

## **A Theory of Autonomism: Origins and Maintenance of the Autonomist Bargain**

**Dr. Jaime Lluch, URGE, Collegio Carlo Alberto, Turin, Italy**

[jaime.lluch@gmail.com](mailto:jaime.lluch@gmail.com)

March 12, 2010

### **Abstract**

In many multinational democracies, models of federation are the preferred institutional configuration to address the complexities of multinationalism, and much of the scholarly literature echoes this preference for federation. Yet, we find many examples of sub-state national societies with autonomist nationalist parties that reject a model of federation as an appropriate institutional design to address their needs. Instead, many stateless nationalists advocate autonomism as the ideal institutional design to accommodate them. I seek to understand what autonomism is, how does it originate, how does it maintain itself, and what are the institutional models advocated by autonomists. In order to understand the origins of autonomism, one must focus on patterns of socio-economic development, and examine the socio-economic processes that framed autonomism's political development. One must also focus on the political coalitions that formed in response to these conditions, and were able to establish hegemony within these national movements, etc. However, in order to account for the continued success and viability of autonomism, and how it is maintained as an ideology of territorial order in the contemporary period, we must recognize that autonomism's hybridity and multiplicity are its forte: it can perfectly balance its anti-federalist with its anti-secessionist stances.

### **Keywords**

Nationalism; Nationalist movements; Autonomism; Quebec; Catalonia; Puerto Rico

## **I- Introduction**

In many multinational democracies, models of federation are the preferred institutional configuration to address the complexities of multinationalism, and much of the scholarly literature echoes this preference for federation (Hechter 2000; Keating 2001; Norman 2006; Kymlicka 1998; Gibbins et al. 1998; Stepan 2001, p. 326; Burgess and Gagnon 1993; Elazar 1987; Watts 2008; McRoberts 1997; Griffiths et al. 2005; Gagnon and Iacovino 2007). Even those theorists that reject monistic conceptions of federalism, in favor of a pluralist interpretation of multinational federalism in which a plurality of identities are recognized, seem to consider that the institutional norm is multinational federation (Karmis and Norman 2005, p. 12).

However, an interesting political puzzle emerges in many contemporary multinational democracies: we find many examples of sub-state national societies with autonomist nationalist parties that reject a model of federation as an appropriate institutional design to address their needs. Instead, many stateless nationalists advocate autonomism as the ideal institutional design to accommodate them. Autonomism has been under-studied, and we need to understand what autonomism is, how does it originate, how does it maintain itself, and what are the institutional models advocated by autonomists.

“Autonomism” is a term imbued with normative content, and it refers to the philosophy of territorial order that autonomists subscribe to. Autonomism implies a commitment to forms of territorial control that challenge traditional conceptions of the nation-state, sovereignty, national identity, and the generalized reification of statist principles. Autonomism makes a claim for institutional hybridity and political syncretism. It invokes a commitment to the search for political models that tend to be unorthodox arrangements: these are political statuses that

generally renounce full sovereign statehood, but lay claim to specific aspects of self-government and sovereignty. In the case of autonomies that are located within states that are organized as federations, these are also political statuses that clearly distinguish themselves from the institutional and political characteristics of the constituent units of such federations. Autonomism is a grey area of territorial management of ethnic differences. It may be conceptualized as “the legally entrenched power of ethnic or territorial communities to exercise public functions independently of other sources of authority of the state, but subject to the overall legal order of the state” (Weller and Wolff 2005).

Scholarly efforts by comparativists and political theorists to develop theories of independentism abound (Bartkus 1999; Beissinger 2002; Hechter 2000; Hale 2008; Hannum and Babbitt 2006; Moore 1998; Murkens et al. 2002). We also have in the existing literature theories about the origins of federalism and federation (Riker 1987, 1964; Watts 2008, 1966; Wheare 1953; Stepan 2001). Yet, we have relatively little in the existing scholarly literature on the origins of the autonomist “bargain” between autonomists and the central state. We need to develop a theory of autonomism, and in particular we need to understand how autonomism originates, how it becomes the dominant current in a substate national movement, how it is maintained as an ideology in competition with both independentism and federalism, and how it becomes established as an ideology of territorial order and institutional design.

## **II- Varieties of Autonomies and Case Selection**

The universe of cases included within my scope conditions encompasses autonomist parties and autonomist movements within autonomies in states with long-standing liberal

democratic regimes (25 year minimum duration),<sup>1</sup> and located within or belonging to states with a high level of socio-economic development, where the minority nation-majority nation relationship has lasted for at least one century, and where the principal cause for the differential between majority and minority nations is language, culture, history, and institutions, as opposed to race or religion.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the cases of actually-existing autonomies are very small territories with very small populations. I will concentrate on the major cases of autonomism, encompassed by my scope conditions.

Contemporary autonomies embody in their institutional design both federalist and non-federalist elements. It is possible to develop a typology of presently-existing autonomies that shows a continuum between those cases with the most pronounced federalist-like elements and those with the strongest non-federalist characteristics.

**Non-federalist ←=====→ Federalist**

Non-federal autonomies

Puerto Rico (1952-)

Devolutionary autonomies

Scotland (1998-)

Wales (1998-)

Northern Ireland (1998-)

Corsica

Semi-federal autonomies

Catalonia (1978-)

Basque Country (1978-)

Galicia (1978-)

---

<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to compare non-democratic polities with democratic ones. For example, the politics of nationalism in Uzbekistan in the fall of 1991 was distorted by the absence of a democratic ethos (Hale, 2008, p. 188).

<sup>2</sup> National or ethnic conflicts that emerge out of ascriptive differences such as race or religion are bound to “resist compromise, arouse passion instead of reason, and generate violence” (Varshney, 2002, p. 26) (Mahoney and Goertz, 2004, p. 660).

### **Figure 1. Varieties of actually-existing autonomies.**

Federalism is not a taxonomic term but a normative one and refers to a political system of multilevel government combining elements of shared-rule and territorial self-rule (Watts 1998: 12). It is premised on a *constitutionally entrenched* division of powers between a central state and two or more subunits so that each level has sovereign authority over certain matters (Gagnon and Burgess 1994: 7).

**Non-federal autonomies.** On one end of the spectrum we have actually-existing autonomies that are non-federalist territorial units, having few federalist elements, and in fact exhibiting a number of anti-federalist characteristics. Some of these cases are “federacies,” and Elazar cites the Puerto Rico-USA relationship as the prototype of a “federacy” (Elazar 1991).

There are four ways in which an autonomy such as Puerto Rico is non-federalist. First, the powers of the autonomic unit are not constitutionally entrenched. Second, an autonomic unit is non-federalist if it is constitutionally subordinate to the center. In other words, the division of powers between the center and the autonomy is so subaltern that in essence the “shared rule” component between the central and subunit governments is practically inexistent. Third, autonomies are non-federalist if their influence over the policy-making institutions of the center is extremely weak or negligible. Fourth, autonomies are also non-federalist if the two orders of government that have been set up are so unequal that the element of “self rule” in the relationship gives the autonomy a special status that is outside the federal political system of the central state. The *Estado Libre Asociado* (ELA) is not part of the whole, and it is a special status that is outside the US federation, while being a territory that is in a subordinate

relationship with the center. In essence, the ELA-USA federal government relationship has some elements of empire and nearly none of federalism.

Yet, autonomism in Puerto Rico has until very recently been the dominant political tendency in its national movement since the 1950s. It is also a model that has been cited often as an important exemplar of actually-existing autonomism, evincing a clear contrast with the model of a subunit of a federation.

**Devolutionary autonomies.** Autonomies that are created in “union-states” or unitary states, undergoing a process of asymmetric decentralization or “devolution,” have some federalist elements. Those that have been created in the United Kingdom since 1998 are the most illuminating contemporary exemplars of the cases covered by my scope conditions. I will here focus on Scotland, although some of the generalizations will also be applicable to Wales and Northern Ireland. Some of the generalizations about devolutionary autonomies may also be applicable to cases of territorial autonomy within unitary states, such as Corsica.

“Devolution” is a distinctly British term coined in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and it has some similarities with federal political systems but with a number of distinct features. First, powers and governmental authority have been transferred to the territories and nations, but the ultimate sovereignty of the Westminster Parliament remains unaltered. “Westminster retains the constituent power and could even suspend or abolish the devolved institutions (as happened in Northern Ireland in 1972, 2000, and 2002)” (Keating 2005: 19). This is a non-federalist element that devolutionary autonomies in the UK share with non-federalist autonomies such as Puerto Rico because their autonomic (or devolutionary) institutions are constitutionally subordinate to the center. In Scotland, as in federal political systems, some competences have been devolved to

Scotland, some have been reserved to the center, others are shared between the two. Yet, unlike a genuine federation, “the constitutional limits apply only to Scotland and not to Westminster, which retains the right to legislate even within devolved spheres, although under the Sewell conventions...this should happen only with the consent of the Scottish Parliament” (Keating 2005: 20). In addition, the UK institutional arrangement is highly asymmetrical, given that “Westminster continues to rule directly in England and proposals for regional government there fall far short of creating units comparable with Scotland. This creates a structural imbalance since Westminster, doubling as the UK and English government, will be the predominant partner” (Keating 2005: 20).

**Semi-federal autonomies.** The Spanish model of state established by the 1978 Constitution is a quasi-federation, consisting of 17 “autonomous communities” having the constitutional right to self-rule. Spain is not a federation in name and is not yet a fully-formed federation, but it does exhibit some of the institutional characteristics of contemporary federations. The Spanish “State of Autonomies” can be considered an example of ‘devolutionary federalism,’ and is analyzed as such by many scholars (Moreno 2001: 25) (Griffiths and Nerenberg (eds.) 2002: 25). “As a unitary state engaged in devolutionary federalization within its own borders by a process characterized by considerable asymmetry, Spain is an interesting example of an effort to accommodate variations in the strengths of regional pressures for autonomy” (Watts 1999: 31). Accordingly, the Spanish “State of the Autonomies” should be seen as an early stage of an evolutionary path that could possibly lead eventually to a type of asymmetric federalism. A fundamental step towards the further federalization of Spain would be reforming the Spanish Senate, turning it into the representative territorial chamber,

representing Spanish citizens through their autonomous nationalities and regions (Moreno 2001:135).

Therefore, autonomies such as post-1978 Catalonia, Euskadi, and Galicia are semi-federal autonomies. Of the three types of autonomies examined here, they have the most pronounced federalist elements. To be sure, I maintain that these are not subunits of a federation. Hence, they are properly classified as autonomies. But, the semi-federal nature of Spain lends these autonomies clear elements of federalism.

**Case Selection.** Therefore, I have chosen to examine the autonomies or autonomist movements located on both ends of the spectrum: those that are non-federal autonomies and those that are semi-federal ones. I will examine the origins of the actually-existing autonomist currents in Catalonia and Puerto Rico in order to develop some hypotheses about how the autonomist bargain originates. In order to examine their origins, we need to focus on the pre-contemporary period, and look at their history during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Then I will examine how autonomism is maintained as an ideology of territorial organization, in some cases of contemporary autonomism. I will do so on the basis of empirical research into the attitudes, ideology, and opinions of the autonomist leaders and militants themselves in the contemporary period. To understand how autonomism is maintained as an ideology of territorial order, I will rely principally on an analysis of four autonomist parties of three substate national societies, namely Catalonia, Quebec, and Puerto Rico.

### **III- Explaining the Origins of the Autonomist Bargain**

As the distinguished historian Joan B. Culla of the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* remarked, the Catalan national movement since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, has historically had a weak independentist component. It has instead oscillated between federalism and autonomism.<sup>3</sup> As Isidre Molas has also remarked, one of the most surprising aspects of the Catalan national movement is the fact that it has not had, and does not have, the explicit purpose of forming an independent state (Molas 2000: 180). A strong autonomist orientation has characterized the Catalan national movement from its origins. Similarly, since the 1940s, the national movement of Puerto Rico has had a strong autonomist orientation, which has become hegemonic in it since the 1950s.

Specific structural and political factors explain the *origins* and early development of the autonomist orientation of these national movements.

### **Catalonia**

In the case of Catalonia, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, its industrial bourgeoisie turned away from the struggle for power in the Spanish state when it realized it was impossible to gain power at the core within the oligarchic liberal democracy of the Restoration. “Instead it aimed to secure power at the local and regional level and to build up support on the basis of cultural nationalism to bargain more effectively with the central government on economic issues particularly protectionism. Without this conflict of economic interests...the emergence of Catalanist nationalism would be difficult to understand. Certainly the intellectuals, the poets and writers, the defenders of traditional legal institutions, contributed very much to the formulation of the

---

<sup>3</sup> Personal interview with Joan B. Culla, July 13, 2004, at the UAB.

nationalist idea but the organizational resources and the money were provided by the bourgeoisie” (Linz 1975: 386; Balcells 1977: 84). Other scholars have stressed the importance of how patterns of development shaped Catalan nationalism by creating constellations of class and ethnic interests that determined both center-periphery relations and class relations within the two regions. Diez-Medrano’s explanation pays particular attention to two contrasts: that between combined development and endogenous development and that between capital-goods development and consumer-goods development. The concept of combined development rests on the coexistence, within a country or region, of an advanced and highly concentrated industrial sector and an economy that remains largely traditional. This dual economic structure is typical of economic latecomers. The development of a small capitalist class linked to the capital-goods production sector antedates and stunts the development of a commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, and sweeps away small-scale manufacturers and artisans, and leads to the rapid proletarianization of the peasantry. Endogenous development, by contrast, stems from capital accumulated in agriculture, which is then invested in industry. This pattern, which generally takes form over a longer time span than does combined development, facilitates the emergence of a large bourgeois class and the gradual integration of preindustrial classes, including the peasantry, into the process of capitalist industrialization (Diez Medrano 1995: 41). Accounts of European economic development generally show that industrialization passed through two major initial phases: consumer-goods industrialization (mostly textile production) and capital-goods industrialization (mostly the production of iron and steel). “The textile industry, with small capitalist requirements, did not depend on investment by banks, the state, or foreigners for its development, and its rise was thus not conducive to the emergence of a powerful banking system.....The steel industry, historically, required large sums of capital for its expansion” (41).

In the Basque lands of Spain, iron and steel production was the main industrial sector, while in Catalonia it was textile production. Catalonia experienced endogenous development based on the consumer-goods sector, while the Basque Country experienced combined development based on the capital-goods sector.

Catalan nationalism reflected the frustration of the Catalan bourgeoisie over its inability to shape Spanish policies according to its own interests. Although a large bourgeoisie emerged during industrialization, its economic and political power was much weaker than that of the Basque capitalist elites. “Exchanges between the Catalan consumer goods industry and the Spanish state were much smaller than those between the Basque capital-goods sector and the Spanish state. Catalan industry produced for the Spanish market rather than to satisfy state demand, and Catalonia’s financial sector was too weak to meet the state’s borrowing needs” (111). The bourgeoisie’s decision to adopt a nationalist agenda resulted from three factors: the endogenous character of Catalan development, the specialization of Catalan industry in consumer-goods production, and their pro-Catalan cultural and political orientations. Because endogenous development and specialization in consumer-goods production facilitated the assimilation of the Catalan preindustrial elites and the peasantry into the nascent capitalist society, mobilization against social change by these social groups was minimal (192).

Thus, the “Catalan industrial and commercial bourgeoisies had to rely on nationalist political mobilization to achieve their economic and political goals...” (111). These elites developed a form of peripheral nationalism, but one which was (and is) autonomist, because they “would not have gone as far as endangering the unity of Spain and with it their access to a protected market for their products” (Linz 1975: 381). For the Catalan bourgeoisie, maintaining

access to the Spanish consumer market and securing protectionist policies from the central state were essential objectives. Hence, their preference for a national movement that had an autonomist orientation (Balcells 1977:92).

### **Puerto Rico**

The origins of the autonomism-seeking orientation of the Puerto Rican national movement can also be explained by focusing on the socio-economic conditionings that framed the political development of this movement and by showing how internal hegemony within the movement was achieved by a group espousing an autonomist preference. After 1898, the U.S. came to exert unprecedented economic and political control over Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico, “and the Spanish Caribbean as a whole became a sphere for U.S. direct investment, a colonial region dominated by the decisions of U.S. capitalists. Although U.S. capital flowed into all economic sectors, sugar production became the primary locus of investment, the premier economic activity of the islands...[and] the principal export” (Ayala 1999: 1-2). Thus, the first three and a half decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were the high period of sugar monoculture dominated by U.S. capital. To borrow a term used by Eric Williams, the “American Sugar Kingdom” was established. “The combined sugar production of the three islands doubled from 433,000 tons in 1900 to 1,127,000 tons in 1902. Sugar output then doubled again between 1902 and 1910, reaching 2,470,000 tons...At the end of World War I the three islands produced close to one-third of the sugar sold in the world market” (5).

Sugar plantations were not new to the Caribbean. However, the “American Sugar Kingdom” did not merely reproduce old patterns of economic organization associated with the previous European colonizers in the region. Instead, a radical social and economic

transformation took place in the islands as a result of U.S. imperial expansion, including: the development of a free labor market, new forms of corporate organization (“trusts”), the introduction of the latest technological advance in the sugar mills, and the fast-paced economic integration to the U.S. economy (2-3).

In 1897, coffee was the principal export of PR, having surpassed sugar in the closing decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This process was reversed after 1898. Products protected by the U.S. tariff system, such as raw sugar and tobacco, received a tremendous boost. (Ayala 1999: 66-7). Sugar quickly regained the position of principal export and largest sector of the economy. Puerto Rican sugar gained a privileged market in the U.S., while foreign sugar producers were subject to a tariff. Puerto Rican sugar was thus protected, like mainland-produced sugar, from the full impact of foreign competition. Production of raw sugar in PR rose from 81,526 tons to 866,109 tons (Dietz 1986: 103-4). Four large sugar corporations dominated the economic life of the island by the early 1930's. The Aguirre, Fajardo, South Porto [sic] Rico, and United Porto Rico companies produced approximately 60% of the sugar on the island by the late 1920” (Ayala 1999: 108). Sugar, in effect, is what made U.S. colonization profitable. “PR began to take many of the properties that characterized sugar monocultures in the West Indies...as a result of U.S. policies and the actions of U.S. sugar producers and investors” (Dietz 1986: 124).

In addition, “the provisions of the [1900] Foraker and [1917] Jones Acts also guaranteed that Puerto Rico would trade almost exclusively with the United States” (119). Foreign-owned and foreign-controlled capital became dominant in the Puerto Rican economy. Aside from sugar, U.S. tobacco companies controlled some 85% of the cigar-manufacturing industry. Moreover, by the 1920's, about 50% of public utilities were foreign owned; railroads were 60%

foreign owned; shipping, nearly 100%. Four banks that were 95% foreign-owned held 50.2% of the banking assets in 1929 (126). “More than a quarter of PR’s total wealth, and substantially more of its productive wealth, was owned by foreigners, primarily U.S. businessmen....U.S. capital investments reoriented the economy. There were some local capitalists -- in sugar, for example -- but U.S. dominance in political, economic, educational, and judicial affairs was unquestionable” (133).

For Muñoz Marín and those who would establish the *Partido Popular Democrático* (PPD) in 1938, sugar was the Gordian knot tying the economic life of PR. Beginning in 1934, for Muñoz Marín and his followers, “the forces of privilege against which the country had to struggle were the gigantic sugar corporations...in this sense he started defining his economic project: the definitive liberation of the people of PR from the inexorable cycle of sugar cane; the abandonment of the land because, in the last instance, it was incompatible with modernity” (Álvarez-Curbelo 1993: 32). Although in 1932, initially, Muñoz Marín expressed a preference for independence in order to reject the economic determinism of sugar, the PPD soon abandoned this stance (after 1940) and adopted an association-seeking position (30). On May 9, 1934, Congress passed the Jones-Castigan Act, which provided quotas on the imports of sugar in order to reverse the price decline for U.S. sugar producers resulting from the glut of sugar in the world market. Puerto Rico’s quota for 1934 was based on the proportion of total U.S. sugar purchases it had supplied during 1925-33. In 1934, actual production levels exceeded the quota by 37% (Dietz 1986:171). The developing crisis in the sugar sector made it increasingly clear to the PPD leaders that sugar would not be a viable basis for long-term economic development (Álvarez-Curbelo 1993: 181).

Puerto Rico's pattern of development since 1898 exhibited the colonial and dependent pattern of the "American Sugar Kingdom" period in the Caribbean. For the PPD, the Gordian knot of sugar was constraining PR's development, and the foreign-owned sugar plantations were very visible antagonists. After the Jones-Castigan Act, it became clear that sugar's possibilities were limited. "The PPD's populist program and rhetoric were anti-imperialist and anti-expansionist; they were not, however, anti-American or anti-capitalist" (180). The PPD's efforts to redirect the economy were based on the attraction of U.S. manufacturing concerns, which tied its destiny ever closer to the U.S. (183). The PPD also clearly accepted the "colonial restrictions on local power that were institutionalized by the [1917] Jones Act" (219).

In order to explain the ideological transformation of the PPD, some have argued that the original populist ideology of the PPD (in 1938) was elaborated by a professional sector that was interested in creating its own State in order to become its hegemonic class. Moreover, this class was intent on inserting itself in the economic arena in order to execute a comprehensive reorganization of the social sphere. After 1940, a political coalition composed of this class, plus the emerging proletariat, and the middle class was able to establish hegemony within the national movement. But, it was the development of a strategy of economic development (in the 1940's) that depended on a series of economic incentives to U.S. transnational corporations that created a dilemma for this coalition. There was a fundamental contradiction between the separatist ideal of creating a new sovereign state out of the colonial past and the program "for the modernization of the economy and the abolition of misery. This political coalition found an answer to this dichotomy in the *Estado Libre Asociado*: a local autonomous government inside a common market, a common monetary system, a common defense, and a common citizenship with the United States" (Quintero Rivera 1980: 101-102).

The PPD, therefore, supported and developed an autonomist political orientation because it sought to break the Gordian knot tying PR's development (the foreign-owned sugar plantation economy) by attracting the direct investment of U.S. industrial corporations. This strategy was incompatible with an independentist national movement, and, therefore, an autonomist nationalist ideology was invented and promoted.

### **Summation: The Origins of the Autonomist Bargain**

The Catalan national movement and the Puerto Rican one are the quintessential examples of movements that develop autonomist nationalist ideologies that have become hegemonic within them. In order to understand the origins of such movements, one must focus on patterns of socio-economic development, and examine the socio-economic processes that framed their political development. One must also focus on the political coalitions that formed in response to these conditions, and were able to establish hegemony within these national movements. In the case of Phases A-C (according to Hroch) of the Catalan national movement, the endogenous character of Catalan development and the consumer-goods orientation of Catalan production helps to explain the rise of peripheral nationalism in that region, and, furthermore, the Catalan industrial bourgeoisie's need to maintain access to the protected Spanish market also helps to account for the autonomist orientation of the movement. Similarly, the Puerto Rican national movement (particularly its Phase C) was influenced by the pattern of development that was evident after 1898, i.e., a foreign-owned sugar plantation economy controlled and dependent on U.S. capital. Facing this constraint, and when the sugar economy entered a period of crisis in the 1930's after the Jones-Castigan Act, the leadership of the PPD -- which was becoming increasingly dominant in the national movement -- opted to shed its independentist ideology and

transformed itself into an autonomy-seeking national party, in order to provide a political formula that would suit its strategy of industrialization, which was its only option in light of the evident limitations of a sugar-based economy.

I argue that national movements tend to develop as autonomy-seeking movements if they originate within a socio-economic pattern of development in which the group that comes to dominate the movements believes the peripheral region must maintain stable economic links with the core state, because they this is seen as beneficial for the region and for the social groups and classes that have managed to form the dominant political coalition within the national movement.

#### **IV-Autonomists and the Maintenance of the Autonomist Bargain**

So far, we have developed an argument about how the autonomist bargain originates. Once the original conditions that have given rise to autonomism have passed, we need to account for the continued success and viability of autonomism. Thus, we need to understand how autonomism is maintained as an ideology of territorial order in the contemporary period.

I have studied the autonomist movements of Quebec, Catalonia, and Puerto Rico, focusing on the leaders and militants of the *Action Démocratique du Québec* (ADQ), the *Partido Popular Democrático* (PPD), and the federation of *Convergència i Unió* (CiU) -- consisting of *Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya* (CDC) and *Unió Democràtica de Catalunya* (UDC) For each of these four political parties, I have conducted in-depth fieldwork.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>I have conducted interviews with over 50 top-level leaders of these parties. Also, I conducted focus group interviews with base-level militants of these parties. In total, I have received 640 answered questionnaires from the militants in the research I have done in Puerto Rico, Quebec, and Catalonia. Two techniques were used to distribute

The virtues of autonomism are its hybridity, malleability, mutability, and multiplicity. Autonomism is an ideology of territorial order that can perform an exquisite balancing act between its anti-federalist stances and its anti-secessionism stances. It manages to do the latter because it develops a discourse on how to achieve “sovereignty” within existing state structures that effectively marginalizes the secessionist ideal. Its **anti-federalist** stance has four basic components: diminished predominance of dual national identities, rejection of federalism’s homogenizing and uniformizing tendencies, willingness to trade the value of meaningful influence on the center for the perception of more autonomy, and negative perception of the possibilities for recognition and accommodation by the central structures of the state. Autonomism succeeds because of its hybridity and multiplicity: it can perfectly balance its anti-federalist with its anti-secessionist stances.

*Autonomism and Federation.* During my interview with Artur Mas, the president of CiU, said: “We at the European level are federalists because we believe in a UE of a federal sort that is a union of the European nations, and we of course aspire to be a European nation. At the level of the Spanish State, we could say that we are confederalists, that is, within the Spanish State we opt decidedly for a recognition of the ensemble of nations and we thus support a plurinational state. This is not de facto independence because we believe that today classic independence has ceased to exist and been replaced by co-sovereignties and co-dependencies.”<sup>5</sup> The leader of CDC had this to say about how the party’s founder viewed autonomism: “I believe

---

the questionnaire. Whenever possible, I went to party congresses or assemblies and, with the permission and cooperation of the parties, I distributed my questionnaire in person and received the responses the same day directly from the militants. In other cases, the party distributed the questionnaire by email to an email list of their militants. I also interviewed 18 academics.

<sup>5</sup> Personal interview, Artur Mas, November 19, 2004, at CDC headquarters, Carrer Corsega, in Barcelona.

that President Pujol has never been a federalist. He always tried to make the most of the statute of autonomy and the Constitution of 1978, interpreting it in a Catalanist and autonomic note. It was logical that he should do that given that this was the only way available. He lived within that framework, within a Spanish Constitution that he helped to create.” Dolors Batalla was vice-secretary of CDC for political action and strategy when I interviewed her and is now a member of Parliament. With respect to federation, Batalla echoed the views of other CDC members: “we try to avoid at all costs any kind of federalism that leads to the homogenization of all the constituent units...In reality what we are looking for is to have a different and differentiated status within the Spanish state.”<sup>6</sup>

As former President Pujol has often emphasized, CiU rejects a model of federation. In Pujol’s view, as he said in a conference in 1996: “we have to say clearly that we are not federalists, because federalism, as it is normally understood...is a federalism that wants to emerge out of a homogeneous base that does not exist, and of a will to homogenize that is unjust towards us” (Pujol 1997).

*Autonomism and Independence.* Ramon Camp has been one of the most distinguished CDC members of Parliament, and has served as the spokesman of the party in the Parliament. He said: “CDC is not a federalist party but its autonomism is not an ideology nor a paradigmatic system that has an all-purpose solution for the Catalan situation...”<sup>7</sup> According to Ramon Camp, a “strictly independentist proposal is the consequence of not finding another way of expressing the recognition and development of the society...” Josep Antoni Duran i Lleida is the President

---

<sup>6</sup> Personal interview with Dolors Batalla, September 23, 2004, at CDC headquarters, Barcelona.

<sup>7</sup> Personal interview with Ramon Camp, September 23, 2004, at the Catalan Parliament.

of UDC. What does UDC aspire to, according to Duran i Lleida? “Not to separate ourselves from Spain...In 1931 when UDC was founded it had a confederal proposal for all the Spanish state...Our aspiration is that the Spanish state will be able to configure itself as a sum of various nations, and not have Spain be identified as the only nation.”

*Autonomism and Identity.* The autonomist militants of the *Partido Popular Democrático* show a strong sense of Puerto Rican nationhood (see Table 1). Autonomists agree (99%) that Puerto Rico is a nation and they were almost monolithic in identifying as Puerto Ricans, not as “Americans.”<sup>8</sup> Very few of them think of the USA as their country or their nation, and, at best, merely see the US in legal realist terms: by law, they are U.S. citizens and thus the US is simply the state to which they belong as citizens. The codes and practices that help us recognize the Puerto Rican sense of nationhood are revealed in part in these militants’ responses to the open-ended question about what they thought about what elements defined Puerto Rican nationness. Most replied it was language and culture, and, secondly, a sentiment of belonging and a common history. Very few referred to ethnicity as a defining characteristic.

<b>Puerto Rico is a Nation?</b>	<b>National Identification</b>	<b>What is the United States?</b>	<b>What is Puerto Rico?</b>	<b>Puerto Rico is Cultural or Political nation?</b>
Yes-99%	Only Puerto Rican-58%	My <i>Patria</i> - 1% (“country”)	My <i>Patria</i> - 45% (“country”)	Political- 22%

---

<sup>8</sup> The term *estadounidense* (or equivalent) is used in Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Latin America, but USA English has no equivalent term. “Americans” literally refers to those who are residents of all of the Americas, but we will use it here as shorthand to refer to those who consider themselves holders of the U.S. national identity.

No- 0%	More Puerto Rican than United States identity- 33%	My Nation- 1%	My Nation- 54%	Political and Cultural- 54%
Other-1% Colony	Equally Puerto Rican and U.S.A. identity- 9%	The State to which I belong as a U.S. citizen- 63%	A region of the USA without a national personality-1%	Only Cultural- 24%
	Other- 1% PR with US citizenship	The colonizing state that conquered PR in 1898- 28%	Other- 1% Colony	
		Other- 7% Partner, Good Neighbor, Nothing		

**Table 1. National identities among autonomists in Puerto Rico. Responses from PPD militants (N=197).**

As Tables 2-3 show below, the militants of the ADQ strongly identified Québec as a nation or as a distinct society and their own party as a nationalist party. Most were inclined to identify strongly with Quebec, but they were less monolithic than the independentists in their self-identification, given that some were willing to express a dual identity. But, still the number of ADQ militants expressing a strong Quebecois identity were a majority. The militant base of the two Catalan parties, CDC and UDC, were strongly nationalist in their responses, on all the criteria (especially CDC).<sup>9</sup> In essence, their responses are comparable to the independentists' responses. In addition, I would argue that the difference in terms of national self-identification between autonomists and independentists is relatively small.

---

<sup>9</sup> In a survey at the XI National Congress of CDC held in 2000 at Cornellà de Llobregat, the delegates at the Congress responded that 66% were only catalan, and 26% more catalan than Spanish, and 4% equally Spanish and Catalan (Baras i Gómez 2004).

Catalunya is a Nation?	National Identification	Identifies as a Nationalist?	Cultural or Political nation?	Opinion of the Central state
Yes- 100%	Only Catalan- 78.5%	Yes- 91%	Political- 29%	Negative- 30.5%
	More Catalan than Spanish- 16%	Other- Catala- nist 9%	Political and Cultural- 60%	Neutral- 58%
	Also European- 21%		Cultural- 5.6%	Positive- 11%

**Table 2. National identities among autonomists in Catalonia. Responses from CDC and UDC Militants (N=88).**

Quebec is a Nation?	National Identification	Identifies as a Nationalist?	Cultural or Political nation?	Opinion of the Central state
Yes-68%	Only Quebecois- 15%	Yes- 68.7%	Political- 22.5%	Negative- 23.7%
Other-Distinct Society 16%	More Quebecois Than Canadian- 37.5%	Other- 22%	Political and Cultural- 20%	Neutral- 41%
No- 18%	Equally Quebecois & Canadian 23.7%		Cultural- 53.7%	
	More Canadian than Quebecois 5%			Positive- 32.5%

	Only Canadian- 2.5%			
--	------------------------	--	--	--

**Table 3. National identities among autonomists in Quebec. Responses from ADQ Militants (N=80).**

*Autonomism and Sovereignty.* In studying the political orientation of autonomist parties such as CDC, it should be noted that the position statements that have the most sovereigntist tone are all internal documents of the party, typically produced at its National Congresses, and mostly for the consumption of its militants. CDC’s public face is decidedly autonomist in orientation, even if some of its more recent internal declarations have taken on a more sovereigntist hue. Furthermore, it is important to note that CDC and UDC present themselves to elections within the federation of CiU, and the public face of the federation is even more decidedly autonomist in its orientation than the individual positions of the two parties in their internal documents and position statements. The recent electoral programs of CiU are clearly autonomist in their political orientation. I concur with Aguilera de Prat, who writes that CiU cultivates a studied ambiguity and often evades clear definitions, but, in the end, it is an autonomist formation, although it reserves the right to make rhetorical references full of sovereigntist flourishes (Aguilera de Prat 2002). In any case, CiU has repeatedly stated that its project of nation-building can be plainly accommodated within Spain, and, hence, its strategy is not independentist, preferring to orient itself toward the construction of a plurinational Spain (256). CiU is a nationalist formation that maintains its non-separatist stance (Guibernau i Berdún 2004; Culla 2001). CiU always demands an “autonomic turn” from the Spanish state, which it sees implicit in the model of state founded in 1978, and reaffirms its objective to implement it in an asymmetric way, given that the realities and needs of the historic nationalities are not the same as those of the regions (Aguilera de Prat 2002). In sum, CiU is a nationalist and autonomist formation that proposes an

asymmetric autonomism, without renouncing to a certain dose of supplemental sovereigntist rhetoric (308).

The members of the *Corvée Place du Québec* prepared for the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress of ADQ members, held on September 25-26, 2004 at Drummondville, the party's most complete statement on its autonomist position to date, which was later disseminated in a document entitled Projet: L'ADQ - La Voie Autonomiste. The ADQ states: "our primary fidelity, our passion and our loyalty are towards Quebec; all those who live in Quebec are the Quebecois, without exception; the development for Quebec as a distinct nation passes naturally by a growth in our autonomy; we respect the Canadians outside Quebec, we appreciate our common history and we consider them like our privileged partners..." (3) The ADQ estimates that it is time to ask sovereigntists if it is still pertinent to want to continue having referendums, repeatedly. More than waiting for a "yes" to a question to which the Quebecois have already said "no" twice, or worse risking a third "no" that will further weaken Quebec, it is time to examine new approaches, to explore new avenues, to turn towards new horizons to advance the autonomy of the Quebecois people. (3)

*Autonomists' Preferences.* The last section of the questionnaire that I distributed among the militants of the autonomist parties asked them to evaluate the relative impact of various factors (using a 10-point scale) on their decision to opt for autonomism as their political orientation. These various factors generally represented *cultural, political, and economic* considerations. I asked them to sort which of these factors weigh most heavily in their decision to opt for autonomism. I consider only the responses that placed a given factor in the top three deciles in the questionnaire (i.e., 8, 9, or 10 in their response in a 10-point scale). The

respondents were provided additional space and additional questions allowing them to explain their answers. In the limited space available here I can provide only the quantifiable portions of the questionnaire responses. Please refer to Table 4.

		Autonomists in Quebec and Catalonia		Autonomists in Puerto Rico	
	Variable ↓	CDC, UDC (N=80)	ADQ (N=88)		PPD (N=197)
Cultural	Culture,identity language	70%	45%	Culture, Identity, and Language	75%
Economic	Economic or industrial development	40%	76%	Economic or industrial development	63%
	Fiscal Considerations	33.5%	58%	Tax considerations	48%
	European Union/NAFTA	20%	26%	N/A	
	Globalization	12%	40%	Globalization	47%

Political	Political Structures of Spain/Canada/USA	41.5%	45%	Political structures of federalism in the USA	42%
	Spanish/USA/Canadian centralist nationalism	53%	55%	The centralist nationalism of the USA	36%
	Past History of minority-majority nation relations	33.5%	37%	Long political history of relations between USA and PRico	55%
				U.S.A. citizenship	38%
				Changing demographics of "Hispanics" in the USA	36%

**Table 4. Analysis of the Political Orientation of Autonomist Militants (N=365).**

(% of responses of militants that indicated this factor was “important” in accounting for their decision to opt for autonomism. “Important”= answered 8,9,10 on the 10-point scale in the questionnaire)

**Conclusion: Accounting for the Origins and Maintenance of Autonomism**

The empirical investigation we have conducted into the attitudes and discourse of the militants of four autonomist parties has yielded a rich bounty of data, which we can use to establish the general contours of autonomism as an ideology of territorial order.

**Diminished predominance of dual national identities.** Autonomism is one of the varieties of minority-nation nationalism. Autonomists have a strong sense of identification with their sub-state national society as their nation, although some do have dual identities, but generally much less than is the case with the militants of pro-federation national parties.

**Rejection of federalism's homogenizing and uniformizing tendencies.** Autonomists reject a model of federation because they believe that federations generally lead to the homogenization of all the constituent units. They therefore advocate a third way between federation and independence, given that models of autonomism may be more flexible and adaptable to the needs of their sub-state national society.

**"Sovereignty" discourse within existing state structures effectively marginalizes the secessionist ideal.** Most autonomists are nationalists. Therefore, they in principle are generally not unsympathetic to the ideal of independence, given that they have affinities with the animus behind the drive for independence. However, most mainstream autonomists reject the independence alternative for practical considerations. Moreover, for autonomists, independence and sovereignty are distinct categories. Autonomism is the search for gradually expanding spheres of sovereignty within the existing state structures. There may be presently-existing juridical or political barriers that impede the expansion of this sphere of sovereignty. Autonomism's challenge is to find mechanisms, processes, and institutional openings that will neutralize (or circumvent) such obstacles.

**Negative perception of the possibilities for accommodation by the central structures of the state.** The autonomist militants of all four parties indicated in their questionnaire responses and during the focus group interviews that considerations of culture, language, and

identity are the primary reason accounting for their choice of political orientation. This is not surprising: as nationalists, identity is a primary consideration. In the case of **CDC**, **UDC**, and **ADQ**, the second most important bloc of factors influencing their choice were *political factors*. Especially important was the impact of majority-nation centralist nationalism on their decision to opt for autonomism. The second most important political factor was their perception of central state political structures and the likelihood these could accommodate their imagined community. Autonomists have strong negative opinions about the likelihood that the political structures of the central state can accommodate them.

The economic factors, as a bloc, came in third in the case of the Catalans and the Québécois. In the case of the **PPD**, given that the ELA is a very dependent economic model (on the USA), considerations about economic development came in second, but third was a political factor-- namely, the long history of relations between metropole and sub-state national society -- which reaffirms our point about the importance of political factors in accounting for autonomists' preferences.

**Conclusion.** Autonomism is an ideology of territorial order that can perform an exquisite balancing act between its anti-federalist stances and its anti-secessionism stances. It manages to do the latter because it develops a discourse on how to achieve “sovereignty” within existing state structures that effectively marginalizes the secessionist ideal.

We have shown that in order to understand the **origins** of autonomism, one must focus on patterns of socio-economic development, and examine the socio-economic processes that framed autonomism's political development. One must also focus on the political coalitions that formed in response to these conditions, and were able to establish hegemony within these national

movements, etc. However, in order to account for the continued success and viability of autonomism, and how it is **maintained** as an ideology of territorial order in the contemporary period, we need to focus on the malleable discourse of autonomism. Autonomism succeeds in the contemporary period because of its hybridity and multiplicity: it can perfectly balance its anti-federalist with its anti-secessionist stances.

### Bibliography

- Aguilera de Prat, Cesáreo. 2002. *Partidos y Estrategias Nacionalistas en Cataluña, Escocia, y Flandes*. Valencia: Tirant Lo Blanch.
- Anderson, R. W. 1965. *Party politics in Puerto Rico*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Baras i Gómez, Montserrat. 2004. *Els Militants dels Partits Polítics a Catalunya: Perfils Socials i Percepcions Polítiques*. Barcelona: ICPS.
- Bartkus, Viva Ona. 1999. *The dynamic of secession*. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Beissinger, Mark R. 2002. *Nationalist mobilization and the collapse of the Soviet State*. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bernier, Robert, Vincent Lemieux, and Maurice Pinard. 1997. *Un combat inachevé*. Sainte-Foy, Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec.
- Brubaker, Rogers. 1996. *Nationalism reframed : nationhood and the national question in the New Europe*. Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Burgess, Michael, and Alain Gagnon. 1993. *Comparative federalism and federation : competing traditions and future directions*. Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.
- Culla, Joan B. 2001. "De la primera victoria al vintenni en el poder (1980-2000)." In *El Pal de Paller: Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya (1974-2000)*, ed. J. B. Culla. Barcelona: Pòrtic.
- Danspeckgruber, Wolfgang F. 2002. *The self-determination of peoples : community, nation, and state in an interdependent world*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Danspeckgruber, Wolfgang F., and Arthur Watts. 1997. *Self-determination and self-administration : a sourcebook*. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Elazar, Daniel Judah. 1987. *Exploring federalism*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.
- . 1991. *Federal systems of the world : a handbook of federal, confederal, and autonomy arrangements*. Harlow, Essex, U.K: Longman Current Affairs.
- Gagnon, Alain, and Raffaele Iacovino. 2007. *Federalism, citizenship, and Quebec : debating multinationalism*. Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.
- Ghai, Yash P. 2000. *Autonomy and ethnicity : negotiating competing claims in multi-ethnic states*. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gibbins, Roger, Guy Laforest, and Institute for Research on Public Policy. 1998. *Beyond the impasse : toward reconciliation*. Montréal: Institute for Research on Public Policy.

- Griffiths, Ann L., Karl Nerenberg, and Forum of Federations. 2005. *Handbook of federal countries, 2005*. Montreal ; Ithaca [N.Y.]: Published for Forum of Federations/Forum des fédérations by McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Guibernau i Berdún, M. Montserrat. 2004. *Catalan nationalism : Francoism, transition and democracy*. London ; New York: Routledge.
- Hale, Henry E. 2008. *The foundations of ethnic politics : separatism of states and nations in Eurasia and the world*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hannum, Hurst. 1993. *Documents on autonomy and minority rights*. Dordrecht ; Boston: M. Nijhoff.
- . 1996. *Autonomy, sovereignty, and self-determination : the accommodation of conflicting rights*. Rev. ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Hannum, Hurst, and Eileen Babbitt. 2006. *Negotiating self-determination*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Hechter, Michael. 2000. *Containing nationalism*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hepburn, Eve. 2007. *The New Politics of Autonomy: Territorial Strategies and the Uses of European Integration by Political Parties in Scotland, Bavaria, and Sardinia (1979-2005)*, Department of Political and Social Sciences, European University Institute, Florence.
- Keating, Michael. 2001. *Plurinational democracy : stateless nations in a post-sovereignty era*. Oxford, England ; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kymlicka, Will. 1998. *Finding our way : rethinking ethnocultural relations in Canada*. Toronto ; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lapidoth, Ruth. 1997. *Autonomy : flexible solutions to ethnic conflicts*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- McGarry, John. 2002. "Federal Political Systems and the Accommodation of National Minorities." In *Handbook of Federal Countries*, ed. A. L. Griffiths and K. Nerenberg. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- McRoberts, Kenneth. 1997. *Misconceiving Canada : the struggle for national unity*. Toronto ; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Moore, Margaret. 1998. *National self-determination and secession*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Murkens, Jo Eric, Peter Jones, and Michael Keating. 2002. *Scottish independence : a practical guide*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Norman, W. J. 2006. *Negotiating nationalism : nation-building, federalism, and secession in the multinational state*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pujol, Jordi. 1997. *Tot Compromis Comporta Risc*. Barcelona: Edicions 62.
- Ramírez Lavandero, Marcos. 1988. *Documents on the Constitutional Relationship of Puerto Rico and the United States*. 3rd ed. Washington, D.C.: Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration.
- Reisman, W. Michael. 1975. *Puerto Rico and the international process : new roles in association : a report for the conference on Puerto Rico and the Foreign Policy Process--New Roles in Association, held at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, New York, October 1973*. [St. Paul]: West Pub. Co.
- Riker, William H. 1964. *Federalism: origin, operation, significance*. Boston,: Little.
- . 1987. *The development of American federalism*. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Skurbaty, Zelim, Raoul Wallenberg institutet för mänskliga rättigheter och humanitär rätt., and Institut for menneskerettigheder (Denmark). 2005. *Beyond a one-dimensional state : an emerging right to autonomy?* Leiden ; Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Statham, E. Robert. 2002. *Colonial constitutionalism : the tyranny of United States' offshore territorial policy and relations*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books.
- Stepan, Alfred C. 2001. *Arguing comparative politics*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.

- Suksi, Markku. 1998. *Autonomy : applications and implications*. The Hague ; Boston: Kluwer Law International.
- Trías Monge, José. 1997. *Puerto Rico : the trials of the oldest colony in the world*. New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press.
- Watts, Ronald L. 1966. *New federations: experiments in the Commonwealth*. Oxford,: Clarendon P.
- . 2008. *Comparing federal systems*. 3rd ed. Montréal: Published for the School of Policy Studies, Queen's University by McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Watts, Ronald L., Queen's University (Kingston Ont.). Institute of Intergovernmental Relations., and Queen's University (Kingston Ont.). School of Policy Studies. 1999a. *Comparing federal systems*. 2nd ed. Kingston, Ont.: Published for the School of Policy Studies, Queen's University by McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Watts, Ronald L., Queen's University (Kingston Ont.). School of Policy Studies., and Queen's University (Kingston Ont.). Institute of Intergovernmental Relations. 1999b. *Comparing federal systems*. 2nd ed. Montreal ; Ithaca: Published for the School of Policy Studies, Queen's University by McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Weller, M., and Stefan Wolff. 2005. *Autonomy, self-governance and conflict resolution : innovative approaches to institutional design in divided societies*. London ; New York: Routledge.
- Wheare, K. C. 1953. *Federal government*. 3d ed. London, New York,: Oxford University Press.
- Winter, Lieven de, and Huri Türsan. 1998. *Regionalist parties in Western Europe*. London ; New York: Routledge.