no longer by London. Paul H. Scott underlines the historical shift:

The argument which used to be produced in . . . support [of Union with England] was that it gave access to a wider [imperial] market than Scotland alone. Now, of course, the European Community has widened the market to include almost the whole of western Europe and it is likely to expand still further. The old case for the Union [with England] has therefore disappeared completely.<sup>199</sup>

These are sentiments echoed by the Scottish National Party in its official publications as well. In its words,

All the old scare stories about "separation" once put about by the SNP's opponents — such as Scotland being cut off from our markets or firms pulling out to invest elsewhere — simply do not apply in a single European market where there is free movement of people, goods and services.<sup>200</sup>

Simply put, Scotland "[has] the opportunity to achieve political Independence while enjoying the economic benefits of a home market for our goods of not 55 but 340 million people."<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>199</sup>Scott, P. 27.

<sup>200</sup>Scottish National Party, *Scotland*, 12.

<sup>201</sup>Scottish National Party, *Scotland*, 20.

In terms of protection from outside competition, the SNP feels that London ignores the issue, not recognising the relative importance of the fishing industry to the Scottish economy. It feels that an independent Scottish representation at the European level would ensure that the interests of Scottish fishermen would be better represented.<sup>202</sup> Indeed, they point to the case of Denmark where, because of Denmark's seat at the Council, a compromise was struck to defend its fishing fleet.<sup>203</sup>

As predicted, by the model, the system-wide policies felt by Scotland to be London-centric and the transfer of Scottish oil revenues southward have only heightened Scotland's realisation that its vital markets are no longer guaranteed by union with England. In terms of incentive towards the EU, the limited system-wide policies emanating from the Eurocracy do not seem to either heighten or dampen Scotland's incorporation into the greater EU market. What Scotland stands to gain from direct EU membership, namely control over its oil reserves, and the ability to sell them to its most obvious market, other EU countries, certainly emphasises Scotland's incorporation in the European economy.

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<sup>202</sup>Scottish National Party, *Scotland*, 8.

<sup>203</sup>Scottish National Party, *Scotland*, 7.

The first variable is a disincentive to direct participation in the UK

	system-wide policies	transfer payments
economic integration	+	+

The first variable is an incentive to direct participation in the European Union

	system-wide policies	transfer payments
economic integration	0	+

Considering that Scotland has felt that the system-wide policies have been conceived without consideration for their consequences to England's northern neighbour, the SNP has proclaimed that, "[a]n independent Scottish Parliament . . . will have control over all the major economic instruments such as taxation, public spending, money supply and interest rates and will therefore be able to tailor economic policy to match Scotland's needs."<sup>204</sup>

In the case of Scotland, the model is less clearly predictive of the actual situation. In term of the effects of economic integration, it is not clear that they have strengthened the effects of the system-wide policies as had been predicted. Unless Scotland's trading patterns were significantly different from England's, and unless those were at least in part responsible for differences in the economic cycles of the two nations — which in the past meant that a sluggish Scottish economy fell victim to monetary policy designed to cool down an over-heated English economy —, it is not

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<sup>204</sup>Scottish National Party, *Scotland*, 12.

clear that there is a link. As concerns the incentive that these factors play for encouraging direct Scottish participation in the European Union, the results are better. Scotland's economic integration within Europe does not seem to have any effect on the fact that Europe's weak and largely state-controlled system-wide policies encourage direct participation in the EU. As for Europe's embryonic transfer payment system, which Scotland can hope to become a net beneficiary of, it reduces the effect of Europe's weak system-wide policies, since a more interventionist Europe might mean larger transfers of wealth to Scotland, after all.

The first variable is a disincentive to direct participation in the UK

	economic integration	transfer payments
system-wide policies	0?	+

The first variable is an incentive to direct participation in the European Union

	economic integration	transfer payments
system-wide policies	0	-

It is interesting to note the vagueness of the statement concerning the SNP's plans for a regional policy which seems to imply a European system of social transfer:

As a nation on the North-West edge of Europe, an independent Scotland will also press for the development of a stronger Community

regional policy, so that nations on the EC's periphery do not lose out to its central "golden triangle" in the distribution of resources.<sup>205</sup>

As has already been noted, the SNP caught on to the political expediency of this issue with its slogan "It's Scotland's Oil". As an independent member of the EU, it would indeed be Scotland's oil. This is because in terms of energy, the EC has been unable to integrate its policy, short of a non-committal general strategy decided by the Council of Ministers to reduce the EC's reliance on imported oil. This was adopted in 1974 and revised in 1980 and revised again in 1986.<sup>206</sup>

As predicted, Scotland's economic integration outside of the UK and the perceived negative effect of state intervention has heightened the effect that transfer payments play in giving Scotland a disincentive with regard to the UK. Similarly, the fact that Scotland would not be a major net contributor to a European system of transfer payments, either in cash, or with control of its oil, is heightened by the sense that its economy lies in Europe, the primary market for its oil. However, the fact that Europe's system-wide policies remain limited dampen the effect of a European transfer payments, since a less interventionist government, may lead to less transfers of funds to Scotland, should it ever become eligible for them.

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<sup>205</sup>Scottish National Party, *Scotland*, 18.

<sup>206</sup>Urwin, 193.

The first variable is a disincentive to direct participation in the UK

	economic integration	system-wide policies
transfer payments	+	+

The first variable is an incentive to direct participation in the European Union

	economic integration	system-wide policies
transfer payments	+	-

In sum, the Scotland's economic outlook has shifted away from the oceans of the British Empire towards Europe across the North Sea. In terms of economic rationale, SNP has underlined that Scotland's interests lie on the Continent, a link which is still largely through the government in London. The arguments once used to justify Scotland's place in the bosom of the United Kingdom are now the very same that are being exploited to support an independent future for Scotland. The economic rationale is made all the more poignant by a political structure that keeps the decision-making firmly in the hands of the central government in London.

*Political Isolation: The Centralised State vs. Independence in Europe*

Keating and Jones highlight that Scottish and Welsh devolution projects in the 1940's and 1950's were frustrated by a House of Commons, 85% of whose members

are returned by English voters.<sup>207</sup> This fact is still very much true today and continues to be a source of frustration to the SNP.

In terms of Scottish representation within the UK, there does exist a Scottish Office, a sort of Scottish executive for decisions taken in Westminster. It does not, however, truly serve as lobby from Scotland to London. Quite the opposite, its primary aim is to ensure that decisions from London are applied to the specificities of Scotland. The Office does have a European Affairs division which occasionally participates in UK negotiating teams at the Council of Ministers. Overwhelmingly, though, the best that Scotland can hope for is that the Scottish Office sensitise the UK cabinet to Scottish concerns. Since the 1980's, its role has been minimised by a backlash to the failed Devolution project of the 1970's. Also, the Secretary of State for Scotland, the head of the Scottish Office, comes from the party in power. Since the 1980's this has led to a lack of credibility, as the ruling Tory party in London has been a minority in Scotland. This lack of institutionalised representation within the United Kingdom has left Scotland at quite a disadvantage compared with other nations and regions in terms of lobbying the European Union.<sup>208</sup>

The feeling of institutional exclusion is even more heightened by symbolic events. In a report by the Chancellor, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland were described as "territories", implying that decisions are to be made with the Centre, in this case England, in mind, and that the "territories" will simply have to adjust.<sup>209</sup> This highlighted the sense that England decides for Scotland and certainly, occasional anxiety of imperialism would be understandable.

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<sup>207</sup>Keating and Jones, 313.

<sup>208</sup>Keating and Jones, "Nations", 100-1.

<sup>209</sup>Salmond, *Horizons without Bars*, 11.

Recent evidence shows that the people of Scotland, recognising the reality of "Europe", prefer some form of regional Scottish government with a greater voice at the European level over the status quo by a decided majority.<sup>210</sup> It seems that the Scottish people, like the SNP, recognise the reality of Europe, but are concerned with Scotland's place in it. The Party says that,

[w]hatever the eventual outcome, two things are certain. Firstly, that many decisions affecting the lives of every European will continue to be taken in Brussels. And secondly, that those decisions will be reached by representatives of independent member state in the Council of Ministers. The only way that Scotland will have a direct voice at the top table in Europe is by becoming an independent member state of the Community.<sup>211</sup>

This is a reaction echoed by Paul H. Scott when he affirms that,

[I]t is true that major economic and financial decisions are now taken increasingly through the institutions of the European Community. This makes independence still more necessary because we need our own voice in the Community. We should then participate in the decision-making and be able to ensure that account is taken of our interests<sup>212</sup>

As with the case of Flanders, the model works well on most counts to explain the Scottish situation. It has experienced a shift in trading patterns which now make a link to Europe more important than its outdated link through England to the British Empire. While the Empire would have been closed to Scotland with union with England, it is very likely that Scotland can have direct access to the EU market of its own accord. Similarly, the repercussions of economic decisions based on the English majority in the UK have had a detrimental effect on the Scottish economy, an while it

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<sup>210</sup>Levy, "Scottish Nationalism", 139.

<sup>211</sup>Scottish National Party, *Scotland*, 5.

<sup>212</sup>Scott, P., 17.

is likely that EU interference would be less, it is important to remember that a good deal of Scotland's difficulty came about through the London's monetary policy. Should Scotland opt for independence in Europe, it may soon find the EU just as invasive about monetary policy. In effect, Scotland would trade London-based management of the currency in for Frankfurt-based management. It is not clear that this would provide it with any benefit. Also, Scotland can be expected to be more attracted towards direct membership in Europe because that would give it control over the oil resources off its shores and be eligible for transfer funds from the EU. Finally, Scotland's weak institutional presence has made it feel even more distant from the growing power-centre that are the EU offices in Brussels. Without the institutional endowments, such as enjoyed by Flanders, Scotland has found it difficult to press its case in Europe.

## Conclusion

Rather than to dilute the presence of states and sub-state groups, the process of European integration has produced quite the opposite result. Sub-state groups, and in particular nationalist groups, have been emboldened by the process of integration and used Europe as a centre-piece of their platform. This is not contradictory, not an aberration, and not a reaction against yet another centralising force. Quite to the contrary, the groups in question have embraced the idea of Europe. Their nationalist claims are a natural and predictable result of integration, especially as it has evolved within the institutions of the European Union. Of the prominent nationalist groups seeking to bring their nations into the decision-making system of Europe, the individual cases of Flanders and Scotland have been examined in this work. While each of these two nations is subject to the particular conditions in their respective states, they share many commonalities, and there is no indication that the underlying trends are limited to these two examples. It is, therefore, important to consider what drives these trends and what can be expected as a result of them.

The central element to consider is the changing role of the state, with particular emphasis on the change within the context of the European Union. Certainly, economically, the state is becoming a less relevant unit. In the European context, trade patterns have extended to cover large areas of the continent. Trade, economic, and monetary policies are to an increasing extent being laid out by the Union's institutions. Foreign, defence, and justice issues are moving in the same direction. To say that the states are increasingly losing their *raison d'être*, however, is only part of the answer. This would certainly explain why nationalist groups have begun to talk in European terms, recognising that there exists another relevant level of political activity. However, if the EU were about to spontaneously cast off the states reorganise itself into a Europe of the Regions and of the Nations, then sub-state groups would need to do nothing more than wait or enthusiastically encourage the

process from the sidelines. This is not happening and there are no indications that it will. For this reason, nationalist groups are actively promoting their respective nations to the top of the current institutional structure — i.e. to the status of member states.

On the other hand, if Europe were nothing more than simply a collection of treaties and multilateral mutual co-operation pacts, that might explain nationalist groups' emphasis on statehood rather than simply "relevant regions" in the European Union. However, this would leave many questions without satisfactory answers. Most prominently, it would not explain their commitment to a stronger and more relevant Europe, in effect opting for the status of sovereign state, only to promote the surrender of key elements of this sovereignty, such as management of the currency, greater foreign policy decisions, and the system transfer payments.

The answer lies between, and to a certain degree above, the two situations. It lies in the fundamental dichotomy between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism that has marked the European construction from the beginning. "Europe" is relevant and does provide benefits as an entity on its own. The completion of the common market as well as moves towards economic, monetary, and political union are relevant and do bring considerable advantages. At the same time, however, the member states have been the defining elements of the Union and continue to exercise a monopoly of power in its decision-making structures. Europe can be characterised by the member states agreeing to chip away at their own relevance and functionality while at the same time concretising their central presence in this process.

There are two dominant trends that can be distinguished. The first is simply the process of a group aspiring to more control over its own territory. Simply stated, this is the desire to see certain powers which are currently executed by the member states — Belgium and the United Kingdom — transferred to other political entities — Flanders and Scotland, respectively. This, in itself, is not surprising and falls

within the parameters that have been the mainstay of traditional thinking on nationalism. These groups, however, know that Europe is here to stay and that it must be dealt with. The difference is that while these groups do desire the acquisition of "state" powers, this desire is tempered by a willingness to actually surrender some of these powers to Europe.

This is the other trend: to have real representation for the region at a relevant level. Here is the difference with traditional thinking on nationalism, and certainly with the concepts of nationalism that swept Europe for a century and a half after the defeat of Napoleon's armies. The nationalist groups seek not to become *the* single pertinent and relevant level of authority or political power above all others. The authority and power of the upper, "European", level is accepted, but the regions want a voice and a fair share of influence in how decisions are made at that level. In this sense, it is important to distinguish these groups from certain "state nationalist" groups such as in Norway, Switzerland, and to less significant degree in the United Kingdom and Denmark. These "state nationalist" groups are different in that they accept the validity of the current state and strive to keep it the exclusive relevant political entity.

These two trends taken together can be understood as the application of subsidiarity. The nationalist groups studied want to give control over a number of issues to the European level where they can best be dealt with, but want to be assured that in doing so, they will have their part in the policy-making at that level. At the same time, they feel that certain issues can better be dealt with at a lower level. Now that the state has ceded control over the "upper" issues to Europe, many of these groups feel that the remaining responsibility for "lower" issues could be better dealt with at a level more local than at the level of the existing state. This explicit duality

is argued by both the VU<sup>213</sup> and by the SNP, which states, "Independence in Europe will not only give Scots all the advantages of a direct Scottish voice at the heart of Europe — it will also give us all the power of an independent Scottish Parliament at home."<sup>214</sup>

Hudson Meadwell points out that nationalist mobilisation can be constrained by a group's aversion to the risks of transition to independence.<sup>215</sup> While it is valid to say that "[i]ndependence in Europe carries reassurance to Scots . . . fearful to take a leap in the dark"<sup>216</sup> and that "the European Community . . . would provide a bigger, warmer grouping, protecting Scotland from the chilliness of total separation"<sup>217</sup>, this does not explain the full story either for Scotland or for Flanders. Certainly, this aspect seems to play a stronger role in Scotland. A commitment to Europe, though somewhat weaker and later in coming in Scotland than in Flanders, does indicate that it is precisely the changing roles of the state and of Europe which have been central to the nationalist movements. This is further underscored by similar, though sometimes less far-reaching calls from such non-nationalist parties as the Flemish Socialists and Christian Democrats as well as the Labour Party in Scotland.

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<sup>213</sup>Volksunie, *Met hart en ziel*, 3 and "Het Belgisch staatsstelsel is op dit ogenblik bijna een lege doos. Wat is nog Belgisch? De koning? Ja. Af en toe de Rode Duivels. Een zakje friet. Buitenlands beleid zit al Europees. In de handen van de federale regering, ja. Ik zie dat Van den Branden en noem maar op, dat zij naar het buitenland trekken, met Zuid Afrika, met Kroatië contacten sluiten. Wij hebben al een buitenlandse bevoegdheid. Justitie, de Schengen akkoorden zijn grotendeels al Europees. We gaan 20 jaar bevoegdheden zien overstappen naar Europa en aan de regio's komen." Kuijpers, interview.

<sup>214</sup>Scottish National Party, *Scotland*, 11.

<sup>215</sup>Meadwell, "The Politics of Nationalism", p. 216.

<sup>216</sup>Keating and Jones, "Nations", 97.

<sup>217</sup>Marr, 52.

In both the cases of Flanders and Scotland, economic integration has been important in showing up the declining economic facility of the state. Most notably, the current state structure does no longer, of itself, provide access to larger markets. Flanders, always reliant on trade with Europe at large, can now trade largely unhindered with its neighbours, because of its participation in the EU and not by virtue of being part of Belgium. Thanks to the completion of the single internal market, Germans have as much access to English markets as do Scots. As the market for Scottish goods and services since the Second World War has been overwhelming European, rather than Empire-oriented, participation in the EU is more relevant than is participation in the UK in this regard. This is an argument that holds for virtually all regions of Europe, and will only grow as regions on the eastern and southern rim of the EU seek an imminent expansion of the EU to include their traditional partners in Central Europe and the Mediterranean.

As for protection from outside forces, two different situations in Flanders and Scotland have led to the same result. Flanders, concerned with the Belgian Establishment's indifference vis-à-vis foreign, largely French, dominance of the Flemish economy, can also not count on intervention from the European level in any significant degree. Realising that this a competency still in the hands of the member states, independent membership in Europe on the part of Flanders may enable it to address this issue. In this case, it is a desire to transfer powers from the state of Belgium to Flanders. Scotland, on the other hand, has suffered from the free access to its fisheries enjoyed by other EU countries, thanks to 1970 EU fisheries policy. An independent Scotland would not have any more direct power to protect its fishing industry, but, like Denmark today, it would at least have a voice in the formulation of this policy and others like it. Scotland, in this case, seeks to have a direct voice in the policy-making made at the European level that has a direct impact on Scotland, without having to make use of the intermediary agent that many regard as ineffective, the British state.

In terms of system-wide policies, both Flanders and Scotland have felt subject to invasive and unwanted policies. Flanders feels that it cannot carry through a coherent economic policy as it has not been given a complete set of tools, notably fiscal powers, with which to work. All the more difficult is that Flanders's more market-oriented approach is often not shared by the Belgian state. Furthermore, since Flanders does not have full responsibility for its own revenue, its budgets are at the mercy of the financial soundness of the combined federal and federated governments. Despite its fiscal prudence, Flanders remains unevenly burdened by debt and a constrained budget due the spendthrift attitudes of the other Belgian governments. As for Scotland, it has been subject to economic policies which have been out of step with the realities and the needs of Scotland, especially in terms of monetary policy. While as an independent member state of the EU, Scotland would have a say in the establishing of monetary policy, it may find that economic and monetary union at a European level will bring with it a new set of difficulties for a peripheral region like Scotland.

Transfer payments are another strong element driving EU-friendly nationalism. In Flanders, there is a sense of frustration over the flows of money from the North southwards to Wallonia. While the most blatant abuses of the social security system have been corrected, there are still concerns that the system is unjust. There have been calls for Flanders to be solely responsible for its own system of social transfers within a Belgian context, but that as a full participant in Europe, a Europe-wide social security structure should be built up. In the case of Scotland, technically a net recipient, the case of transfer payments has been perceived through a different optic. Frustration is felt that Scotland continues to pay some of the highest heating rates despite being home to Europe's largest supplies of energy in terms of oil and hydroelectricity. This is only made more acute by taxes from London on heating fuel. In this sense, oil is perceived very much as a negative transfer.<sup>218</sup> With a true

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<sup>218</sup>Scottish National Party, *Scottish Budget*, 2 and Alex Salmond, *Horizons*, 24.

European system of social transfers barely more than nascent and still firmly in the hands of the member states, beyond philosophical arguments, arguing for "Europe" may simply mean seeking control over their own wealth and resources for these nations.

On the topic of political isolation, Keating points out that many of the regionalist movements are pan-European, with the ultimate goal of a Europe of the Regions. However, he goes on to declare such moves as "utopian", considering the current state of affairs in Europe. He plainly sees that any success will come from negotiation with authorities of the states themselves and within the structure in which they operate.<sup>219</sup> Jones brings out similar points, while being less condemning of the regional-EU link. He points out that Wales, for instance, has deftly been able to establish relations with the EU outside of the traditional British cadres, and in so doing it has somewhat stemmed British predominance. However, he admits that Welsh interests are still largely restricted to the political tools available to it at the state level.<sup>220</sup>

To say, however, that regions, or their interests, have absolutely no presence on the European scene is not entirely accurate. The European Parliament has been a strong proponent of regional initiatives.<sup>221</sup> Since its members were first directly elected in 1979, regionalist parties like SNP, the VU, and several others have sent representatives to the so-called Strasbourg Parliament. The Parliament, however, has been largely marginalised in the EU power structure, to the benefit of the bureaucratic Commission but mostly of the member-state-dominated Council. Some would say

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<sup>219</sup>Keating, 25.

<sup>220</sup>Jones, 101–106.

<sup>221</sup>Lambinet, 232 and Keating and Jones, *Nations*, 97.

that this weakened position of the Parliament has come about precisely because its interests can be independent of those of the EU's member states.<sup>222</sup>

Clearly, by keeping the Council of Ministers and the European Council predominant, the European powers-that-be have ensured that Europe will remain an essentially intergovernmental arrangement, and "[a]s long as the Community remains primarily an intergovernmental organization, with power concentrated in the Council of Ministers, the main channel of influence will continue to be national [i.e. state] government."<sup>223</sup> Only in the state and European parliaments, both largely irrelevant institutions in the European decision-making process, do the sub-state nations and regions have any direct voice. In the European Parliament, regional groups may have a voice, but as the Parliament is impotent, it is a voice muted. Furthermore, "national parliaments . . . have little power within the EC"<sup>224</sup>, and sub-state interests, especially of the nationalist sort, are effectively barred from state government. In the case of Scotland, this is guaranteed by the UK's particular "first-past-the-post" electoral system combined with voting patterns which during the 80's and early 90's have put the governing Tory party in an almost embarrassing minority in Scotland. In both the cases of Flanders and Scotland, any members of these nations who are represented in the government do not seriously question the constitutional order if they are to succeed in their political careers.

Despite this, the concept of subsidiarity has become the Leitmotiv for Europe. Even when explicitly incorporating the concept of subsidiarity into the Treaty of Maastricht, though, its focus is deliberately placed on the state as the pertinent lower

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<sup>222</sup>MacFarquhar, 20.

<sup>223</sup>Keating and Jones, "Nations", 105-6.

<sup>224</sup>Urwin, 245.

level of government. The negotiators of this treaty, representatives of member states, included the principle of subsidiarity into the treaty as follows:

In areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Community shall take action, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, only if and in so far as the object of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member *States* and can therefore, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved by the Community.<sup>225</sup>

This has, of course, frustrated a number of sub-state nationalists. Discussing the UK prime minister's support for the principle of subsidiarity, Scott states that,

John Major accepts this idea, but seems to think that it should come to a halt at Westminster. He is right about the letter but not the spirit of the Maastricht Treaty. If he is as enthusiastic about the principle of subsidiarity as he pretends, he should welcome its extension to Scotland.<sup>226</sup>

In fact, Major may be right about both the letter and the spirit of Maastricht. It is unlikely that the negotiators would have missed the significance of the term "member state". It is significant that in being wrong about the spirit of *subsidiarity*, Major may very well be right about the spirit of *Maastricht*.

The VU brings up similar concerns, almost to the point of over-emphasising the regional aspect:

The building up of the international society must take place on the basis of *federalist principles*: starting from the localities to the regions and

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<sup>225</sup>European Communities, *Treaty on European Union*, title II, article G, paragraph 5 [italics added].

<sup>226</sup>Scott, P., 27.

to Europe, powers must be laid at the appropriate level. This happens according to the principle of subsidiarity.<sup>227</sup>

While it is hardly surprising that the member states of the EU should be "hostile to the setting up of rival regional centres of power"<sup>228</sup>, by devolving power from the Council to the other EU bodies, keeping the decision-making process entrenched in the Council may invite challenges from another corner. Given the general reluctance of member states to seriously consider a politically relevant "regional Europe", "[t]erritorial nationalists such as the SNP prefer Scotland to join the EC as a sovereign state rather than to rely on the transformation of the EC into a supranational Europe of the Nations and Regions."<sup>229</sup> The realities of the situation spur the sub-state groups on in the feeling that an assertion of independence may be easier than to somehow convince not only "Europe" but indeed each individual member state to adopt a new regionally-centred decision-making structure for Europe.<sup>230</sup> Both the SNP and the VU have made it clear that as long as "Europe" does remain inter-governmental, their respective nations ought to have a seat at the table of member states of Europe.

This is further complicated by the very real hierarchy of regions that exists within Europe. As the various regions have different institutional entities, those whose representatives are better institutionally endowed within the state context, tend also to carry more weight in "Europe". The most obvious example of this is the fact

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<sup>227</sup>"De opbouw van de internationale samenleving moet gebeuren op basis van *federalistische principes*: vertrekkend van de gemeenten, over de regio naar Europa worden de bevoegdheden op het gepaste beslissingsniveau gelegd. Dit gebeurt volgens het principe van de subsidiariteit." Volksunie, *VU — Programma, Europese*, 25.

<sup>228</sup>Kellas, "European Integration", 236.

<sup>229</sup>Kellas, "European Integration", 238.

<sup>230</sup>Jambon, 54.

that the German *Länder* have their own representative, though only with observer status, at the Council of Ministers. Also, the *Länder* governments make up the representation of the upper house of the German parliament, the *Bundesrat*, meaning that they can effectively veto any federal government decisions which explicitly run counter to the interests of the regions. Regional interests, generally understood, can block German federal approval, without which European initiatives are unlikely to proceed further. In the Committee of the Regions, a newly-formed body in the EU whose roles and responsibilities remain minimal and ill-defined, for example, regions such as Flanders and the German *Länder* send their minister-presidents. Because of the institutional structures, as defined by their respective states, they are better able to mobilise resources to exercise pressure at the European level. Others, without the benefit of institutionalised positions for the regions within their states, send functionaries or town councillors.<sup>231</sup> The representation that a region enjoys at the European level is, in a very real way, dependent on the arrangements made within the relevant state. Ian Lang, Secretary of State for Scotland, summed this up quite succinctly when, at the official opening of "Scotland Europa", he underlined that this did not embody Scotland's representation in Europe, since that was the role of The UK Permanent Representation to the EC. "After all, we're not Bavaria. We are part of a unitary state."<sup>232</sup>

It is interesting to note in this regard that the inherent struggle between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism seems also to rage amongst the nationalist groups. Whereas the *Volksunie* does call for a Flemish seat at the European Council as long as the EU remains intergovernmental, it has also clearly come down in favour ultimately for a supranationalist structure: "Over time, the Council and the Commission must be replaced by an elected European Government, which is

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<sup>231</sup>Kellas, "European Integration", 230 and Robert Taylor.

<sup>232</sup>Ian Lang as quoted in the Glasgow Herald, as cited in Keating and Jones, "Nations", 107.

responsible before the European Parliament. The Committee of the Regions ought to grow to become a senate of peoples and regions."<sup>233</sup> The SNP, on the other hand, maintains that, "[the SNP's] objective is not a European super state but a confederal Community of independent nations which choose to share their sovereignty and cooperate more closely . . ."<sup>234</sup>

Furthermore the SNP was strongly against any notion of a Europe of the Regions since it considered itself to be equal to the other member-states of the EC.<sup>235</sup> The SNP even refused to participate in the setting up of the Bureau of Unrepresented Nations since it felt that contrary to the "fringe" Breton, Welsh, Basque, and Alsatian groups, Scotland enjoys a "mature national movement with mass support ready to assume independence"<sup>236</sup>. MacFarquhar brings up this same point in contrast with the regions of England:

While Scotland and Wales might envisage themselves as potential additions to the Nine [member-states of the EC at the time], the English regions would be more likely and better advised in the long run to seek links with similar regions elsewhere in the Community in order to bring pressure to bear on the Community institutions, over the heads of national governments if need be.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>233</sup>"Op termijn moeten Raad en Commissie vervangen worden door een verkozen Europese Regering, die verantwoording verschuldigd is aan het Europees Parlement. Het Comité van de regio's dient uit te groeien tot een senaat van volkeren en regio's." Volksunie, *Vitaminen*, 5.

<sup>234</sup>Scottish National Party, *Scotland*, 18. See also Keating and Jones, *Nations*, 96.

<sup>235</sup>Keating and Jones, 317.

<sup>236</sup>Keating and Jones, "Nations", 94.

<sup>237</sup>MacFarquhar, 22.

This difference may be explained by exactly the institutional arrangements each nation is subject to its respective state. Flanders, as Liesbet Hooghe states, has enjoyed a strong feeling of confidence and is

capable of organizing society and economy as effectively as the Belgian State. [It] could probably take care of [its] external relations as efficaciously as the Belgian federal State, which can command only slightly more resources within the context of the European Community.<sup>238</sup>

Indeed, she goes on to list the various powers that Flanders enjoys within the Belgian federation, saying that what remains is left to the federal government "where it is not becoming European"<sup>239</sup>. She highlights what Kuijpers points out, that Flanders enjoys many of the powers previously exercised by the Belgian state, with the notable exceptions discussed above and most importantly a seat at the decision-making table. Scotland, by contrast, does not enjoy any of these powers and as a result may be less comfortable with a largely undefined Europe of the Nations and Regions. Indeed, as Meadwell argues, "the development of . . . a set of institutions that are an alternative to those of the central state"<sup>240</sup> is an important enabling condition of nationalist mobilisation. Scotland may not yet have the political confidence or legal potency that Flanders has fostered through years of institutional development leading to a politically and legally relevant nation. As a result, it is not surprising that Scotland should prefer the option of full statehood to realise its national ambitions.

At the state level, the insistence of the EU's member states to maintain a monopoly of power within the power structures has been backfiring against them. It has been shown that many state powers are being transferred to the EU, where only

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<sup>238</sup>Hooghe, "Belgian Federalism", 136.

<sup>239</sup>Hooghe, "Belgian Federalism", 140.

<sup>240</sup>Meadwell, "The Politics of Nationalism", 215.

member states have a say. By granting sub-state entities even less access to this decision-making process than some of them enjoyed at the state level, many are feeling that the only way to remain relevant is to gain access to the process over the heads of the states. Furthermore, the fact that the member states are still jealously guarding certain powers for themselves, only further encourages regions to participate in Europe as member states rather than as effete regions of Europe.

The proposed model laid out four primary independent variables (economic integration, system-wide policies, transfer payments, and political isolation) which would predict increases or decreases in a region's desire to directly participate in either the state or in Europe. These factors were largely accurate, both in their overall effect, and in the manner in which they interacted with each other, in predicting a stronger movement for Scotland and Flanders to become independent member states of the European Union.

By and large, the factors tended to reinforce one another, with two notable exceptions, both relating to the incentive or disincentive to direct participation in the EU. The first is between economic integration and the presence of system-wide policies. These two seemed to have neither a reinforcing nor a weakening effect on one another. This is very likely due to the fact that economic integration at a European level was promoted by actively *eliminating* policies that served as barriers, rather than establishing a common set of policies. The second exception was the interaction between system-wide policies and system of transfer payments. This may be because the two elements are perceived to be linked so closely. That is to say that a more generous system of transfer payments would generally accompany a more interventionist Union. On the other hand, an arrangement with fewer system-wide policies, would be expected to require fewer transfer payments. Much like an individual would be less enticed by a cut in taxes if it were accompanied by an equivalent cut in the amount of tax credits he or she would be entitled to.

In two areas the model proved to be somewhat less accurate. The first was in the case of the interaction between economic integration and system-wide policies in Scotland with respect to the United Kingdom. This may be because, unlike Flanders which is subject to the monetary policies of Germany and the economic pressures of France, Scotland is more subject to the economic and monetary policies set in London. The second area where the model served less well was the classification of Scottish North Sea oil as a transfer payment. It may be possible to create another factor which accounts exclusively for region-specific resources. The problem with creating such an additional factor of study is that it may make the model less universally applicable. In the case of Flanders, it is not clear whether its specific resource would be its multilingual population, an important port, its position as key transportation route between Britain, France, and Germany, or something else altogether.

None the less, the overall success of the model is all the more interesting when keeping in mind that the model's economic aspects were based on the theories of an extra-European case. On the other hand, the two movements studied in this thesis were picked because they are amongst the strongest such movements in Europe. This brings up two possibilities for further study. Firstly, that there may be other relevant factors missed by this model; factors which may hold for Scotland but not Flanders or vice versa. Secondly, while these factors are relevant to the movements which focus both on the "national-cultural" question and independence vis-à-vis the current state, they may not be for other regionalist movements. Two notable movements of interest would be that in Catalonia, which while striving for greater "national-cultural" awareness, does not seek secession from Spain, and the nascent movement in Padania, which does seek secession from Italy, but on economic grounds, rather than for "national-cultural" considerations. Also, it may be of interest to see whether the model holds for movements whose expression has been marked by a significant amount of non-democratic activities, such as Basque Country along the Franco-Hispanic border and Corsica off the coast of France.

Ultimately, as pressures towards internationalisation are compelling states to pool their sovereignty with other states, the member states of the European Union are doing this by deliberately keeping the state at the centre of this process. Of the various institutions of the Union, only those in which the member states have the first and last say are significantly empowered. The concept of subsidiarity has been revived in order to keep the institutions of shared sovereignty, the EU, from encroaching upon state privileges. However, the same economic and political forces which are forcing states to share their sovereignty amongst themselves are also eroding their monopoly on sovereignty with regard to sub-state groups. By resolutely keeping the state as the relevant political entity in Europe, the states themselves are giving many sub-state groups the impression that there is no other alternative but to effectively "depose" the current state. Whatever future arrangements Europe comes up with to manage relations between the EU and the member states will, in the end, also have bearing on the sub-state/state and sub-state/EU relationships.

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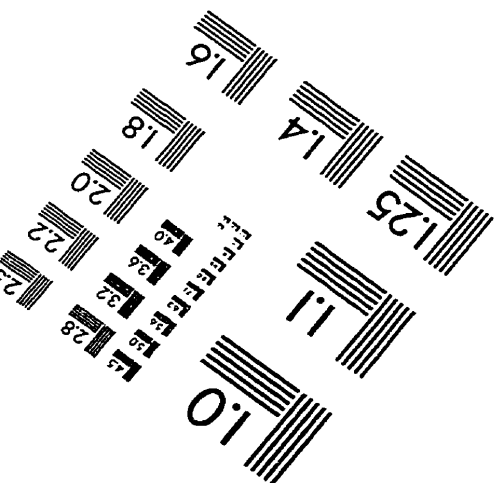
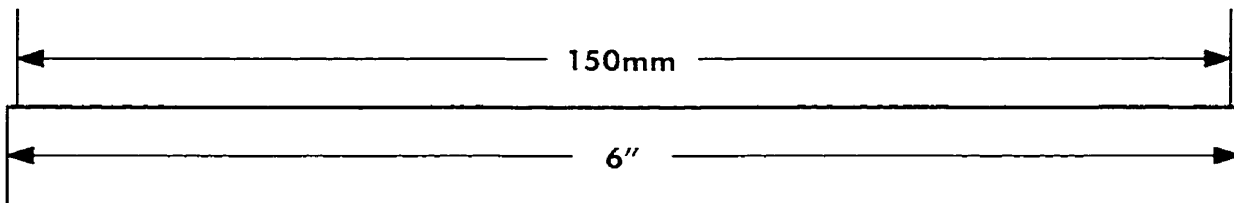
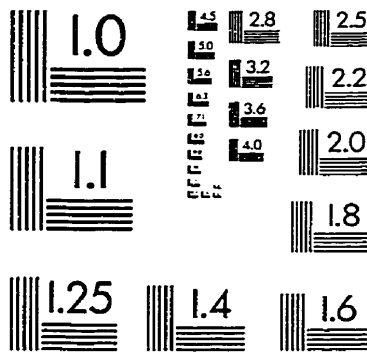
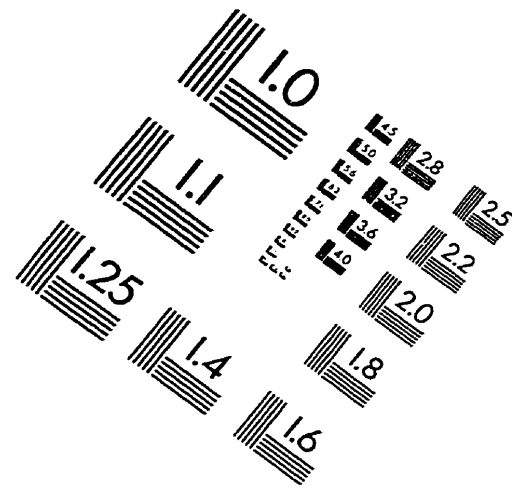
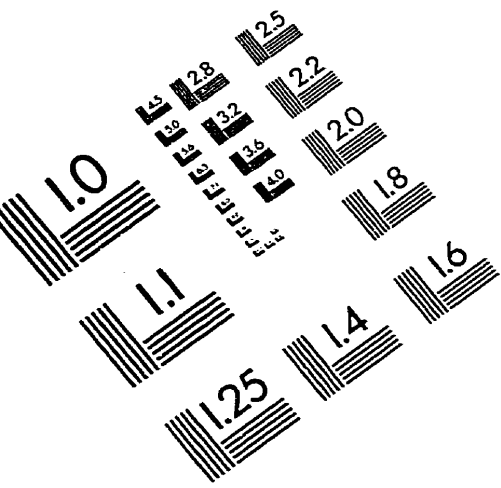
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