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National identity politics and cultural recognition: the party system as context of choice

Jean-François Dupré, School of Political Studies and Chair of Taiwan Studies, University of Ottawa.[1]

Abstract

This paper looks into the determinants of cultural recognition in ethnically diverse democracies that are divided on national identity, arguing that political parties' cultural ideologies are not entirely predetermined by their national identity position. It posits that, rather than a tool for national identity building, cultural recognition in such societies should be conceptualized as a way for parties to show commitment to their ethnic electorate. In this sense, the ethnic segmentation of the party system provides political elites with a context of choice from which to formulate their stance on cultural recognition. The paper argues that, far from being divisive, national identity politics can have a strong influence in establishing consensus on national culture. Moreover, it suggests that looking at national identity and recognition politics from the perspective of electoral incentives can help us understand why culture regimes can appear to be unfair to some groups, yet remain legitimate politically.

Keywords: Catalunya; cultural recognition; identity politics; party politics; Québec; Taiwan

Introduction

Culture regimes are the sets of cultures that are officially recognized, promoted, or protected by governments, together with related policies and practices on ethnocultural management. By enshrining cultural symbols into state institutions, governments not only delineate the ethnocultural parameters of the state, but also establish cultural hegemonies and identity representations. In doing so, culture regimes almost inevitably favour the interests of certain ethnocultural groups while marginalizing others (Kymlicka 1995, 2001; Liu 2015; Sonntag and Cardinal 2015; Taylor 1994). National identity politics—inter-party competition on the promotion of specific national identities or statuses—has often brought issues of cultural recognition to the forefront of political discourses and agendas. Such competition on the content of culture regimes—a phenomenon I term *culture politics*—has been particularly prevalent in secessionist regions, stateless nations and emerging states like Québec, Catalunya, the Basque Country, and Post-Soviet Republics. In those places, political elites have attempted to counter old state hegemonies by promoting their own cultural ideologies and culture regimes. Interestingly, these processes have resulted in culture regimes that are

[1] Jean-François Dupré, jfdupre@connect.hku.hk

largely stable and legitimate (or at least politically viable), though not necessarily representative of their societies' ethnocultural demographics. Moreover, these consensuses on culture regimes have emerged in spite of these societies' populations and political parties remaining fundamentally divided on national identity. Insofar as culture regimes can be seen as proxies for official national cultures, the dynamics of culture politics and regime creation in such societies raise important questions, not only about the political determinants of cultural recognition in democratic settings, but also about the relationship between culture and identity more generally.

Conventional theories of national identity politics and peripheral nationalism see culture politics as an attempt by regional nationalist elites to enshrine the cultural predominance of regional elites or majority groups into regional institutions for the sake of nation and state building (e.g. Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1992; Hechter 2000; Smith 2001). These assumptions are perhaps best represented in David Laitin's Ruler-Lord game (1992: 34), which posits that regional and post-colonial political elites have a rational incentive to promote regional languages and cultures so as to enhance regional distinctiveness and foster political autonomy. While these assumptions are pertinent in understanding elites' ideological predispositions, this paper argues that they overstate the power of political elites over their entourage and electorate in democratic contexts. In other words, they fail to appreciate the fact that politicians' identity choices are themselves shaped by the dynamics of the party system in which they operate. Moreover, the assumption that culture politics is predominantly a tool for identity building fails to recognize the fact that many of the recent cases of secessionist cultural nationalism have occurred in societies that are fundamentally divided on the national identity issue. If we assume, for instance, that French language politics is primarily used as a tool for secession in the Canadian province of Québec, how do we explain that both federalist and independentist provincial parties have unequivocally supported official French unilingualism?

Important advances on the relationship between democratic politics and cultural recognition have been made in the past decade (e.g. Bertrand and Haklai 2014; Kaufmann 2004; Lecours and Nootens 2009), though scholars do not agree on the nature of this relationship. While Kaufmann identifies 'an epochal shift from dominant minority to dominant majority politics brought on by democratization' (2009: 37), Bertrand goes the opposite way, arguing that 'the process of democratization creates new constraints on [majority-dominated] state nationalist projects and favors the development of civic characteristics' (2009: 150, my addition). In a recent contribution, Liu and Ricks (2012) make an innovative advance by positing that language regimes are determined by the ethnic composition of governing coalitions. Their argument is that governments have an incentive to coopt and absorb elites from ethnocultural groups that threaten their administrative survival by recognizing their language. This paper follows a somewhat similar premise, but with a focus on electoral incentives in reframing elites' cultural ideologies rather than the cooptation of antagonistic political elites. Put differently, this paper is more interested in ethnic voting than elite cooptation.

This paper aims to make a theoretical and critical intervention to our understanding of national identity politics and cultural recognition. It does so by outlining a theoretical proposition that takes ethnic distributions (i.e. segmentation) across the dominant party cleavage as a basis for conceptualizing the dynamics of culture politics in diverse democracies. This theoretical proposition posits that cultural recognition in diverse democracies should be conceptualized as a way for political parties to show commitment to ethnic groups supporting their favoured identity category of the party cleavage. Therefore, culture politics is likely to represent a tradeoff between the ideological predisposition of radical party elites (corresponding to Laitin's model) on the one hand, and the ethnic makeup of the electorate susceptible of supporting their position on national identity on the other.

Thus conceptualized, the ethnic structure of the party system (i.e. the extent to which it is ethnically segmented) constitutes a context of choice—a repertoire of politically viable cultural identities—for party elites in formulating their cultural ideology.

While not meant as a fully explanatory or generalizable stand-alone model, the theoretical proposition outlined in this paper calls for greater attention to be paid to party politics and electoral incentives in studies of nationalism, identity politics and ethnocultural recognition. In doing so, this paper attempts to make a contribution to the literature on nationalism and ethnic politics by shedding light on why culture regimes can appear to be rather unrepresentative of societies' ethnocultural makeup—and therefore essentially 'unfair'—yet remain largely legitimate, at least on the political scene. Moreover, this paper intends to show that rather than being exclusively divisive—as it is often portrayed to be—national identity politics can actually give rise to political consensuses on national cultures. The paper illustrates this logic by way of case studies of Québec, Taiwan and Catalunya. By their strong national identity cleavages, their predisposition to culture politics, and their variance in both independent and dependent variables (ethnic segmentation and culture regime respectively), these cases are ideal for the purpose of theory development.

Toward a model of culture politics

General assumptions on the logic of national identity politics and cultural recognition in secessionist regions can be subsumed into David Laitin's (1992: 34) Ruler-Lord game:

> Assume that a ruler controls a realm with a variety of culturally distinct regions, each having a lord who shares a language with the people of his region but is under the political control of the ruler. Suppose the ruler seeks to reduce the cost of the translations needed for collecting taxes, dispensing justice, and monitoring commerce by decreeing that all official transactions be recorded in the language of the central court. Why should the lord comply by learning and operating of the language of the ruler? (We assume the lord wants one day to be free of political bondage to the king and hopes to become the ruler of a realm in which his region would be the centre.)

This analogy becomes a simplified model for explaining the logic of culture politics and nation building in secessionist contexts. While Laitin's game expresses the basic logic of cultural revitalization and peripheral nationalism—or at least what Mair (1998: 21) would call the 'generalized *ideological* predispositions' of nationalist elites—rather cogently, some assumptions surrounding the Ruler-Lord game are questionable when taken at a different level of analysis. One issue with this game is that, by focusing on inter-territorial conflicts, it largely neglects the influence of ethnic networks and conflicts at regional level. In fact, one premise in Laitin's model seems to be that regions are ethnically homogenous. However, none of the regions to which the game is supposed to apply—be it Catalunya, the Basque Country, or Québec—can be deemed homogenous. This point is particularly significant if we view culture regimes as ways to institutionalize power relations between ethnic groups (Liu 2015). By leaving ethnic diversity out of his model, Laitin fails to acknowledge the fact that national identity conflicts are perhaps more often than not extensions of ethnic conflict. For instance, linguistic nationalism in Québec was partly triggered by a perception that French-Canadians were in a disadvantaged position vis-à-vis English speakers, leading them to develop a sense of forming an 'ethnic-class' within a system favouring internal colonialism (Meadwell 1993: 206-7). What evolved into a secessionist Ruler-Lord game involving the provincial government in Québec and its federal counterpart in Ottawa was in fact first and foremost entrenched in Québec's own (real or perceived) ethnic hierarchy. Similar inferences can be made in the case of Flanders, Catalunya, and post-Soviet Republics, though in some of

these cases the goal was arguably more to reverse political rather than socioeconomic hierarchies.

Second, assumptions surrounding the Ruler-Lord game over-simplify institutional processes, which results in the game overestimating the lord's power over his own government and regional population. If we assume that the lord represents the head of a regionalist party in a democratic country, he will have to face not only the central ruler, but also a wealth of other factors. Most fundamentally, the lord needs to pay attention to the dynamics of the party system, that is, the repertoire of policy orientations or ideologies that are politically viable and expectable in order to survive and thrive in the system. Since the lord wants to be reelected, his actions will be constrained not only by the ruler, but also by the electorate and the identity and cultural choices of other political parties. In this sense, culture regimes result from intra-regional bargaining as much as centre-periphery competition. The role of electoral incentives and party dynamics in this bargaining process, together with their interaction with ethnic conflict and mobilization, need to be given particular consideration in any model that purports to apply to democratic settings.

Ethnic and culture politics in democracies are often deemed to exacerbate ethnic tensions or divert politics away from '*real*' issues (such as the more materially substantial issues of public good provision), and is therefore almost invariably depicted as detrimental to good governance, social harmony, democratic stability, and even democratic survival. These assumptions partly stems from a general recognition of ethnic elites' rational incentive to capitalize on ethnic divisions in order to maximize electoral support in their constituencies, a phenomenon known as *ethnic outbidding*, and deemed conducive to socio-political polarization (Beissinger 2008: 85; Rabushka and Shepsle 2008 [1972]; Reilly 2000). A number of formal models have been elaborated to conceptualize politicians' incentive to appeal to narrow ethnic interests (e.g. Fearon 1999; Laitin and van der Veen 2012). Since democracy—understood in procedural terms—is above all about majority rule, it is believed that ethnic politics can easily lead to democratic breakdown as 'minorities reject majority decisions in which the minorities feel they have had no voice' (Beissinger 2008: 85). For this reason, the drafting of effective power-sharing institutions that de-incentivize the formation of ethnic cleavages and parties has become a prominent concern in theories of democratic consolidation and resilience in ethnically diverse societies (Lijphart 1999; Horowitz 1993; Snyder 2000).

The concept of cleavage constitutes another pillar in the neo-institutionalist literature on ethnic politics and democratic stability. Unlike formal political institutions and electoral rules, the function of which is to structure political behaviour (and by extension party strategies), cleavages are focal issues that divide political, social or cultural systems into voting, interest, ideological or identity blocs. The kind of cleavage that emerges in specific political contexts is partly—if not largely—attributable to formal institutions and their interaction with the sociocultural systems in which they operate. By structuring political interests and identities, cleavages also influence other informal political institutions, such as party ideologies, strategies, and, by extension, general party dynamics. This interrelationship between formal political institutions and cleavages partly explains the consolidation, intensification and resilience of certain types of cleavages, which often become the hallmark of political systems. This is what has been referred to the 'freezing' of party systems, which occurs 'by reference […] to the establishment of a language of politics in which one particular conflict is prioritized, and in which any potentially alternative alignment of forces is either absorbed or marginalized' (Mair 1998:15).

If political systems tend to be divided on a dominant cleavage (such as class, ethnicity, or national identity), most such systems also comprise a variety of secondary cleavages. These secondary cleavages can be cross-cutting (i.e. running across other cleavages) or reinforcing (i.e. overlapping with one or more cleavage categories) (Lipset and Rokkan 1967).

According to Coakley (2008) and Zuber (2013), the interaction between different cleavage structures creates one of different types of party strategies, which I subsume into two, often complementary, types, *underbidding* and *outbidding*:

- *Underbidding* refers to the de-radicalization and depolarization of party agendas as they try to move toward the political centre or median voter.

- *Outbidding*, on the other hand, refers to inter-party competition on a given issue. I further argue that outbidding can have two effects: convergence or polarization.

Ethnic outbidding is usually observed in polarized contexts, so that competing parties try to appeal to different support bases located at each end of the political spectrum. In this context, ethnic outbidding is likely to lead to further polarization, conflict, and potentially violence. However, there are situations in which outbidding can lead parties to converge rather than stray further apart. For instance, parties can converge and outbid each other on a single support base or issue located at the centre of the political spectrum. For our purpose, what matters is the *target category* (e.g. ethnicity, ideology, etc) and/or *target content* (e.g. ethnic minorities or majorities) of each type of strategy. These strategies are important for the study of national identity politics and cultural recognition because they embody the logics under which the politicization of cultural identities and ideologies is either intensified, attenuated, or refocused altogether. If culture regimes are deemed to structure power relations between ethnocultural groups, the question of which groups should be represented in state institutions (and in what ways), and which can legitimately be left out, must be reflected in party strategies and at least partly decided by the cleavage structure of the party system.

According to Posner (2005: 4), ethnic cleavages are created on the basis of 'minimum winning coalitions' (a concept popularized by Riker (1962)). The rationale behind this is that people want to be part of the winning (i.e. electorally dominant) group, but this group must 'contai[n] the fewest members with whom the spoils of power will have to be shared' (Posner 2005: 4). According to Posner's model, ethnic identities can be mapped on a matrix in which rows and columns represent different ethnic categories, such as ancestry (A) and language (B) (see tables in this paper). The largest ethnic group (people of A_1 origins and speaking language B_1) will determine which category (A or B) becomes politically relevant, as this category enables the group to form a single majority or minimum winning coalition.[1] While Posner's model is designed to explain the formation of ethnic cleavages, it can be adapted to non-ethnic cleavages by placing the most relevant ethnic category in the rows section, and a non-ethnic one in the column area. For instance, in Table 1, A_1 stands for French language speakers, while B_1 stands for pro-Québec independence. The distribution of ethnic groups across column categories (the secondary cleavage, which can be either cross-cutting or reinforcing), can be used as a basis to make sense of parties' ethnic strategies and ideologies.

The argument is that ethnic elites will politicize or promote cultures that may enable them to form an optimal winning coalition, or which maximize their chances of forming one based on the identity category that constitutes their core ideology. In other words, parties have a rational incentive to design cultural policies based on the ethnic makeup of their preferred political ideology, which is why culture politics should be seen as a way for parties to show commitment to ethnic groups supporting them, rather than as the expression of entirely 'ideologically' predetermined cultural inclinations. In the following sections, I elaborate upon this framework by way of case studies of Québec, Taiwan and Catalunya.

Québec *interculturalisme*: a majority-centred regime in disguise?

Québec constitutes the archetypal example of majority-centred, secessionist cultural nationalism as portrayed in Laitin's Ruler-Lord game. As Karmis points out, 'there are not many places in the world where there have been so many innovative reflections on questions about the politics of identity' (2004: 81). Identity in the Canadian province cannot be disentangled from the French language, the mother tongue of over 80 per cent of the population, overshadowing all other aspects of national belonging. With its unilingual French language regime, Québec can be conceived as a case of majority-centred cultural nationalism.

Québec's party system used to be based on the traditional conservative-liberal cleavage, and it is only in the 1960s that secessionist nationalism became an important political force in Québec politics. In 1968, some nationalists broke off from the Parti Libéral du Québec (PLQ) to found the Parti Québécois (PQ), a party based on social-democratic ideology and, most importantly, political independence. The PQ outbid the Liberals (previously the centre-left option) on both social and identity issues, and turned Québec's emerging concern with national status into a new default party cleavage. Starting in the early 1970s, the two parties have alternatively formed single or double term governments as part of a two- (sometimes three-) party system based on national identity as the dominant cleavage. This cleavage was pushed forward by identity engineers who—to use Laitin's (1998) metaphor—managed to create an identity cascade. The first referendum on independence in 1980 was a bitter loss for the independence camp, whose proposal for sovereignty-association only garnered support from 40.4 per cent of the population. Following mounting dissent on constitutional arrangements between the Québec and federal governments in the 1980s and early 1990s, the PQ government held its second referendum in 1995. While national identity in Québec was, as elsewhere, multifaceted and contextual, the unwillingness of Aboriginal groups and other provinces to allow for asymmetrical federalism in the form of further devolution and recognition of Québec as a distinct society in the preceding years played an important role in legitimizing the independence movement and reducing the cleavage to dichotomous values (status quo or independence). The results were tight: 50.6 per cent of the population expressed its desire to remain part of the Canadian confederation, against 49.4 who wished to opt out. Support for independence had increased substantially in only 15 years, to the extent where it made sense to consider both independence and status quo as potential minimum winning options.

Table 1 National Identity by Ethnicity in Québec (1997 data)[2]

Home Language	Position on National Status		Total
	Sovereignty	Status Quo	
French	48.1%	38.0%	86.1%
English	0.8%	10.3%	11.0%
Allophone	0.4%	2.4%	2.9%
Total	49.3%	50.7%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square: 96.86 p<0.001
Valid n: 907
Source: Table compiled using data from the Canadian Election Survey 1997

Table 1 shows that pro-independence French speaking Québécois nearly formed a simple majority (48.1 per cent) by themselves, making for a *reinforcing* cleavage. Given the narrowness of the gap between population-wide supporters of independence (49.3 per cent) and status quo (50.7 per cent), based on these data, it is only rational for the PQ to keep mobilizing the French speaking population in the hope of turning the independence option into a minimum winning coalition.[3] Table 1 also suggests that Anglophones and Allophones (in most cases Aboriginals and recent immigrants) will, for the most part, vote for confederation (i.e. status quo) regardless of how the PQ engages them. Since the pro-status quo Liberal Party can more or less take votes from the English and Allophone communities

for granted, it can afford supporting the French-dominated culture regime while only showing a minimum level of commitment to minorities.

The consolidation of the national identity cleavage in Québec was accompanied by the simultaneous logics of outbidding and underbidding. Outbidding in Québec has mainly worked for the benefit of the French speaking majority. This outbidding logic was in part initiated on the federal scene, with the federal government enshrining countrywide official bilingualism through the Official Languages Act of 1970, partly in an attempt to contain Québec secessionist nationalism. At provincial level, the PLQ's response was to pass Bill 22 in 1974, making French the only official language in the province. This was followed in 1976 by the more stringent Charter of the French Language (Bill 101) by the newly elected PQ government. If Québec nationalist elites did, as predicted by Laitin, use language as a tool for identity building, it is also true that all parties (including the pro-status quo federal and provincial Liberal parties) have resorted to language politics as a way to show commitment to the French speaking population and defuse the separatist momentum rather than reinforce it. Although the English and Aboriginal minorities—together with immigrant communities—do enjoy robust cultural rights (often by virtue of federal laws), Québec's culture regime is clearly centred on the French majority.

At the same time, the establishment of national identity as political cleavage coincided with a shift from an ethnic French Canadian identity based on ancestry to a more civic identity based on the French language and residence in Québec. In other words, linguistic outbidding has been accompanied by a form of ethnic underbidding, as French has increasingly been conveyed as a 'civic marker,' a public language to be shared by all Québec residents regardless of their ethnic origins. This at least is the rhetoric behind Québec's own policy of *interculturalisme*, according to which the provincial government recognizes the plural character of Québec society while encouraging minorities to adopt French as public language. Since underbidding dynamics has operated almost entirely on the ancestry (as opposed to the linguistic) sub-category, and there has been little incentive from either of the two major political parties to oppose official unilingualism. At the same time, recent debates on immigrant integration have been used by political and intellectual elites (many of whom are close to the PQ) to reinstate the dominance of the French-Canadian majority in Québec's culture regime (Dupré 2012). While this trend is commonly decried in Anglophone media as an expression of xenophobia and ethnic nationalism, it can also be conceptualized as a rational party strategy determined by the segmentation of the ethnic electorate across the party cleavage.

Minority-centred multiculturalism in Taiwan

Contrary to Québec, Taiwan's culture regime can be considered a minority-oriented one on two accounts. First, the Mandarin-dominated regime in place was established by the Mainland Chinese minority (now accounting for about 12 per cent of the population) that ruled Taiwan in the post-World War Two era. Second, recent developments in ethnocultural recognition have largely focused on other historical minorities, namely the Hakka (15 per cent) and Austronesian Aboriginals (2 per cent), rather than the Hoklo majority (70 per cent), resulting in a form of minority-centred multiculturalism.

When the Republic of China (ROC) began to administer Taiwan after 50 years of Japanese rule, Mandarin was imposed as national language in accordance with the Mainland's policy and the government's re-sinicization campaign. With the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the Mainland in 1949, hundreds of thousands of ROC soldiers and administrators, led by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, took refuge in Taiwan, which remained the ROC's last bastion. During the period of Martial Law (1949-1987), members of the Mainlander minority affiliated with the Chinese Nationalist Party

(Kuo Min Tang or KMT) occupied the bulk of administrative positions in the authoritarian ROC party-state, and local languages and cultures were progressively banned from schooling, public affairs, and the media fields. Under this regime, the languages of local groups, including that of the Hoklo majority, became increasingly marginalized, and state symbols came to be almost exclusively centered on Mainland Chinese culture and history. This is how today's Chinese culture regime—justified by the KMT as a neutral regime since it was initially foreign to all indigenous ethnic groups—came to be consolidated. This minority-oriented, yet increasingly hegemonic, culture regime, has survived democratization and persisted to this day.

National identity became Taiwan's main political cleavage in the course of democratization in the late 1980s and 1990s. This was made possible by the institutionalization of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in 1986, which was established on a platform of human rights, democracy and, particularly since 1991, Taiwanese independence. If the establishment of an independent Taiwanese republic did not appear to be a matter of immediate concern for most citizens at the time, Table 2 shows that by 2003, pro-independence parties—dominated by the DPP—had the potential of forming a 'minimum winning coalition.' Nonetheless, until the DPP's landslide presidential and legislative victory in the January 2016 elections, threats of economic and military retaliations from the irredentist People's Republic of China in the advent of a formal declaration of independence have played in favour of the KMT—the status quo party—with its ambiguous stance on Taiwan's political status.

Table 2 National Identity by Ethnicity in Taiwan (2003 Data)[4]

	Position on National Status			
Ethnicity	Toward Independence	Status Quo Indefinitely	Toward Unification	Total
Hoklo	32.3%	22.2%	14.4%	69.6%
Hakka	4.9%	6.6%	3.9%	15.2%
Mainlander	2.3%	4.4%	6.1%	12.4%
Aborigine	0.9%	1.3%	0.6%	2.8%
Total	40.4%	34.5%	25.1%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square: 120.25 $p<0.001$
Valid n: 1906
Source: Table compiled using data from the Taiwan Social Change Survey 2003

The 1990s are not only reminiscent of democratization, but also of cultural revitalization and *Taiwanization*. In the early years of the Taiwanization movement, Hoklo culture—the majority culture—appeared as the most obvious contender to Mandarin and Mainland Chinese hegemony. However, the rise of Hakka and Aboriginal identities and claims challenged the view that Hoklo culture could be shared by all citizens. In this process, both parties have engaged in underbidding and diluted their core ideologies with appeals to multiculturalism (Dupré 2015). As the KMT rebalanced its Chinese core with the need to show commitment to local Taiwanese culture in the 1990s, the DPP toned down its Hoklo rhetoric and came to power as minority government in 2000 on a platform of ethnic equality, promising to grant special consideration to minorities. As a by-product of this underbidding logic, alternating DPP and KMT governments have tried to outbid each other on minority policy, with the DPP establishing a Hakka Affairs council in 2002 and passing an Indigenous People's Basic Law in 2005, and the KMT passing a Hakka Basic Law in 2010 and drafting an Indigenous People Autonomy Law in 2011. In Taiwan, outbidding has been an issue-specific subcomponent of underbidding.

Taiwan's underbidding logic makes sense when seen from the perspective of cross-cleavage ethnic segmentation (Table 2). As can be seen in Table 2, pro-independence Hoklo

constitute the majority group (32 per cent of the total population). They do not, however, form an optimal majority on their own. It is only with significant support from the Hakka, Mainlanders and Aboriginals that their preferred category (independence) can constitute an optimal winning coalition (40 per cent).[5] If the DPP loses support from minority ethnic groups (for instance, by promoting Hoklo nationalism or making the party otherwise inhospitable to minorities), the advantage will clearly fall into the status quo camp (that is, the KMT). On the other hand, marginalizing the Hoklo majority culture within the pro-independence category cannot have a negative influence on the DPP's electoral success, as pro-independence Hoklo would gain nothing from moving to the status quo category. They could of course vote for the more radical TSU, but, strategic voting incentives apart, this would still be a vote for a DPP-led coalition. While the largely unsegmented distribution of ethnic groups across the party cleavage has to do with the historical evolution of Taiwan's identity and its political system, it is also this pattern of segmentation that reinforces incentives toward minority-oriented ethnic strategies. The ethnic voting structure of Taiwan's party system strengthens the legitimacy of Taiwan's minority-centred culture regime which, much like the party system itself, has become 'frozen' into a consensual language of minority-leaning multiculturalism.

Biculturalism in Catalunya

The case of Catalunya shows yet another culture regime—Spanish-Catalan biculturalism—based on different cross-cleavage ethnic configurations. Catalunya has a long history of cultural distinctiveness and socioeconomic dynamism. While the first Catalan revitalization movement took place in the 19th century (known as the Catalan Renaissance or *Renaixença*), it is not until the final quarter of the 20th century that Catalan culture politics took a prominent place in Catalan society. During the Spanish Civil War, Catalunya was one of the main bastions of resistance to Francoist fascism, and during the period of Martial Law, the region paid a heavy price for its previous 'insubordination,' as Catalan was banned from the schooling system, the media, and governmental affairs (Gore and MacInnes 2000, McRoberts 2001). The vitality of Catalan was further hampered by the influx of millions of non-Catalan speaking Spanish migrants, attracted by the economic opportunities created by the indigenous Catalan middle class and bourgeoisie. By the time of Franco's death in 1975, native Catalan speakers accounted for less than 50 per cent of the population, while Spanish speakers had become the ethnolinguistic majority (Gore and MacInnes 2000: 5).

Upon the fall of the Franco dictatorship in the late 1970s, autonomous status was reinstated to Catalunya, and its government—which had survived in exile—was re-established. Despite Spanish speaking residents accounting for the majority of the population, native Catalans—who remained on average better educated and wealthier than their Spanish counterpart—formed the bulk of the political class in the post-democratization period. A central cultural focus for them was the revitalization or *normalization* of Catalan. The extent to which the Spanish-speaking population has identified as Catalan and learnt the language despite the language ban that lasted for nearly 40 years is remarkable (Gore and MacInnes 2000: 10). Catalunya had been one of the main economic engines of Spain for decades (if not centuries), and had remained a stronghold of liberalism and other socially progressive ideologies throughout the oppressive Franco dictatorship. It is no wonder, therefore, that a large proportion of Spanish speakers has supported the Catalanization agenda.

Table 3 National Identity by Ethnicity in Catalunya (2006 data)

Home Language	Position on National Status				Total
	Independence	More Autonomy	Status Quo	Less Autonomy	
Catalan	15.6%	15.8%	6.3%	1.0%	38.7%
Spanish	5.1%	16.6%	21.1%	7.7%	50.5%
Both	2.4%	3.7%	1.8%	0.2%	8.1%
Other	0.4%	0.4%	1.6%	0.2%	2.6%
Total	23.5%	36.5%	30.8%	9.1%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square: 96.26 p<0.001
Valid n: 493
Source: Table compiled using data from the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas 2006

This is not to say that linguistic normalization has been uncontroversial (McRoberts 2001). As in other cases of culture regime change, Catalan normalization was the result of an inter-party bargaining process, the ultimate outcome being official bilingualism. As shown in Table 3, Spanish speakers constitute the majority ethnic group, with those seeking more autonomy from Madrid forming a minimum winning coalition. Cross-cleavage ethnic segmentation makes for an identity cleavage split between 'more autonomy' and 'status quo' categories, each of which is represented by both groups in varying, yet substantial, proportions. These cross-cutting—or even *crisscross*-cutting—distributions mean that each ethnic group would need the support of its ethnic counterpart in order for its preferred nation identity category to form a winning coalition. In other words, Catalan nationalist parties, led by the long-ruling Convergence and Union (CiU) coalition, have had to convince Spanish speakers that their rights would not be infringed upon in a 'Catalanized' polity (whether independent or not), while status quo parties had to convince the Catalan population that they would go ahead with Catalan normalization regardless of the political status of Catalunya. These concomitant logics of underbidding and outbidding in Catalunya have contributed to establishing a consensus on biculturalism rather than promoting a fundamentally asymmetrical culture regime.

Conclusion

On the whole, this theoretical proposition laid out in this paper offers an institutionalist framework that is vested in ethnic and party competition. This paper has argued that culture politics in divided democracies constitutes not only a way to foster national identities, but more significantly, an opportunity for parties to show commitment to ethnic groups supporting their nationalist agendas. In this context, culture regimes are largely the result of parties' ethnic strategies rather than predetermined ideologies, and these strategies are themselves partly determined by the distribution of ethnic groups across categories of the dominant party cleavage. The ethnic voting structure of the party system enshrines a repertoire of politically viable cultural ideologies available to politicians in articulating the content and parameters of cultural identities, ideologies and regimes. Cultural recognition therefore typically constitutes a tradeoff between the cultures promoted by the more radical political elites and the cultures of ethnic groups susceptible of identifying with their political ideology. Of course, there are other elements that account for party strategies, ideologies, and culture regimes, such as the number of relevant cleavage categories in the party system, the number of parties contending for power, or electoral systems and rules. Nonetheless, preliminary observations in this paper suggest that ethnic distributions that cross-cut the dominant cleavage (which corresponds to less segmented systems) may be more likely to produce multicultural or minority-oriented dynamics and regimes. On the other hand,

reinforcing cleavages (i.e. more segmented systems) may be more likely to produce majority-centred ones. This would be a hypothesis worth testing in future research.

The fact that the Catalan titular group has successfully obtained recognition for its language, while Hoklo majority recognition has been unsuccessful and more controversial in Taiwan, seems counterintuitive. A look at cross-cleavage ethnic segmentation, while not explanatory in itself, can help making sense of such cultural outcomes. The logics of the Catalan and Taiwanese party systems are actually quite similar, in that their cross-cutting ethnic structures have discouraged strategies favouring ethnic majorities over minorities. In the case of Québec, reinforcing ethnic and identity cleavages legitimated a dynamics in which both sides tried to represent themselves as the protectors of French-Canadian interests, regardless of their preferences on national status. What is significant is that culture regimes in all of those polities, though not necessarily uncontroversial in all respects, have been largely stable and unproblematic. This is why I argue that national identity politics need not be detrimental to democracy and ethnocultural coexistence. In fact, in all three cases observed here, national identity politics has led to the emergence of political consensuses on culture regimes. The interpretation proposed in this paper challenges widely held preconceptions about the 'destructive' nature of cultural nationalism. Moreover, looking at electoral incentives helps us move away from the ethnic and civic dichotomy of nationalism, and suggests instead that most forms of nationalism, whether advocating multiculturalism or assimilation to the ethnic majority, are in a sense *ethno*nationalisms. Their focus on ethnic majorities or minorities is not entirely dictated by predetermined ethnonationalist ideologies, but also by the strategic incentives provided by the ethnic structure of the party system—the context of choice in promoting politically viable national cultures and identities.

Notes

1. Optimal winning coalitions are customarily defined as simple majorities, i.e. 50+1, or as rendered by Chandra and Boulet (2012), threshold k, .5〈k〈1. However, notwithstanding parties' incentives to move toward the median voter, national identity cleavages are not necessarily symmetrical in that they can comprise a wide range of categories, as in Taiwan or Catalunya. With this in mind, I define an optimal winning coalition as a relative majority (i.e. a plurality), the minimum threshold (k) of which is determined by the number of possible cleavage categories (CC) in a given political system, so that $k=\frac{1}{n_{\mathrm{CC}}}$. In Taiwan, for instance, there have generally been three categories (independence, status quo, and unification), although status quo and unification parties have tended to ally as part of the same coalition in the legislature.

2. This table was obtained by merging the 'favourable' and 'somewhat favourable' (to Quebec sovereignty) categories as part of the sovereignty option, and the 'somewhat opposed' and 'very opposed' categories as part of the status quo option. Non-response and the neither categories were excluded. The CES 1997 also asked a question on respondents' vote at the time of the referendum, which gives slightly different results (48 per cent who voted Yes, versus 52 per cent who voted No), but shows similar dynamics, with French speakers casting a Yes vote accounting for 46.9 per cent of the total sample (0.7 per cent amongst Anglophones) and those casting a No vote accounting for 37.7 per cent (10.2 amongst Anglophones). Using mother tongue rather than language spoken at home also bears similar results.

3. This is precisely what PQ leader and premier Jacques Parizeau implied in his controversial referendum night speech, when attributing the loss of the 'Yes' camp to 'money and ethnic votes': 'Let's stop talking about the Francophones of Québec, alright? Let's talk about us; with 60%, we voted for it. […] So this means that next time, instead of being 60 or 61% to vote Yes, we will be 63 or 64%, and that will suffice.' While the survey sample inflates the proportion of French speakers slightly vis-à-vis Allophones, Table 1 suggests that Parizeau's estimates were rather accurate, in that there was a clear pattern of ethnic alignment that can partially explain the campaign's outcome.

4. These results are obtained by grouping the categories of 'status quo now with a move towards independence' (31.8%) and 'status quo now with a move towards unification' (22.9%) as part of the 'independence as soon as possible' (8.6%) and 'unification as soon as possible' (2.2%) categories, respectively. Non-response categories and an insignificantly small number of non-Taiwanese ethnic groups have been excluded. This makes for a fairly reliable representation of the national identity and party cleavage nexus, especially with regard to the independence category. In fact, DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian was elected president in 2000 with 39.3 per cent of the popular vote, on a platform that can precisely be summed up as 'status quo now with a move towards independence.'

5. Pro-unification parties are for the most part splinter parties from the KMT, with which they tend to form coalitional governments as part of the so-called Blue camp. Despite the ideology of the Green camp's independence coalition (headed by the DPP) being favoured by public opinion, the KMT has consistently attracted a larger share of voters by straddling the status quo and unification categories, and by emphasising the economic benefits of maintaining positive relations with China. This, together with pressure from China and the United States, has limited the success of pro-Taiwan parties in promoting formal statehood for Taiwan.

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