Derek W. Urwin

Some Reflections on Western Minority Nationalism: A Variable Market in Futures?

Ændringerne i Østeuropa har givet nyt håb for Vesteuropas nationale mindretal, som efter 1960'ernes og 1970'ernes hektiske aktivitet sank hen i mere eller mindre glemsel. Artiklen vurderer de faktorer, som fremmede mindretalsnationalismen efter 1960, og de faktorer som i løbet af 1980'erne placerede nationalismen perifert på den politiske dagsorden. Erfaringerne fra de sidste tiår viser, at hvis de nationale mindretal skal genvinde det politiske fodfæste, skal de koncentrere sig om de politiske og kulturelle rødder snarere end om økonomiske emner, ligesom de skal beskæftige sig med borgerrettigheder snarere end det bastante krav om uafhængighed.

As a new decade opens, the significance of the phenomenon of the politics of territory and identity in industrialised states has received an additional boost with the break-up of the USSR, the violent and bloody disintegration of Yugoslavia, and the more polite, but equally potent, divorce between Czech and Slovak. It is more of an open question whether the events in the old Communist empire will spill over to aid a revival of what seems to be the flagging fortunes of most minority nationalist movements in Western democracies. Their prospects seem to be less – or at least no more advanced – than they were some decades ago. Of course some achievements have been gained, ranging for instance from extensive autonomy for Euzkadi and Catalonia to the more limited, but perhaps politically and culturally no less significant, creation of a separate Welsh-language television channel for Wales. Equally, some remain an ominous threat to the territorial integrity and legitimacy of the existing state: Quebec is a case in point, as perhaps is the Flemish-Walloon divide in Belgium. But on the whole Western minority nationalism has seemingly passed from a vibrant youth to a rather more staid middle age. While expectations survive, most movements almost seem to have become just another element of the everyday political system – colourful perhaps, but not something about which one should become unduly agitated. Have their goals, then, become more fantasy than dream?

Stocktaking the Past
The 1960s and 1970s have become typified as an era of new politics, a period when feminism, environmentalism, terrorism and perhaps another 57 varieties of »isms« flourished. The blossoming or – in some instances – reawakening of minority nationalism was part of this broad trend. Like the other components of the new politics, it directed at least part of its ire against the modern centralizing and depersonalising state with its stress upon economic management bureaucratization and welfare state paternalism.

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The new emphasis upon territorial politics seemed to take both politicians and analysts by surprise: there appeared to be unanimity on the agenda of the modern state, defined by one writer as »the politics of consensus in an age of affluence«.[1] Since the French Revolution the two concepts of state and nation had gradually become synonymous, to the extent that by the first half of the twentieth century the concept of state and nation had become widely accepted as a norm and ultimate goal for territorial organisation, with the Western democracy being both its spiritual home and the model which the rest of the world should strive to emulate. Territorial homogenization, according to this conventional wisdom, was the outcome also of industrial civilisation, with minority national groups inexorably »dissolving into the wider culture«.[2] Minority nationalist organisations which sought to buck this trend were more likely to be dismissed as comic opera buffons or branded as potential criminals. If there was to be a future other than that of the nation state, it was, at least in Western Europe, the merging of existing states in a wider form of European identity and organization.

The fact that several national minorities had not read this script was brought home in the 1960s by a general territorial unrest spearheaded by movements and parties which visibly and explicitly voiced separatist sentiments. The assertion of the right of self-determination, whether independence or some form of autonomy or home rule, obliged political science to add or to recall two elements to its lexicon. First, the state everywhere is a territorial as well as a legal entity, and that to understand the state we have to understand the linkages and networks that have developed across territory. Second, it hammered home the message that most, if not all, Western states fall far short of the simple classical definition of the nation-state. Since that definition asserts that all members of a particular ethno-cultural group are to be found in only one state where they form the overwhelming majority of the population, then very few such states actually exist.[3] Several publications listed an extensive number of minority national groups and/or organisations which, irrespective of how one defined ethnicity or national identity, drew attention to the fact that almost all Western states should be regarded as being multi-ethnic or multi-national in the sense of more than one identity being present.[4]

The analytical response to the new nationalism was a range of studies which, through a variety of conceptual approaches, defined the phenomenon as internal colonialism, the ethnic resurgence, peripheral politicization or the ethnic potential.[5] The new research agenda was defined in terms of the potential for national separation with, depending upon the author's sympathies, the demise of long-established states being seen as possible, likely, desirable or inevitable. Much of this literature on the growth of Western minority nationalism suffered from a number of problems. Most basic perhaps was a lack of consensus on terminology, concepts and even the boundaries of the subject under review. Many publications were only case studies which did not directly illuminate any kind of universality. Equally, many taxonomies simply listed different categories of minority nationalism without paying sufficient attention to the specific historical and territorial environment of each particular case.

What is clear when we compare the analytical literature with the long lists of minority national groups to be found in Western states is that historical, geographical and political contexts are crucial. Only in a minority of cases did a politicization of the groups occur in the 1960s or later. In a few instances, indeed, there had been a decline in the intensity and support apparent earlier in the century. The research agenda and the analysis, therefore, were defined not by the multi-national nature of Western states, but by the few examples of an at least partially successful politization of minority nationalism. By the 1970s the arrival of new nationalist parties, along with the well-publicized terrorist activities of groups such as the IRA in Northern Ireland and ETA in the Basque territories of Spain, seemed to be producing a majority view that a trend towards the deconcentration, even perhaps disintegration, of the state was indeed well-established. The prediction, if we can call it that, was remarkable not only because it was based upon a relatively small number of the minority groups, no matter how defined, that can be found in the Western world, but also because it assumed that these movements had a firm popular base far in excess of what was being demonstrated, inter alia, at the ballot box. Size, of course, is not a sole criterion of success, nor would it be necessary for political groups to mobilize the bulk of their putative support. Very small groups of people can bring about momentous changes in social and political organisation. The fact remains, however, that in the 1960s and 1970s very few of the new political movements spawned during these decades could demonstrate more than a limited minority support among their self-defined national group.

These caveats must form part of the background to any assessment of the general conditions that were held to have given rise to minority nationalism. These all related to the inadequacies and/or changing nature of the state, and to the particular perceptions of it held by groups which possessed both a strong collective awareness that they were culturally fundamentally different from other citizens of the state, and an emotive attachment to a specific territory within the state.[6]

The expansion of state activity after 1945 had led, it was argued, to an increasing bureaucratization and depersonalization. These were but two aspects of a growing centralization of decision-making in which non-economic and territorially concentrated groups like national minorities fared badly. Equally, the party systems were state and elite-oriented. Major parties, even those which attempted to be catch-all in character, had also become more centralized through a process of professionalization: they tended to regard the solicitation of support from national minority groups as only marginally productive electorally, or where the support was already »pledged« taking it very much for granted. While living standards had risen everywhere with the unprecedented economic growth of the first post-war decades, the level of improvement was unequal across territory as well as groups.[7] An ongoing and escalating centralization and concentration of economic decision-making in the private as well as the public sector contributed to a feeling among minorities, reinforced by the advent of mass television and the images it presented, that they were becoming more disadvantaged, even marginalized, in the emerging centralized world.

But whatever the economic argument, they were linked to and came from other and deeper roots possessed by minority nationalism. That was more primarily an expression of cultural and ethnic loyalties distinct from those given to or demanded by the state, which felt themselves under threat from a standardized state and societal domination. Economic concerns and worries about democratic participation in a majority-oriented world combined with far older concerns which had to do with community, a shared and distinctive cultural inheritance and identity which, in Renan's phrase, expressed themselves in an ongoing plebiscite, a constantly reaffirmed commitment to the communal group through your daily actions and behaviour.[8] What counts in this broad view of identity is the whole and varied repertoire of signals and stigmata available to everyone in the cultural community, where group identity is reinforced by an identity with place. It is place in which lives are lived, interests defined, and information received and interpreted within a framework of everyday and routinized social interaction.

What was important for the rise of minority nationalism was not just that it was a possible consequence wherever dissatisfaction with the bureaucratic state coincided with distinctive cultural and ethnic loyalties concentrated in specific territories. It was also a consequence of more general economic and social change which inter alia had produced within national minorities a new middle class, more professional and managerial, which injected an additional strength and vigour into the traditional cultural – and often politically naive – style of leadership. More perhaps than any other group, this new middle class highlighted the dilemma of national minorities in a democratic state – the dilemma of balancing participatory concerns and rights with distributive concerns and rights, which together are encapsulated by the issue of the nature of citizenship.

In a system of democratic pluralism there are two very different kinds of citizen rights: the collective right to respect for community of origin, whatever its cultural composition; and the individual right to the opportunity to utilize fully your own abilities.[9] The former is a right to roots, the other a right to options. Roots are the essence of minority national groups. They form the core of identity. But options are equally important, and increasingly members of national minorities objected to perceived limitations on options which were believed to be the result of people possessing distinctive roots. National minorities more vocally demanded the right to both. If the state could not or was not willing to provide both for groups that were both culturally and territorially defined, the territorial structure of the state, along with its management practices, needed to be changed.

In very broad terms, whenever persuaded by electoral or other political considerations that some kind of action towards minority nationalism was desirable, Western governments responded positively. This was easier in the economic arena where the most common response was an extension and intensification of regional economic policy. But there were also political responses – in, for example, Quebec, Northern Ireland, Catalonia and the Basque provinces, Flanders and the Alto Adige.

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By the 1970s regional economic policy was a standard state item, with the development of infrastructures, defined growth poles or nodes, large scale investment and a host of other mechanisms as declared objectives. As it became more elaborate, regional policy did require and acquire local partners in its various enterprises. It suffered, however, from one basic flaw. It was regarded by central government as an adjunct to or necessary part of national planning. Regional policies tended to be acceptable to the centre only if they were deemed to be something that would benefit the state as a whole. At the end of the day regional economic policy was a response to perceived economic problems and demands: even if successful it would not per se have necessarily answered the political dilemma raised by minority nationalism.

Increasingly, regional policy was identified by many observers as something that was helping to fuel minority nationalism. The insistence of governments that it was part of a balanced state policy did at least tacitly acknowledge that some areas were economically disadvantaged. The claims made on its behalf raised expectations that were not fulfilled. It created more centralized planning mechanisms that, if anything, weakened existing structures of territorial representation. While there may be grounds for a debate about whether regional economic policy could ever have been effective in defusing political minority nationalism, world conditions in the 1970s doomed it to failure. The more peripheral regions of states – where many minority nationalist groups were to be found – were affected relatively more severely by the sharp downturn and continuing internationalization of the world economy, both factors which reduced the ability of governments to pursue an effective regional policy for political reasons.

The Western state, then, was seen as being in trouble. A new literature introduced such terms as overloaded government and ungovernability.[10] Other studies argued that government freedom to decide upon policy was so constrained that it was irrelevant which politicians or political parties occupied power.[11] If the state was proving generally unmanageable, then perhaps it made sense to dismember leviathan. The territorial future could lie with devolution and democratization, and hence in part with minority nationalism. To head off the ultimate challenge of separation, governments would have to consider more seriously some form of territorial/group accommodation involving either power-sharing or federalism, even though either might prove to be the thin end of a wedge that would sooner or later – but inevitably – lead to independence. It was even suggested that states could afford to be more relaxed about the territorial imperative. In an ever-shrinking and interdependent world, independence, sovereignty and the retention of territory at whatever cost had become less significant and their diminution or dilution accepted with greater equanimity.[12]

The coincidence of the intensified expression of cultural and ethnic identities with factors associated with a wider socio-economic malaise of democratic industrial countries led many to believe that the future did lie with minority nationalism. Settlements such as the Proporzpaket in the Alto Adige or new constitutional arrangements in Belgium and Spain, the experience of power of the Parti Québécois in Canada, and even the conversion of the British Labour government to

devolution for Scotland and Wales – all were accepted, by both supporters and opponents of minority nationalist demands, as being but the first step on a route that had a separatist solution as its end point.

Slump and Depreciation

The dreams were not to be translated into reality. The 1970s proved to be the high watermark of a widespread nationalist upsurge and of concern about it. During the following decade its political expression tended to mark time or decline in intensity. The result: in most instance its consequent demotion down the political agenda of government and a loss of interest by analysts.

To some extent minority nationalism was a victim of its own relative success – no matter how meagre that may have been – and of the changing fabric of world society. All nationalist movements have been broad churches containing widely different views on tactics, strategies and even ultimate objectives. The recent upsurge of Western minority nationalism was no exception. Apart from a common identification with a territory and group, there was little in the way of a common element. During the heady days of its emergence, relatively little attention was paid to these internal differences and their possible consequences. They were much more visible in the 1980s. The reasons were varied. In some cases, like Quebec, it was because some success had been achieved; in others, as in the United Kingdom, it was more because central government had responded more minimally with measures that might quell or dampen nationalist aspirations.

In order to demonstrate that they were serious contenders for power, that they were able to govern responsibly, nationalist movements – whether they were political parties themselves or, as in the Swiss Jura, essentially an interest group endorsing or opposing politicians of all persuasions – felt the need to demonstrate an awareness of policy issues other than the demand for territorial structural change. All felt obliged to develop a broad policy portfolio that laid down a political strategy on the economy, social welfare, the environment, and so on. In a world rife with economic problems, the development of a broad policy profile persuaded several nationalist leaders of the economic and social difficulties that would occur in the wake of secession: the promised land would not necessarily be the one of milk and honey. Autonomist or devolution sentiments and options became more acceptable. Where this occured, it clashed with a more rigid nationalism that brooked no compromise short of full independence.

Furthermore, while central governments may have been indulgent in economic policy towards minority regions, if these policies misfired the fact remained that nationalists could do little about them other than criticise. The same is true of cultural concessions by governments where the latter feel that allowing these will not undermine the integrity of the state. Wales offers a good illustration of this problem. Plaid Cymru has been trapped between arguing about economic issues about which it can do little, and presenting cultural demands which may be and have been conceded by London governments on an ad hoc basis without any admission of this implying a recognition of the party's general claim for Welsh independence.

These problems perhaps emerged first and most clearly where minority nationalism had achieved some marked success, even to the point of acquiring some government responsibility. The capture of the provincial government by the Parti Québécois and its implementation of policies designed to preserve and strengthen the distinctive cultural fabric of Quebec reinforced and reassured French Canadian power in the province. This perhaps is part of the explanation behind the provincial rejection of independence in the 1980 referendum, and the consequent turmoil which led to splits within the party between hard-core and more moderate elements.[13] Equally, the establishment of extensive regional autonomy after 1977 did not resolve the internal contradictions of Basque nationalism. If anything, it magnified them. While the Basque National Party (PNV) may have emerged as the largest single party, both because it lacked a majority and wished for a modus vivendi with Madrid and the Spanish-oriented parties in the provinces, it faced renewed challenges from ETA and other Basque parties that rejected compromise on the question of independence.

Scotland provides yet another variation. The failure of the 1978 referendum was a shock to the nationalists and Labour government alike. It took another decade before Scottish nationalism seemingly regained the ground lost after 1978. An impressive 1988 by-election victory in Labour's Glasgow heartland and a string of opinion polls were heralded as auguries of the future – just as similar evidence had been two decades earlier. The 1992 general election demonstrated otherwise, occasioning a soul-searching among all those who a few days earlier had confidently expected that independence or a Scottish assembly with extensive executive powers would be only a matter of form.

Frustration, whether with nationalist leadership for insufficient vigour or with the state for not conceding demands, contributed to a fragmentation of cohesion. One consequence was an increase in the visibility of the chauvinistic xenophobia which is never far from the nationalist surface. The more illiberal elements of nationalism were not apparent everywhere in the 1980s, but where they did appear, they fed off not only discontent with government but also the changing nature of society. At the extreme, as in Flanders, it acquired overtones of the far right, with a racialist, anti-immigration slant. In other instances, it reinforced an intransigence that argued that since the parliamentary route had failed, direct action was called for. The Irish IRA and the Basque ETA had their admirers and potential imitators everywhere, though none were able to advance beyond the fringes of their respective movements.

An equally important factor in the about-turn in the fortunes of minority nationalism was the economic. The change in the Western economies, with recession, high inflation and high unemployment becoming part and parcel of the everyday picture, focused government attention on economics, which pervaded virtually all policy considerations. The heightened governmental preoccupation with costs and balance sheets was linked to the rise to dominance of a different economic thinking that rejected the Keynesian recipes that had reigned almost undisputed since 1945. In their place came a market-oriented conception of the economy that eschewed an economic role for the state. The rise of a New Right

in politics with its neo-liberalist outlook was a consequence of the failures of Keynesian-oriented governments in the 1970s. While Margaret Thatcher's Conservative governments in the United Kingdom were the European standard-bearers of the new philosophy, along with the Reagan Administration in the USA, the principles underlying its prescriptions on the economic role of the state were accepted at least in part by most Western governments, irrespective of their political persuasion.[14]

Not only did economic primacy mean that political questions like those posed by minority nationalism became less important and relevant in the eyes of decision-makers: it entailed a rejection of any kind of governmental political activity. That, according to the new creed, would simply hinder or destroy the economic progress which only the unshackled interplay of the free market could bring about. Whether governments accepted the market-first approach without reservation is irrelevant. What counted is that the focus switched from the virtues of government-sponsored collective social welfare considerations to the imposition of a ceiling on public expenditure and an enhanced role for individual responsibility, and from the distribution of wealth to its creation.

In this changed perspective the root cause of regional or territorial problems was identified not as the lack of investment or concern by the state, but too much central intervention. The old regional policy was rejected because it could not work, because no level of investment could guarantee the results looked for or satisfy the expectations raised, and because it created a culture of dependency. The counter-productiveness or inefficiency of regional policy was therefore deemed to be an inevitable consequence of government involvement. By contrast, the solution to the economic problems, which, one must assume, would also assuage the cultural concerns of minority nationalism, lay with the free play of the market and individual initiative within it. Rather than governments pouring money into schemes to alleviate, for example, regional unemployment, of creating or moving jobs to where people were, the pendulum swung to the other end of its arc. The terse advice offered to the unemployed of Britain by the government minister, Norman Tebbitt – »get on your bike« – was repeated, perhaps more politely but no less forcefully, by many others.[15]

All of this boded ill for minority nationalism. If the conventional interpretation of the 1960s and 1970s is correct, then in a way minority nationalism had thrived upon the attention paid to it by governments. Even where governments spurned any political concessions, minority nationalism could always use the inadequacy of regional policy as a rallying point for support for its political demands. With the demotion of regional policy, it became more difficult to pursue this kind of strategy. Even an active denial was more productive than a silence. Disinterest proved to be a more effective dampener of minority spirits and support than policies of consensus that sought a more or less liberal use of state funds to maintain territorial integrity by offering concessions to nationalist demands.

However, even though minority nationalism argued about economic policy and adopted economic positions, its fundamental raison d'être was and is political, with demands presented in terms of collective rights. The climate of the

1980s was a fatalistic one where political outcomes were concerned. If governments accept that the panacea lies with a more or less free rein for market forces, then there is little that they could or should do politically except assist, or not interfere with, those forces. Demands for political actions were more likely to be ignored rather than accepted or rejected. The concerns of minority nationalism became even more marginalized in the eyes of central government.

In this changed environment minority nationalism was left with few choices. One was to accept the demands of its extremists and look to direct action as the only strategy that could bring the desired result. This was a strategy fraught with high costs, even if it did not offend the inherent democratic impulses that drove most minority nationalist leaders. Even in those societies where direct action had a tradition and substantial support, as in Northern Ireland and the Basque provinces, there occurred a greater disenchantment with violence and a declining sympathy for the organizations concerned. What seemed to be left was to concentrate even more than hitherto on economic factors, but to argue the social collective case against the individualistic ethos. This forced many nationalist parties leftwards to a reemphasis of the original post-1945 social democrat consensus, a movement which also helped to push them further towards the national political spectrum. While this pressure did not per se destroy the specific uniqueness of minority nationalism, it did entail a blurring of that uniqueness and of its marginalization, of becoming just another minority party. Where state structures and previous central policies of accommodation had established some kind of decentralized institutional format of government, thus could provide a bulwark against any serious erosion of minority distinctiveness. But as the examples of Canada and Spain indicate, decentralization may not necessarily generate an effective protective shield.

In short, the 1980s saw, as it were, a kind of ossification of minority nationalism. It became more an established, accepted and conventional part of the political picture. Governments may have consulted its party representatives or have ignored them; but they seemed to be less agitated by its presence. The triumph or right-wing governments and/or neoliberal policies made a form of accommodation with mainstream political forces more of a necessity. Short of switching to the path of violence, minority nationalist parties tended to stress centre-left or social democrat credentials. While this was not too difficult to do, in that right-wing parties, traditionally more likely defenders of the territorial status quo, could be perceived as more »natural« opponents, it did strip away some of their distinctiveness.

One problem continued to reoccur. The more the parties moved towards the political mainstream and normal participation in everyday politics, the more they risked a loss of internal cohesion and an increase in dissatisfaction at the lack of progress in realizing minority ambitions. While this was most obviously so where right-wing parties were in power, it tended equally to be the case when the left occupied the seat of government. The debates and frustration within the Scottish National Party (SNP) and, to a lesser extent, Plaid Cymru leading up to

and immediately following the 1992 British general election were in many ways strongly reminiscent of the late 1970s when the two nationalist parties tacitly supported a minority Labour government. Similar problems have afflicted the PNV in Euzkadi with the consolidation in the 1980s of a Socialist government in Madrid. At the extreme, too close an association with the mainstream left led to total disarray and disintegration, the fate of the Union Démocratique Bretonne (UDB). While the left may have absorbed some of the views of minority nationalism, it has its own and different concerns which in the last resort will take priority. One further factor augured ill for an association with the left. In many countries the lack of electoral success persuaded social democrats to embrace a modified version of the market-oriented vision of neoliberalism, following a route taken by their sister parties in government in other countries.

The 1980s were a bad decade for minority nationalism. Economics and the market ruled the roost. Governments, especially those of the New Right, had other concerns and proved to be less accommodating than in the consensual past. Minority nationalist parties failed ultimately to capitalise on the upsurge of previous decades. In terms of support they at best marked time. In terms of objective there was more perhaps a narrowing of vision, with an emphasis upon autonomy rather than separation. In turn the lack of ultimate success produced confusion and disagreement within the minority ranks. The more the parties strove to present an image of respectability and governmental potential, the more they risked diluting their ideological and political distinctiveness.

Bull or Bear Market?

The question of whether political minority nationalism in Western democracies has a future is rather superfluous. The roots of that nationalism lie in cultural and ethnic distinctiveness. As long as this persists, then the potential for a political mobilization of minority nationalism will also remain. The dilemma for nationalist groups has always been how to turn that potential into mass support and ultimate policy victory: all analyses have demonstrated that very few nationalist parties or movements have been able to tap more than a fraction of their potential support.

In a broader context the protest of the 1960s and 1970s did place the territorial structure of the state – in all its aspects – more firmly on political and research agendas. To some extent the question has remained on these agendas ever since, at least as an unspoken item. Several developments have helped to keep them there. The internationalization of networks has continued to erode the impermeability of state boundaries. In particular, the revolution in the electronic media, with deregulation and satellite developments, has begun to have a significant effect upon the previous nationalising effect of broadcasting.[16] The critiques delivered by other elements of the new politics of the 1960s and 1970s, especially by green activists, have re-emphasised the significance of place and region. A decade or more of market dominance and neoliberalisation has not resolved the issue of regional economic disparity. Without the moderating effect of government largesse, the gap between rich and poor regions, with all its potential political conse-

quences, may well have increased. Then there is the flood of immigrants from other parts of the world which has, at least for some commentators, given a new meaning to the phrase, the multicultural society, with some confusion over whether this new society will be built on principles of cultural integration or a kind of cultural apartheid. This has raised, and will continue to raise, questions about the meaning of citizenship.[17] The issue of what constitutes citizenship may well be one of the greatest challenges facing future governments, offering further opportunities for indigenous minorities to stake a special place for themselves in this new form of society. Finally there is the impetus the European Community has received from the Single European Act and the planned drive to the internal market. The post-1992 implications – for example, those spelled out in the rather inchoate 1991 Maastricht treaty on political and economic union – could well have significant effects upon territorial identity.

Much of this can be only speculation. What perhaps is not speculation is that the Western state has proved to be far more resilient in the face of the minority nationalist challenge than earlier prognoses suggested. Not only is there a considerable institutional inertia, but also a significant elasticity. State responses to minority nationalist demands were more or less positive, albeit grudgingly so in some cases. To a certain extent this illustrated not just the deep roots of political structures, but also attitudes which betrayed an acceptance of pluralism and difference, and a tolerance towards it. This is perhaps the major difference between the Western experience of recent decades and that which several of the new democratic regimes of Eastern Europe have had and may have to face. History is less recognisably on their side.

Despite the probable persistence of factors conducive to the survival of minority nationalism, its political expression will still face the same kind of obstacles and inertia as in the past. What the experience of the past few decades suggests is that minority nationalism is still confronted by the dilemma of roots and options. It wishes both, but they are not easy to reconcile. A central theme has been that its distinctive roots have led to discrimination in options. The latter, particularly economic rights, often proved an easier target for mobilisation, and also something to which central government was more disposed to respond. What we had through the later emphasis upon market forces was an extension of the options alternative, with a greater shelving of roots.

The political wisdom of the 1980s perhaps distracted minority nationalism. In issue terms it perhaps unduly followed the dominant trend, ignoring too much its essential cultural and ethnic roots. The consequences were a heightened risk of internal dissension, of emasculation, marginalization and/or absorption. If previous experience is anything to go by, it suggests that minority nationalism is more likely to retain its political vitality when political or cultural issues are more central. The Parti Québécois and the PNV are cases in point. Political and cultural issues are central to the roots/options dichotomy. They relate to traditions and place, to Renan's daily plebiscite. Minority nationalism needs to pay particular attention to its special perspective on rights, to restore roots to a position where they are accorded the same value as options. In an increasingly interdepen-

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dent world, especially among its industrialized components, perhaps minority nationalism should reject the old argument as to whether it should brook no compromise on independence or accept some form of autonomy. The profitable future strategy may lie with notions of rights and citizenship in a world where all action is not determined by »independent« states, to argue that there is a place for harmonious relationships between national groups within and across states and economic systems. The alternative of insisting upon independence may well condemn minority nationalism in the West to the political wilderness of a bear market, and even perhaps its degeneration into a violent fringe decried by most of the people it claims to represent.

Notes

1. R. Lane (1965), »The Politics of Consensus in an Age of Affluence«, *American Political Science Review*, 59, pp. 874-895.
2. E. Gellner (1983), *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 47.
3. This is the definition emloyed by G.P. Nielssen, »State and 'Nation Group': A Global Taxonomy«, pp. 27-56 in E.A. Tieryakian & R. Rogowski (eds.), *New Nationalisms of the Developed West* (1985), Boston: Allen & Unwin. Nielssen identifies only 31 such states in the world, 12 of them being in Europe. Such taxonomies, however, overlook the simple fact that even very small minorities and localities can be extremely troublesome: for example, Northern Ireland, the Alto Adige, or the Fourons.
4. See, for example, the listing of organisations in J. Blaschke (ed.) (1980), *Handbuch der westeuropäischen Regionalbewegungen*, Frankfurt: Syndikat. See also M. Stephens (1976), *Linguistic Minorities in Western Europe*, Llandysul: Gomer Press; S. Rokkan & D.W. Urwin (1983), *Economy, Territory, Identity*, London/Beverly Hills: Sage, especially Chs. 2-3; D.W. Urwin, »Harbinger, Fossil, or Flea-Bite?: 'Regionalism' and the Western European Party Mosaic«, pp. 221-256 in H. Daalder & P. Mair (eds.) (1980), *Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change*, London/Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980, pp. 221-256.
5. Respectively M. Hechter (1975), *International Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1936-1966*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; U. Ra'anan (1979), *Ethnic Resurgence in Modern Democratic States*, New York: Pergamon; Rokkan & Urwin, *op.cit.*; P. Gourevitch (1980), *Paris and the Provinces*, London: Allen & Urwin. See also M.J. Esman (1977), *Ethnic Conflict in the Western World*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, Chs. 1-2; A.H. Birch (1978), »Minority Nationalist Movements and Theories of Political Integration«, *World Politics*, 31, pp. 325-344.
6. For further elaboration of these concepts, see Rokkan & Urwin, *op.cit.*; D.W. Urwin, »The Price of a Kingdom: Territory, Identity and the Centre-Periphery Dimension in Western Europe«, pp.151-170 in Y. Mény & V. Wright (eds.) (1985), *Centre-Periphery Relations in Western Europe*, London: Allen & Urwin, 1985, pp. 151-170.
7. A simple point reiterated by J. Rothschild (1981), *Ethnopolitics*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 3-4.
8. See, for example, E. Renan (1970), *Poetry of the Celtic Races and Other Studies*, London: Kenikat Press, pp. 61-83.
9. For an elaboration of this argument, see Rokkan & Urwin, *op.cit.*, Chs. 4-5.
10. For example, R. Dahrendorf (1980), »Effectiveness and Legitimacy: On the Governability of Democracies«, *Political Quarterly*, 51, pp. 393-410; J. Douglas (1976), »The Overloaded Crown«, *British Journal of Political Science*, 6, pp. 483-505; A. King (1975), »Overload: Problems of Governing in the 1970s«, *Political Studies*, 23, pp. 162-174; R. Rose (1979), »Ungovernability: Is There Fire behind the Smoke?«, *Political Studies*, 27, pp. 351-370.

11. For example, R. Rose (1974), *The Problem of Party Government*, London: Macmillan; R. Rose (1983), *Do Parties Make a Difference?*, London: Macmillan; K. von Beyme (1984), »Do Parties Matter?«, *Government and Opposition*, 19, pp. 5-29.
12. For example, Birch, *op.cit.*
13. See, for example, D. Clift (1982), *Quebec Nationalism in Crisis*, Montreal/Kingston: McGill/Queen's University Press; G. Fraser (1984), *P.Q. René Levesque and the Parti Québécois in Power*, Toronto: Macmillan; R. Hamilton & M. Pinard, »The Quebec Independence Movement«, pp. 203-233 in C.H. Williams (ed.) (1982), *National Separation*, Cardiff University Press, 1982, pp. 203-233.
14. See, for example, S. Taylor, »The Politics of Unemployment«, pp. 33-58 in D.W. Urwin & W.E. Paterson (eds.)(1990), *Politics in Western Europe Today: Perspectives, Policies and Problems since 1980*, London: Longman, 1990, pp. 33-58.
15. See, for example, some of the contributions to C. Johnson (ed.) (1984), *The Industrial Policy Debate*, San Francisco: ICS, 1984.
16. On the extent of the potential impact of the electronic media on individuals and locations, see J. Meyrovitz (1985), *No Sense of Place: The Impact of the Electronic Media on Social Behavior*, New York: Oxford University Press. The possible limitations of the impact do, however, tend to be downplayed.
17. See Z. Layton-Henry, ed. (1988). »The Political Challenge of Immigration in Western Europe«, special issue of *European Journal of Political Research*, 16:6.