



# ***Language Minorities in Europe: Dying species or forerunner of a transnational civil society?***

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## **Abstract**

Language minorities can be found as evidence of unfinished nation-building in relatively closed territorial settlements all over contemporary Europe. From a comparative perspective, different paths of accommodating linguistic diversity can be followed resulting in very dissimilar regimes of legal, political and cultural recognition. In recent years, standardisation of minority protection has taken place, with a new emphasis on the values of linguistic diversity, non-discrimination and tolerance. As will be argued, the expanding rights of language minorities must be understood in relation to a re-structuration of nation-states in Europe and a re-evaluation of difference in the course of European integration. The confrontation with internal diversity and the confrontation with a Europe of deep diversity are closely interlinked setting the conditions for the unfolding of a new politics of recognition towards language minorities. This changing minority-majority relationship and the related processes of Europeanization of opportunity structures for the political and cultural mobilisation of language minorities shall be analysed with reference to specific case studies from Germany, France and Spain.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The empirical part of this paper is based on the results of a research project on the changing role of organised civil society in Europe (civgov) coordinated by Carlo Ruzza (University of Trento) and funded within the Fifth Framework Programme of the European Commission. Case studies on language minorities in Spain and in France were carried out by Margarita Gomez-Reino (Universidad de Santiago de Compostela); Pedro Ibarra, Iñaki Barcena, (Universidad del País Vasco) Elisabeth Dupoirier; Anne Marijnen CEVIPOF. I wish to thank John Erik Fossum and Álvaro Morcillo-Laiz for helpful comments on previous versions.

## 1. Introduction: Europeanisation and the riddle of ethno-regional mobilisation

Existing research on ethno-regional mobilisation *within* the nation-state has focused primarily on the micro-conditions of ethnic mobilisation but does not pay sufficient attention to the changing macro-context linked to European integration. Ethnic mobilisation of language minorities is a prime example of how Europeanisation (i.e. the penetration of national and subnational systems of governance, the formation of an encompassing European political order and the promotion of shared norms and interests) interrelates with nation-state transformation and the new salience of ethnic diversity. First, Europeanisation can help to understand the *riddle of ethnic mobilisation*, i.e. why relatively integrated groups within the nation-state make use of the apparently irrational strategy to mobilise ascriptive categories of collective identity and difference, which are partially detached from their economic interests (Eder and Schmidtke 1998). Second, Europeanisation helps to understand the *riddle of legal and political recognition*, i.e. the question why the state is increasingly willing to recognise minority rights which, at first sight, do not coincide with the majoritarian interest and contradict egalitarian principles. As a matter of fact, the article will be able to show that the new salience of minority politics and the extended politics of recognition is not so much a causal effect of an intensified ethnic struggle or a rational response to ethnic mobilisation but rather is the result of a symbolic re-evaluation of ethnic difference in the course of European integration with effects on the self-image of the minorities as well as on the collective identity of the majoritarian society.

This study on the relationship between minority nationalism and European integration will investigate, first of all, to what extent ethnic groups make use of European opportunities to mobilise their claims and concerns. Secondly, it is also an attempt to understand how discourses of belonging and identities are framed and reflected upon in a Europe of deep diversity affecting majority-minority relations and patterns of mutual recognition. If we talk of Europeanisation, we

thus do not only refer to the efforts of policy coordination at the European level and the impact of commonly agreed policies at the national and subnational level, i.e. to direct interactions and strategic interchanges as an effect of the formulation and implementation of EU-policies. In a wider sense, Europeanisation shall also refer to processes of cultural diffusion of meaning, opinions and expectations about whether and how to achieve common goals and interests (Olsen, 2001; Soysal, 2002).

If Thompson and Rudolph (1989) a decade ago have called for the necessity of macro-explanations for the understanding of ethnic conflicts, our approach to Europeanisation will help to understand these changing macrolevel conditions of ethnic mobilisation in contemporary European nation-states. Our empirical investigation confirms the difficulties of causal (micro) explanations to explain the ebb and flow of ethnoterritorial politics in the Western world. A firm collective identity and the emergence of an ethnoterritorial movement that fights for recognition are not the sufficient causes for explaining the changing framework of minority politics in Europe. On the contrary, as will be shown, the German and French cases provide examples of extended recognition despite the fact that the ethnic groups concerned are increasingly disintegrated; and in the Spanish case, strong regional identities and their mobilisation against the central state were for a long period rather counter-productive in achieving the desired cultural and political autonomy of the regional entities. This European riddle of expanded recognition in absence of consistent ethnic mobilisation and in spite of increasing disintegration of the respective ethnic groups can only be explained by referring to the changing macro-context of European integration. Europe (and not only the EU but also the wider European political and institutional context) helps these groups to discover new opportunities for political mobilisation and to create new identities. The success of such strategies related to a 'new politics of difference' correlates with a change of majoritarian attitudes and is thus relying on a 'new politics of recognition' which includes the attempt of a re-balancing of the 'unity

and diversity' of the nation-state and its traditional way of defining belonging. The case of language minority recognition can contribute to such an understanding of how European integration is related to the transformation of national integration and the confrontation with internal and external diversity.

## **2. Language minorities and the new politics of recognition in Europe**

Language is a sociological artefact. The use of language is not a question of individual preferences but a collective act that transcends the private realm and affects every user in that particular language *community*. Language thus helps to define collectivities which, in most cases, can be territorially circumscribed. At the same time, the use of language as a marker of collective identities is a relatively recent phenomenon. Efforts for the standardisation of vernacular languages have been undertaken only after the rise of print capitalism, the downfall of Roman-Latin Europe and the political segmentation of the continent in sovereign state entities (Anderson, 1991). As described by Rokkan (2000), the establishment of standardised written language has to be understood as a genuinely political process that has determined the fate of state and nation-building in Europe. In the course of modernisation (and some would say as a counter-movement to modernisation) language has become a principal focus of collective mobilisation and identity formation. This process was closed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century resulting in the 'freezing' of nation-states. But it has left open the question of the many victims of the standardisation of nation-state languages.

To be clear, the process of standardisation of nation-state languages has brought very different results all over Europe and language has always remained a hotly debated issue *within* established nation-states. In contemporary Europe relatively successful centres developed with only one hegemonic and exclusive language (e.g. France and Germany). These continue to coexist with many multilingual state structures such as Belgium, Switzerland and recently also Spain. In this

paper, I will observe the ongoing recontextualisation of language nationalism in contemporary Europe. The resurgence and amplification of the struggle for recognition of language minorities will be discussed within the framework of two interrelated processes that have brought about the 'de-freezing' of the monolithic language infrastructure of European nation-states: first, the new emphasis on identity politics that has improved opportunities for mobilisation and increased public attention for minority affairs; second, Europeanisation that has turned language from a question of recognition within the nation-state to a question of recognition in Europe.

The new emphasis on 'identity politics' has sustained a trend within (post)modern societies to blame not only the discrimination of individual rights but to call for justice also with regard to the recognition of group rights and cultural differences. To the extent that such claims for the public recognition of collective identities are raised within or across existing nation-states, we can speak of the culturalisation of social conflicts that substitute or supplement the traditional focus on distributive struggles between different economically defined strata of society (Honneth, 1995; Taylor, 1992). This process of the 'culturalisation' of conflict has been mainly described as the discovery of new categories for claiming identity, difference and self-determination. The literature has focused on the so-called new social movements and has illustrated how particular groups like homosexuals or women have discovered culture as a category of recognition and used for the reconstruction of their collective identities like, for instance, the culturally defined gay communities (Adam, 2001; Hobsen, 2003). Considerable attention has been further devoted to the study of minority cultures and rights where the research focus was on the formation of new ethnic groups defined by race, immigration and religion, which began to change the traditional cleavage structures of Western societies (Wrench and Solomos, 1993; Joly, 1998; Modood, 2000)

What has been neglected here, at least in the European literature, is how this cultural turn has also given new impetus to the so-called *old cultural minorities* in Europe that have been suppressed in the nineteenth century process of nation-building and that now survive as relics of pre-modern, multicultural and fragmented empires.<sup>2</sup> It is this last category of groups that will be looked at more closely in this paper. In contrast to ethnic immigrant minorities, these so-called national minorities are distinguished by their desire to become or to survive as a separate entity alongside the larger society and to demand various forms of autonomy and self-governance in cultural and political terms (Kymlicka, 1995: 10). The second shift that has favoured the resurgence of minority politics in Europe can be broadly described as the transnationalisation and more specifically in our case as the Europeanisation of collective action. In the case of language minorities, an intermediary space of contention has emerged that involves European institutions, governments and local actors and that has intensified interaction and communication processes within the European multi-level system. More specifically, Europeanisation has facilitated the diffusion of common orientations and particular policy models of minority protection. It has further led to transnational agenda-setting and it has taken organisational forms in the expression of common preferences, the shaping of political opportunities and the development of mobilisation strategies.

In the following, I will first describe the changing framework of identity politics and struggles of recognition in France, Germany and Spain (part 3). At a first glance, these three countries have little in common. The belonging to a particular minority culture has assumed quite different meanings and there are different institutional responses as well as different degrees of political mobilisation linked to claims for justice and recognition. Majoritarian attitudes and policy responses range from strong assimilatory pressures in an egalitarian framework (France),

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<sup>2</sup> The Canadian literature and, in particular, the work of Charles Taylor (1992) and Will Kymlicka (1995, 2000) makes an exception here and has inspired several European authors to re-think the 'Europe of deep diversity'

federalist accommodation (Germany) and authoritarian repression (Spain). In spite of historical diversity a shift in recent strategies and institutional responses can be observed, which, with some reservations, can be linked to the framework of new identity politics in Europe. To understand the changing framework for minority mobilisation in the three countries of analysis, I will turn, secondly, to the Europeanisation of minority mobilisation that has endorsed the search for a modern expression of language nationalism. Based on the evaluation of interviews<sup>3</sup> the Europeanisation of language minority activism can be traced back in the following dimensions: enhanced cooperative efforts and networking, the impact of commonly defined policies and standards of protection, the development of common understandings, patterns of transnational solidarity and the redefining of collective identities of the formerly fragmented minority communities (part 4).

### **3. The changing framework of minority mobilisation in France, Germany and Spain**

#### **3.1 France: the marginal minorities**

The story of language minorities in France goes from complete marginalisation and suppression to slow but steady incorporation and recognition of rights of difference. The recent changes in attitudes must be explained within the historical context of French nation-building and its recontextualisation in the European context. According to the dominant perception of French political nationalism, the French language has an ideational dimension; it is linked to a civilising ideal and mission. To be French is to be speaking French. The use of French language is perceived as an identification with the ideals of the French revolution and the unitary state is needed to guarantee equality, liberty and fraternity of all citizens. Assimilation is thus perceived as the precondition for the granting of individual,

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(Fossum, 2001). See also the volumes edited by Schneiderman (1991) and Eisenberg and Spinner-Halev (2005).

<sup>3</sup> Interviews were held by the different project partners with leading minority activists, supporters and institutional actors (members of government, parliamentarians) at the regional, national and European level of activism between September 2003 and December 2004.

political and social rights any rejection of assimilation (e.g. through the use of minority languages) is perceived as anti-revolutionary, anti-republican and consequently also anti-democratic.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, French citizenship is non-discriminative, it applies equally to all people living on the territory, independent of their cultural or ethnic status.<sup>5</sup>

There is thus no political status granted to regional minorities in France. 'Speaking a regional language is viewed as a private matter, in the same way as religion is' (Judge, 2000: 46). Even the linguistic status and the number of regional languages in France are unclear since no public authority will ever recognise them or contribute to their institutionalisation. There can be also no official census on the number of speakers of minority languages because any question of this kind would be considered as discriminatory. The standardisation of Occitan, Provençal and Corsican is hotly debated among linguists and cultural activists to this day. In the case of Basque, Catalan, German (Alsatian) and Flemish, only external standards have been adopted. Breton is the only minority language that has been successfully standardised through genuine efforts within the country. The privatisation of minority affairs has also been deeply internalised by the minorities themselves. The majority of them (with the exception of Corsica) did not mobilise significant opposition to their assimilation into French society. Similar to Germany, the depolitization of the language issue has given birth to mainly cultural associations. Small political parties which were founded in the Basque Country, in Brittany and in Alsace were soon marginalized as right wing and did not find substantial voters' support. Only in Corsica is separatism clearly linked to political and not cultural nationalism and the *Front de liberation nationale corse* (FLNC) has opted for a violent strategy against the French central state.

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<sup>4</sup> This is the message expressed in Renan's famous writing but Renan was only vaguely aware that there may be different layers of common practice and identification within a polity.

This peaceful and non-militant strategy comes as a surprise when confronted with its little success in the minority struggle for recognition over the last decades. Until the early nineties, recognition was almost completely denied and the notorious closeness of the French political system for regionalist claims contributed to the increasing marginalisation of language minorities with declining figures of native speakers all over the country. The denial of recognition of minority languages was also not a question of the political left or right since both understand themselves as the heirs of the French revolution defending the assimilatory Republican tradition. This elite consensus made political mobilisation of the minorities even more difficult since there was no proper space for defending the legitimacy of their claims. It was only in the nineties that the French central state began to turn its attention to minority affairs. At that point, the depoliticised, mainly cultural associations had clearly the better starting position. In all regions, recognition began to expand in schools where bilingual educational curricula found, for the first time, governmental support (Judge, 2000: 54). The framing of minority politics as educational politics is strikingly similar to the new approach towards minorities chosen in Germany, and previously also in Spain, which developed new educational models of bilingual education immediately after the death of Franco. As a late comer but still in adaptation to its European neighbours, France stepped forward in the late nineties with the official recognition of regional languages, which were now re-framed as a component of the French national heritage, as part of French culture.<sup>6</sup> Behind this new official rhetoric, we can clearly identify the idea of unity in diversity, which informs EU cultural politics but has been largely unknown to the French tradition so far.

It is also striking that this change in official government rhetoric and attitude is not an effect of intensified claims-making but rather an indirect reaction to European adaptation and diffusion of new hegemonic models in the European

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<sup>5</sup> See Brubaker (1992) for a comparative view on the development of citizenship in France and Germany.

framework. Since the early nineties, the French government was faced with the necessity to bring its minority politics (or rather the absence of minority politics) in line with European standards. More than in any other European country, the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages required deep constitutional changes. Although France still lacks behind its European partners in adopting and implementing the Charter, most observers would agree that similar European initiatives had a clear impact on the change of government attitudes towards minorities.

Last but not least, France became itself the leading country in the EU to protect and promote its national language against the dominance of English. This battle against foreign cultural domination in Europe confronted the French government with claims put forward e.g. by the European Parliament and the Council of Europe to recognise the rights of its own regional minority languages. The recognition of the cultural diversity in Europe entails recognition of cultural diversity inside each European country. Improving its own regime of language protection helped the French government to pursue a more aggressive language policy towards its European partners and the outside world. This change in governmental attitudes goes hand in hand with the reorientation of the minority organisation. Similar to Germany, political activism of minorities has a rather restricted agenda. Most cultural events and initiatives are of non-political character avoiding confrontations with the authorities (with the well-known exception of Corsica). The self-limitation to educational and cultural politics is consensual among the members who do not want to see the minorities become involved in partisan conflicts. Furthermore, the dependence on external funding does often not allow to expand political activism. Also European umbrella organisations (in particular EBLUL) do not support political expressions of language nationalism. Accordingly, the new cultural movements that represented

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<sup>6</sup> The full documentation of this change of governmental rhetoric is given in the unpublished report of our French project partners (see footnote 1).

minorities, e.g. in Brittany, Alsace or Roussillon did not opt for an open expression of nationalism but rather defended their regionalist concerns by reference to a new globalised or explicitly European vision. Bilingual education in Basque, for instance, should prepare the children 'for adult life in tomorrow's open-minded Europe'.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, the revival of Occitan in the French *midi* is clearly not linked to political nationalism but to cultural recognition of difference. The founding of small cultural associations at the local level involves people from all strata of local society. Most typically, the question of language is not addressed in political manifestos but in research projects for the promotion of the knowledge of regional language and culture and for influencing teaching methods. The use of the regional language is not seen as a defensive weapon against dominant French but as the gate to the outside world, enabling open-minded students to more easily learn other European languages.<sup>8</sup>

European integration does also influence the new self-consciousness of the minority associations. Especially in the border regions (Alsace), our respondents expressed very positive attitudes towards European integration and European institutions. Europe makes regional actors more powerful vis à vis the national government. Europe is perceived as the only hope, as the alternative that helps to overcome the blockage of national politics. At the same time there is a deep scepticism that Europe will really be able to change deep rooted French attitudes and a regret that not more competences are allocated at the European level.

### **3.2 Germany: the unobserved minorities**

The story of language minorities in Germany goes from disregard and oblivion to increased attention and legitimacy to minority claims and concerns. Similar to the French case, this change in attitude towards minorities indicates a change in the dominant perception of collective identity of the German nation-state and the

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<sup>7</sup> Quotation from a booklet of the Basque pedagogical movement SEASKA, here taken from Judge (2000: 54).

<sup>8</sup> For examples see Judge (2000: 65). Identical claims are made by language minorities in other European countries.

way of defining belonging in the new Europe. The acquisition of new rights of difference of the minorities was accompanied by a new positive evaluation of difference of the German majority.

In contrast to French political nationalism, language in Germany was not linked to an ideational-missionary attitude but had a strong ethnical-cultural component. German language was considered as the soul of the German *Kulturnation* and not as something that could easily be acquired. In consequence, German cultural nationalism developed an exclusive attitude towards outsiders. The concept of the *Kulturnation* implied also that there was no need to erect a unitary state structure in Germany. Federalism encouraged plural cultural practices and differences inside. This has allowed small minorities to survive with distinct cultures. In the case of Polish and Sorbian minorities in the Eastern territories, these populations were simply not considered as being part of the German nation and no need was felt to assimilate them.<sup>9</sup> In the case of Danish and Frisian minorities in the Northern territories, cultural practice was largely restricted to folklore and not to political activism.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, no particular attention was paid to them beyond their local settlements. The unnoticed minorities were neither perceived as a threat to the unity of the nation nor as something that had to be urgently assimilated.

In the post-war period this traditional framework of German nationalism underwent substantial changes that slowly shaped a new attitude towards minorities. An overall all partisan consensus developed among the political elites and among the general public that the residing language minorities should benefit from special rights and protection. This basic consensus can be explained as a relic of a consciousness of collective guilt of the past: it is well known and often

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<sup>9</sup> In the case of Polish minorities, assimilation took place through emigration to the industrialised West. After the territorial re-division in 1919, most Polish settlements were included in the new Polish nation-state. In the case of Sorbian minorities, small populations survive in the rural areas of Lausitz (Sachsen and Brandenburg).

<sup>10</sup> Frisian minorities survive in different settlements in the North-Western parts of Niedersachsen (close to the Dutch border) and Schleswig-Holstein (close to the Danish border). Their language status is clearly different from Danish, Dutch and German. Danish minorities settle in the Northern part of Schleswig-Holstein.

remembered that the ethnic minority population suffered from repression, prosecution and – as in the case of Sinti and Roma – even extermination during the Nazi regime. In the post-war period the language minorities profited from this particular moral obligation towards religious and ethnic minorities and the Federal structure of the newly established FRG allowed for special attention to be paid to the mainly localised language minorities. This general consensus did also comprise the socialist regime of the former GDR which established educational, cultural and even religious autonomy<sup>11</sup> rights of the Sorbian minority. The recognition of language minorities has nevertheless only been an issue of minor contention in the FRG. Due to the federal structure of the political system, language and minority policies are strongly regionalised and all major responsibilities and authorities of legislation and decision-making reside with the regional governments.<sup>12</sup> Language minorities are officially recognised in the regional constitutions of Brandenburg and Sachsen (the Sorbs) and of Schleswig-Holstein (the Danish, Frisian and Sinti and Roma). So far, no federal law provides for the protection of national minorities and the claim for an amendment of the federal constitution (*Grundgesetz*) put forwards by the minority organisations at the beginning of the nineties, has been rejected by the majoritarian parties.

Even so, Germany's hidden agenda of minority protection includes special representation rights (in the exemption of the five per cent clause for the Danish Party SWF in the regional Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein), polyethnic rights (in the form of a guarantee of public subsidies), and even rights of political self-determination (e.g. the independent school system run by the Danish minorities).<sup>13</sup> In contrast to France, where no infringement to the egalitarian principle through the granting of such minority rights was conceivable, the German federal system allows for the accommodation of minority claims through

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<sup>11</sup> Although these basic rights, and, particularly among them religious rights (e.g. the right to held services in Sorbian language) were rather restricted by arbitrary administrative practice (Heckmann, 1992: 26f.).

<sup>12</sup> So called *Kulturhoheit* of the *Länder* which have full sovereignty in cultural affairs and educational policies.

decentralised and flexible policy measures and through cooperation and partnerships between the minority organisation and the local administrations. As a common pattern to all minority organisation, political activism is mainly reduced to the promotion of educational and cultural policies at the local and regional level. Only the Danish population is represented by an ideologically neutral political party in the regional Parliament (*Landtag*) of Schleswig-Holstein. In all the other cases, ideological neutrality is perceived as vital for upholding and strengthening the unitary structure of the minority representation. A stronger commitment to political campaigning beyond the general consensus of promoting minority protection would mean to transform the associational structure into a partisan structure. This again, would imply the high risk of internal conflicts and frictions and thus endanger the unitary structure of the minority representation.

Confronted with this general necessity of consensus-building and solidarity, German language minorities have chosen highly consensual issues of claims making. Even so, political activism of German language minorities has increased considerably over the last decade. Minorities have discovered a common agenda for political claims-making and succeeded in institutionalising new channels of access to the political system both at the regional and at the national level.

All minority activists interviewed agree that the public awareness of minority issues is low, but only few would go so far to presume a general hostility of the German population towards the minorities. The general public attitude is described as inadequate knowledge, ignorance and indifference with regard to minority issues. The non salience of the issue of minority protection is also regarded as a major handicap for collective mobilisation and for securing public funding. Confronted with this general indifference of the public, the need is felt to 'sell' a positive image of the minority. In many cases, mobilisation is linked to information campaigns that strive at enlightening the German majority. Minorities

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<sup>13</sup> For the distinction of these three type of minority rights and the normative argumentation that these should complement the majority principle within liberal democracies see Kymlicka (1995).

perceive themselves as 'exemplar citizens' who can teach cultural diversity and tolerance to the majority. Against stubborn Germanness, language minorities feel authorized to transmit knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity making the Germans recognise that besides their own language, there exist other languages actively spoken in their territory. In this context, a new image of Germany as part of an Europe as a 'unity in diversity' is emphasised. Many of our respondents would like to see minorities as exemplary Europeans, as people who have learned to appreciate the values of difference and tolerance and now can communicate and teach their experience to the majority.

The success story of minority mobilisation in Germany is reflected in the expansion of the political opportunity structure from the local and regional to the national and European level. This increasing openness and responsiveness can be attributed to four intervening factors: 1) the supportive international context and European initiatives (implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and agenda-setting through the European Language Charter, the European Year of Languages etc.); 2) successful intermediation and channelling of claims-making through the new offices of the Commissioner of Minority Affairs established by the regional and federal governments, 3) improved cooperation, solidarity and mutual support between the single minority organisations operating in Germany, 4) changing public attitudes and positive attention towards minority issues. Still, minority organisations are in a rather defensive position that restricts their opportunities for running an offensive claims-making strategy. Minority language communities are organised along the pattern of internal conflicts and external closeness. They have centralised their political representations and try to speak with a unitary public voice. This is not so much a condition for the success of political mobilisation than a condition for the survival of the community as such and for its visibility within the German majority culture and society. The general degree of success of organisational activities must therefore be measured not so much in successful

claims making than in terms of protecting the integrity of the language community and in terms of opening opportunities for the modernisation of its activities. All language groups share a generational problem. The major challenge is to look for the modernisation of their internal structure and activity which means defining new contents and identities that keep the communal life intact and motivate participation of the young generation.

Beyond this general background, Europeanisation and internationalisation of community activism can be perceived as a chance for modernisation. It is a way of overcoming generational problems, to define new issues for mobilisation and to motivate participation. It is a new image and identity of the minority not as a localised, folkloristic element of German society but as a part of a new multicultural life style. Similar to the French case, the Europeanisation of minority politics has become a major condition for the success of minority activism. Europe supports claims-making at the national level, it fixes new opportunities for expanding activism and it offers new identities to minority activists.

### **3.3 Spain: the resistant minorities**

The story of language minorities in Spain goes from violent confrontation and resistance to enhanced cooperation, tolerated diversity and enforced, but not yet peaceful coexistence. Instead of unilateral recognition of the minority through the majority, we can speak of a case of multi-lateral recognition of different nationalities within the new framework of the Spanish multinational state where all sides were involved in collective learning processes. Despite ongoing violent expressions of regional nationalism and unresolved conflicts between the national governments and its autonomous regions (*comunidades autónomas*), the consolidation of the Spanish democracy has contributed to a redefinition of the majority-minority relations and the growth of civic virtues and trust in Spanish multilingual society.

In contrast to France and Germany where nationalism and the promotion of a common language are directly linked to modernisation and the necessity to establish a unitary state structure, the Spanish state has been formed by what can be called an old, premodern and pre-revolutionary nationalism. After the *reconquista*, Spain was inspired by the missionary attitude of Catholic restoration at the inside and expansion towards the outside. As a side effect of the discoveries Spanish language was exported to the New World where a surprisingly high level of language standardisation was achieved. In turn, the consolidation of the own state territory and the political and cultural unification of the country were clearly neglected. Spanish nationalism was thus directed towards the outside with only limited effects of unifying the state territory at the inside. The Castilian hegemony has to be understood, in part, as a result of the American empire from which Mediterranean Catalans and peripheral Galicians and Basques were largely excluded. Only after the loss of the American colonies, the Castilian crown began to look inwards trying to consolidate the Spanish territory. The political and administrative centralisation of Spain, for the first time, brought Castilian linguistic supremacy in conflict with the existing national languages in the territory. Early state-building was followed then by late peripheral nationalism against the state (Linz, 1973; Mar-Molinero, 2000: 85f.).

The *castilianization* of public life pushed by the central government went hand in hand with the resurgence of language nationalism in the Spanish peripheries.<sup>14</sup> The nineteenth century political resistance against centralising state structures was related to what can be called the *first Europeanisation of language nationalism*. Its manifesto was written in the early nineteenth century by German writers such as *Herder* and *Fichte* whose ideas of language as the soul of the nation were

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<sup>14</sup> The 'renaissance' of catalanism has to be understood as a reaction against the attempts to establish Castilian supremacy and a unitary state model according to the French model. Similar to the Catalan *Renaixença*, also the Galician nationalists speak of their *rexordimeto*. In both cases, the idea of the rebirth of national language can be

enthusiastically taken up by the suppressed minorities in the peripheries all over Europe (Hobsbawm, 1990; Barber, 2000: 15).<sup>15</sup> The permissive attitude of Spanish nationalism towards linguistic plurality at the inside was slowly replaced by a conflictual confrontation between the political centre and the growing cultural and political self-consciousness of the populations in the prosperous and industrialised peripheries. In the early twentieth century, deep cleavages cut through Spanish society, and the peninsula increasingly fell apart culturally, linguistically, politically and ideologically. The Spanish civil war was the violent manifestation of Spain's multiple identity crises (Mar-Molinero 2000: 97) and it was clear that the Franco regime could only bring about a temporary authoritarian stalemate of the unresolved language question.

It is well known and needs no further explanation here that the suppression of language minorities during the four decades of dictatorship laid the grounds for militant nationalism in the transition period. On a first look, this validates the thesis of Spanish exceptionalism in Europe. In contrast to France and Germany, language nationalism in Spain has always been strongly politicised with both sides being disposed to make use of unconventional and violent means in the political struggle. At the same time, language nationalism has been strongly institutionalised: it is not limited to cultural associationalism as the dominant organisational form of language minorities in France, Germany and elsewhere in Europe but has succeeded to establish influential regionalist parties which in *Euskara* (the Basque Country) and in *Catalunya* are also the majoritarian parties in government. In the legal-constitutional framework of the *comunidades autónomas*, regional nationalism has become executive nationalism of stable and powerful

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grounded in the long tradition of vernacular literature and written culture. In contrast, the standardisation of the Basque language took place only in the twentieth century (For an overview see Mar-Molinero, 2000).

<sup>15</sup> Especially the Catalans discovered their language as the spirit that defines the nation. Instead, the emphasis of Basque nationalism was rather on race and not on language. Reasons for this difference might be seen in the rather fragmented character of the Basque language which, in contrast to Catalan, has no written tradition and is spoken only by a minority of the Basque population (see Mar-Molinero, 2000: 92ff.). Both cases are similar to the German experience where cultural nationalism developed as a counter movement to the political nationalism of the French Revolution (Giesen 1993).

governments that replace the minority movement from which they originate. The defence of the regional language is thus taken over by the administrative apparatus of the region where citizens and their associations play only a minor and substitutive role. At the same time, this leads to the persistence of a strong territorial cleavage structure that continues to shape Spanish politics in Europe.

From the perspective of Spanish exceptionalism the framework of a 'new identity politics' becomes problematic since political mobilisation was determined by mutual non-recognition, by distributive rather than cultural struggles and by the striving for independence from and not difference within the majoritarian society. In contrast to France and Germany, the very term 'minority' is ambivalent and contested as it does not refer to a locally confined group at the margins of the majoritarian society but to one of Spain's equal 'nationalities' which successfully defends its political and cultural hegemony within the region.<sup>16</sup> In practice, this means that the language of the 'minority' is the official language of the region and regional language politics create 'minorities within the minority' repressing the non-speakers of the minority language who, as in the case of Catalunya, Galicia and the País Vasco, can be excluded from public offices.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless three major trends over the eighties and nineties confirm the slow transformation of Spanish language nationalism. First, the marginalisation of left-wing radical nationalism in *Catalunya* and *Galicia* (less so in the *País Vasco*), which corresponds to a turn from distributive struggles to more culturally defined

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<sup>16</sup> Article 2 of the Spanish Constitution speaks in this regard of the 'indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation, the common and indivisible country of all Spaniards'; and it 'recognizes and guarantees the right to autonomy of the nationalities and regions of which it is composed, and solidarity amongst them all'.

<sup>17</sup> The Spanish speaking non regionalists form a typical case for a minority within minorities. As speakers of the state-wide majority, they live within an ethnic community with a strong we-feeling that forms a territorially concentrated national minority, which is at the same time a regional majority (Patten, 2005: 136). In the Spanish case, it should be mentioned that also members of the ethnic community might suffer from marginalisation and, as in the case of the Basque country, need to be protected by bodyguards, if they show resistance against majoritarian regional nationalism and raise their voice against the aggressiveness of the ultra-regionalists (see, among many, the case of the Edurne Uriarte, Professor of Political Sciences at the University of the Basque Country, Bilbao).

activities; second the reconciliation with the Spanish central state and the acceptance of the idea of a unity in diversity within the new framework of administrative federalism and regional autonomy; third, Europeanisation that defines a new role of the Spanish regions as partners in European governance, offers opportunities for transregional cooperation (which is most advanced in *Catalunya*) and involves minority associations in European networking. We thus find increasing evidence for the softening of Spanish exceptionalism in the new Europe. The successful consolidation of the Spanish nation state goes hand in hand with an increasing marginalisation of militant nationalism and public indignation and solidarity with the victims of terrorism.<sup>18</sup> Spanish federalism has offered a constitutional framework for the still unfinished and open-ended appeasement of ethnic conflicts. The often purely functional need for cooperation replaces the traditional conflict inclination among the autonomous regions. Learning also takes place in the multi-level European framework that offers new roles to regional actors as participants in European governance.

In contemporary Spain, the battle about the status of minority languages has been won. In less than twenty years, Spain has passed from one of the most repressive regimes to a forerunner of bilingual education and language rights in Europe. Under these conditions, nationalism is reduced for most people to cultural and linguistic autonomy – that is regionalism rather than separatism. Whereas political nationalism is in decline, the images of regional identity are improving and minority languages can stabilise their position.<sup>19</sup> However, it should also be noted that the recognition offered by the central state remains conditional: Associations that accept the self-limitation of their activities to cultural regionalism are awarded with legal protection, affirmative action and public subsidies while at the same time all activists that stick to political nationalism or separatism are

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<sup>18</sup> See the citizens' movement 'Basta Ya' which organises huge street manifestations and spreads public indignation against the adherents of violent nationalism (<http://www.bastaya.org/>)

marginalised. This dividing line between cultural regionalists and political nationalists is of course blurred in the every day political struggle. In the case of the Basques, the continuance of the operation of an armed organisation seriously restricts the opportunities of the minority to find political and legal support for their concerns. Over the last years, Spanish Courts were ready to criminalise all expressions of separatist nationalism that were seen as close to terrorism. Most controversially, this culminated in the banning of several Basque cultural organisations, one political party and the closure of the only daily newspaper in Basque language in 2003. The *Aznar* government supported this repressive policy against the Basque movement and refused to engage in any form of dialogue with representatives of organisations that supported the use of violence. Most Spaniards back this strategy of ‘no tolerance’ against radical nationalists and there is a broad democratic consensus that increasingly marginalises ETA and their adherents. Yet, in the eyes of many Basques, these measures are still perceived as a massive attack on regional autonomy and affirm their idea of the repressive nature of the Spanish central state.

The Spanish experience of language minorities’ activism thus remains ambivalent. In the European context, the emphasis of a new politics of recognition does not result from the rediscovery of the value of minority languages (as in France and Germany) but from the slow and still incomplete transformation of traditional political nationalism and its inclination to violent conflict solution. Spain is also different in its organisational structure of minority activism. It is represented by regionalist parties which raise territorial claims and not by cultural associations. The partisan structure of Spanish language minorities is clearly a strength which helps them to become a powerful player in Spain and in Europe. Minority activism in Spain has experienced a late Europeanisation but, supported by regional governments, was soon able to become a powerful player in Europe. In

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<sup>19</sup> See the study of Thomas J. Miley (2004) who analyses the exemplary consolidation of regional autonomy in Catalunya and the imposition of Catalan as a majoritarian language in the region through Catalan political elites

contrast to minority lobbyists from other countries, the defenders of Spanish minority languages sit in the European Parliament or participate directly in intergovernmental negotiations of the EU. On the other hand, Spanish minorities and their governmental representatives have found it difficult to integrate in European associationalism and to develop European visions and patterns of transnational solidarity that go beyond their particular interests. As agents of executive nationalism, they sit closer to the intergovernmental Europe of interest representation than to the civil society Europe of enforced rights and shared values.

#### **4. The Europeanisation of language nationalism**

Our comparative overview of changing patterns of minority-majority relations in France, Germany and Spain has found important convergences in strategies, attitudes and institutional responses within the minority field of activism. We thus find a clear trend towards more openness, legitimacy and benevolent attention to cultural difference within the framework of a new politics of recognition that is slowly replacing the traditionally sharp and exclusive cleavage lines of political nationalism. In this part an additional explanatory variable will be introduced that links the convergences of minority protection in Europe and the status of a new politics of difference to encompassing Europeanisation processes that increasingly shape minority activists' strategies of mobilisation, institutional response and public attitudes.

##### **4.1 The emerging organisational field of language activism in Europe**

Considering the fact that around 40 million EU citizens speak a language other than the main official language of their country of origin, language minorities have the potential to become an important player in European politics. In total 40 linguistic minorities reside in Europe which are organised in a few hundred different cultural and political associations, regionalist parties, networks and umbrellas.<sup>20</sup>

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and entrepreneurs.

<sup>20</sup> A full documentation is given by EBLUL. See: <http://www.eblul-bic.be>.

For most of the long-established national minority organisations in Western Europe the extension of organisational activities, claims-making and networking in the European political sphere is not a new experience. In particular German and French minorities have played a prominent role in promoting European cooperation among language minorities in the framework of two major umbrella organisations: the 'Federal Union of European Nationalities' (FUEN) and the 'European Bureau of Lesser Used Languages' (EBLUL). FUEN was founded in 1949 among Western European minority organisations who fought for regional autonomy and the protection of minority languages. Formerly an organisation of mainly 'elderly Gentlemen' this European network has experienced a rapid change since 1989. A new dynamics was given to the organisation with the challenge of Eastern enlargement. FUEN has actively supported the integration of Middle and Eastern European minorities into European networking structures and has tried to develop policy answers to the burning question of minority protection in these countries. FUEN has also contributed to the internal democratisation of East and South Eastern European minority organisations and to the pacification of conflicts in these countries.<sup>21</sup>

Eastern enlargement has further changed the framework of mutual learning among language minorities in Europe. Traditionally, FUEN was specialised in exporting know-how and organisational capacities from Western to Eastern Europe. Now, minority organisations who cooperate within FUEN, increasingly realise that new inputs and ideas for political mobilisation are reimported from the East. In general, one can conclude that Eastern enlargement has turned European networking much more dynamic and has enlarged the scope of action and influence of Western European language minorities. FUEN has been traditionally associated with the Council of Europe but apparently has problems to occupy the political opportunity structure that is offered by the EU, first, because the EU has no genuine competences in protecting minorities and consequently cannot be approached on such issues, second because EBLUL has been established as a competing organisation at the European level. EBLUL is an independent NGO that receives subsidies mainly from the European Commission's DG Education and Culture.

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<sup>21</sup> The goals of FUEN are defined broadly with preserving identity, language, culture and history of national minorities. This requires member organisations to support democratic ideals, to pursue its goals only by peaceful means and, in particular, to reject separatism and the violent moving of national borders.

Established in 1982 it works for linguistic diversity and the preservation of minority languages in Europe. In contrast to the Council of Europe, the EU framework offers a rather limited POS to language politics (i.e. cultural politics) and not minority politics. EBLUL can therefore be considered as a 'non-political' organisation and not fully representative of minorities' issues and concerns in Europe. Although EBLUL was mostly obedient to this restriction of political activism trying to evade all possible conflicts with the Commission and the governments, its expanding activities in networking minorities all over Europe were watched with suspicion by some of the governments. In August 2004, the Commission unexpectedly withdrew its subsidies for the maintenance of EBLULs organisational infrastructure. After the closure of the Brussels' offices and the dismissal of the staff, the situation of European networking is still unclear, but it can be expected that EBLUL will only be able to survive in larger and richer countries whereas the fragile infrastructure in Eastern Europe, where national committees of EBLUL were established only recently, will collapse.

All principal minority language organisations in France and Germany are active founding members of both European networks. Spanish minorities became only lately involved in European network organisations. Until today, they are not a member of FUEN.<sup>22</sup> European contacts are used for enhancing problem awareness, for improving strategies of claims-making and for raising additional funding through European projects. One respondent also mentions the possibility of institutional isomorphism and learning effects as a side-effect of cooperation.<sup>23</sup> Asked about their experience in collaborating with both European networks, most respondents answer that they prefer collaboration with FUEN which is said to be more political, more independent and longer experienced in networking. Asked about the relationship between FUEN and EBLUL, there seems to be only limited cooperation between the two trans-European networks: they neither cooperate nor compete with each other.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> There are several reasons for the late Europeanisation of Spanish minority activism: first, and most obvious the repression in the fifties and sixties and the late membership in the EU; second, the dominant partisan structure of Spanish activism whereas in the European arena preferential treatment is given to associationalism; third, as reported by one observer, Spanish activists who move at the European level sometimes face serious language problems and cannot adapt easily to the dominant use of English or even German at European meetings.

<sup>23</sup> As one activist of the Danish minority in Germany put it: 'for us, it is always interesting to see how other minority organisations organise their interests and what kind of strategies are successful in other countries'.

<sup>24</sup> This and the following information is given by privileged witnesses of minority activism in Germany.

## 4.2 Europe as an arena of contention

These European activities have clearly gained importance in the early nineties. There is an awareness of European opportunities and all organisations agree in the necessity to intensify European networking. Why have minority rights become more prominent in the European context? In most cases, the reasons for this growing European awareness are not further specified. Most minority activists perceive Europe vaguely as a new opportunity that should be occupied although it is not quite clear what this new opportunity stands for. Others refer to the efforts to support language minorities from Eastern Europe and to include them into European networking. And certainly everybody is attracted by the possibilities of campaigning and funding both in the institutional context of the EU (e.g. the European Year of Languages in 2002) and of the Council of Europe. It is nevertheless deplored that EU-language policies are framed in a depoliticised and consensual way that turns the minority populations into an object of administrative care-taking.

There is further a strong perception among many respondents that networking and policy cooperation at the national level has improved as a positive side-effect of European networking. Europeanisation is thus an opportunity to overcome fragmentation within the nation-state. Even within the nation-state, different minorities were fragmented as in the case of Germany and France. In order to become an influential actor in the European power play, minority organisations should first try to pool their resources and to aggregate claims-making at the national level. The European arena is an additional meeting point and sometimes, preparatory meetings or coordination of information flows at the national level are felt as necessary. This potential of European cooperation as a promoter of national networks is further supported by FUEN and EBLUL which brings together geographically dispersed organisations on various occasions such as general assemblies or special working group meetings.<sup>25</sup> From the governmental side this new salience of minority issues is still mainly restricted to the EU enlargement process (Sasse, 2003: 18). As is well known the four Copenhagen criteria for accession explicitly mentioned 'the respect for and protection

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<sup>25</sup> E.g. FUEN organises an annual meeting of German speaking minorities.

for minorities'. The wording of the first criterion of Copenhagen is identical with Article 6(1) of the TEU defining the common value basis of the EU by reference to 'liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law' (ibid.). What cannot be found in the existing EU provisions, however, is the additional reference to minority rights.

The draft Constitutional Treaty, which was now rejected by the people in France and in the Netherlands, uses the minority issue mainly for window-dressing as part of the new rhetoric of 'unity in diversity'. Article I,2 speaks now of the Union values including the formerly missing reference to minorities. Art. 6 evokes a 'society of pluralism, tolerance, justice, solidarity and non-discrimination' and Part 2 of the draft Treaty stresses the EU's respect for the 'diversity of the cultures and traditions of the people in Europe'. In substantial terms, however, the adoption of the Constitutional Treaty would not have changed the EU's rather cautious and diffident way of handling minority issues. In spite of extensive lobbyism of the minorities themselves (e.g. through FUEN and EBLUL as members of the civil society forum), there has been no explicit legal commitment to the principles of minority protection. Similarly, the issue of minority protection has been omitted in the previously drafted Charter of Fundamental Rights adopted by the Nice IGC in a legally non-binding form. In consequence the European Union (in contrast to the Council of Europe cooperation) still lacks any legal basis for a Community initiative in this area.<sup>26</sup>

In light of the present deadlocks of political integration of the EU and the dismantling of its minority network (EBLUL) minority activism can be expected to shift further to the framework of Council of Europe cooperation. Already in the past, the Council of Europe was experienced as much more open and responsive than the EU. Minority protection figures prominently among the Council of Europe's main activities. Minority representatives are invited for briefings and hearings on a regular basis where they meet with governmental authorities and MPs and where they are allowed to express

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<sup>26</sup> In the 2003 IGC claims from the minorities have only been taken up by the Hungarian government which, at one point in the negotiation proposed to include an explicit mentioning of minority protection in the Constitutional Treaty. Others, like the German government did not support this proposal fearing to overburden the negotiation and assuming that the inclusion of the Charter of Fundamental Rights would be enough tricky and difficult to achieve.

themselves on political (and not simply cultural) issues. The implementation of the Language Charter foresees to strengthen these working relations with the Secretary of the Council of Europe establishing partnerships with minority organisations at the local level and including them in monitoring activities as well as in the evaluation of the programme. Among our respondents, it is deplored that no similar activity unfolds at the EU level where routine contacts with the Commission are upheld mainly to obtain funding or to resolve administrative questions but not to discuss policy contents.

### **4.3 Europeanisation as modernisation**

The opening of a European arena of contention cannot be reduced to the success or failure of European lobbyism. There is a further and deeper reason for the new prominence of minority issues in the wider Europe that goes beyond strategic thinking and the opening of new opportunities at the European level. As will be argued, the turn towards Europe gives a new cultural meaning and adds a new identitarian dimension to minority regionalism. In this wider context, Europeanisation must be understood as a process of horizontal diffusion of meaning and opportunities. Among the minorities themselves, Europeanisation is experienced as modernisation. While traditional regionalism is connoted with the negative image of folklore and still has to fight against the reputation of being backwoods, traditional and even right-wing, the new image of representing a national minority in Europe has clearly positive connotations and is increasingly taken up as a positive reference point for fixing personal and collective identities.<sup>27</sup>

From this new perspective, the claim for regionalism and language diversity can be taken up progressively as a form of legitimate opposition against majoritarian nationalism which becomes itself reflexive in dealing with its internal diversity. Language minorities promote the positive experience of diversity which makes them appear more open minded and tolerant confronted with the majority population. The European framework thus grants new legitimacy to their claims and concerns. It supports a new politics of difference against traditional national cleavages and thus increases the reflexivity of

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<sup>27</sup> This observation holds in particular for France and Germany. In Spain too, the link between regionalisation and Europeanisation is perceived as modernisation, yet it means overcoming traditional (often left wing) political nationalism and turn from a separatist movement to the reconciled vision of a European unity in diversity.

minority regionalism and of majority nationalism as part of a Europe of deep diversity (Fossum, 2001). In the new European framework, the tension between language politics as interest politics and between language politics as identity politics becomes blurred. Detaching language politics from the nation-state means also cutting them off from power politics, from redistributive struggles and from partisan conflicts thus increasing the chances of recognition through the majority. There is, however, a new ambivalence in the new European discourse of justifying language protection that shifts between universal rights and particular values. On the basis of universal rights, the lowest common denominator of language protection can be formulated that a free and fair context of language use should be created in which nobody can be forced to speak a particular language which is not the one in which he feels most secure of expression (Kymlicka, 1995). With this regard, the European Union in itself has erected a regime of linguistic tolerance which is unique in terms of institutional design and expenditure (Kraus, 2000) but ambivalent with regard to the recognition of minority languages which are not included in the official programmes of promoting linguistic diversity. On the other hand, the justification of minority language protection is ultimately recurring to aesthetic arguments claiming that the survival of the language assumes an absolute value and that European diversity ought to be protected against the globalising and unifying trends.<sup>28</sup> The value of linguistic survival would thus require to take measures for the sake of the language itself and not in the interest of its speakers (or of the majority).

The risk of the European 'unity in diversity' framework is that European institutions evoke a new fundamentalist and mainly symbolic rhetoric of the value of linguistic diversity without enforcing the rights of its speakers. More promising in this regard has been the approach followed within the Council of Europe framework where language protection was linked to the enforcement of individual and collective rights as laid down in the Charter of Regional and Minority Languages. The new European dimension in minority protection has clearly contributed to change attitudes towards minorities and has increased the openness and responsiveness of political institutions. As a direct effect of commonly agreed standards of language protection within the Council of Europe framework (and notably not within the EU legal framework), the national governments

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<sup>28</sup> From a Canadian perspective, Réaume (1991) distinguishes in this regard between the survival model and the

in France and Germany were forced to set the issue of minority protection on the agenda. National and regional policy actors have to take new forms of European monitoring into consideration. Europe is a kind of external moral authority that supervises the national performances in minority protection. Positive feedback and approval from Europe increases the legitimacy of national policy actors.<sup>29</sup>

The major challenge is now to expand this Council of Europe framework of rights to the European Union and to use language and minority rights as a track for the democratisation of the EU. Are language minorities thus forerunners of a European civil society? Many of our respondents would like to see minorities as exemplar Europeans, as people who have learned to appreciate the values of difference and tolerance and now can communicate and teach their experience to the majority. In this context, a new image of Europe as a 'unity in diversity' is emphasized that finds much resonance among European institutions and becomes part of the official image politics of the EU. The knowledge that 'Europe does not only consist of nations but of many different cultures' shall further be used to promote the democratisation and the constitutionalisation of the EU.

In this new context of meaning, Europeanisation and the search for a modern expression of language regionalism has clearly contributed to sharpen the consciousness of a sense of transnational solidarity among the minority groups in different parts of the continent. Notably, the common European engagement has also contributed to overcome generational conflicts that threatened the integrity of the local communities in France and Germany and obstructed new political activism. The youth can be inspired and enthused by modern regionalism and internationalism at the same time. This change in attitude within the younger generation is reported by most of our respondents. Although generational problems are far from being resolved, nobody would claim any longer (as in the seventies) that language minorities are threatened from rapid extinction. The new interests of the young people and their turn towards modern, 'European' minority

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security model of language protection and claims normative superiority for the latter one.

<sup>29</sup> The expectation of such external plaudit has even encouraged the German government to invite international experts directly to Germany in order to monitor and verify the high standards of minority protection and compare them to the benchmark of international standards. See press release of the Commissioner for National Minorities of the Federal Republic of Germany (12.2.2004, Berlin: Bundesministerium des Inneren).

regionalism is also reflected in the relative success of YEN, the Youth of European Nationalities that organises common activities at the European level.

## **5. Conclusion: solidarity across borders and patterns of trust of a new polity**

The changing framework of European integration implies a trend from deep diversity of ethnocultural movements and respective policy responses towards a common policy of recognition coordinated at the European level and implemented in the different national and regional settings. In the original framework, diversity existed 1) in terms of intranational differences, experiences of nation-building and state-society relations (e.g. different conceptions of national identity in France and Germany), 2) in terms of intraregional differences (e.g. between Sorbian and Danish minorities in Western and Eastern Germany), 3) in terms of intracommunal divisions (i.e. divisions within one minority group, such as those between pro-German Frisians and pro-Danish Frisians), 4) in terms of policy responses (i.e. the rejectionist approach chosen by the French government, the representative approach chosen by the Spanish government and the managerial approach chosen by the German government, 5) in terms of policy outcomes (e.g. marginalisation in the French case, accommodation in the German case, incorporation, participation and representation in the Spanish case), and 6) in terms of policy dynamics (the conflict driven approach in Spain and France and the consensus driven approach in Germany).

The hypothesis that has been tested out in this paper is further that European integration offers a pathway to the accommodation and consociational management of minority affairs. As noted by Thompson and Rudolph (1989: 231) the politics of difference always involves two elements: first, ethnoterritorial sentiment and ethnoterritorial mobilisation. Second, they also involve the readiness of the majority to recognise cultural difference and to grant special rights of protection of the minorities. As pointed out throughout the paper, there is no

clear causal link between ethnic mobilisation of the minority and recognition from the majority. The German managerial approach is certainly closer to the European framework of enforced intraregional cooperation and solidarity than is the French repressive or the Spanish political-representative and participative model. In the Spanish and French (Corsica) case, the confrontation of the central state with strong separatist movements has for a long time rather blocked the expansion of regional autonomy. More recently, we find a growing readiness of the majority in France and Germany to recognise difference and to accommodate ethnic conflicts which is not reflected in an increase in organisational capacities and mobilising potential of the minorities.

If these insights hold true that no clear relationship between ethnoterritorial mobilisation and policy responses can be found, it is better to speak of an encompassing process of policy transformation that shapes institutional choices and mobilisation strategies. The alternative hypothesis that has been tested out in this paper refers to Europeanisation understood 1) as the effort of policy coordination at the European level and the impact of commonly agreed policies at the national and subnational level, 2) as a process of enforced societal interactions and communicative exchanges within the new politically and institutionally defined space, 3) as the diffusion of meaning and understanding, the convergence of expectations and the formation of a collective will about whether and how to achieve common goals and interests. Our findings with regard to these interlinked processes can be summarised as follows:

- 1) Minority politics are a prime example of the effects of Europeanisation *outside* the institutional framework of the EU. The case of minority protection has been promoted almost exclusively by the Council of Europe. Europeanisation in this case takes place through the direct effect of European Conventions in national law and the necessity of policy adaptation. Minorities themselves usually make a sharp distinction between these two institutional paths of Europeanisation. The rather positive

experiences with European cooperation in the Council of Europe framework is translated in their readiness to support international law, universal human rights and the transfer of authority to supranational institutions by safeguarding subsidiarity and regional autonomy. The rather negative experiences with European cooperation in the EU-framework is translated into a general mistrust of intergovernmental agreements and in the dominant role played by national governments. The new Constitutional framework was seen as a major improvement but still only as a partial solution to the problem of re-empowering diversity in Europe.

- 2) Europeanisation is not a steady and one way process. There is no rule of expanding minority rights in Europe. National governments and the Commission remain rather ambivalent with regard to the formulation of general objectives of minority politics and the transfer of authority to the European level. Instead of deepening integration, we might also expect major backlashes in the implementation of the Council of Europe standards or in the delay of the EU-constitutionalisation process. Europeanisation in terms of building organisational capacities, promoting transnational exchange and interactions is further largely dependent on the good will of governmental actors and can be easily manipulated. The future of European minority activism and networking is jeopardized by the Commission's and other governmental bodies' withdrawal of funding. European activists suddenly became aware that their organisational structure is much more fragile than they thought and can be easily put at risk by arbitrary administrative practice.
- 3) Europeanisation understood as the opening of a European arena of contention cannot be reduced to the success or failure of European lobbyism and networking. There is a further and deeper reason for the new prominence of minority issues in the wider Europe that goes beyond strategic thinking and the opening of new opportunities at the European

level. As has been argued, the turn towards Europe gives a new cultural meaning and adds a new identitarian dimension to minority regionalism. In this wider context, Europeanisation must be understood as having unleashed a process of horizontal diffusion of meaning and opportunities and refers to the encompassing modernisation of ethnic nationalism in which regional belonging and transnational solidarity are interlinked.

In this last sense, the accommodation of ethnic difference can also be seen in global terms as a process of democratisation, opening new participatory channels and modes of representation for formerly marginalised groups. Europeanisation is thus embedded in the global framework of a 'new politics of recognition' that grants legitimacy to subnational groups and actors (Keck and Sicking, 1998; Fraser and Honneth, 2003). In the long run, Europeanisation goes hand in hand with improving patterns of trust and enforced cooperation at the nation state level. To the extent that minorities become competent players in the EU and active combatants of a European civil society, the state-minority relationship is undergoing substantial changes. It is not only the minority that adapts to the new Europe of unity in diversity, it is the self-image of the nation-state within Europe that is slowly changing.

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