Regionalism after regionalisation: Spain, France and the United Kingdom

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Brittany is one of the most well known regions of France, the most western peninsula, and one of the clearest edges of the Hexagone. Brittany has long been a relatively poor region, characterised by migration to Paris, but has now developed into a wealthier region. It is also known as one of the regions with the most long lasting protest against French centralisation of political power in Paris. This history of Breton regionalism is described in the following section, followed by a description of Breton regional administration until and since the 1986 regionalisation. Section 7.3 discusses the regional institutionalisation of Brittany since 1986, while section 7.4 analyses to which degree Brittany developed its own political arena. Finally, the impact of regionalisation on Breton political regionalism is discussed in section 7.5.

Map 7.1 Brittany, the départements
7.1 Breton regionalism before 1986

As symbolised by the character and adventures of Asterix, histories of Brittany sometimes seem to be a succession of resistance against its rulers, with battles against the Franks, the peasant revolt of the ‘Bonnets Rouges’, the period during which Brittany became known as the ‘province that is the most difficult to govern’, to the Ancien Régime (Martray, 1985). Probably the most emblematic historical figure of erstwhile Breton independence is Nominoë, who led Bretons in campaigns against the Franks in the 9th century, penetrating deep into the territory of Charles the Bald, and establishing an independent Breton Kingdom in 848. The 1789 French revolution provoked protests in Brittany as well. Most Breton peasants, and the lower level clergy, were in favour of the revolution, but revolted in 1793 against the higher taxes, the interventions and attitudes of the national guards recruited from urban France, and against the persecution of priests that refused to preach loyalty to the Constitution (Dupuy, 2001). This guerrilla-like rebellion, known as the Chouannerie, became fused with the protests of the aristocracy of Brittany in reaction against the loss of their regional powers and part of their wealth (Sutherland, 1982).

However, Brittany has not only been viewed as a land of revolt. In the 19th century, British Romanticism inspired an interest in all things Celtic in France. Portrayed as land of megaliths, druidism and the Celtic language, ‘Brittany became France’s Scotland and Appalachians’ (Dupuy, 2001, pp.32-33). ‘Celtomania’ also caught among the Breton elite. An Académie Celtique was established (1805), St.Brieuc hosted the second Interceltic Congress (1867), and an abundant amount of literature was produced (Nicolas, 1986, pp.17-18). Based on a longing for the reinstatement of their pre-revolutionary privileges, the Breton aristocracy and higher clergy resisted the rise of urban society and the Breton bourgeoisie in the wake of the French Republic. These reactions to the official historiography of 19th Century France portrayed the Breton language, faith, peasantry, nobility and clergy as inseparable constituent elements of Brittany (Fournis, 2004, p.147).

The conservative and elite character of the 19th Century Breton movement, as supported by the aristocracy and clergy, continued as a feature of the first political movement, the Union Régionaliste Bretonne (URB), which was founded in 1898. The URB was mainly preoccupied with the defence of

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62 ‘If Brittany, subconsciously in the mind of the authors, has given a value to Asterix, it must be that of resistance. Brittany, indeed, is a land of resistance, in whatever period of its history’ (translation FS).
a rural society in decline and with preservation of the social order, but it largely remained an organisation through which to exchange ideas among Breton notables and was ineffective in mobilising the masses (Nicolas, 1982, pp.53-55). This does not mean there were no popular protests against the republican policies of centralisation and French nation-building. In 1902, there were violent rebellions all over Brittany against the Law on Associations that had been introduced the year before. A ban was introduced on the use of regional languages in religious instruction, which was strictly enforced in the polarised aftermath of the Dreyfus Affair (Ford, 1993). However, in the same period, Breton society changed and increasingly urban elites became involved in the Breton movement. This led to a scission of the URB in 1911, when members of the Breton bourgeoisie formed the Fédération Régionaliste Bretonne, whose focus was on regional industrial development and the progress of local commerce. In the same year, the separatist Parti National Breton (PNB) was founded, with a young and intellectual base, comprising mainly students, and influenced by international examples, in the first place Irish nationalism (Nicolas, 1982, pp.60-73).

After the First World War the young, separatist current was the most ambitious, inspired by the successes of Irish nationalism. After attempts to rally Breton elites behind the idea of 'Home Rule', a political party was formed in 1927 known as the Parti Autonomiste Breton (PAB). In 1930, the PAB put forward candidates at the general elections in Guingamp and Rennes, but it turned into a debacle with them winning just a couple of hundred votes. Soon afterwards, the PAB fell apart and was soon succeeded by a radical nationalist and anti-communist party that re-used the name Parti National Breton. Its programme and organisation became influenced more and more by Italian fascism and German Nazism. With a war between Germany and France increasingly inevitable, the PNB was pro-German, with some members tactically adhering to the principle that 'the enemies of our enemies are our friends', while others became convinced of Nazis ideology (Nicolas, 1982). After the German defeat of France, PNB leaders turned to Berlin, and for a few months an independent Breton satellite state was a serious possibility (Nicolas, 1982, p.93). During the Second World War, the PNB collaborated with the Vichy and German authorities, and even had its own militia incorporated into the Waffen SS, whose members fought against the Resistance until the end of the war.

Although the PNB never represented a particular section of Breton society, nor the wider Breton movement, many of the more moderate Breton regionalists were attracted by the conservative provincialism of the Vichy regime and participated in its administrative structures (Nicolas, 1982, pp.96-102). As a result, after the liberation of France, the Breton movement in general was associated with collaboration. The infamous period during WWII affected the image of Breton regionalism for a long time. Against this background, and in a context of post-war rebuilding and zealous economic mod-
ernisation, the new regional movement that emerged combined economic and cultural regionalism without political ambitions and did all it could not to be associated with Breton nationalism. From 1950 onwards, the Comité d'Étude et de Liaison des Intérêts Bretons (CELIB) brought together Breton élus, trade union representatives and regional notables, with the goal being to stop the trend of post-war economic decline and emigration from peripheral Brittany (Sainclivier, 2001, pp.59-60). CELIB achieved some success, particularly with regard to the modernisation of Breton agriculture (Pasquier, 2003a, Martray, 1983). It achieved support from left-wing and right-wing parties and generated a remarkable level of consensus among them, while positioning regional development 'above politics' (Berger, 1977, pp.161-162). The CELIB remained an a-political organisation operating within the existing administrative structure and, although they aimed to promote an idea of Breton common interests, they avoided the issue of Breton political autonomy. That was the terrain of the Mouvement pour l'Organisation de la Bretagne (MOB), founded in 1957. Often regarded as the political branch of CELIB, the MOB had modest ambitions – and little political impact – and adopted the slogan 'Nous voulons l'aménagement de l'appartement Bretagne de l'immeuble France du quartier Europe' (Nicolas, 1982, p.186).

The context of the backdrops of the Algerian war and a resurgence of the left in France inspired a new development in the 1960s, namely the emergence of a left-wing Breton movement. In 1964, a group of students broke with the conservative MOB and formed the Union Démocratique Bretonne (UDB). Although they aimed to achieve Breton autonomy, cultural and linguistic development, they devoted most of their energy to gaining recognition as a left-wing organisation (Nicolas, 1982, p.308). From the start, the UDB cooperated with 'la gauche hexagonale', for instance Michel Rocard's Parti Socialiste Unifié, and supported socialist candidates at elections. Autonomy for Brittany was viewed from a Marxist and Third-World perspective, with the analysis of Brittany as internal colony of France as the Leitmotiv (Pasquier, 2004). In 1974, the UDB signed the 'Chartre de Brest' with likeminded European movements – among them the Unión do Povo Galego and Welsh Gym Goch – and committed themselves to the fight against colonialism within Western Europe. Since the 1971 municipal elections, the UDB has put forward candidates at political elections, at all spatial scales, more consistently than any other Breton movement. However, as regards national elections, the législatives of 1973, 1978 and 1981, the results have been pitiful and have hardly ever exceeded 2%. The UDB was more successful at municipal and cantonal elections, obtaining seats on a number of municipal councils. Its most successful elections were the 1979 cantonales, with an average of 5.6% of the votes for 34 candidates (Nicolas, 1982, pp.319-321).

63 'We want the organisation of the apartment Brittany of the building France of the neighbourhood Europe' (translation FS).
As in the 1930s, others had less patience with the unimpressive support from the Breton voters. In the 1960s, the MOB also led to the creation of a more impatient group, named the Front de Libération de la Bretagne and its paramilitary wing, the Armée Républicaine Bretonne (ARB). The latter was again inspired by developments in Ireland and imitated the IRA. They carried out a series of bombings of symbols of the 'French occupation', such as préfectures, national police barracks, television transmitters, and even the Château de Versailles (Tourault, 2002, p.293). Violent action yielded some results in the form of media attention for a 'problème breton', and some public sympathy for the detainees and the amnesty movements (Nicolas, 1986, p.40). This period of violence lasted until the ARB was dismantled at the end of the 1970s. As a result, the 'Breton mouvement', grouped under the collective name of 'Emsat' ('uprising'), encompassed a wide range of political and cultural parties and movements, including some that were willing to resort to violent action, although none of them had any proof of any serious degree of popular support.

**7.2 Decentralisation in Brittany**

*The governance of Brittany before 1986*

Throughout the Middle Ages Brittany was mostly a semi-independent Duchy, and its Dukes were vassal to either the English or French Kings. In the 15th century, moves by François II to cut the links of his Duchy with the French Kingdom provoked the decisive War of Independence of Brittany (1487-1491). François was beaten and after his death his daughter Anne became Duchesse. Advanced feudal politics led to Brittany becoming definitively incorporated into France. However, it was only after the marriages of Anne to Maximilian of Austria, Charles VIII, and finally at the age of 21 to Louis XII, as well as the marriage of her daughter Claude to François I, and Claude's death in 1524 that the members of the États de Bretagne agreed to an Act of Union with France in 1532 (Monnier & Cassard, 1997, Kerhervé, 2002).

After the Act of Union, Brittany retained many fundamental liberties, in the hands of the États de Bretagne. The French King could not raise taxes without the consent of the États, Bretons could only be tried by Breton tribunals, and Church earnings could only be allotted to Bretons (Monnier & Cassard, 1997, p.326). Besides the États, a Parlement de Bretagne was established as a juridical institution in 1554, first in Nantes and later in Rennes. Economically, Brittany became integrated into France, particularly through the efforts of Colbert under Louis XIV, and Nantes acquired the monopoly on maritime shipping to the Antilles. Politically, tensions remained between the États and the French government, particularly on the subject of taxation. With the États, Parlement and a number of other institutions all administering
the same territory, Brittany managed to keep provincial powers without having to deal with a rival in the French Kingdom (Martray, 1985, p.33).

The French Revolution did away with the provincial powers and privileges. They were replaced by départements and, despite the ambition to renew France and apply geometrical patterns, the provincial boundaries remained intact, and Brittany was divided into five départements (Pennec, 2002). However, Breton administrative institutions were abolished and ‘the word Bretagne or the adjective Breton was banned from the administrative vocabulary’ (Monnier & Cassard, 1997, p.512). With the départements as pivotal administrative territories, Brittany, like other parts of France, was actively integrated into the Republic during the 19th Century (Weber, 1976). At the beginning of the Third Republic, schooling was still only accessible to a minority of the population in Brittany, and was controlled heavily by the Church. According to Pierre (2001), the spread of private or public schools teaching only in French, a spectacular growth in peasant landownership and new ways of communication, such as railways, stimulated the assimilation of Brittany into a larger French society. Railways not only facilitated the influx of civil servants into Brittany, but also extended the mobility of Breton workers and a massive wave of emigration and the establishment of a Breton diaspora in Montparnasse (Monnier & Cassard, 1997, pp.515-516). However, in his Tableau politique de la France de l'Ouest, which dates from 1913, André Siegfried was still able to conclude that Breton backwardness hindered the spread of French republican and democratic values:

Vis-à-vis de la France républicaine et démocratique, ou si l'on veut vis-à-vis des forces de la Révolution française triomphante, l'Ouest représente donc, en plein début du XXe siècle, un élément d'opposition qui ne cède pas. ... Contrée intérieure plus encore que maritime, isolée plus encore que lointaine, et préservée de ce fait d'un contact trop étroit avec la vie moderne, l'Ouest perpétue en effet des manières d'être et de sentir qui sont d'autrefois plus que d'aujourd'hui. De là son charme de vieille France et cette paresse d'évolution, qui fait que les changements ne s'y produisent ni de la même façon, ni avec la même rapidité qu'ailleurs. On s'y meut dans l'atmosphère du passé, et ce sont les luttes du passé qui y continuent, sans que les forces de la résistance y aient été jusqu'ici sérieusement entamées64 (1913, p.514).

64 In comparison with republican and democratic France or, if one prefers, in comparison with the triumphing forces of the French revolution, the West represents then, well in the beginning of the 20th Century, an element of opposition that does not give up. ... More interior than maritime country, more isolated than remote, and because of that preserved from too close contact with modern life, the West perpetuates indeed manners and feelings that are more those of the past than those of today. Therein rests its charm of old France and its lazy evolution, which makes that changes do not happen at the same way there, nor at the same speed as elsewhere. There, one moves in the atmosphere of the past, and it is the struggles of the past
In this period, the republican model remained incompatible with the former provinces, and formal institutions were established at provincial level. This explains why pétainisme and the Vichy regime adopted a more favourable stance towards provincial institutions. A regional préfet was established and a Comité Consultatif de Bretagne in 1942. Brittany again became an administrative territory, although the Loire-Inferieure département of Nantes was not part of the Province de Bretagne created in 1941 (Favereau, 1993).

Pétain vowed to restore the provinces during the regionalisation of France, and regionalists and representatives from Rennes and Nantes lobbied for a Brittany of five départements, quarrelled on what the regional capital would be, or proposed Nantes as the centre of a ‘Grand Ouest’. While this debate went on, a preliminary administrative division was made, on functional and partly military grounds, which specified a Rennes region and an Angers region, of which Nantes was part (Rocher, 1998). After that, it was considered more practical to maintain that division than restart the debate in the circumstances of the war (Baruch, 2002). This suggests that the initial decision to separate Loire-Atlantique from Brittany was more functionally motivated than inspired by a wish to undermine Breton centrifugal tendencies.

After the Second World War, the Breton administrative institutions were abolished. However, from the 1950s onwards an administrative region of Brittany was restored during the introduction of planning regions throughout France.

The tasks of the Conseil Régional

Apart from Corsica and the overseas départements and territoires, all French régions received the same capabilities under the 1982 decentralisation. The administration of subjects such as economic development, advanced secondary education, and infrastructure became the responsibilities of the Conseil Régional of Brittany, as was the case in other regions. Regional governments have limited possibilities to develop distinctive policies in their region because the decentralisation did not include the transfer of legislative powers, nor capacities to adapt legislation made in Paris. On the other hand, the Conseils Régionaux, like other collectivités territoriales, have general administrative responsibilities within the legislative framework (Cole, 2004b, p.357). One unique characteristic of Brittany is the desire for cross-party cohesion, and cohesion between conseillers régionaux and representatives of other entities, such as the mayor Breton cities, with a view to forming a Breton coalition which would put forward solutions in defence of a common regional interest. According to Pasquier (2000, pp.238-240), this regional unity when con-
fronting the services of the state is a direct legacy of the approach of the CELIB.

Although the budgets of the Conseils Régionaux have increased over the past decades, they constitute a modest proportion of the total budget for all government expenditure, as well as a small part of the budget of all collectivités territoriales. In 1996, the communes accounted for 59.6%, the départements for 30.7%, and the régions 9.9% (Pasquier, 2000, p.186). In Brittany this means that the annual budget of the whole Conseil Regional is more or less the same as that of Brittany’s capital city Rennes. Although the subjects that are the responsibility of the région are those deemed more strategic, and those of immediate and intermediate proximity of the communes and départements (Cole, 2004b, p.357), in many ways the regional level is not the dominant one. In some policy fields the distribution of responsibilities simply reflects a spatial hierarchy with responsibility for primary schools being assigned to the communes, collèges to the départements, lycées to the région, and universities to the state. However, the election system has, for example, meant that the départements have stayed very important.

7.3 Regional institutionalisation in Brittany after regionalisation

**Complex and controversial Breton territories**

After the French Revolution the province of Brittany was divided into five départements, while the new division did not alter the boundaries that had existed between Brittany and Normandie, Maine, Anjou and Poitou. The present administrative région of Brittany groups four of those départements, namely Finistère, Côtes-d’Armor, Morbihan and Ille-et-Vilaine, while Loire-Atlantique is part of the region Pays de la Loire. This division has been maintained since the introduction of 22 régions de programme in 1956, which itself continued the separation of Loire-Atlantique made in 1941 by the Vichy regime. As a result, there is now a familiar distinction between Bretagne historique of five départements including Loire-Atlantique, and Bretagne administrative without Loire-Atlantique. Campaigns to restore the historical territory of Brittany by adding Loire-Atlantique to administrative Brittany are an important part of Breton regionalism. The claims are given more clout by the presentation of Nantes as 'historical capital' of Brittany. And indeed, Nantes was the capital city of the Duchy of Brittany, and initially the seat of the Parlement de Bretagne.

Since the 1970s, the ‘reunification’ of Brittany has been one of the major demands of Breton regionalists. The demands intensified once the importance of the administrative regions increased. The same demands have

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65 At the time, and until 1957, Loire-Atlantique was known as Loire-Inférieure. Similarly, Côtes-d’Armor was known as Côtes-du-Nord until 1990.
also been made by organisations like Bretagne Réunie, which used to be called Comité pour l’Unité Administrative de la Bretagne (CUAB) and is considered an integral part of the Emsav. The arguments the organisation gives for a Brittany of five départements are not just historical, but also point to the economic advantages for Brittany that the metropolitan area of Nantes and the port of St. Nazaire would bring, Breton characteristics of Loire-Atlantique, and the wishes of the inhabitants of Brittany (Comité pour l’unité administrative de la Bretagne, 2005). Indeed, opinion polls held in recent years by regional newspapers support the claim that the inhabitants of administrative Brittany as well as Loire-Atlantique are in favour of a ‘réunification’. According to a 1999 TMO poll, 68% of the inhabitants of Loire-Atlantique were in favour of joining Brittany, and 25% were opposed (Dimanche Ouest-France, 1999). In 2000, the CSA found 71% in favour (CSA, 2000) and, according to an Ifop poll in 2001, 75% of the inhabitants of Loire-Atlantique were in favour (Dimanche Ouest-France, 2001). However, the polls also show that most are mildly in favour, and relatively few support réunification to any great extent. Reunification is a relatively minor item on the regional political agenda and, although most Bretons are in favour of a larger region, the subject does not figure prominently in election campaigns. In 1997, 2001 and 2004, the Conseil Régional voted in favour of a réunification, and the Conseil Général of Loire-Atlantique did likewise in 2001. When asked about the issue, some Conseillers régionaux said they were strongly in favour:

La Bretagne a tout à gagner à être à cinq départements. Elle a tout à gagner à récupérer Nantes, elle a tout à gagner à augmenter sa force, sa puissance, sa force financière, son ouverture maritime (interview, Les Verts 2004).

But for many it is not high on the list of priorities:

Moi, ça ne m’intéresse pas. C’est vrai que c’est cohérent que la Bretagne historique se retrouve. … Pour moi c’est pas un thème politique majeur. Je pense qu’il y a beaucoup de thèmes majeurs. … Je n’en fais pas une maladie, ni pour, ni contre. … Le vote? Je ne sais pas. Comme mon groupe (interview, PS, 2004).

66 For a defence of the ‘réunification’ based on economic arguments and the ‘truly European dimension’ of a larger Brittany see Martray & Ollivro (2001).

67 ‘Brittany has all to gain by having five départements. It has all to gain by getting Nantes back, it has all to gain by increasing its strength, its power, its financial strength, its maritime access’ (translation FS).

68 ‘It does not interest me. It is true that it is coherent that historical Brittany recovers. … For me it is not a major political issue. I think there are many major issues. … It’s no big deal to me, neither for nor against. … The vote? I don’t know. As my group’ (translation FS).
It is indisputable, indisputable, that historically Nantes is part of Brittany. Saying that Nantes does not have its place in Brittany would be a historically error. ... But well, is it the major and central question of Brittany? (translation FS)

In return, and that is a real difficulty for us, the regional conseil of Pays de la Loire has developed many means of communication, I would even say propaganda, to try to get the existence of a region that does not resemble anything into people’s heads. ... One has even recreated history, done what the regional council of Pays de la Loire does since many years, that is, distributing books on the history of Pays de la Loire to secondary school students for free. The region Pays de la Loire has given books first for free to young married couples to force the idea into their heads that Pays de la loire goes back a long time, and that it has always existed, which is evidently bogus (translation FS).
of Pays de la Loire is more difficult. No opinion polls have yet asked what the inhabitants of the other départements of Pays de la Loire think of it. They might be less impressed by the argument that Brittany with Nantes is more coherent, and will weigh up a shift from an ‘artificial’ Pays de la Loire to a marginally less ‘artificial’ ‘Val de Loire’ region against losing the metropolitan area of Nantes. An aspect that complicates the matter even further is that both the mayors of Nantes and of Rennes are against the idea, and the question which of the two cities would be the capital of a larger Brittany cannot be answered to everyone’s satisfaction. However, ‘réunification’ as a political issue apart, the two territorial shapes of Brittany exist alongside each other, and both keep being used in different contexts. Spatially, the word ‘Bretagne’ means the areas of Finistère, Morbihan, Côtes-d’Armor and Ille-et-Vilaine, and often Loire-Atlantique as well. Regionalisation and the increased importance of regional institutions has not normalised the idea of a Brittany of four départements.

There are more territorial divisions that complicate the establishment of a clear territorial shape for Brittany. Several territorial divisions of Brittany exist alongside each other while in some contexts Brittany is not a relevant territory at all. There is the division of Brittany into Armor (‘land of the sea’) and Argoat (‘land of the woods’), widely used in tourism and in references to differences between inland and coastal Brittany, Basse-Bretagne versus Haute-Bretagne which more or less coincides with the linguistic division between Breton-speaking Brittany and French or gallo-speaking Brittany, and then there is a division into pays like Léon, Cornouaille, Trégor, Pays de Vannes, etc., some of which are former duchies or counties, and lastly there are, of course, the administrative divisions into départements, cantons, arrondissements, communes, and communautés de communes, communautés d’agglomération and communautés urbaines. Moreover, there is also the larger area of the Grand Ouest. In mass media (regional television, newspapers) the combination of Grand Ouest and Basse-Bretagne/Haute-Bretagne is often used, surpassing the level of Brittany itself. The availability, and continued importance in different contexts, of different competing territorial divisions at more or less the same spatial level means there is no neat set of territorial divisions which is used in the majority of circumstances. If such a hierarchy existed, as in the case of the administrative entities of commune, département, région, (État, Europe), the regional level certainly does not dominate. However, this labyrinth of territories is not specific to Brittany and can be found in other parts of France as well. For example, in the case of Basse-Normandie, an inventory has been made in a ‘Guide des zonages bas-normands’, describing 40 different territorial divisions of the region in usage at the same time (Benoit et al, 1998).
A Breton symbolic shape

The fact that there are not just two languages but three means there are three names for Brittany, namely Bretagne in French, Breizh in Breton and Bertaèyn in Gallo. Only one of those languages has official status, namely French, and in public administration Bretagne is almost always the only term used. However, elsewhere, the Breton name Breizh is often used as well, in a way that Bertaèyn is not. The name Breizh is generally known and understood to mean Brittany, and is used in French language contexts as well. More than is the case with ‘Bretagne’ it is a reference to Breton particularity, regional identity, and even the regionalist movement. For instance, TV Breizh is a bilingual commercial regional television station owned by TF1, Breizh Cola a Breton coke softdrink brand dedicated to the Breton cultural movement, Breizh Mobile is a Breton mobile phone network, Breizh FM is a regional French language radio station, ‘BZH’ is used as alternative ‘country code’ on bumper stickers, and ‘Breizh’ is used in the titles of many regional websites. Most of those organisations operate only in French, but the Breton version of the region’s name is used to highlight the regional character of the organisation, and the specificity of Brittany (see figure 7.1).

An even clearer way to use the Breton region and identity for marketing purposes is demonstrated by the work of the ‘Produit en Bretagne’ association. Founded in 1995, Produit en Bretagne is a private organisation which awards regional produce hallmarks to promote Breton products, but also to ‘valorise and promote the Breton culture’ (Produit en Bretagne, 2005). However, its main goal is to support the value of products from Brittany by associating Brittany with ‘quality, solidity and health’ (Le Coadic, 1998, p.270). Brittany has not always had an image as a resource or as an area which generates something positive. Le Coadic (1998) even speaks of a shift from ‘submission to distinction’ in the way the Breton identity is perceived.

Figure 7.1 The phare as Breton icon and the usage of the word ‘Breizh’ in a French language context.

The success of the ‘Produit en Bretagne’ logo, particularly when used for agricultural products, can be explained by the particular existing image of
Brittany as provincial, close to nature and nostalgic. Those images existed earlier, although their appreciation has varied. Bertho (1980) analyses the representation of Brittany in 19th Century literature and the emergence of a Breton stereotype, and its function as an amplification of the characteristics attributed to provincial France in general. This stereotype was based on three main elements, namely the ‘celtness’ of Bretons as ‘anthropological fossils’ of the Celtic ancestry of the French, the contra-revolutionary rural revolts of the Chouannerie, and the area’s real economic backwardness. The structure of the stereotype did not change profoundly and this evoked an image of a savage, archaic, folkloristic, catholic and conservative Brittany. Nevertheless, Bertho (1980) shows how those elements were appreciated differently in different periods, that is either as sinister, foreign, savage and backwards or, for instance during the romantic period, as a refuge from modernity, and as a mystical, picturesque, pious place where you could get close to nature. Le Coadic (1998) finds similar images of Bretons in French literature, such as Flaubert’s Voyage en Bretagne or Balzac’s Les Chouans, as savage, ignorant, religious and stubborn ‘men of granite’. Comparing this with 19th and 20th century literature by Breton authors, Le Coadic concludes that Breton writers use the very same stereotypical elements, but that ‘the same features that are appraised by Breton authors are often mocked or depreciated by French authors’ (1998, p.118).

One 19th Century French literature character is still regarded as the representation of the archaic, rural and ignorant Breton stereotype, namely Bécassine. A series of very popular comic books spread this image throughout France, and Bécassine as a representation of Bretons, is despised by many Bretons for that very reason. Bécassine, a young Bretonne with a coiffe (traditional headdress) is as close to a feminine character symbol of Brittany as it gets (Bertho, 1980). She is like a Breton version of the French Marianne, although disliked instead of celebrated because her stupidity, naivety and ignorance reminds people of the more negative Breton stereotypes.

As described by Bouyer (1987), the albums of Bécassine are also rich in stereotypical representations of Breton popular events, rural life and landscape. Given that a ‘close relationship to nature’ itself is a stereotypical characteristic of Bretons (Le Coadic, 1998), representations of a particular Breton landscape are an element of Breton iconography. As Caradec (2001, p.121) notes, the evocations of Breton landscape are based on the Armor-Argoat duality of coast and interior. On the one hand there is the rocky granite maritime coast and the sea and, on the other hand, there is the green hilly landscape of forests and bocage (groves), with their iconic economies of fishing and agriculture. Despite the urbanisation of Brittany and the presence of important urban centres such as Nantes (not inside administrative Brittany, but certainly related to the Breton image), Rennes and Brest, the typical Breton landscape has remained rural and maritime. This image is even promoted in campaigns by the Breton Comité Régional de Tourisme or Produit en Bretagne.
A particularly popular landscape feature which was used as a symbol of Brittany, used over and over again in branch logos and publications that want to make sure their connection with Brittany is understood, is a lighthouse, or indeed, a phare breton (figure 7.1).

In places, bilingual road signs are a visible and specifically Breton addition to the landscape, but bilingual signage is implemented so haphazardly that this is certainly no universal feature of the whole region. Public road and street signs are the responsibility of the départements and communes, and each of those authorities is free to choose whether to add a Breton sign to the existing French ones, with a mishmash of bilingual and monolingual signing as a result. The French signs remain the only official versions, but there is no formal prohibition to adding a sign in Breton, or Gallo (Office de la Langue Bretonne, 2002, p.49). As regards the latter, Gallo is hardly ever used for road or street signs, while many communes in the Pays de Gallo have adopted street signs and panneaux d'entrée (place-name signs) in Breton. So, although those towns are located in Haute-Bretagne, Breton and not Gallo has historically been the local language, and one enters Rennes/Roazhon, Saint-Brieuc/Sant-Brieg and Fougeres/Felger, and not Resnn, Saent-Berioec and Foujerr. This reflects the different roles of both regional languages. Breton is a symbol for the whole of Brittany, with some applications in public life, and Gallo is a symbol of Haute-Breton heritage, with much more restricted functions. Nevertheless, the use of Breton/French bilingual signs is much more developed in Basse-Bretagne than Haute-Bretagne, mostly because the active policies of the Conseil Général of Finistère.

The 1982 decentralisation, with the abolition of the tutelle of state representatives, gave local authorities more leeway to add regional language signs, but this applied mostly to départements and communes, and not to the régions. So, from the 1980s onwards, more and more places installed bilingual signs, while the role of the Conseil Régional in this matter was restricted to arranging consultations on the issue with the Conseils Généraux. Another actor that stimulated the implementation of bilingual signs was the persistent militant action of Stourm ar Brezhoneg, whose members painted over road signs in the early 1980s, costing the départements large sums to clean or replace the signs (Office de la Langue Bretonne, 2002, p.50).

While not all villages have a bilingual sign, when entering a Breton village one sees the signs of its jumelage (twinning) with foreign places, and often those twin cities are from Ireland, Wales, Cornwall or Scotland. According to Roudaut (1999, p.106) Breton towns have a disproportionate number of jumelages with ‘Celtic’ towns (158 in total, as opposed to 100 German, 51 English and 18 Spanish twins). A sense of Celticness is an important aspect of Breton particularism, and Brittany plays a relatively active role in panceltic events and organisations. The yearly Festival Interceltique de Lorient, which has taken place since 1971, attracts 450,000 visitors, about three times as many as the Welsh Eisteddfod. The portrayal of Brittany as one of a number
of Celtic territories with a ‘Celtic culture’ serves to distinguish it from the rest of France (Wyart, 2004). Initially expressed through the Breton Celtic language and music, Brittany’s Celtic qualities also connect to a differentiated history and provide a background to Breton regionalism. However, over the past decades there has been a growing interest in certain products of this ‘Celtic culture’, especially music and the festoù-noz (night feast), folk dance events with music and Breton language songs, which are becoming increasingly popular among a younger public, and in other parts of France as well. This popular ‘neo-Celtisme’ has broadened the appeal of Celtic and Breton culture to a larger audience, disconnected from the political regionalism, and many of those events in Brittany remain fundraising occasions for organisations as Diwan, and mobilisation opportunities for the Breton movement.

After regionalisation, all the regions started adopting a new logo to use in the region’s communication and marketing, and to boost the new regions’ identity. Brittany was one of the last region’s to do so, but adopted a logo and flag in 1987. There were doubts about the need for such a new logo, as the Conseil Régional seemed content to use existing historical resources and its President Marcellin for communication purposes (Dauvin, 1993, p.399). The fact that there already was a flag and emblem for Brittany played a role in this. The black and white Breton flag, the Gwenn-ha-du, itself a relatively recent creation, was designed in 1923 by Morvan Marchal, and was used by the Breton movement Breizh Atao71. It was inspired by the American ‘Stars and Stripes’, and includes a number of hermines (ermines), symbols of the historical banner of the Duchy of Brittany. The hermines were a symbol of Brittany, akin to the French fleur de lys. They also figure in the flag of Nantes and are still used as symbols of Brittany. The Gwenn-ha-du is also used widely as the Breton flag and can be seen at demonstrations or sport events. As a result, the new flag, which was created in 1987, has only been used as logo and symbol of the Conseil Régional, not of the region itself. Even so, the Gwenn-ha-du has recently been adopted more and more by regional authorities and is now flown from the buildings of the Conseil Régional, and from many Mairies and Conseils Généraux throughout Brittany (including the buildings of the Conseil Général of Loire-Atlantique and the Mairie of Nantes). Although it has no official status, its usage on government buildings and by the Conseil Régional (during events, at its website), and political parties (in their election manifestos) reflects a general acceptance of the flag within Brittany, and a very reduced status for the 1987 regional logo. In 2005 the

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71 Because of fascist tendencies of its designer, and collaboration with the German occupation of the Breton movement during the Second World War, the flag was denounced after the war, and is still criticised for that fascist connection by certain defenders of a strict republicanism; organisations such as the Observatoire du Communautarisme (http://www.communautarisme.net) and Libre Pensée (http://librepenseefrance.ouvaton.org/) keep entire Gwen-ha-du dossiers.
new socialist-ecologist-regionalist government of the Conseil Régional introduced a new logo, with more references to history, the hermine, and the Gwenn-ha-du, but still did not adapt the Gwen-ha-du as its flag.

Figure 7.2 Breton flags: Gwenn-ha-du, and the new 1987 and 2005 Conseil Régional flags

Breton institutions

Languages of Brittany, Breton and Gallo
One of the main territorial divisions within Brittany is the one separating the region from east to west, between Basse-Bretagne and Haute-Bretagne, or between ‘Bretagne bretonnante’ and the ‘Pays gallo’. From a practical point of view, both areas are nowadays primarily ‘francophone’, but the idea that Brittany ‘has two regional languages’ each with its own historical territory is well established. This is reflected in attention focused on the ‘limite du breton’ (e.g. Broudic, 2002, Favereau, 1993), a linguistic limes, forced back westwards since the Middle Ages, with towns falling to francophonie like besieged fortresses: “Mur-de-Bretagne cesse de parler Breton au milieu du XXe siècle”72 (Broudic, 2002, p.158). However, increasingly that mythical line cannot be seen as a separation between a homogenous Breton-speaking area and a non-Breton-speaking territory. To its west there is a strong concentration of Breton-speaking communities in certain areas and virtual absence of them in others while, to its east, places like Rennes now have substantial numbers of (new) brittophones73.

One result is that generally surveys on the numbers of Breton speakers have been carried out only in Basse-Bretagne. An exception is a recent survey by Cole et al. (2004a), which included a question about knowl-

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72 ‘Mur-de-Bretagne stopped talking Breton in the middle of the 20th Century’ (translation FS).
73 The term ‘brittophone’ has basically the same meaning as ‘bretonnant’, i.e. a Breton speaker. However, because ‘bretonnant’ also evolved to mean someone particularly interested in Breton culture in general, the term ‘brittophone’ was introduced as a more neutral word with a meaning confined to linguistic abilities (Chartier & Larvor, 2002, p.9).
edge of Breton in the whole administrative region of Brittany. Indeed, the difference between Ille-et-Vilaine and Cotes-d'Armor and Finistère in particular is clear (see table 7.1). This applies mostly to the ability to speak Breton with some fluency, since in Ille-et-Vilaine and Morbihan about a quarter of the population know a few basic Breton words. Even within Basse-Bretagne there are huge differences.

Table 7.1 Knowledge of Breton language, 2001, %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cotes d'Armor</th>
<th>Finistère</th>
<th>Ille-et-Vilaine</th>
<th>Morbihan</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speak fluently</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak and understand fairly well</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak and understand some</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can say and understand a few basic words</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can't speak or understand at all</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>1009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cole, 2004a

There is a long history of surveys of the knowledge and usage of the Breton language, from the 18th century reports of Abbé Grégoire, and the 1886 research of Paul Sébillot, to more contemporary surveys by the Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques and commercial organisations. However, because they have all used different methods, asked different questions and covered populations of different areas and ages, it is not possible to establish a precise trend. What is clear, however, is that there has been a long-term decline in the usage of Breton. According to Sébillot's estimates, at the end of the 19th century there were more monolingual bretonnants than bilinguals and hardly any monolingual francophones in Basse-Bretagne (Pavereau, 1993, p.27). In 1952, Gourvil estimated that there were 100,000 (or 7%) Breton monolinguals in Basse-Bretagne, in comparison to 400,000 (27%) French monolinguals (Broudic, 1995, pp.181-183). Surveys in the 1980s and 1990s no longer focused on Breton monolinguals and presupposed their virtual disappearance, but found that about 30-40% in Basse-Bretagne understood Breton, while 20-30% spoke it at least reasonably well (Broudic, 1995, Office de la Langue Bretonne, 2002). According to Broudic (2003, p.75) the decline of the Breton language occurred in the decades after WWII, when parents started en masse to raise their children in French instead of in Breton.

As mentioned above, the contemporary surveys differ too much in approach to distil a reliable trend over the last few decades. An indirect indication of the continued decline in the number of Breton speakers is the high correlation with age (see table 7.2). In particular, only old age pensioners are these days fluent speakers of Breton. According to this 2001 survey, 69% of all people fluent in Breton are 65 or older, while 89% is older than 44.
Knowledge of Breton is almost non-existent among those younger than 35. This means that initiatives that have been taken over the past decades to stimulate the learning of Breton through education have had very little success.

Table 7.2 Knowledge of the Breton language, per age group, 2001, %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>16-24</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>35-44</th>
<th>45-54</th>
<th>55-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I speak Breton fluently</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can speak and understand Breton fairly well</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can speak and understand some Breton</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can say and understand a few basic words of Breton</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can't speak or understand Breton at all</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cole, 2004a, own elaboration

The situation as regards skills other than understanding and speaking Breton is even more problematic. While a 1997 TMO-Région survey among Bas-Bretons (Broudic, 1999), found that 31% understood Breton well or fairly well, and that 20% were able to speak Breton well or fairly well, only 5% could read Breton easily or fairly easily (and 10% with some or a lot of difficulty), and only 1.5% were able to write Breton well or fairly well (and 6.5% 'fairly well'). In the light of this evidence, which paints a picture of Breton as a language of the elderly with hardly any application in reading and writing, the question mark in the title of a recent report of the Office de la Langue Bretonne, *Un avenir pour la langue bretonne?*, seems justified.

Efforts to spread the usage of French as replacement of regional languages and patois in all parts of the *hexagone* have long characterised education policies in France. As long ago as in 1794, a decree ordered that 'in all parts of the Republic, education is only to be given in the French language' (McDonald, 1989, p.27). Several laws throughout the 19th century confirmed that French was to be the sole language used in education. In 1925, the Minister of Public Education, De Monzie, said that "Pour l'unité linguistique de la France, il faut que la langue bretonne disparaisse" (cited in Bempéchat, 2004, p.14), and even in 1972 President Georges Pomidou stated: "Il n'y a pas de place pour les langues et cultures régionales dans une France qui doit marquer l'Europe de son sceau?" (cited in Leclerc, 2000). At that moment it was already possible to

74 'For the linguistic unity of France, the Breton language should disappear' (translation FS).

75 'There is no place for regional languages and cultures in a France that has to make an impact in Europe' (translation FS).
learn some Breton at school, since the introduction of the 1951 ‘Loi Deixonne’, which allowed a maximum of three hours of education of a few designated regional languages, if explicitly demanded by the parents, and if the teacher had no objections. Only a tiny proportion of students in Brittany learns some Breton this way. In 2000, this was equivalent to 2.0% of all primary school pupils in the five départements of historical Brittany, 2.4% of all college students, and 0.9% of those attending a lycée (Office de la Langue Bretonne, 2002, p.200). It took until 1971 to pass the regulations making application of the ‘Loi Deixonne’ possible. Although certain measures have been taken in favour of regional languages, such as the possibility to experiment with bilingual classes, the possibility to make History and Geography exams at collège and lycée in Breton, and the possibility of teaching Breton as a ‘living language’ (other than French), little legislation has been introduced to generalise the teaching of Breton. The collectivités locales, like the regional authorities, have no say in the curriculum of schools, only in offering facilities like school buildings. The Conseil Régional can only appeal to national authorities to change legislation and make symbolic statements as it did in 2004 when it ‘officially’ recognised the existence of Breton and Gallo as ‘languages of Brittany’ alongside French (Conseil Régional de Bretagne, 2004). In practice, for instance through the investment in Breton learning material, it is not the Conseil Régional that is the most active, but the Conseil Général of Finistère, the only département completely in Basse-Bretagne.

Bilingual schools have appeared in Brittany during the past decades not as a result of regional government policies, but on the basis of parent initiatives. The first, and still the largest of those organisations, is Diwan which was founded in 1977. Diwan not only covers the education of Breton, but education in Breton as well. Subjects are taught in both French or Breton, with Breton being dominant, and even exclusive in the first few years. These schools do not conform completely to the national curricula guidelines since they are private schools and are only partly financed by the state. In the 1980s, bilingual classes were introduced in a number of state-financed schools (organised by the association Div Yezh), and in Catholic (private) schools (initiated by Dihun), where pupils study Breton as a subject and are taught a number of other subjects in Breton as well. In Brittany private (Catholic) schools are relatively important, and 39% of Breton primary school students attend a private school, as opposed to 14% in France as a whole (Ministre de l’Éducation nationale, 2004, p.18). In 2002, there were 45 bilingual state schools, 39 bilingual Catholic schools, and 37 Diwan schools. The number of bilingual schools, and the number of pupils who attend them, has grown significantly over the past decades, with a total of 7,386 students at all levels in 2002. This is nearly three times as many as in 1995. Bilingual nursery and primary schools are the most popular, and there were 2,835 bilingual primary school students. However, this still corresponds to only about 1% of all primary school students in Brittany (Office de la
Geographically, the spread of bilingual schools is not generalised either. Most are located in Basse-Bretagne, although there are Diwan schools in the larger towns and cities of Haute-Bretagne, such as Rennes, Nantes, St. Nazaire and St. Malo, and one in Paris as well.

The symbolic impact of Diwan seems to be much more important and the defence of those schools is an important issue within the Breton regionalist movement. As far as cultural movements are concerned, the organisation can even be regarded to some degree as an integral part of Emsav. Donations for Diwan can be made at festou-noz and in Breton bookshops. Opposition to the decision by the Conseil Constitutionnel in 2001 to forbid Education Minister Jack Lang's proposal to integrate Diwan schools into the state school system figures as prominently in demonstrations as the opposition to the French refusal to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Table 7.3 Preferences for Breton language policies, 2001, %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Breton language is a central part of the Breton identity</th>
<th>We need to train more Breton speakers to occupy positions in politics &amp; administration</th>
<th>Certain jobs in Brittany should be reserved for bilingual speakers</th>
<th>Public funding should be given to the Breton media</th>
<th>Public funding should be given to Breton associations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>1007</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cole, 2004a

The symbolic impact of the Breton language not only affects the Breton movement, but large parts of Breton society as well. According to a 1997 TMO-Régions survey, 69 % of respondents in Basse-Bretagne were very or fairly attached to Breton, 12 % were indifferent, and 13 % had little or no attachment to the language. In the same survey, 88 % were of the opinion that Breton should be preserved ('il faut conserver le Breton') (Broudic, 1999, p.74). A majority in the whole of Brittany agree with the statement that the Breton language is a 'central part' of a Breton identity (see table 7.3).

76 In 1999 the Conseil Constitutionnel decided that the Charter contradicted the French constitution and could not be ratified by France, while the Conseil d'État had come to the same conclusion in 1997.
When it comes down to actual ways of preserving the language, most people may agree that allowing people who wish to do so to learn Breton is a sympathetic idea. However, anything that comes close to making the teaching of Breton a general and obligatory feature of education in Brittany is much less popular (see table 7.3).

According to Le Coadic (1998, pp.195-206) elements of former stigmatisation of Breton and bretonnants persist in opinions about the language. On the one hand Breton is associated with negative stereotypes of Bretons, on the other hand, Breton is often regarded as a language for which there is little practical use. For an older generation of Basse-Bretons, whose maternal language was Breton, school was the place where Breton was replaced by French, a transformation that itself was linked to progress and a way out of the relative economic underdevelopment of Brittany. To a completely different group it appears to have meant the opposite, namely that Breton was an attribute of modernity (Le Coadic, 2002, p.71). These were the ‘neo-bretonnants’, those who had learned the language as adults, particularly since the 1970s. The 1960s and 1970s can be regarded as a period of a Breton cultural ‘renaissance’, mostly a movement of intellectuals, who founded cultural organisations, took an interest in festoù-noz and created opportunities for Breton education. The 1982 regionalisation did not provide an immediate impulse for this cultural movement; Nicolas (2001, p.145) even speaks of the 1980s as a ‘traversée du désert’ for the Breton political and cultural movement. However, in the 1990s, it regained momentum among a group for whom the Breton identity could be a mark of distinction. The result has been that a cultural gap has appeared between the rapidly diminishing group of those who have spoken Breton in their daily lives from childhood and the growing group of those who have learned Breton as adults out of enthusiasm for Breton culture, mostly in surroundings in which Breton is not spoken as a community language. Contact between both groups is sparse. What is more, both groups have different views on the role of Breton in society and possible linguistic policies. Many of the traditional Breton speakers look with bewilderment or mockingly at the enthusiasm of the ‘neo-bretonnants’ (Le Coadic, 1998, pp.244-245).

And then there is Gallo. Often referred to as patois, this version of the langue d’oil is spoken in Haute-Bretagne. Although Gallo is specific to Brittany, it does not have the all-encompassing symbolic importance that Breton has for the whole region. There are only a few associations that promote and defend the language, and these are mostly interested in its linguistics and not in its social, economical or political role. There is not one significant group of intellectuals that take an interest in the language. According to Favereau (1993, p.40) even the few small organisations that have shown an interest in Gallo have appeared to ‘echo’ the Breton movements of the 1970s. As a result, there are no reliable estimates of the number of speakers of Gallo, and no surveys have included questions about its status and future.
One feature of the limited role of Gallo is that a lot of those who speak the language themselves do not even know the term ‘Gallo’, and simply refer to it as ‘le patois’ or ‘dialecte’ (Le Coadic, 1998, pp206-211). Michel Denis speaks of the double inferiority of ‘Gallos’, that is inferiority with respect to those speaking French, as though it is regarded as a bad or backward version of French, and inferior with respect to those who speak Breton, which is recognised, without doubt, as a language in its own right (in Le Coadic, 1998, p.215). When asked about the role of Gallo in Brittany, most members of the Conseil Régional are quick to confirm that it is part of the heritage of Brittany, and should be protected as such, but also state that the lack of social demand means linguistic policies should not go further than that:

Le gallo fait partie de l'histoire culturelle et de l'identité de la Bretagne. ... Et je crois que ce qu'il est fait pour la connaissance de la langue bretonne, doit être aussi fait pour la connaissance de la langue galloise77 (interview, UDF, 2004).

Others – two Breton-speaking conseillers régionaux from Finistère – had fewer problems expressing the hierarchy between Gallo and Breton:

Ça n'est aucune comparaison. Ça n'a rigoureusement rien à voir. Alors, la encore on est dans l'exploitation politicienne de très, très bas niveau. ... D'aucuns sont même arrivés à dire ‘le gallo comme le breton', ça n'a pas de sens. Le breton est une langue vraie langue, qui n'a rien à voir avec le français. Le gallo est un patois directement dérivé du français ancien. C'est tout, hein. Que le gallo est parlé, bon. Que, pour le plaisir intellectuel, on conserve, on essaie de codifier, pourquoi pas. Ça occupe quelques personnes. Mais c'est un non-sens absolu pour moi de considérer qu'on avance de manière parallèle sur le breton et le gallo 78(interview, UMP, 2004).

Alors, je crois qu'on n'est pas sur le même niveau de problème. Le gallo, c'est une forme de, c'est une dialecte du français. ... C'est plus au niveau des contes,

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77 Gallo is part of the cultural history and identity of Brittany. ... And I believe that what has been done for the knowledge of the breton language, must also be done for the knowledge of the gallo language' (translation FS).

78 'It is no comparison at all. It has nothing at all to do with it. So, there again this is at political exploitation at a very, very low level. ... Some are even saying now 'gallo just like breton', but it doesn't make sense. Breton is a language, which has nothing to do with French. Gallo is a patois directly derived from ancient French. That's all? That gallo is spoken, OK. That for intellectual pleasure, one conserves, and tries to codify, why not. That keeps some people busy. But it is absolute nonsense to me to consider moving forward in the same way with Breton as with Gallo' (translation FS).
au niveau des chants qu'on peut conserver et faire quelque chose (interview, PS, 2004).

In contrast to organisations promoting Gallo, there are a large number of cultural and linguistic organisations promoting Breton, some of them with semi-official status. The Conseil Culturel de Bretagne was founded in 1978, as a result of the signing of the Charte Culturelle de Bretagne between the state, the Conseil Régional, and the départements, including Loire-Atlantique. It forms a platform for consultation and co-operation between diverse cultural organisations in Brittany. The same 1978 cultural charter also led to the establishment of the Institut Culturel de Bretagne, whose aim was the ‘development and distribution of Breton culture in its widest sense’. It is financed by the Conseil Régional, and has had fewer responsibilities since the regional elections of 1998. Its tasks relating to the promotion of Breton have been taken over by the Office de la Langue Bretonne, created in 1999 by the Conseil Régional.

These initiatives are part of a less antagonistic view of Breton by the authorities, that is the state and the Conseil Régional. It seems no longer acceptable to speak in denigrating terms of the language, and with a rapidly shrinking number of everyday speakers, it is increasingly difficult to seriously present its practice as a danger to the unity of the Republic. On the other hand, most policies that support Breton have served to enhance its image and symbolic role as an element of Breton identity, while there have been few efforts to make its daily usage easier. Bilingual education for a small group, or a few bilingual road-signs here and there, have significant symbolic effects but hardly do anything to make a ‘normalisation’ of the language a reality. A major obstacle seems to be the French legislation and the interpretation of the Constitution, which blocked steps such as the integration into the public school system of Diwan schools, and the ratification of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. The fact that everything that has to do with the curricula has remained the domain of the state has not made it any easier for the Conseil Régional to carry out a linguistic policy. This should not be used to hide the fact that drastic measures to achieve such ‘normalisation’ of Breton are simply not what most of the inhabitants of Brittany want, as shown in table 7.3.

Regional media in Brittany

Two regional newspapers cover Brittany, Ouest-France and Le Télégramme. Ouest-France is by far the largest daily newspaper in France in terms of readership, and Le Télégramme is also a large regional newspaper, with a circulation

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79 So, I believe that it is not the same level of problem. Gallo, it’s a type of, it’s a dialect of French. … It’s more at the level of tales, at the level of songs that one can conserve and do something’ (translation FS).
higher than the national daily Libération. In France, in general, regional and local newspapers are much more popular than the national dailies that are well known abroad, such as Le Monde and Le Figaro. In 2000, the circulation of all regional newspapers was three times higher than that of the national dailies combined over the whole of France (Fagnon et al, 2002, p.108). Over time, regional newspapers have even become more popular. In 1950, regional newspapers accounted for 66% of all newspapers read, while in 2000 the figure was 75%. In the same period, the total readership of newspapers dropped, but almost exclusively because the national newspapers became less popular. The circulation of regional newspapers remained stable. Brittany has, together with the eastern regions of Franche-Comté, Lorraine and Alsace, the highest circulation of regional newspapers relative to the population size (PQR, 2005). In contrast to France as a whole, there has been a drop in the popularity of regional newspapers in Brittany, in absolute terms as well as compared with national newspapers (see table 7.4). This has not yet eroded the predominance of regional newspapers over national ones in Brittany, but there is certainly no reason to state that regionalisation stimulated the sales of regional newspapers in Brittany.

Table 7.4 Daily newspaper readership* in Brittany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ouest-France</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Télégramme de Brest*</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Monde</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Figaro</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aujourd'hui*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Croix</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libération</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Office de Justification de la diffusion, author's elaboration.

* The figure for newspaper readership is the newspaper circulation divided by the total number of households in Brittany.

** The Télégramme de Brest is not widely distributed in Ille-et-Vilaine.

Neither Ouest-France nor Le Télégramme are straightforward Breton regional newspapers, although Le Télégramme calls itself ‘le quotidien de la Bretagne’ ("The Brittany daily"). However, it is only available in the three western départements of Finistère, Côtes-d’Armor and Morbihan, and it is only really popular in Finistère where it sells more than three times as many copies as Ouest-France. Le Télégramme, originally called Le Télégramme de Brest et de l'Ouest, is not available in the capital of Brittany, Rennes, or in Loire-Atlantique, and does not include any local news about those areas. It can be regarded as the newspaper of Basse-Bretagne. Ouest-France on the other hand covers the Grand Ouest, a much larger area than Brittany. It is also the regional news-
paper of Pays-de-la-Loire and Basse-Normandie, and therefore cannot really be regarded as a Breton newspaper either.

However, as the national newspapers have no regional editions and rarely report on regional politics (Le Monde has a 'Régions' page which focuses on one or a few of the French regions), coverage of Breton politics and news in general relies on Ouest-France and Le Télégramme. Nevertheless, Brittany does not appear to be the main preoccupation of both newspapers, if we take a look at samples of Ouest-France and Le Télégramme (see annex D). Of the different spatial scales to choose from, Ouest-France mainly focuses on news with a French national dimension, and reports with a very local scope. Ouest-France has no fewer than 42 different editions, and a large number of local correspondents, providing readers with extensive coverage of events in their particular village or neighbourhood. Apart from sections for international, national and local news, Ouest-France has a regional and departmental section as well. Of those, around three pages are reserved for news from the département, and half a page for Brittany. However even that is not news of a Breton dimension, but simply consists of reports on an event happening somewhere in Brittany. Reports on the debates and actions of the Conseil Régional are virtually non-existent, apart from the few occasions per year when there is a plenary session. In addition, regional councillors are rarely asked for opinions outside their confined spheres of responsibilities, reflecting the largely administrative, and not political, nature of the Conseil Régional. The same applies to Le Télégramme, which offers its readers one page a day of information on Brittany. With 17 editions in just three départements, and a large number of pages dedicated to local news, the focus of Le Télégramme is more local than regional as well. Le Télégramme does apply a Breton perspective to general articles, such as on the number of road casualties or the fortunes of the tourist industry, more often than Ouest-France which often sees things in a Grand Ouest perspective. However, although both newspapers are widely read in the region, they apply several territorial perspectives at the same time, and amongst those, Brittany certainly does not dominate. Regionalisation did not lead to an augmentation of Breton news or an adoption of a Breton prism to present general reports. Although regionalisation did serve to 'confirm' the preservation of a page 'Bretagne' in the Ouest-France (Dauvin, 1993, p.186), the regional institutions had too little political clout to challenge the dual focus of regional newspapers on the national and local levels.

Similar to the newspaper Ouest-France, the main regional television channel, France 3, has the Grand Ouest and the départements as its main organisational entities, and not Brittany. France 3 is a national public television channel, divided into 13 regional editions. Some of those regions are the same as the administrative regions, but some are not. In Brittany people receive France 3 Ouest, just like the inhabitants of Pays-de-la-Loire. Within that large area, several subdivisions are used. Local news, for instance, is divided into Basse-Bretagne and Haute-Bretagne. France 3 is a network controlled by
a national board in Paris that has existed since 1973. Because it offers news and programmes from a Haute- or Bas-Breton, departmental, or Grand Ouest perspective, it is a regional channel, but not specifically Breton. It does offer some programmes in the Breton language. In 2001 this was just over 63 hours a year (Office de la Langue Bretonne, 2002, p.225). Part of that is available only in Basse-Bretagne, and part in the whole of Brittany on Sunday mornings. As part of the promotion of the Breton language and culture, the Conseil Régional subsidises those Breton language broadcasts, but does not play a role in the other regional offerings of France 3 Ouest. The initiatives to include Breton language programmes in the schedules of France 3 where made possible by the signing of the Cultural Charter in 1977 (Guyot & Michon, 1997, p.93), and was started before the regionalisation of the 1980s.

In 2000, a private television channel was founded called TV Breizh, which was financed by TF1 boss Patrick Le Lay and a number of other Breton and international investors. It is distributed by cable and satellite, and is therefore accessible for just a small section of the population. According to Musso (2003) there is potential for 200,000 subscribers. It offers a full schedule of programmes aimed specifically at Brittany, and available in the administrative region as well as Loire-Atlantique, with ‘Brittany, celticness and the sea’ (Musso, 2003) as the main themes. Because it broadcasts digitally, viewers can choose between French and Breton language versions for many of its programmes. However, because of financial problems and the small number of potential viewers, TV Breizh has not yet made a major impact.

Breton and French identities in Brittany

The OIP asked Bretons about their territorial identifications, their sentiment d'appartenance. Having been forced to make a hierarchy between different territories, when asked to which place they were attached above the others, the smallest local level, the commune, came out on top every time except in the most recent poll in 2000 (see table 7.5). In all surveys more people prioritise their attachment to France than they do to Brittany. The difference between the national and regional level is not large though, especially not in 2000. In 2000, people were asked about their second preference as well and in that case the regional level came out in top with 29%. So, many inhabitants of Brittany put their Breton identification first, but France and the commune are more popular still as the first level of identification. When the second preference is included, Brittany is even more popular. The départements are clearly not territories to which people are very attached in Brittany, at least, only a small group names them first. If there is a trend in this series of survey results, the clearest is that the commune has become less popular and the région more popular. Based on this survey questions, the regional identity of Bret-
ons is much stronger now than it was just after the moment of regionalisation.

Table 7.5 Strongest sense of belonging to which territory, %

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<tr>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commune</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Département</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Région</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aucun</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


However, having asked people about the territory people feel most attached, we do not know much about their actual level of attachment to either, especially not those that are not their first (or second) choice. In 2001, the OIP also asked to what degree people felt attached to each of those territories. Nearly all respondents have a certain degree of attachment to all of them, although less to ‘Europe’ (see table 7.6). France and Brittany have almost equal scores when if you add together those with some and those with lots of attachment. But Brittany seems overall more popular, because more people acclaim a very strong attachment to Brittany than to France. But, as 62% feels very strongly attached to France, and 74% to Brittany, and more than 90% rather attached to both, those are largely overlapping as well. Only 2.1% does not feel attached to France at all.

Table 7.6 Degree of attachment to different territories, 2001, %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Brittany</th>
<th>Département</th>
<th>Commune</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very attached</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rather attached</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very attached</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all attached</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This 2.1% is exactly the same as those responding that they felt only Breton and not French in the only survey that included the ‘Moreno-question’ in Brittany, as carried out by Cole (2004a) in 2001. This confirms that this category, which will mostly be a condition for support for separatism, is very small in Brittany. Only a fraction of the inhabitants of Brittany would declare themselves not to be French at all. On the other hand, only
7.5% did not consider themselves Breton either, which means that both exclusive categories are very small in Brittany. Nearly everyone regards him or herself as Breton and nearly everyone regards him or herself as French. This means that, for a vast majority, being Breton and being French are not mutually exclusive. A majority of the respondents do not even make a hierarchy at all, and claim to feel equally Breton and French.

Table 7.7 Regional and French identities in Brittany, 2001, %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breton but not French</th>
<th>2.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Breton than French</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equally Breton and French</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More French than Breton</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French but not Breton</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>1007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cole, 2004a

This does not mean that distinctions between Brittany and France, not as nested spaces but separate from each other, are not made more often in colloquial speech, as demonstrated by Le Coadic (1998, pp.357-360). In a series of interviews he found that a number of Bretons interviewed casually talk about Brittany and France as if they are different countries, and 'the French' as a group opposed to the Bretons. Pentecouteau (2002) found similar themes in interviews with new learners of Breton, with implicit statements about France as a foreign country, and French as a foreign language. Le Coadic calls them slips of the tongue ('lapsus de langue'), and they are hardly related to separatist opinions in a political, constitutional sense.

7.4 A Breton political arena?

Turnout at elections

If there is a trend in turnout at elections in Brittany over the last couple of decades, it is a downward one, like in many other places. This applies to the regional elections as well, although the impression figure 7.3 gives is a distorted one because the very high turnout in 1986 was caused by the législatives being scheduled for the same day. On that day, the percentage of eligible voters who turned up, including blank and invalid votes, was almost the same for both elections, namely 80.1% for the législatives and 79.9% for the

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80 This category of people in Brittany who do not consider themselves Breton at all is much larger amongst those not born in the region (20.5%) than amongst those born in Brittany (2%). But this also means that nearly 80% of those living in but not born in Brittany consider themselves to be Breton.
régionales. However, in other years, the turnout at regional elections has been considerably lower in Brittany, by a clear although not very large margin. The lowest turnout was in 1998, when just 59% turned up. Based on turnout figures, therefore, the attention for regional elections is less than for national elections, and is also declining.

Figure 7.3 Turnout at regional and general elections

![Turnout graph](image)

Source: Le Monde, Ministère de l'Intérieur

**Media attention for regional politics**

The attention of the major national newspapers for the regional elections has been minimal, and presented mostly as a national political event or as a test for the national government of the day. On the day of the 1998 regional elections, *Le Monde* recapitulated on its front page what it thought was at stake at the regional elections:


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81 "The four stakes of the regional elections. The Left: set up the change-over from 1997 in the regions. The Right: prepare the recomposition between RPR and UDF. The government: uphold the policy direction taken since nine months. The Front..."
Apparently, the administration of the regions and regional democracy was not really at stake. In 1986 in particular the regional elections were completely obscured in the media by the simultaneous campaigns for the législatives, and all the attention at the meetings, in the programmes and during the campaigns of the large parties was focused on the national elections. In other years, when there was no competition from other elections, the two largest national newspapers in Brittany, Le Monde and Le Figaro, paid slightly more attention, although mostly viewed from a national perspective as a test event or in the form of reports on visits to places in the provinces by campaigning national political leaders. Because those newspapers do not have regional or local editions, the information they provide each reader about the election campaign in his or her particular region is limited. Informing voters about regional election campaigns is perhaps more the task of regional newspapers, and Ouest-France and Le Télégramme report more extensively on the Breton candidates. However, even for those regional newspapers, the regional elections are to a large extent national events.

In Le Télégramme and Ouest-France, as well, the coverage of the 1986 regional election campaign was particularly meagre, comprising mostly no more than one item a day and completely overshadowed by the législatives. In 1992, 1998 and 2004, the coverage was more extensive with one to two pages a day dedicated to the regional election campaigns over the last two weeks leading up to the elections. However, a lot of this space was assigned to reports on the campaign in France as a whole or to visits to Brittany by national party leaders. In 1998, Le Télégramme carried a clear headline on its front page two days before the elections, namely “régionales: le troisième tour des législatives” (Le Télégramme, 1998, p.1). According to Monnier (1994, pp.354-355) the bipolarisation of French national politics over the past decades influenced the role of every election as a national test. Bipolarisation at regional level might have the effect of refocusing more seriously on regional candidates, as in 2004 when the battle between Le Drian and De Rohan attracted more attention of the regional media to the candidates in Brittany.

Regional party organisation

The Fédération socialiste de Bretagne, which was founded in 1900, joined other organisations to form the Section française de l'internationale ouvrière in 1905, itself the precursor of the Parti Socialiste (PS). Thus, even before the formation of a national socialist political party, a Breton regional one existed. However, departmental federations had been formed as long ago as in 1907, and those soon acquired a prominence within the party organisation. In fact, all major

National: arbitrate between the two camps betting on high abstention’ (Translation FS).
French political parties have long since been organised in the same way. They have a national organisation with central headquarters in Paris and departmental federations as local organisations directly underneath the national level. With the exception of Les Verts, all are still organised this way. In addition, some parties have developed regional organisations, but none are more than regional platforms for discussion and coordination. As far as the Union pour une Mouvement Populaire (UMP) and its predecessors are concerned, the regional organisation comes down to the political group in the Conseil Régional. The composition of this group is dependent on the parties represented in the Conseil Régional. There is no stable Breton organisation outside the Conseil Régional. After the merger of part of the Union pour la Démocratie Française (UDF) with the UMP, the remaining party offered its departmental federations the possibility in its statutes to form a regional federation. The Breton federations did so, and although this can be regarded as a regionalisation of the organisation of the UDF (interview, UDF, 2004), the departmental federations did not disappear or lose any powers, and the regional federation of the UDF has more of a coordinating role.

The same applies to the regional organisations of the left-wing parties, which were founded much earlier. The Breton departmental federations of the PCF had already created a regional organisation before the 1980s, although it never really developed into more than a platform for discussion and coordination between regional élus. It did serve as an example though for the creation of regional bodies in other regions after the regionalisation of the 1980s. The Parti Socialiste has perhaps the most advanced regional organisation in the form of their Bureau Régional d’Étude et d’Information Socialiste (BREIS). Founded in 1972, BREIS was created as a platform for internal discussion and coordination, grouping élus of the five (not four) Breton departmental federations long before the creation of regional organisations elsewhere in France. It assembles Breton conseillers régionaux, as well as conseillers généraux, mayors, députés and government ministers - sometimes the same individuals because of the cumul des mandats. BREIS has served as a platform for analysis and reflection, drafting election manifestos in Brittany, and adapting national manifestos for Brittany. It has been relatively successful although it has remained a supplementary body, alongside to the departmental federations, which retained predominance in terms of personnel, facilities, formal status and links to party members.

Only Les Verts has a Breton regional federation with no role for the départements. As a relatively young political party it was organised as a regional organisation from the 1980s, grouping five départements. The level below the region is in Brittany for Les Verts not that of the départements, but of the smaller pays, reflecting the regionalist wish to replace the départements with a structure of région – pays. The regional organisation covering five départements,

82 The acronym referring to the Breton word for Brittany, ‘Breizh’.
without the backup of departmental federations, was deemed unpractical as long as the administrative region remained a Brittany of four départements, and the Breton regional federation was reduced to one of four départements. However, it kept its logo featuring a map of Brittany which included Loire-Atlantique.

Still, Les Verts are the only national political party with a real Breton federation. Some of the others have a regional structure, but the departmental federations have clearly continued to be the main building blocks of the political parties’ organograms. The regionalisation of the 1980s did very little to change this model. The PS and PCF introduced their Breton regional organisations a decade before Deferre’s decentralisation. The most important reason why the political parties did not adapt their organisations in line with regionalisation is not just because the départements remained at least as important administratively and politically as the régions, but because the départements also became the constituencies at regional elections. As already stated by Dauvin (1993, p.69), the choice for departmental lists prevented the regionalisation of the elections, and consequentially there was no necessity to regionalise the political party structure. Choices to do so anyway were ideologically motivated, as was the case with Les Verts and BREIS.

In conclusion, regionalisation did not break through the existing structures that bind the regional and national levels of administration. The cumul des mandats continues to exist, ensuring that local and regional interests are heard at a higher level, while averting interest-driven antagonism between those levels. Those that already are an ‘élite’ somewhere make a better chance of getting elected or of obtaining a higher place on the lists of candidates, because of their higher visibility (Dauvin, 1993, p.62). On the other hand, the system also reduces the availability of regional councillors and the urge to act in the interest of the region all the time. There are only four plenary sessions of the Conseil Régional a year, and while there are other duties in specialised commissions and elsewhere for regional councillors, being a regional councillor is for most people a part-time job. Many spend most of their time at their mairie or in Paris. Bretons in particular are also rather successful at obtaining government and national party executive posts (Cole, 2004b), and at making use of the existing political system, sometimes to put Breton issues on the national political agenda. An example of a similar route taken by Breton elites to represent Breton interest was the CELIB. As an essentially apolitical structure grouping Breton political elites of all parties to represent Breton regional interest through existing institutional structures (Pasquier, 2000), the CELIB did leave a heritage of Breton cooperation, but not one of a separate Breton democratic political arena at regional level.
7.5 Political regionalism in Brittany

Public opinion on regional autonomy

As described in the previous chapter, a majority of those interviewed by OIP in France since the moment of regionalisation think that regionalisation should be developed further, and that is certainly also the majority opinion in Brittany (table 7.8 and 7.9). Around three quarters of Bretons are in favour of regionalisation in general, and of developing it further. Because the OIP changed the question after 1992 it is hard to establish a trend, but the support in the most recent survey in 2000 for further regionalisation seems lower than before, and the percentage of people that think that regionalisation has already gone too far is considerably higher. There is certainly no increase in the support for more Breton autonomy. Therefore, although support for more regionalisation remains invariably high in Brittany, if there is a trend it would be that increasing regional autonomy has become a bit less popular than it was in the first years after regionalisation.

Table 7.8 Opinion on decentralisation, %

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very favourable</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rather favourable</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rather unfavourable</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unfavourable</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>701</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 7.9 Opinion on further decentralisation, %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Should be developed further</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has reached a satisfactory level</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has gone too far</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>713</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Recently Cole (2004a) surveyed public opinion in Brittany on a wider range of regional autonomy options (table 7.10). Although this was a one-off survey and we cannot use it to draw any conclusions on developments since regionalisation, it has produced a number of remarkable results. In the first place, very few Bretons want to abolish the Conseil Régional, and the presence of a directly elected regional executive seems well accepted. The virtual absence of support for its abolition might be related to its low profile
and modest powers which may be reasons why people do not really detest it as an institution. Secondly, almost half of all respondents, and a majority of those that expressed their opinion, were in favour of a considerable increase in powers, legislative and taxation powers, that is Breton ‘autonomy’. The survey did not clearly ask whether people were in favour of Breton independence, but the options given here already go quite far, at least further than any national political party in France would be prepared to go.

Table 7.10 Preferences for regional autonomy for Brittany, 2001, %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion on regional autonomy</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abolish the Conseil Regional</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Conseil Regional should remain with limited powers</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give the Conseil Regional law making &amp; taxation powers</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brittany should become autonomous</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>1007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cole, 2004a

Regionalism at elections in Brittany

The centre-right has for a very long time dominated political posts in Brittany, although not by such a large margin as the continuity of that dominance would suggest. At regional and national legislative elections (see table 7.11) the UDF and RPR, most recently the UDF and the UMP, obtained around 40 % of the votes, although this was subject to a very gradual downward trend. In the early years of Mitterrand’s presidency the PS obtained similar or even slightly higher results, falling in the 1990s, and recovering again more recently. The PCF used to have a number of bastions in Brittany, most notably the Trégor in western Côtes-d’Armor, but their overall support has declined, and at the most recent regional elections the communists joined the PS on a combined list of candidates.

Spatially, the votes for the main parties are concentrated in particular areas of support, and these have remained fairly stable (Nicolas & Pihan, 1988, Bussi et al, 2004). The centre-right is strongest in eastern Ille-et-Vilaine around Fougères and Vitré, eastern Morbihan and the northwestern coast of Finistère. The PS has its base in western Ille-et-Villaine, southeast Finistère and Rennes. The regionalist parties have been a bit stronger in Basse-Bretagne than in Haute-Bretagne, although the differences are not large, and their vote is rather equally spread out over the region. There is no stronghold where they have gained more than 5 % of the votes. Overall, they have made little electoral impact. UDB candidates mostly gained 2-4 % of the votes at regional elections, and 1-3 % at legislatives. Because they have not always
<table>
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<th>L88</th>
<th>R92</th>
<th>L93</th>
<th>L97</th>
<th>R98</th>
<th>L02</th>
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<tr>
<td>RPR-UDF *</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>21.9</td>
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<td>0.6</td>
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<td>72.8</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Le Monde, Ministère de l'Intérieur

L = législatives; R = régionales. R04 = premier tour.

- * Since 2002 as UMP. For the régionales in 1986, the RPR and the UDF had combined lists in Finistère and Morbihan only.
- b For the régionales in 1986, the RPR put forward a separate list in Côtes-du-Nord (d'Armor) and Ille-et-Vilaine. For the 1997 législatives, the RPR put forward separate candidates in 2 constituencies, and for the 1993 législatives in 3 constituencies.
- c For the régionales in 1986 the UDF put forward a separate list in Côtes-du-Nord (d'Armor) and Ille-et-Vilaine. For the 2002 législatives the UDF put forward separate candidates in 6 constituencies, for the 1997 législatives in 2 constituencies, and for the 1993 législatives in 5 constituencies.
- d In the first round of the 2004 régionales a PS-PCF-PRG (Parti Radical de Gauche) coalition, at the 1998 régionales a PS-PCF-Verts coalition.
- e In 2004 in combination with the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire.
- f For the 1993 législatives Christian Guyonvarc'h of UDB stood as candidate in the Ploërmel constituency for Les Verts supported by the UDB. He obtained 7.4% of the votes in that constituency. In 2004, Les Verts and UDB put forward a combined list, together with Frankiz Breizh.
- g In 1997 in 17 constituencies, this includes two candidates of Frankiz Breizh in Finistère. In 2002 in all 26 constituencies. In 1981 in 11 constituencies.
- h In 2002 in 3 constituencies.
- i For the 1993 législatives Emgann put forward candidates in seven constituencies.
presented candidates in all constituencies, their overall scores shown below are lower. So, although most people have voted similarly at regional and national elections, the regionalist parties obtained better results at regional elections. There has been a slight growth in the votes the UDB gained at regional elections but, on the other hand, their results at national elections have, if anything, worsened in comparison to the results of the late 1970s, and their participation has been less consistent. The Regional Council elections did not offer a possibility to acquire representation, since the UDB, or any other Breton party, did not win a seat until 2004. The three UDB seats won in 2004 was based on a coalition with *Les Verts*, as well as with the PS and the PCF in the second round.

**Regionalism and political programmes**

*French statewide parties in Brittany*

In the period since regionalisation the two largest parties in France, the RPR and PS, were also the largest in Brittany. The UDF is also an important party in Brittany, but a large section of the UDF merged with the RPR to form one party, the UMP, and because they had previously almost always put forward joint lists at elections, they are discussed in the same section here. The PCF is still a separate party, but much smaller, and often part of electoral coalitions with the PS. It is, therefore, not discussed separately here. *Les Verts*, comparable in size to the PCF in Brittany, is dealt with separately because of its particular opinion on regionalism and cooperation with the regionalist UDB

*Union pour un Mouvement Populaire*

At the 2004 cantonales the political right lost the presidency of the *Conseil Général* of Ille-et-Vilaine that it had held since 1848, when elections by general suffrage were introduced. On the same day, the right also lost the majority in the *Conseil Régional* of Brittany for the first time. It is therefore not surprising that Brittany has long been regarded as a right-wing bastion, and more specifically, a fortress of the Catholic right. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Christian Democrat *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* obtained around 20% of the votes in Brittany, which is more than twice as many as in France as a whole. This relatively strong Catholic *centrisme* is not only a characteristic of Brittany, but of the Grand Ouest in general and the Alsace as well (Monnier, 1994, p.9). Yet, like in France as a whole, Gaullism dominated in Brittany within the centre-right. Over the past decades the neo-Gaullist *Rassemblement pour la République* (RPR) and centre-right UDF, which were both founded in the late 1970s, have mostly put forward joint lists at elections. In 2002, the RPR and part of UDF formed a new party, the *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire* (UMP). Part of the UDF continued independently.
In 1969, President De Gaulle proposed the introduction of regional administrations with directly elected councils and, during the 1970s, the Gaullists remained formally in favour of enforcement of the regions. Regionalisation was also included in the RPR-UDF’s 1981 national manifesto for the législatives:


However, when the PS won both the législatives and présidentielles in 1981, and immediately proposed regionalisation as part of a wide decentralisation scheme, the strongest opposition came from the RPR and UDF, who warned about threats to national unity. In the Assemblée Nationale the RPR spoke out against directly elected regional councils and all Breton RPR députés voted against the proposal. The UDF was in favour of direct elections, but voted largely against Deferre’s proposals, and two of the five Breton UDF députés abstained (Le Monde, 1981, p.5, Nicolas & Pihan, 1988, pp.172-174). The same preoccupation with national unity figured prominently in the RPR-UDF manifesto for the 1986 législatives (RPR-UDF, 1986). It proposes an ‘authentic decentralisation’, ‘wise and gradual’, not ‘hastily and disorganised’ like Deferre’s decentralisation (RPR-UDF, 1986).

As far as the centre-right coalitions are concerned, regional elections have not been the place to discuss the powers of the regional authorities. Although the national manifestoes for the législatives of 1986, 1993 and 1997 discuss the issue of decentralisation, it does not feature in the 1986, 1992, 1998 and 2004 regional election programmes. Instead, the regional election manifestoes focus more technocratically on the policy field over which the regional council already had competences: environment, planning, training, employment and culture. Because ‘culture’ is a regional competency, there are some references to the protection of a Breton identity, either as a general asset of the region - “La richesse de l’identité bretonne est un atout essentiel de notre développement” (RPR-UDF, 1992b, p.2), or as part of a regional heritage

83 “The powers of the public authorities should be redistributed for the benefit of the régions, the départements and the communes. Despite the efforts dispayed since the start of the 5th Republic, the competencies and the social administrative means of the mother of the family remain in France too much concentrated in the hands of Parisian Ministers or their local representatives. A real regional reform must be realised without delay’.

84 “The wealth of the Breton identity is an essential asset of our development’.
which needs protection: “Notre projet pour la Bretagne inclut la protection de nos racines: notre langue, notre patrimoine (sous tous ses aspects qui ne sont pas seulement architecturaux)” (RPR-UDF, 1992a, p.6). Connections between a particular Breton identity and regional autonomy are not made.

Up until 1998, the UDF and RPR put forward their candidacies with much focus on the département, with names as ‘liste union pour l’Ille-et-Vilaine’, ‘Union Départementale de l’Opposition’, ‘Le Progrès du Morbihan’, and ‘Union Finistère-Bretagne’. The manifestoes bet on two horses, alternating between promising to defend the interests of the département and those of Brittany as a whole, although with most emphasis on the départements. For instance in 1986 the manifesto stated, “Vous voterez pour donner aux Côtes-du-Nord la représentation politique lui permettant de faire entendre efficacement sa voix au sein de la majorité régionale” (RPR, 1986). The prominence of departmental interests in regional election campaigns was caused to a large degree by the electoral system, although it is perhaps more correct to say that the electoral system of the regional elections did not change the already existing political organisational structure with an important role for the départements.

The new electoral system with one list and one campaign for the whole region used in 2004 changed the campaign’s territorial focus. As part of the UDF merged with the RPR to form the UMP, and another part remained independent, there were two centre-right lists in 2004, namely one UMP led by outgoing regional President Josselin de Rohan, and one UDF led by the mayor of St. Brieuc, Bruno Joncour. Both took Brittany, and no longer the départements, as a main territorial frame of reference for their proposals. There was also a much more important role for Breton symbols than before. Both the UMP and UDF used images of the Gwen-ha-du in their manifesto, and used a sub-title in Breton, namely ‘Lakaat Breiz da c’houmit! (“To make Brittany win!”) and ‘Breizh a galon’ (‘Brittany with passion’) respectively. These remained the only words in Breton in the manifestoes, but they formed a more prominent basis for proposals promising to ‘affirm’ and ‘preserve’ (UMP), ‘defend’ and ‘strengthen’ (UDF) a Breton identity. The UDF seems to go a bit further in its proposals than the UMP and promised support for TV Breizh and a referendum on the merging of Loire-Atlantique with Brittany. Both parties also promised not only to support the Breton language, but Gallo or the ‘culture gallêse’ as well.

Regionalist opinions are not the domain of a single party in Brittany, and are not exempt from one. Supporters of increased regional autonomy, investment in regional languages or reunification with Loire-Atlantique is a theme of various parties, and proposals related to this are often made by

85 ‘Our project for Brittany includes the protection of our roots: our language, our heritage (in all its aspects that are not only architectural)’ (translation FS).
86 ‘You will vote to give Côtes-du-Nord the political representation which allows it to have its voice be heard effectively within the regional majority’ (translation FS).
cross-partisan ad hoc coalitions. The UMP and its predecessors have, in a
general sense, been relatively hostile to regionalist points of view, and not
dogmatic in all instances. In 2005, the Breton UMP député Marc Le Fur un-
successfully initiated a proposal to amend the second article of the constitu-
tion—"la langue de la République est le français"—by adding the phrase "dans le re-
spect des langues régionales qui font partie de son patrimoine", to enable ratification
of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. In the run-up
to Raffarin’s recent decentralisation proposals, the Conseil Régional of Brittany,
presided over by the Gaullist Josselin de Rohan, published a ‘Manifeste de la
décentralisation en Bretagne’ which positioned Brittany on the front-row of re-
gions looking to further regionalisation with lots of references to the region’s
history. It even mentioned, and rejected, legislative powers for the regions:

Le premier cas de figure reside dans l’attribution aux Conseils Régionaux d’un
pouvoir législatif dans des domaines de compétences déterminées. Des “lois ré-
gionales” viendraient compléter les lois nationales selon certaines versions, y
derog er selon d’autres ou encore suppléer à l’absence de dispositions législatives
nationales dans tel ou tel domaine. La Bretagne ne pense pas qu’il soit ju-
dicieux, dans le cadre de la République actuelle et au stade de régionalisation
qu’elle propose, de porter atteinte sur ce point à la Constitution de la Vème Ré-
publique. Seul le passage à un État fédéral justifierait ou provoquerait ce saut
constitutionnel. Toutefois, si un pouvoir législatif quel qu’il soit devait être re-
connu à l’une quelconque des régions françaises, la Bretagne estime avoir histori-
quement le droit d’un traitement identique (Conseil Régional de Bretagne, 2002, pp.9-10).

Parti Socialiste

Historically regionalism and the reactionary right in France have been re-
garded by the Left as a coalition opposed to its vision of the Republic. How-
ever, this Jacobinist heritage of the Left, which Philipponneau (1981) re-
ferred to as ‘la peur de la région’ (p.36), was largely abandoned in the 1970s by
the PS. While a left-wing UDB became the most important regionalist party

87 ‘French is the language of the Republic’ (translation FS).
88 ‘respecting the regional languages that are part of its heritage’ (translation FS).
89 ‘The first form consists of providing the regional councils with legislative powers
in determined competency domains. ‘Regional laws’ would complete national laws
according to certain versions, and contravene them according to others, or again
supplement them by absence of national legal dispositions in any domain. Brittany
does not think that it would be judicious, in the framework of the present Republic
and at the stadium of regionalisation it proposes, to infringe at this point upon the
constitution of the 5th Republic. Only the transition to a federal state would justify or
prove that constitutional step. However, if any legislative powers are admitted to
whichever of the French regions, Brittany considers to have the historical right to an
identical treatment’ (translation FS).
in Brittany, and the Parti Socialiste Unifié adopted a regionalist discourse, the PS became less hesitant towards regional government and regional cultural and linguistic questions (Roué, 1996). Since the late 1960s, Socialist leaders such as Pierre Mendès France and Michel Rocard adopted the idea of the ‘decolonisation of the province’, adding a regional dimension to the class struggle (Philipponneau, 1981, pp. 46-47). The changes of May 1968 facilitated drastic ideological reformulations and the Épinay congress of 1971, during which the PS was established as a new party, permitted the integration of regionalisation and a changed perspective on regionalist cultural demands in Socialist political programmes. This eventually led to Gaston Deferre’s 1982 decentralisation. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the ‘regional question’ became an important theme of debate within the PS. For instance, the PS publication La France au pluriel speaks out clearly in favour of decentralisation, and does not refrain from using terms like ‘autonomie’ and ‘autogestion’ (‘self-administration’) as an answer to demands such as those of the Occitan ‘volem viure al país’ mobilisation. It also proposes a broad scheme of regional cultural policies, for instance a regionalisation of education, with regional languages as semi-compulsory subjects at schools in certain regions, which parents could refuse if they do not think that would be good for their children (Parti Socialiste, 1981). Part of this new approach to ‘plural France’ was also the usage of Breton during election campaigns. For instance, in 1973, Louis Le Pensec managed to answer a regional journalist in Breton after the législatives (Roué, 1996, p. 71) and the 1981 BREIS regional manifesto for the présidentielles carried a picture of François Mitterrand with the slogan “Gwel-loc’h e vo ar vuhez, warc’hoazh e Breizh, gant ar SossiaHsted” (Breis, 1981).

The Bureau Régional d’Étude et d’Information Socialiste (BREIS) was founded in 1972 as an amalgamation of five Breton départements, including Loire-Atlantique. This meant that Brittany had its first regional organisation within the PS. BREIS published two regional manifestos for national elections in 1978 and 1981, and also presented a general Breton manifesto for the regional elections from 1986 onwards, despite the division of candidates into departmental lists. As a result, the PS manifestos for the regional elections have generally been aimed at Brittany as a whole (BREIS, 1986, BREIS, 1992, Bretagne Nouveau Cap, 1998, Bretagne à Gauche, 2004), although they are sometimes intended to appeal as well to those more concerned with the départements happy as shown by the use of slogans such as “pour la Bretagne, faire gagner le Finistère!” (PS, 1992). As was the case with the centre-right, any preferences for further decentralisation or regionalisation are not discussed in the regional election manifestos. That continues to be something to be dealt with in Paris. This does not mean that regional and local PS élus have no opinion on the matter. Indeed, some are quite outspoken sup-
porters of more regional powers, preferring a special statute for Brittany similar to Corsica's, or are even categorised as part of Emsav (cf. Chartier & Larvor, 2002). However, there are also those that regard certain regionalist issues as less relevant, or as a potential threat to the republican principle of equality. Those two currents meet, however, in their criticism of prime minister Raffarin's proposals for decentralisation, seen as a 'transfer of tasks, without a transfer of financial means'. Even in a 2001 publication by BREIS, which was not involved in the elections, the PS regional councillors did not put forward very clear plans on the way regionalisation should go: "Il s'agit simplement d'affirmer la Région dans un rôle de stratégie avec un pouvoir d'impulsion et d'innovation" (BREIS, 2001, p.7).

The regional election manifests have focused more on the competences the Regional Council already has, and the regional language has consistently been regarded as one of those. In general, Breton regional identity has been given a prominent place in the PS's regional manifests: "Une nation moderne respecte l'identité régionale" (BREIS, 1986, p.15). Especially the more recent PS (in coalition with PCF and others) regional election manifests (Bretagne Nouveau Cap, 1998, Bretagne à Gauche, 2004a) have included rather concrete proposals for a Breton linguistic policy, aimed mainly at 'safeguarding the language' as an aspect of regional heritage. However, some hints to Breton as an everyday language were made: 'ouvrir à la langue bretonne tous les champs de la vie sociale en Bretagne' (Bretagne à Gauche, 2004a, p.51).

The main goal of the Breton PS, according to these manifestos, and the special linguistic policy document the left-wing coalition published for the 2004 regional elections (Bretagne à Gauche, 2004b), is to stimulate and facilitate the practice and learning of Breton for those who want to, without striving to achieve 'normalisation' of bilingualism through any form of obligation. More recently, the PS reintroduced the custom of the 1970s and early 1980s of, symbolically, adding subtitles in Breton to their regional manifestos to stress its regional flavour: 'Breizh war ′raog' (Bretagne nouveau cap, 1998) or 'Breizh a-gleiz Breizh d'and holl' (Bretagne à Gauche, 2004a).

Whereas in the 1970s and early 1980s the PS at national level sometimes adopted a regionalist discourse and could be regarded as the 'spokesperson of regionalist demands' (Monnier, 1994, p.354), while focusing primarily on Brittany, by the 1990s the political agenda of the PS in France had much fewer regionalist elements. At the Breton level, an influential section of the PS kept making certain proposals usually associated with Breton regionalism, such as the demand for reunification with Loire-Atlantique, the proposal for a more assertive linguistic policy, appeals to ratify the European

92 'It is a matter of simply confirming the region in a strategic role with a power of incentive and innovation' (translation FS).
93 'A modern nation respect the regional identity' (translation FS).
94 'To open for the Breton language all the aspects of social life in Brittany'.
Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, and the expressed preferences for more powers for the Conseil Régional. This is demonstrated by the PS political programmes at regional elections, particularly the most recent ones, and very recently in the policies of the PS-led regional executive since 2004. However, at national level the PS has started focusing largely on issues other than Breton regionalism. Only the issue of Corsica, and solutions to its violent conflict, has remained a pressing theme in Paris.

Les Verts
As long ago as 1974, René Dumont put himself forward as the first French ecologist candidate for national minorities at the presidential elections, and campaigned in Brittany on behalf of the Breton language and identity, with the Gwenn-ha-du as a backdrop (Kernalegenn, 2004). Ecologist political movements appeared at the same time as the conversion of part of the French left to regionalist issues, and the ecologist movements incorporated certain regionalist themes into their programmes from the start. The Ecologist current in French politics has been represented by various political parties and movements, but Les Verts has been the most constant and most successful. Les Verts was founded in 1984, so the regional elections in 1986 were one of their first appearances in the political arena. On this occasion one of their campaign leaflets in Brittany included a ‘test-minute’ to determine whether the reader was ‘écologiste’. One of the four test questions was “Le développement de la culture bretonne doit être encourage?” (Les Verts, 1986). Cultural regionalist demands, in particular, were regarded as a central part of the Breton Greens’ programme. A remarkable fact is that this had already been done in 1986 in the form of an appeal to promote both the Breton and Gallo cultures, something which most other political groups picked up much later. Apart from this, Les Verts in Brittany also pleaded for support of Diwan schools and the reunification of Brittany with Loire-Atlantique. This latter objective was underlined by the Breton Verts’ logo: a sunflower and a map of Brittany of five départements, with a Gwenn-ha-du black and with the striped background.

Les Verts in Brittany have thus adopted regionalism as a core element of their stance, classify themselves as regionalists, and can even be regarded as federalists, on the basis of a statement of one Conseiller Régional of Les Verts: “Les Verts donc sont régionalistes. C’est a dire que nous souhaitions une organisation fédérale de l’État avec comme unité de base la région” (interview, Les Verts, 2004). This is perhaps expressed more strongly in Brittany than the rest of France, but regionalism is part of the ideology of Les Verts nationally as well. For instance, the relevant national commission is called ‘Régions –

95 ‘The development of the Breton culture must be encouraged’ (translation FS).
96 ‘So Les Verts are regionalists. That means we wish for a federal organisation of the state with the region as base unit’ (translation FS).

250
Fédéralisme' and the 2004 European election programme of Les Verts for the whole of France stated:


More than other French political parties, Les Verts draw a parallel between working towards federalism and subsidiarity in the relationship between the European Union and Member States, and their opinion on the relationship between state and region.

The Breton Verts adopted a regionalist view but also saw a number of specific ecological battles turn into expressions of Breton identity, becoming interwoven with regionalist campaigns. Most notably, the 1981 protest against a nuclear power plant in Plogoff, and the demonstrations following the oil tanker disasters of the Amoco Cadiz (1978) and Erika (1999) turned from local problems into issues with a Breton dimension (Gemie, 2001, Kernalegenn, 2004). Particularly at European elections, Les Verts have repeatedly put forward joint lists with the UDB or other regionalists. On other occasions, they have been more reluctant, such as at the 1986 régionales, or those in 1998 when Les Verts refused requests by the UDB for cooperation (Guyonvarech, 1998, Monnier, 1998). Only in 2004, after the introduction of a new electoral system for the régionales with a higher electoral threshold, did Les Verts and UDB form a joint list. This was a demonstration of the ideological overlap between both parties in Brittany, although both maintain clear differences in priority as regards ecology and regionalism. However, common ground between regionalist and ecologist movements is not something that increased after the regionalisation of the early 1980s, nor was it even stimulated by the events of that period.

Regionalist parties

Union Démocratique Bretonne

Since the 1970s, the constitutional objective of the UDB has not changed, and the same term has been used consistently, namely ‘autonomie régionale’. Regional autonomy, based on a Breton assembly with legislative powers, was

97 ‘For Les Verts Europe is the right space to respond to the problems of citizens. But that Europe should be in direct connection with a level that is closer to them, namely the regions. Counterweight to the power of the EU, but also to that of the states, the region permits allows one to gain from diversities and to fight against uniformity’ (translation FS).
the demand in the political programme drawn up in 1977 (UDB, 1977, pp.58-9), and is the UDB’s objective more than 25 years later:

Donc l’UDB demande l’autonomie pour la Bretagne et eventuellement pour les autres régions en France98 (interview, UDB, 2004).

Pour nous évidemment l’espace pertinent c’est la région. Et c’est une autonomie qu’on voudrait, comment dire, tout ce qui concerne la vie quotidienne des Bretons99 (interview, UDB, 2004).

Separation from France and Breton independence, or even the use of ambiguous terms which leave that option open, have not been part of the UDB’s approach. In line with that choice, the UDB does not demand the recognition of a Breton nation, but of a ‘peuple breton’ (‘Breton people’). This has been its consistent demand over the past decades. The 1982 regionalisation did not alter this objective, apart from adding new requests for the ‘extension of regional powers’ (Convergence bretonne, 1986).

What did change was the context in which regional autonomy was presented and the arguments used by the UDB to legitimise it. This coincided with an ideological shift from Marxism to a European federalist and ecologist position. UDB’s elaborate political programme in 1977 stated clearly that

Ce tableau de la situation économique de la Bretagne conduit l’U.D.B. à dire que notre pays vit dans une situation coloniale faite de subordination et d’exploitation100 (UDB, 1977, p.11).

This formed the basis for demands for Breton autonomy:

Le premier responsable de la situation actuelle de la Bretagne est bien le capitalisme et l’État centralisé français n’est que son instrument. La transmission d’une partie des leviers de commande à des autorités locales ne résoudrait rien dans le cadre d’une société capitaliste où les travailleurs bretons continueraient d’être exploités101 (UDB, 1977, p.58).

98 ‘So the UDB demands autonomy for Brittany and possibly for the other regions of France’ (translation FS).
99 ‘The relevant space for us is obviously the region. And it’s an autonomy that we would want, how to put it, for all, all that concerns the everyday life of Bretons’ (translation FS).
100 ‘That picture of the economical situation of Brittany leads the UDB to say that our country lives in a colonial situation consisting of subordination and exploitation’ (translation FS).
101 ‘In the first place responsible for the present situation of Brittany is capitalism and the French centralised state is nothing but its instrument. The transfer of a part
An ideological evolution took place in the mid 1980s, the years between the decision on regionalisation and the first regional elections. After the surprising election victories of the Parti Socialiste, supported by the UDB, and the disappointment of many militants over Gaston Deferre’s moderate regionalisation, tensions over close relations with the French left ran high. In 1982, the former party spokesman and one of the UDB’s founders, Ronan Leprohon, left the party for the PS, and after the fiery 1984 party congress the more nationalist sections of Brest and Léon left the party to form Frankiz Breizh (Free Brittany). This party still exists, although it maintains very close links with UDB in practice (Nicolas, 2001, pp.88-92). After the very disappointing results of the first regional elections in 1986, an internal analysis concluded that the arguments and slogans of the 1970s had lost their appeal (Monnier, 1999, p.34). The slogan ‘Bretagne = Colonne’ was abandoned, and gradually replaced by a focus on the construction of a ‘Europe of the regions and peoples’ and a European federalism.

This was reiterated in campaign manifestoes (e.g. UDB, 1978, UDB & PSU-Bretagne, 1981). In the 1980s, the strong belief in industrialisation that combined the neo-Marxist analyses was dropped and the internal colonialism thesis abandoned. This paved the way for an increasingly strong ecologist element in UDB.

The 1994 document ‘Une Bretagne responsable dans un monde solidaire’ stated the UDB’s doctrine at the time and confirmed the link between Europeanisation and regional autonomy:

Les États-nations unitaires qui, sur le modèle de la France, répondent au principe selon lequel il convient de traiter indifféremment des réalités différentes, sont voués à disparaître au bénéfice d’ensembles politiques plus vastes qui, pour fonctionner démocratiquement et prospérer, devront laisser respirer les communautés de base. Toutefois, les États-nations pourraient garder provisoirement certaines de leurs compétences d’ici à l’avènement d’une fédération des peuples et régions d’Europe102 (Fievet & Guyonvarc’h, 1994, p.20).

The example of Corsica, which had a more powerful regional administration, and whose residents were recognised as a ‘people’, has not been used much in Brittany to mobilise support for a similar arrangement. Be-

of its levers of command to local authorities would solve nothing in the framework of a capitalist society where Breton workers continue to be exploited’ (translation FS).

102 ‘The unitary nation-states that, based on the French model, answer to the principle according to which it is beneficial to treat different realities indifferently, are bound to disappear to the advantage of larger political structures that must let base communities breath in order to function democratically and prosper. However, the nation-states could retain for the time being some of their competencies now, until the accession to a federation of peoples and regions of Europe’ (translation FS).
cause of the association of Corsican autonomy with violence and separatism, the Corsican example is regarded as counterproductive within the UDB, and has been avoided (interview, UDB, 2004). With European federalism as the argument behind regional autonomy, Breton autonomy was envisaged within a federal France, and within a federal Europe (Fievet & Guyonvarc'h, 1994).

Notre objectif n’est pas de nous séparer de la France. C’est de faire évoluer les institutions françaises. Faire le fédéralisme interne. Nous sommes des fédéralistes européens\(^\text{103}\) (interview, UDB, 2004).

However, while Corsica had not been adopted as a useful model, the devolution in Scotland and Wales which took place in the late 1990s influenced the UDB strongly (e.g. UDB, 1997). The UDB reacted quickly, and presented ‘Une statut politique pour la Bretagne’, which was modelled on, and referred explicitly to the example of Wales (UDB, 1999, p.1). Other frequently used examples in the 1990s were the German länder, the new independent states of the former Soviet Union, and Catalonia (but not the Basque Country, because of its association with violence). This fits in with the important position of Europeanisation in the UDB’s discourse, but is perhaps something that appeals more to those interested in regionalist theory than a popular vote-catcher in election campaigns.

Part of this international orientation is also the intensity of organisational links with regionalist movements in other parts of France and abroad, and the UDB’s role as an instigator. Lynch notes the discrepancy between the position of Breton regionalism internationally and within Brittany. The Breton movement takes ‘transnational regionalism’ extremely seriously, and plays a prominent role in cooperation between regionalist parties, but has enjoyed very little political success within Brittany itself (1996, p.105).

The 2004 regional elections showed that the UDB is prepared to make compromises on its already relatively moderate regionalist goal of regional autonomy. The election programme of the coalition in which the UDB (and Frankiz Breizh) joined Les Verts only mentioned the issue in an annex, with a proposal to move from ‘déscentralisation’ to ‘régionalisation’. The inclusion of a demand to safeguard the ‘equality between territories’ and ‘efficient control’ on the regions, and the absence of terms like ‘autonomy’ or ‘legislative powers’, means it is really more of a Les Verts proposal than a regionalist one:

Afin d’éviter les dérives libéraux ou communautaristes, la régionalisation ne peut se concevoir sans un ancrage fort au pacte républicain issu de notre histoire d’état-

\(^{103}\) ‘Our objective is not to separate ourselves from France. It is to help develop the French institutions. Create internal federalism. We are European federalists’ (translation FS).

Other political regionalist movements

Apart from the UDB, no party has existed and participated with any level of consistency at elections during the period since 1982. Some political parties existed for a limited number of years, such as the Parti pour l’Organisation d’une Bretagne Libre (POBL). Others were founded more recently, such as the Mouvement Régionaliste de Bretagne (MRB) and the Parti Breton. Emgann has existed since 1983, but has only occasionally taken an interest in participating in elections, while the Armée Révolutionnaire Bretonne (ARB) has dedicated itself to violent action. Apart from these parties, a number of individuals or ad-hoc groups have participated at elections on the basis of a regionalist programme. Although formally a separate political party, Frankiz Breizh has remained very close to the UDB, and has nearly always been in the same electoral coalitions.

The period directly after the decision to introduce regional governments and elections saw the foundation of two Breton political parties, namely the POBL and Emgann. The POBL, which was founded in 1982 by Yann Fouéré, a former leader of the MOB, presented itself as Breton in the first place, in contrast to the ‘leftist’ UDB: ‘ni à gauche, ni a droite: breton’ (Nicolas, 2001, p.98). They were also not afraid to use the terms ‘nationalist’ and ‘nation’ to describe themself and Brittany (POBL, 1990). At the 1986 regional elections the party demanded “l’émancipation du people Breton et l’autonomie de la Bretagne, dans le respet des solidarités avec les autres peuples d’Europe” (Démosthènes Bretonne, 1986). The POBL took the term ‘autonomy’ a step further than the UDB, coupling ‘national autonomy’ to ‘national rights’ and regarding Breton independence as a possibility (Nicolas, 2001, p.102). In a more elaborate programme in 1990 the idea of ‘souveraineté bretonne’ took a central place and it was made very clear that this meant the creation of an ‘État breton’ (POBL, 1990, pp.12-13). At its height the POBL managed to assemble around 300 militants (Nicolas, 2001, p.102), but never got much support at elections.

104 ‘In order to avoid liberal or communautarist tendencies, regionalisation cannot be conceived being strongly embedded in a republican pact originating from our historu as nation-state. It defines the respect for fundamental rights: education, health, work, environment, access to public services, equality of citizens, equality of territories; the state must be its guarantor’ (translation FS).

105 ‘Pobl’ also means ‘people’ in Breton.

106 ‘Neither at the right, nor at the left: Breton’ (translation FS).

107 ‘The emancipation of the Breton people and the autonomy of Brittany, respecting the solidarities with the other peoples of Europe’ (translation FS).
Emgann ("combat") originated from committees for the liberation of ‘political prisoners’, those involved in the series of violent actions of the late 1970s. Emgann was founded in 1983 as a political party, but does not participate in elections – apart from being part of the all-Breton coalition ‘peuple Breton, people d’Europe’ for the 1992 regional elections. It is widely regarded as a political wing of the ARB, and publishes ARB’s communiqués in its party journal (Nicolas, 2001, p.103). However, Emgann operates as a political movement on its own, organising and participating in mass demonstrations, while its members have been condemned for actions like painting over road signs. Emgann has been a nationalist and radical left-wing movement since its foundation, with an independent socialist Breton state as its objective. Unlike the POBL it has been very clear that independence is its only autonomy objective (interview, Emgann, 2004). Although it only had 200, mostly young, members in the late 1990s, and does not participate in elections, it is a very active party, and very present within Emsav. A series of bombings between 1998 and 2000 by the ARB did not reduce its militancy, even when its leader Gaël Robin was imprisoned for connections with the ARB and its attacks.

Both Emgann and POBL were founded following the decision to regionalise France, and Nicolas (2001, p.3) states disillusionment with the Mitterrand government as one reason for its establishment. However, both also built on structures that had existed earlier, namely the amnesty committees and the MOB respectively. Neither could or would make use of the new regional elections and government to mobilise support. It is true that the regional elections became a platform for a grand coalition of all Breton movements, including Emgann in 1992, under the name ‘Peuple Breton, peuple d’Europe’. But apart from bringing different parts of Emsav together, it was not very successful.

More recently, a number of other regionalist parties have been formed. The Mouvement Régionaliste de Bretagne (MRB) was founded by a former Front National and Mouvement National Républicain conseiller régional in the région Centre. His name is Xavier Guillemot and he advocated a regionalism directed against centralism, as well as against separatism. The MRB has put forward candidates at elections since 1998, as much on a regionalist as on an anti-immigration platform, albeit without much success.

The Parti Breton was founded in 2001 as a moderate centre-right party whose ambition was to build a strong Breton party with more general appeal and a larger voter potential. Until now, it has only put forward two candidates in the 2004 cantonales as a kind of pilot project, and wants to build up the party before really entering the political arena (interview, Parti Breton, 2004). The Parti Breton calls for autonomy for Brittany as a step towards independence and, like the UDB, the formation of a Europe of the regions occupies a central place in its ideology. In more general terms, the Parti Breton stresses its influences from abroad, particularly Wales and Scotland, and makes much of its international linkages. On its website, the party’s name is
translated in English as ‘Breton National Party’ (www.partibreton.org), with the ‘national’ omitted in French because of the negative connotations that would have (interview, Parti Breton, 2004).

Finally, the ARB took up arms again in the late 1990s, with a series of bombings on buildings inside and outside Brittany (including the Mairie of Minister of the Interior Jean-Pierre Chevènement in Belfort and a tax office in prime minister Lionel Jospin’s constituency of Haute-Garonne) (Tourault, 2002, p.293). The actions were intended to bring about the creation of a socialist Breton state, the ‘reunification’ of Brittany and official status for Breton, but were also directed against water pollution, nuclear power stations, tourist complexes and other ‘projects of colonisation’ (Torreiro, 2002a, p.62). The actions ended abruptly after an employee of a bombed McDonald’s restaurant near Quevert in 2000 was killed ‘unintentionally’. This first death in the history of contemporary violent Breton ‘resistance’ caused internal tensions within ARB and the postponement of further actions.

 Organisation of Emsav after regionalisation

In 1980, on the eve of Mitterrand’s election victory and before regionalisation, the UDB had nearly 1,200 members, which steadily declined to the present number of 700 (Chartier & Larvor, 2002, p.24-25). As regionalisation did not automatically mean a larger number of political posts, at least not until 2004, and also meant more time, money and attention to develop the party, the introduction of an elected regional council was not really a boost for the UDB’s resources. It did not really adapt its organisation to regionalisation. Its party headquarters, located in Brest, were transferred to Nantes, and not the regional capital Rennes, which was the original Breton political arena.

The organisational and ideological crisis of the UDB in the early 1980s, with a variety of splits, had little to do with regionalisation. The cause was instead the discussion of the time concerning whether to engage in further integration into the hexagonal left, or avoid become a satellite organisation of the PS (Nicolas, 2001, p.85). After the PS 1981 presidential and general election victories, Breton PS leader Louis Le Pensec even declared that “l’UDB n’a plus lieu d’exister puisque nous avons gagné et que nous allons appliquer notre programme qui est aussi le sien” (cited in Nicolas, 2001, p.83). The prospect of a Breton regional council was not widely seen as a new opportunity for the UDB to become a large party itself. At the time of regionalisation, key members left UDB for the PS because they felt they could do more for Brittany there. Others went and founded another regionalist party, Frankiz Breizh, while Emgann and POBL were also founded at the same time. All in

108 “There is no room for the UDB because we have won and we will apply our programme which is also their’s” (translation FS).
all, this period was hardly characterised by a belief that the UDB could develop into a large Breton force in the new regional council.

In 1981, the UDB had supported the presidency of François Mitterrand, and during the 1980s it kept approaching French political parties with a view to forming election coalitions. In 1986, Les Verts preferred to go solo, and the UDB allied itself with the PSU and a number of small pacifist or ecologist organisations. In 1992 and 1998, Les Verts rejected proposals for cooperation at the regional elections as well (Monnier, 1998), and 1992 was the only time the four Breton parties put forward one unified list, under the label ‘Peuple Breton, peuple d’Europe’. As none of those coalition tactics yielded improved election results for the UDB, they participated on their own in 1998, which again did not prove to be the magic formula. The attraction of the UDB remained simply too low to obtain seats without a larger coalition partner, such as Les Verts – finally – in 2004. The efforts of the UDB to avoid being associated with violence, and the refusal of more radical groups to cooperate in any way with ‘French’ parties, meant the democratic and the extreme and violent factions of Emsav remained separate. Together with a whole range of new cultural and specialised political organisations, and a couple of new political parties founded in the late 1990s and first years of the new millennium, Emsav has become more nebulous instead of more unified since the 1980s.

7.6 Conclusion

If one looks at the main criteria for the emergence of a regional political space that Keating (1997) identifies – namely a sense of regional identity, a regionalised party system, an electoral system focusing debate on the region, and regional media – only the regional identity is present in Brittany. The political party system has remained an integral part of the French party system, with the departmental organisations as the most important smaller units. The regional elections held since 1986 have focused the political debate and election campaigns as much on the départements, where it already was with the cantonal elections, as on the région. Regional media, newspapers as well as television, concentrate much more on smaller (the départements, Haute-Bretagne and Basse-Bretagne), and larger (Grand-Ouest) entities. In some ways, the région has become an important territory, but it remains one amongst many possible spatial divisions. Regionalisation added the région, but it did not gain predominance over other territorial entities, and other factors that have been obstacles to a regional political arena, such as the cumul des mandats and préfectures persisted.

Consequently, regional elections remained largely second order elections, where considerations related to national French politics steered voters’ choices. There has been no major difference in the election results of regional and of legislative elections and in 1986, when they were held on the
same day, the result of the regional elections was almost a carbon copy of the legislatives. The UDB evolved ideologically after 1982, but it seems more correct to say that this reorientation coincided with the moment of regionalisation than claiming that it was caused by it. Disappointment with Deffere’s decentralisation and even more disappointment after high hopes about the first regional elections came down to very little in reality and played a role in generating an urgency to change direction. The diminished appeal of neo-marxist solutions, and ongoing European integration were more important factors. The introduction of regional elections and regional institutions did not cause an increase in votes of regionalist parties and a maturation of those parties, nor significant changes in the adoption of regionalist views held by Breton branches of the main French parties. This was despite the fact that there is considerable popular support for further regionalisation and legislative powers for the Regional Council, as well as for other regionalist demands such as the reunification of five Breton départements, and a more extensive linguistic policy. Nevertheless, these issues are not high enough on Breton voters’ lists of priorities to turn to the regionalist parties, and neither the regionalist movements, nor the infrastructure introduced by regionalisation have put them higher on the political agenda.