

The Political Economy of Nationalism: Stateless Nations and the World-System in the Longue Durée

by

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Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

Cardiff Business School
March 2024

Summary

This research has two objectives: firstly, to analyse the long-term factors behind differences in economic development and spatial inequality; and secondly, to uncover whether this spatial inequality affects the salience of secessionism. To achieve this, factors such as history, geography, politics, and institutions will be examined.

This thesis posits that to understand the economy of a place, it must first be situated within a world-system. By adopting a holistic approach, this analysis more fully illuminates the internal contradictions and socio-economic struggles within a particular place, as these are shaped by the world-system.

This work incorporates a *Longue Durée* approach to history, popularized by the Annales School and Fernand Braudel. This form of analysis involves moving away from viewing nationalism as spatiotemporally permanent. A *Longue Durée* approach helps to uncover when, how, and why nations develop, and by understanding their origins, we will be better equipped to understand these movements today.

This thesis specifically examines the role of stateless European nations within the world-system to determine whether their economic position is primarily due to their statelessness or other factors such as geography or history. Given their nature as stateless nations, secessionism is at least a hypothetically viable option for these places. This work will therefore address how nationalist politics interacts with economic structure, as well as the ensuing reaction of majority nationalism to minority nationalism within the world-system.

The main case studies chosen for this analysis are: Wales within the United Kingdom, Catalunya within Spain, and the Mezzogiorno and Padania within Italy. Each of these case studies is geographically close to the core of the international

world-system, yet each has a distinct set of economic structures and outcomes. The question, therefore, is what separates them and what binds them.

This thesis finds that the form of incorporation into the central state is a stronger explanator for differences in economic development levels than the date of incorporation. Furthermore, geography and its interaction with the economic base are vital in understanding the long-term economic development of each case study. Of particular importance, it appears that some form of economic independence (formal or informal) allows for developmental policies that positively improve the position of stateless nations. This seems a necessary but not sufficient factor in explaining differences in economic development. Finally, the salience of nationalism appears not to be linked with the unevenness of economic development per se, but rather with the unevenness of economic development during times of state crisis. Conditions at the level of the world-system affect the salience and internal composition of nationalism within the state.

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Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank *Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol* and the Cardiff Business School for their generous funding which allowed me to undertake this PhD. More importantly, I would like to thank them for their trust and for the academic freedom they gave me to write a piece of work which I hope is both challenging and rewarding.

This work speaks to the social forces that connect us and I would therefore like to thank members of my own, personal world-system. These are relations of dependence that make us stronger, not weaker. To my partner, my mam, my dad, and my sister: thank you. Thank you also to mam-gu and nain for your love and your pride. I would also like to thank my friends: my friends in Cardiff for making it home, and my friends in London for showing me that home (for a time!) can be anywhere.

On an intellectual level I have many people to thank – many more than can be named here – and each deserves more acknowledgement and thanks than I am able to give in writing. Firstly, I would like to thank Huw Williams for beginning this entire process. I am aware that none of this would have happened without you, and for that I will be eternally grateful. Thank you also to Jason W Moore for opening your door to me (both physically and metaphorically!); you opened my eyes to the importance of nature in shaping our economic and social systems. My heartfelt thanks also go to Neil Evans, Nemanja Lukić, Dan Evans, and Robert Lloyd. You all helped immeasurably in your own ways.

Lastly, I want to thank Calvin Jones. In one way or another, this journey began in 2015 when I read an article of Calvin's on the world-system (finally, the world made sense!). Thank you for your support, your morale-destroying red pen, and the space

you gave me to express and develop my own intellectual convictions and curiosities. However, thank you mostly for your kindness and your friendship. It feels fitting that you were here at the beginning and the end of the journey; it was a pleasure to walk down this path with you.

Poor Wales. So far from Heaven, so close to England. – Sharon Penman

Everything must be recaptured and relocated in the general framework of history, so that despite the difficulties, the fundamental paradoxes and contradictions, we may respect the unity of history which is also the unity of life. - Fernand Braudel

If we have chosen the position in life in which we can most of all work for mankind, no burdens can bow us down, because they are sacrifices for the benefit of all; then we shall experience no petty, limited, selfish joy, but our happiness will belong to millions, our deeds will live on quietly but perpetually at work, and over our ashes will be shed the hot tears of noble people. – Karl Marx

This you may say of man - when theories change and crash, when schools, philosophies, when narrow dark alleys of thought, national, religious, economic, grow and disintegrate, man reaches, stumbles forward, painfully, mistakenly sometimes. Having stepped forward, he may slip back, but only half a step, never the full step back. – John Steinbeck

The mark of the modern world is the imagination of its profiteers and the counter-assertiveness of the oppressed. Exploitation and the refusal to accept exploitation as either inevitable or just constitute the continuing antinomy of the modern era, joined together in a dialectic which has far from reached its climax in the twentieth century.
– Immanuel Wallerstein

I mam a dad, am bopeth.

To mum and dad, for everything.

I. Introduction

Two fundamental objectives lie at the heart of this research. The first is an analysis of the economic development of stateless nations over the long term and account for differences in the level of development. In so doing, it will examine the spatial inequalities that exist under the umbrella of the state, and whether this spatial inequality affects the salience of political nationalism. This thesis incorporates the role of geography, politics, institutions, and history into its analysis of economic development. We know that these factors (and luck) are important factors in shaping whether a place is rich or poor but how and in which ways these factors interact to create prosperity is yet to be fully uncovered. At one time, the answer seemed simple; the process of change from poverty to wealth, from 'backwardness' to modernity was viewed as a series of stages through which each state would have to pass. These stages were based on the notional development path of Britain¹, due to its position as the pre-eminent industrial power (Rostow, 1959) (Parsons, 1964) (Almond & Coleman, 1960). Britain's path, therefore, could and should be emulated by others and they too could become 'rich' and 'developed'. This theory - which became known as modernisation theory - made diagnosing laggard states relatively simple; all that was needed was a little more industrialisation here, a slight change in agricultural structure there and each nation would in the end 'modernise' in the same way that Britain had. This theory viewed states as being hermetically sealed, meaning they could be analysed as if mechanically and structurally independent of other states. As Tom Nairn (1975, p. 10) put it:

Modern capitalist development was launched by a number of West-European states which had accumulated the potential for doing so over a long period of history. The

¹ These authors continually conflate 'Britain' and 'England' which is an issue I wish to rectify in this thesis.

even-development notion was that this advance could be straightforwardly followed, and the institutions responsible for it copied—hence the periphery, the world’s countryside, would catch up with the leaders in due time. This evening up would proceed through the formation of a basically homogeneous enlightened class throughout the periphery: the international or ‘cosmopolitan’ élite in charge of the diffusion process.

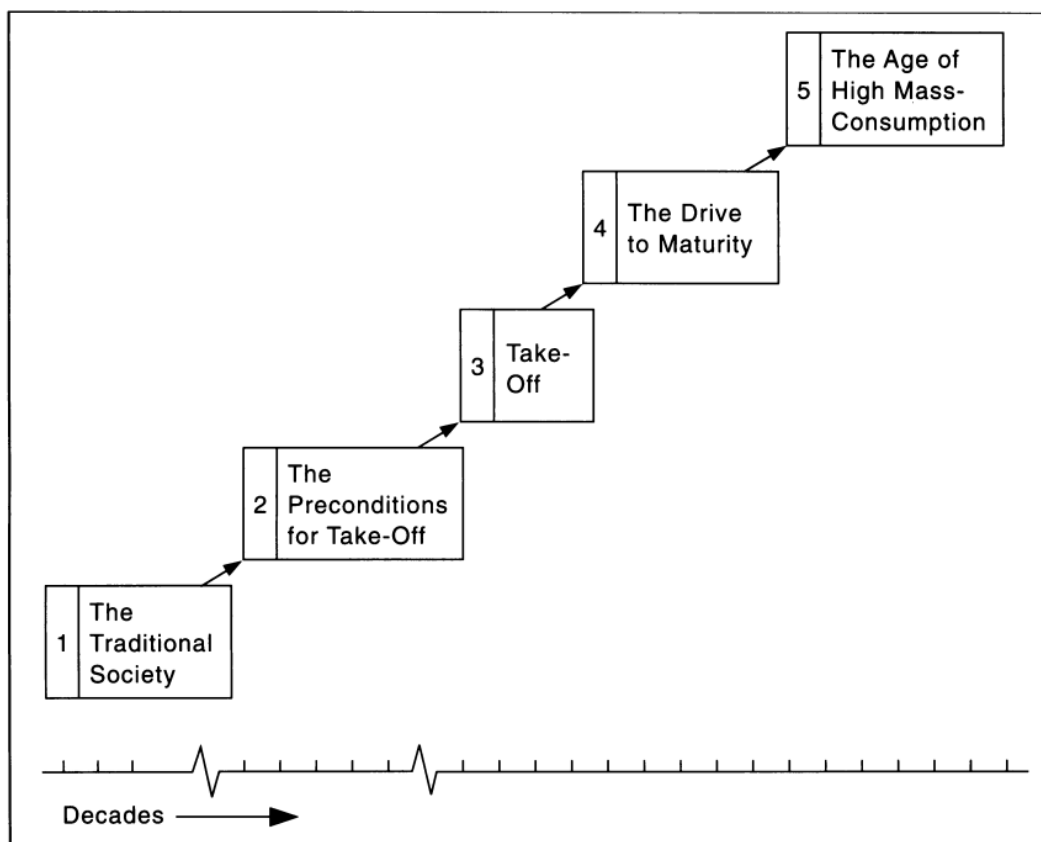


Figure 1: The Rostow Model. Source: (Binns, 1995, p. 305).

By arguing that the conditions for development are entirely endogenous, however, modernisation theory inadvertently argues that “uneven economic and hence social outcomes [are] somehow ‘natural’” (Jones, 2015, pp. 274-275). In other words, if countries have been unable to emulate and ‘catch up’ with Britain and other Western powers, the fault rests on their inability to follow the ‘correct’ policies, rather than on

the structure of the world-economy. The modernist theory of development assumes that development within a country is largely dependent on endogenous factors whereby each country represents a separate system of economic production (Lenski, 2013). This would entail that it is solely how internal resources such as capital and labour are utilized that affects development, alongside “the unseen workings in the ‘black box’ of innovation” (Jones, 2015, p. 275). If this were the reality, we would merely have a handful of successful transitions – such as those of Britain and France – while ‘failures’ to successfully transition would be the norm (Tilly, 1992, p. 7). The failure of mainstream approaches to explain development paths or remediate dysfunction suggests we should not theorise as if states develop in a vacuum and that we must take a different approach to economic development. Britain’s developmental path was shaped by external factors and actors and these places were themselves shaped by development in Britain. These entities do not have “separate, parallel histories, but [are] parts of a whole reflecting that whole” (Wallerstein, 1979, p. 53).

Furthermore, all parts of Britain did not develop evenly; Wales developed differently from England. Southern England developed differently from Northern England. This thesis posits that to understand the economy of a place, whether regional, national, or multinational, we must first situate it within a world-system. Britain’s development, and the development of its constituent parts, took the path that it did due to the “bundles of relationships” (Moore, 2015) that exist between places in the world system. With the holistic approach that a world-systems analysis engenders, the internal contradictions, class antagonisms and socio-economic struggles inside a particular place are illuminated more fully, as these are themselves shaped by the world-system. As Samir Amin (2010, pp. 14-15) argued regarding the world-system:

I hold that the processes governing the system as a whole determine the framework in which local adjustments operate. In other words, this systemic approach makes the

distinction between external factors and internal factors relative, since all the factors are internal at the level of the world-system.

This mode of thought, therefore, is dialectical in that we must not only examine the structure of, for example, the Welsh economy, but also analyse the consequences of this structure for both the whole world-system and its constituent parts. Mao Zedong (1987, p. 21) explained a dialectical outlook as follows:

the world outlook of materialist dialectics holds that to understand the development of a thing we should study it internally and in its relations with other things; in other words, the development of things should be seen as their internal and necessary self-movement, while each thing in its movement is interrelated with and interacts on the things around it.

In contrast to Modernisation Theory, Dependency Theory and World-Systems Analysis point to the “deformation effects of exploitative integration” which inhibit some forms of development while causing other forms (Bornschier & Trezzini, 1997, p. 435). Modernisation theory neglects the role of global political, historical, and economic features which can hamper development. It should be clear that the conditions within Britain – and Britain’s position within the global world-system at the beginning of industrialisation - were immeasurably different to the internal and external conditions which affect development in, for example, western Africa today. As Sunkel and Girvan (1973, pp. 133-134) explained:

the reality of our underdevelopment has been seen mainly from the vantage point of conventional theories of growth and modernization. The optimum functioning of the social system is therefore perceived in terms of the ideal theoretical framework of the mature capitalist economy, represented in practice by the developed countries; underdevelopment is an imperfect and earlier stage on the way towards the ideal prototype. However, the formative stages of development and the present structure of

the underdeveloped countries are radically different from the assumptions implicit in such a theoretical logic.

In the pages to come this thesis will argue that the functional logic of a country's unfavourable position within the world-system deforms internal development. As Hesketh (2017, p. 395) argued, this approach "offers a multilinear and interactive framework whereby world history is presented as an ontological whole, therefore collapsing the false distinction between international and domestic society, and instead looking at the sociological constitution of difference".

In challenging orthodox theories of development, this thesis will incorporate a Longue Durée approach to history, pioneered by Marc Bloch, Lucien Fevre and the Annales School, later popularised by Fernand Braudel. This form of historical inquiry looks at long-term historical structures, their trends, and patterns. Historic biographies of individuals are replaced by a *histoire totale* which follows the weaving contours of history. In effect, a Longue Durée approach is a specific way of dividing and reassembling time. It contains within it the long-term – the seemingly unmoving – which includes natural environments which are resistant to human intervention such as our mountains and seas. There also exists the medium-term - or *conjuncture* - which includes within it economic cycles, usually measured in centuries. The very short term - or *the event* - bursts forward. Yet, *the event* holds within it both momentary pressures and longer-term thrusts (Tomich, 2012). A Longue Durée approach to history therefore moves away from seeing history as a series of linear, teleological events but instead argues that history contains within it plural temporalities, each of which affects the short-term in its own way. As Braudel (2009, p. 182) wrote in explaining the Longue Durée approach:

Whether one is writing about 1558 or the year of Our Lord 1958, if one wants to understand the world, one has to determine the hierarchy of forces, currents, and individual movements, and then put them together to form an overall constellation. Throughout, one must distinguish between long-term movements and momentary

pressures, finding the immediate sources of the latter and the long-term thrust of the former. The world of 1558, so bleak in France, was not produced just out of the events of that charmless year. The same is true for this difficult year of 1958 in France. Each "current reality" is the conjoining of movements with different origins and rhythms. The time of today is composed simultaneously of the time of yesterday, of the day before yesterday, and bygone days.

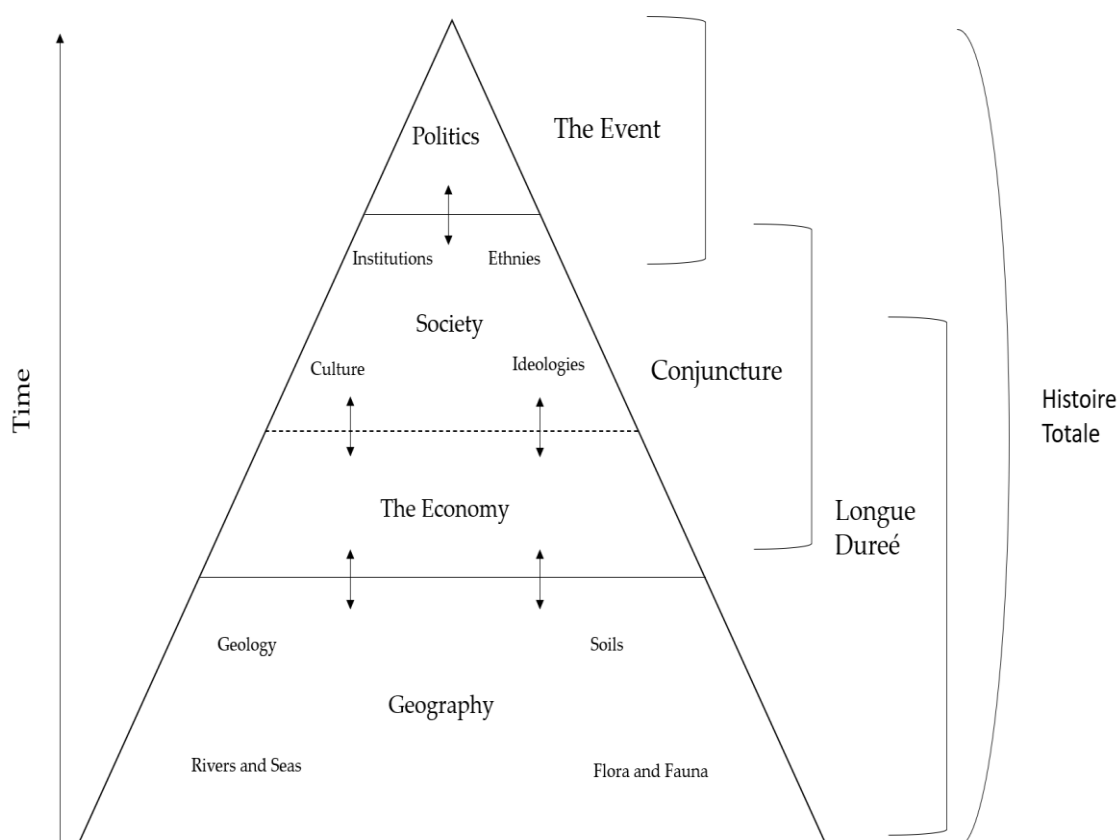


Figure 2: The Study of History via a Longue Durée approach. Author's Own.

By incorporating a Longue Durée approach to history we will also see that nations – and therefore nationalism – are not spatiotemporally permanent or fixed but are instead socio-political constructions. We will be able to analyse not only the long-term thrusts behind state and national development but also analyse how *the event* or short-term pressures affect nationalist sentiment for the majority and minority nation. By understanding the origins, trends, and contours of nations – which today give the aura of permanence - it will be possible to build a picture of how human interaction over extensive space and time has affected regional inequalities, nationalism, and economic development today.

This thesis will look specifically at the role of European stateless nations within the world-system. The main case studies that have been chosen for this analysis are as follows: Wales within the United Kingdom, Catalunya² within Spain, and the Mezzogiorno³ and Padania⁴ within Italy. The main objective of this research is to uncover which factors account for the place of each respective case study within the world-system and level of economic development and whether spatial inequality has affected the likelihood of secessionism in these places. These were not the only case studies that such an analysis could have used. It was decided that case studies should be under the umbrella of separate states. For example, Scotland and Wales would not be picked. The reasoning was that this would allow for an account of what may be generalisable about the position of stateless nations, rather than being state specific. That is, the British state may have a particular way of interacting with stateless nations, separate to Spain, or Russia, or France and so on.

² I have decided to use the Catalan spelling, and this will be kept for the remainder of the thesis.

³ The Mezzogiorno is defined in this analysis as the region of Italy which once constituted The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and Sardinia.

⁴ Padania is the name proposed for an independent state in northern Italy and its name derived from the river Po.

Secondly, it was important that each case study existed at the centre of the geosocial construct of Europe. This is because Europe is the cradle of the modern nation-state. By choosing places outside of this construction, an analysis of the imposition of nationhood onto ethnic or linguistic groups would have to be undertaken. In the context of much of the non-European world, national boundaries were drawn haphazardly, and therefore the building blocks of nationhood were different. Further study would be beneficial in analysing whether regional inequality affects the salience of political nationalism differently outside of the cradle of the nation-state. Other case studies in Europe were considered, such as the former Yugoslavia, Corsica, and Belgium. The inclusion of the former Yugoslavia was difficult for two reasons. Firstly, the (ethnic) composition of the central state had changed at relatively frequent intervals over the time period in question. This makes it more difficult to account for the role of the central state over a long period of time. The second factor was the non-aligned position of Yugoslavia in the Cold-War era which placed it in a very particular, and non-generalisable position. This was coupled with the fact that it was not traditionally capitalist. Corsica was not chosen also due to the fact that the central state had changed hands at regular intervals, making more generalisable findings more difficult. While Belgium would have been an interesting case study, the fact that Padania is being 'created' quite visibly in real time, an exposition of the processes behind this seemed particularly pertinent. Due to the need for brevity, there was no space for more cases studies. These realities mean that these case studies are similar enough to be compared, yet different enough to over an analysis of different variables.

These case studies have been chosen to uncover which factors are important for economic development and how these different factors interact. Each of these case studies can be described as geographically close to the core of the international world-system, yet each one has a distinct set of economic structures and outcomes.

By using current GDP⁵ per capita as a unit of measurement, it is possible to state that Wales is relatively poor within the context of both the UK and western and southern Europe, Catalunya is relatively rich compared to the rest of Spain while its GDP per head is about average for western and southern Europe; the *Mezzogiorno* is the poorest region in western and southern Europe while Padania includes some of the most affluent regions of Europe. Figure 3 shows the GDP per capita of each case study:

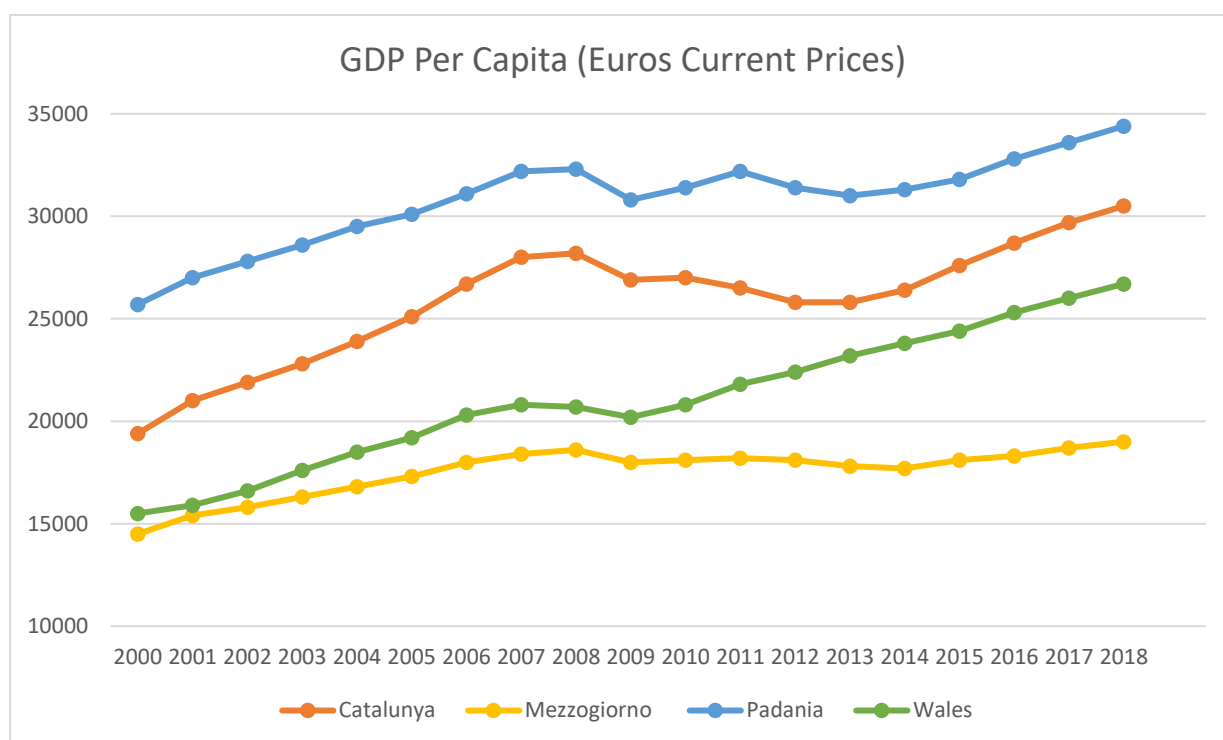


Figure 3: GDP Per Capita (Euros 2018 Prices). Author's Own. Data taken from: (Eurostat, 2023).

⁵ There are clear positives and negatives to using GDP/GDP per Capita as a unit of measurement. GDP per Capita offers a standardised measure by which to compare economic output between regions and it is a widely used indicator of economic 'development'. However, GDP per Capita only measures the average economic output per person in a country or region and does not capture variations in income distribution or disparities in wealth. As a result, it may mask inequalities and fail to reflect the economic realities of different segments of the population. Importantly, GDP per capita alone does not capture important dimensions of human well-being, such as health, education, social inclusion, and quality of life. The purpose of this thesis, however, is to analyse what we may deem to be 'capitalist' development. This does not necessarily take these factors into account. At similar levels of GDP per Capita, it has been shown that socialist governments had better relative physical quality of life results (Cereseto & Waitzkin, 1986).

Due to the nature of these places as stateless nations, the political superstructure is likely to interact with the economic base in novel ways; nationalism – and therefore secessionism – is a hypothetically viable option for these places. This thesis will therefore address how nationalism interacts with economic structure, as well as the ensuing reaction of majority nationalism to minority nationalism⁶ within the world-system (and vice versa). The purpose will be to analyse when and in which ways nationalism becomes salient and whether this is linked to world-system position. These case studies contains nationalist movements with varying degrees of influence, power, and success. This will allow for an analysis of how and in which ways world-system position affects nationalist movements and demands.

Samir Amin (2010, p. 84) argued that “capitalism is not the United States and Germany, with India and Ethiopia only ‘halfway’ capitalist. Capitalism is the United States and India, Germany and Ethiopia, taken together”. This can be expanded; capitalism is not only Germany but also east Germany and west Germany, Frankfurt and Leipzig, New York and Detroit, London and Blaenau Gwent, Milan and Bari. To understand capitalism and our current world-system, we must establish an analysis that ensures places are “taken together”. The aim is to allow these places to be analysed, studied and understood on their own terms, rather than solely through the lens of their respective cores. Each place should be at the centre of its own understanding of itself, and this regional reality is oft obfuscated within ‘British’ or ‘Spanish’ or ‘Italian’ history. A world-systems analysis allows us to respect the

⁶ Majority nationalism is here defined as the nationalism of the overarching state, for example, Spanish nationalism whereas minority nationalism refers to the nationalism of attempting to achieve statehood, for example, Catalan nationalism. Majority and minority nationalism in this instance does not infer that one is the nationalism ‘of the majority’ or ‘of the minority’ but instead infers whether it is the nationalism prescribed by the independent state or a subregion of that state. This is the definition as used by scholars such as (Gagnon, et al., 2011) and (Watson, 1990).

diverse histories of these places while maintaining the harmony of unity at the level of the world-system.

This work is Materialist and Marxist in its epistemological outlook and follows the framework of historical and dialectical materialism as espoused by Marx and Engels. This is the notion that the institutions of human society such as religion, government, culture, and so on develop from the material underpinnings of that society. At a basic level, each human being must engage in economic activities to satisfy the necessities of life such as food, clothing, and housing.

What, then, is the chief force in the complex of conditions of material life of society? ... This force, historical materialism holds, is the method of procuring the means of life necessary for human existence, the mode of production of material values – food, clothing, footwear, houses, fuel, instruments of production, etc. – which are indispensable for the life and development of society.

In order to live, people must have food, clothing, footwear, shelter, fuel, etc.; in order to have these material values, people must produce them; and in order to produce them, people must have the instruments of production with which food, clothing, footwear, shelter, fuel, etc., are produced, they must be able to produce these instruments and to use them (Stalin, 1938).

The way in which society achieves these goals is dependent on the mode of production. For example, most people today sell their labour power to satisfy the need for the necessities of life. In a hunting and gathering society, one would not sell their labour power in exchange for a wage to buy the necessities of life, but would instead kill, make, gather the necessities of life as a society. The difference in the means of production affects the superstructure that emerges from it. For example, the need for hunting and gathering makes a nomadic existence more likely, making the creation of cities superfluous, with no necessity to create a separated political or governmental class. In essence, mind and spirit do not exist independently of the

material world but are instead shaped and forged within it. In espousing this view, Marx ([1859] 1904) argued the following:

In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness.

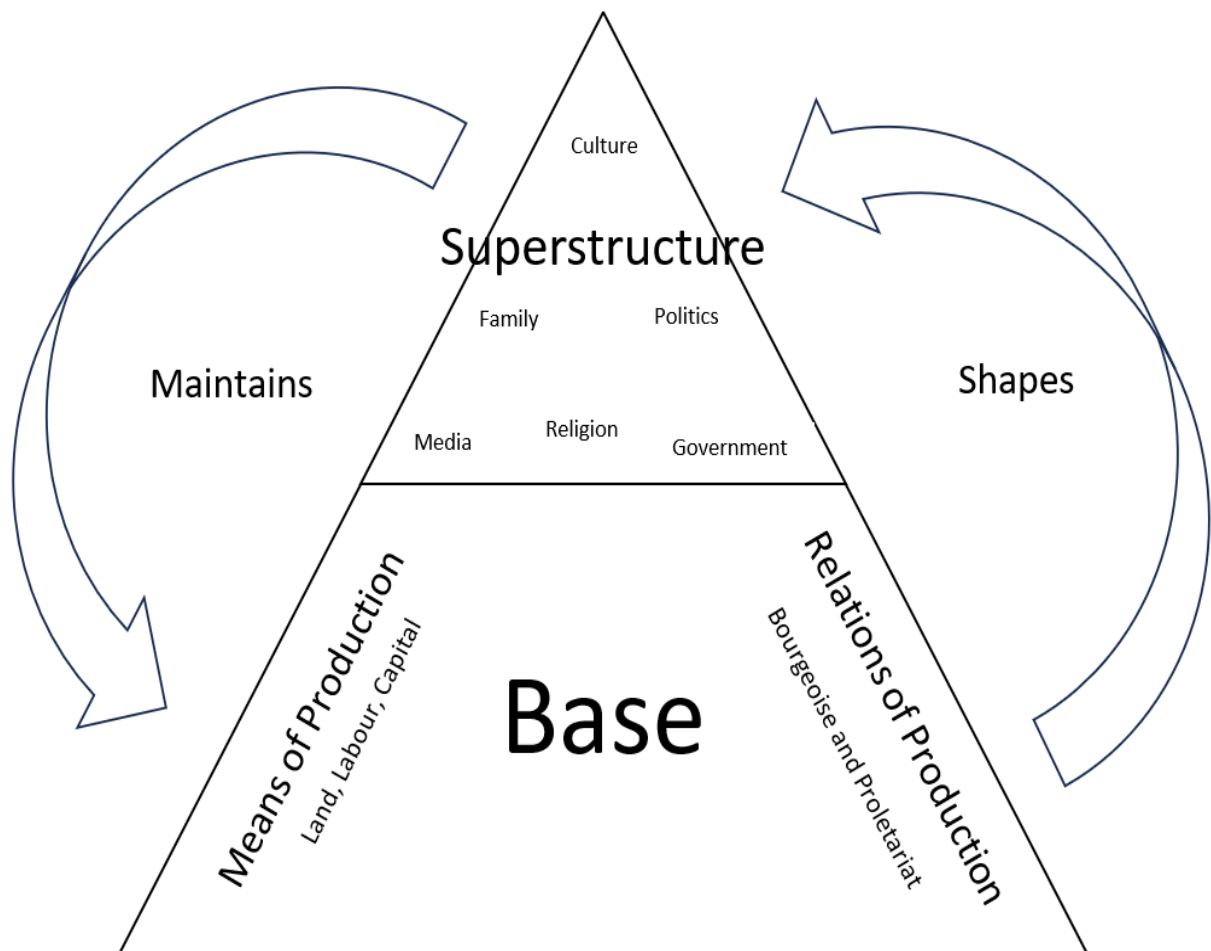


Figure 4: Historical Materialism. Author's Own.

While antagonists would argue that Marxist epistemology may be dogmatic, the reality is that there is no uncritical acceptance of what Marx and others wrote. Instead, it is a fidelity to the Marxist *method*, that is, applying the method of dialectical materialism to develop, deepen, and expand our understandings of history and society. In applying such an epistemology, this thesis continues the work of Wales's greatest historian: Gwyn Alf Williams. Gwyn Alf (1979) was an avowed Communist and went as far as to declare that "if capitalism in the British Isles lives, Wales will die. If Wales is to live, capitalism in the British Isles must die". Regardless of whether one agrees with this prognosis, the genius of Gwyn Alf's evocation of history is indisputable. The purpose of the thesis, therefore, is to reintroduce the Marxist epistemology of Gwyn Alf Williams to not only Welsh history, but also Spanish and Italian history. Due to Marxist epistemology being about *method*, rather than *dogma*, an application of this epistemology does not equate to a rehashing of the work of Gwyn Alf, but can offer new, valuable insights. The following extract conveys the Marxist epistemology of Gwyn Alf's (1985, p. 5) work, and his understanding of the interaction between humanity and nature:

Landscape does not make history; men and women do. Hills may dictate where a road may run but not why a road should be made at all. Forests may mark people off, if they get fed up with that condition, they will remove the forests. As early as the Romans, human beings were shaping the landscape to their needs. Men and women make their own history. But they do not make it in circumstances chosen by them. It has been the interplay between the often terrifying power of human ingenuity, ambition and desperation and that brute, dumb, starveling and beautiful country which has made history here. And in Wales the people whose land it was had to confront a sight more than mountains. In consequence the Welsh have made themselves. They have made themselves over repeatedly because they have had to make themselves against the odds. There were not enough of them and there were not

enough resources around to keep out much more numerous and much more powerful peoples. From birth, they lived with the threat of extinction.

Given the centrality of the ideas of nationalism and independence to this work, it is important to note that a Marxist epistemology has also affected the views on these subjects. This work follows a Leninist conception of the rights of nations to self-determination, which mainly emerge in his *Theses on the National Question* (Lenin, [1925] 1977). One of the basic premises is that nationalism – or nationalist movements – should not be supported or derided indiscriminately. Instead, the specific material conditions and composition of the national and international system determines whether independence or nationalism in each instance is progressive or regressive in world-historical outlook. In his own time, for example, it is why Marx could support German unification or the independence of Ireland yet be ambivalent to the unification of Italy in the same period. Independence is therefore viewed through a materialist, objective lens rather than one of sentimentality. Marxist epistemology is entirely consistent in this regard. This thesis, therefore, did not take an *a priori* view of whether independence for each case study was a ‘progressive’ or ‘regressive’ step, nor was this the intention. Furthermore, it is not paradoxical if the nationalism of one case study is viewed more favourably than another. Nations differ in their compositions at an international level, just as social classes differ in theirs. While the above admissions may seem to bias and prejudice a piece of academic and historical work, it is important to remember the words of the indefatigable E.H. Carr (1964, p. 44):

The historian who is most conscious of his own situation is also more capable of transcending it, and more capable of appreciating the essential nature of the differences between his own society and outlook and those of other periods and other countries, than the historian who loudly protests that he is an individual and not a social phenomenon. Man’s capacity to rise above his social and historical situations

seems to be conditioned by the sensitivity with which he recognises the extent of his involvement in it.

A further point in appreciating the differences between my own society and other countries is an acknowledgement that I do not speak Catalan, Basque, nor Italian while my Spanish is conversational but does not reach the level necessary to read academic texts. This invariably has shaped the materials available to use for this thesis. To overcome this challenge, every effort was made to read authors from the countries in question *and* from differing regions within each country in English. However, there is no *a priori* reason why not having been born somewhere means their historical materialist understanding of the region should be any worse (whilst acknowledging their understanding of culture may be lacking). After all, we in Wales continually reference academics such as Michael Hechter and Alfred Zimmern (two Americans) on Welsh politics. To challenge their work on the proviso they do not speak Welsh – rather than on the content of their work – does not seem a particularly fruitful exercise.

This thesis has been written in both English and Welsh. There is no such thing as a direct translation between languages. Idioms, for example, are based on the historical and material(!) realities that exist in a given place. The general argument in both theses are the same, yet both invariably will have their own points of emphasis with which language imbues a piece of work. It was not a case of completing in one language and translating into another, but instead it was translated in sections. Occasions would occur that while translating new ideas would come to mind which would then be included in the other language. I therefore prefer to view the two theses as being in conversation with one another, rather than one being an imitation of the other.

To conclude the introduction, the rest of the thesis will continue as follows:

- A literature review of Dependency Theory.

- A literature review of world-systems analysis, and a conceptual framing of today's world-system. This will include defining core, peripheral, and semi-peripheral countries. This will be followed by its application in a European context.
- An analysis of state development in Europe and European integration.
- An analysis of each case study in turn.
- A comparative investigation of the case studies to identify which factors are important in explaining economic development or underdevelopment, the salience of political nationalism, and world-system position.
- Conclusions and possible avenues for each case study to improve their position within the world-system.

II. Dependency Theory

Dependency Theory was borne from, and for, the periphery. In the 1960s and 70s, Latin America generally - and Chile in particular - became a nucleus for dependency theorists. The *Centro de Estudios Socio-Economicos* (CESO) at the University of Chile was at the centre of this new tradition with academics such as Andre Gunder Frank, Theotonio dos Santos, Ruy Marini, Eric Hobsbawm, Alan Touraine, Paul Sweezy, and Fernando Henrique Cardoso all working there in its short 6-year tenure. The centre was closed after the coup of Augusto Pinochet in 1973. It was due to the persistence of inequality both within and between states that dependency theorists began their reassessment of economic orthodoxies. In their view, Modernisation Theory could not explain the lack of economic development in the periphery.

In Dependency Theory, the words “development” and “underdevelopment” refer to the structural, systemic position of a place, rather than ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ value judgments. The term “development” is used to denote that some places have more productive forces and more accumulated capital. Being “developed” in this context does not mean that a place is fairer or more egalitarian, it purely means that a place possesses the instruments of capital which makes a place “developed”. As Cardoso and Faletto (1970, p. xxiii) stated:

By development, in this context, we mean "capitalist development." This form of development, in the periphery as well as in the centre, produces as it evolves, in a cyclical way, wealth and poverty, accumulation and shortage of capital, employment for some and unemployment for others. So, we do not mean by the notion of "development" the achievement of a more egalitarian or more just society. These are not consequences expected from capitalist development, especially in peripheral economies.

The Core and Periphery in Dependency Theory

A necessary starting point is to define what we mean by 'core' and 'periphery'. Both terms seem intuitive, but they define specific processes. A good definition can be found in Clelland (2012, pp. 199-200):

foundational thinkers envisioned core and periphery as relationships of surplus transfer. Frank conceived the modern world-system to be a hierarchy of core-periphery complexes, in which surplus is being transferred. Wallerstein defines core and periphery in terms of the transfer of part of the total profit (or surplus) from one zone to another. By extension, we call the losing zone a 'periphery' and the gaining zone a 'core.' He insists that we should define core as those who are living off the surplus value produced by others and periphery as those who are not retaining all the surplus value they are producing. Wallerstein is convinced that core growth is derived from these surplus drains. The shift of surplus towards the core concentrated capital there made available disproportionate funds for further mechanization, both allowing producers in core zones to gain additional competitive advantages in existing products and permitting them to create ever newer products with which to renew the process.

Both the core-periphery paradigm, and the terms "development" and "underdevelopment", therefore, should be viewed dialectically; the development of one place is inherently linked with the underdevelopment of another.

One of the earliest exponents of Dependency Theory was Paul Baran (1957) who argued that the penetration of capitalism into the underdeveloped peripheries hindered development. In the 16th and 17th Centuries - the incubation period of Western capitalism - core states such as the Netherlands and the United Kingdom erected trade barriers to foment the growth of their immature capitalist enterprises. Industries were protected internally until they were mature enough to stand in

competition with foreign firms. In the periphery, the penetration of foreign capitalists flooded the home market, and indigenous industries collapsed against the weight of cheaper products from abroad. The crucial step of incubating immature industry was therefore not a viable policy direction for peripheral regions. As Reinert and Reinert (2005, pp. 9-10) state:

we would argue that adherence to the above principle [protectionism] has been a mandatory passage point for all nations progressing from poor to rich, including Korea in the 1960s and 70s. When classical and neoclassical economics disallowed de jure or de facto colonies from following this principle, they were, as Friedrich List put it 'kicking away the ladder' that they themselves had used to climb to wealth (emphasis in original).

Harley (2004, p. 12) discussed the role of protectionism in a British context and argued that it was a necessary policy position to allow British industries to develop:

The mid-seventeenth-century British Navigation Acts were designed to protect British shippers from Dutch competition — at that time the world's leading commercial and shipping economy. The Acts stipulated that goods from Asia, Africa and America could be imported into Britain and her possessions only in British ships. Imports from European ports could only be carried by British ships or ships of the country of the imports' origin. Further certain "enumerated" colonial staples — particularly sugar, tea, and tobacco — had to be shipped to a British port, even if their ultimate market was elsewhere and colonial imports of European goods had to pass through a British port. The acts certainly created artificial ties between the colonies and Britain and British shipowners and merchants expanded under the shelter they provided from competition from more efficient Dutch competitors.

Israel (1989) and Davis (1975, pp. 31-32) came to similar conclusions. Davis argued that the Navigation Act of 1651 was "the first thoroughly worked out piece of English protective legislation [which] remained at the heart of English maritime

policy for nearly two centuries". In support of this view, Albert Imlah (2013, p. 121) mapped tariff revenue as a percentage of the value of retained imports over time. The below figure suggests that protectionism via tariffs was a key factor in growing the British economy and protecting British industry before the height of the Industrial Revolution.

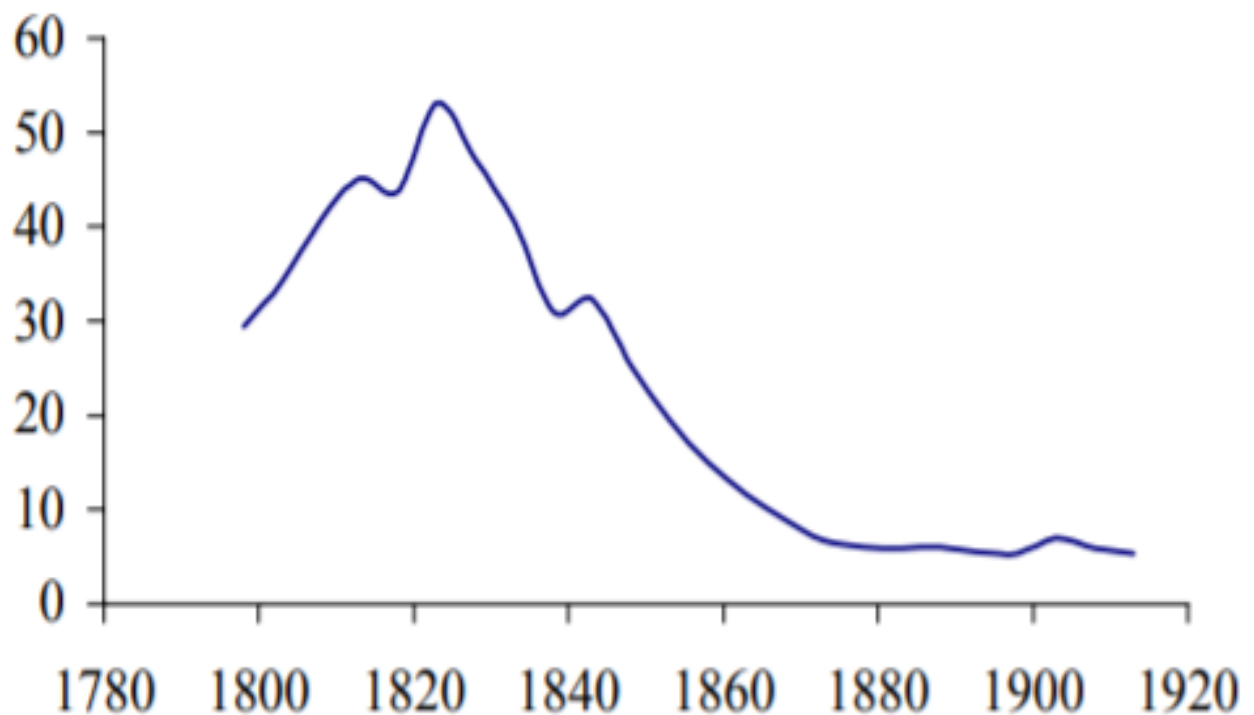


Figure 5. Tariff Revenue as a percentage of the value of retained imports in Britain. Source: (Imlah, 2013, p. 121).

The Development of Underdevelopment

Andre Gunder Frank (1966) supplemented the work of Paul Baran and Dependency Theory by defining a concept he termed “the development of underdevelopment”. Frank’s work included several important theoretical insights. Firstly, he showed that in contrast to the claims of modernisation theory, the lack of development in the periphery isn’t due to a residual hangover from a time gone by, these regions are no less ‘modern’ than their core counterparts, instead, their *underdevelopment* was a specific form of *development* which progressed in the way it did due to “exploitation, structural distortion and suppression of autonomous policies” (Chase-Dunn, 1975, p. 722). Frank (1966, p. 18) explained the dialectic between underdevelopment and development and how *underdevelopment* differed from being *undeveloped*. He stated:

the now developed countries were never underdeveloped, though they may have been undeveloped. ... Contemporary underdevelopment is in large part the historical product of past and continuing economic and other relations between the satellite underdeveloped and the now developed metropolitan countries.

The processes of exploitation and structural distortion which Frank identified take shape in a myriad of ways. He argued that foreign ‘investment’ in the periphery extracts surplus profits from the periphery and moves it to the core. This is in keeping with Myrdal’s (1957) notion of “backwash” effects. Samir Amin (1974) called this process “decapitalisation”; indigenous firms would reintroduce some of their profits back into the system in the form of better equipment and an improvement in the productive forces of society. However, multinationals repatriate their profits back to the core.

Arghiri Emmanuel (1972) argued that the inequality and exploitation between the core and periphery is to be found in the prices for which commodities in the core are

exchanged for the commodities of the periphery. He termed this process “Unequal Exchange”. In his view, inequality essentially stems from the different wage structures in the core and periphery. For example, if productivity was at the same level in the core and periphery, wage differentials mean it may take a worker in the periphery twice the time to produce something that is exchanged at the same price as something produced by a worker in the core. Market prices, therefore, in the exchange of commodities between the core and periphery contain a transfer of value to the core. Hickel et al. (2021, p. 13) assessed whether an unequal exchange - per Emmanuel’s definition - was a reality of north-south trade today. In their view:

drain from the global South remains a significant feature of the world economy in the post-colonial era. ‘Advanced economies’ rely on unequal exchange to facilitate their economic growth and to sustain high levels of income and material consumption. In recent years, the drain has amounted to around \$2.2 trillion per year (constant 2011 dollars) in Northern prices, or \$1.3 trillion per year in global average prices, when calculated according to exchange rate differentials. The intensity of exploitation and the scale of unequal exchange increased significantly during the structural adjustment period of the 1980s and 1990s. These patterns of appropriation through North-South trade are a major driver of global inequality and uneven development.

Distorted Development

Dependency theorists argue that the type of economic structure which emerges in peripheral states is distorted, due to their position in the world division of labour. Theotonio Dos Santos (1970) argued that an overreliance on the export sector limits the development of the internal market, thereby retaining ‘backward’ relations of production. He further argued that the international market is highly monopolised, and this tends to lower the price of raw materials and raise the price of industrial

products. This is exacerbated by the ability of core states to create synthetic raw materials in some instances. These synthetic materials can include dyes and fibres in the textile industry (Muthu & Gardetti, 2020), petrochemical-based synthetic materials such as polyvinyl and polyester (Swift, 1998) and synthetic rubbers (Thirlwall & Bergevin, 1985).

Due to price differentials between raw materials and industrial products, there is an unfavourable balance of trade for the dependent country. Furthermore, due to a lack of capital in the form of machinery and expertise existing in the dependent country, multinational companies offer their services in exchange for the rights to sell the raw material. Therefore:

foreign capital retains control over the most dynamic sectors of the economy and repatriates a high volume of profit; consequently, capital accounts are highly unfavourable to dependent countries. The data show that the amount of capital leaving the country is much greater than the amount entering; this produces an enslaving deficit in capital accounts (Santos, 1970, p. 233).

Hickel et al. (2021, p. 14) argued that most southern export industries are reliant on the use of advanced technologies provided by foreign capital. Countries are nominally free not to trade with core countries, but this may lead to more pronounced inequality due to not being able to access the technologies and resources that are controlled by Western monopoly capital. This in essence locks dependent countries in an unfavourable position; their only options are to decide to submit to unequal trade relations with Western capital or have no access to necessary technology (Köhler, 1998, p. 167).

As Dos Santos demonstrated above, there are “dynamic” areas of the economy within underdeveloped and dependent states. However, the inherent unevenness of capitalist development is exacerbated by the influx of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in small, specialised, sectors. Growth may occur in the immediate sector which

is dynamic but at the cost of other sectors becoming listless. This has the effect of raising income inequality due to the concentration of higher-paid jobs in narrow sectors of the economy (Bornschiefer, et al., 1978, p. 665). While theories of economic change espoused by writers such as Nelson and Winter (1973) (1975) are valuable in explaining how specific firms decide which sectors they fund for innovation, they do not account for the inequalities that exist between space and how this affects investment decisions. That is, they treat regions as being merely functional, rather than located within relations of exploitation and inequality.

Myrdal (1970, p. 280) observed these tendencies and argued that a “growing point” - or “growth pole” (Perroux, 1955) – draws itself to businesses, ‘higher skilled’ labour, and capital. This is coupled with backwash effects which keep wages and the diffusion of capital low in other parts of the country. Myrdal stated that this theory is confirmed by the fact that underdeveloped countries have greater income imbalances than developed countries. This system reproduces itself due to a widening balance of payment deficit which in turn leads to more dependence and more exploitation. Using data from the World Bank, it is possible to map the GINI coefficient of income inequality within states. It is important to consider that wealth inequality and income inequality are not analogous, and wealth inequality may be at least as large in the global north as it is in the south. However, as far as income inequality is concerned, there is a general tendency that shows that the global south is more unequal than the global north. Some of the exceptions to the rule are those countries which have, or have had, socialist governments in the recent past. These examples include states such as Belarus, Slovenia, Kazakhstan, and Mongolia⁷.

Andre Gunder Frank (1966) analysed the physical manifestations of distorted development. In his view, the placement of infrastructure, such as roads, railways,

⁷ It is entirely possible that having existed under a socialist system is not a necessary or sufficient condition of more equal income distribution, an analysis of this is outside the scope of this thesis. However, a cursive glance of the evidence suggests there is at least some correlation between type of government and income equality.

and ports in dependent countries does not follow the same functional logic as in developed countries due to the export-orientation of dependent countries. In these places, infrastructure exists to move out raw materials and bring in value-added goods rather than integrating the internal market and economy of the state. This meant that Myrdal's (1970) "spread" effects were dampened because an increase in demand in one part of the economy would not foster growth in another. The economic structure of dependent states means they are suspended in a state of contradiction: they are integrated into the world economy by their exportation of raw materials and importation of consumer goods, yet their internal economies remain fragmented and incomplete.

Critique

Critics of Dependency Theory have argued that it is too deterministic in nature, whereby the theory suggests that peripheral countries are doomed to be perpetually underdeveloped (Lal, 2000). Furthermore, the theory is critiqued for overemphasizing external factors at the expense of internal factors. Internal issues such as corruption, inefficient institutions, and poor governance also play a role in hindering development (Warren, 2020). While it is true that proponents of Dependency Theory emphasise structural constraints, they do not deny the possibility of agency. Structure and agency should be understood as running along a continuum, whereby structure *constrains* decision-making decisions and agency, but does not predetermine outcomes. The argument is that countries can develop by strategically navigating the global economic system, but that this system places restraints on the decisions available to peripheral countries. Additionally, this explains that while internal factors are clearly of importance to development economics, these issues are exacerbated by external dependency; development is possible, but within a dependent framework which

comes with its own contradictions and challenges. In conclusion, there is room for agency and strategic action within the structural confines of the wider system.

Dependency Theory remains relevant as an analytical tool because it highlights structural inequalities and the complex dynamics of global capitalism that affect developing countries. It remains relevant to analysing the continuing commodity dependence and price volatility, labour exploitation at the bottom of global supply chains, debt dependence, trade imbalances, and barriers to technology.

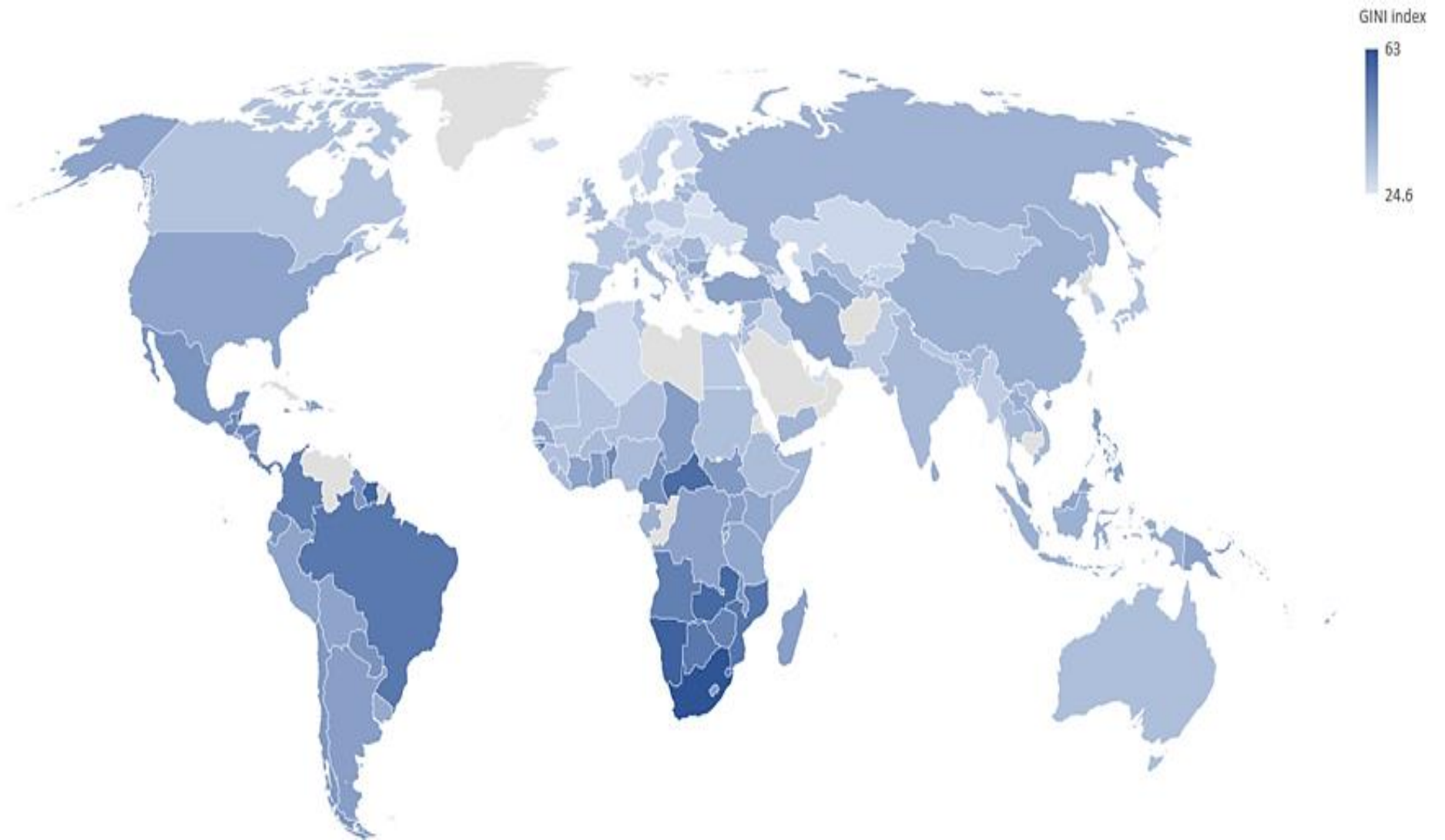


Figure 6: Gini Coefficient Values. Author's Own. Data Source: (World Bank, 2023).

III. World-Systems Analysis

Chronologically and conceptually, World-Systems Analysis is built on the work of earlier Dependency Theorists. World-systems analysts aimed to take the relationships of dependence that *Dependistas* had analysed and turn them into a global analysis. World-systems analysis developed the analysis of the spatial dimension of dependence. In this regard, this thesis continues the work of Edward Soja and Costis Hadjimichalis (1979) in analysing and demystifying what they term the “spatial problematic”. This is the notion that physical space contains the relations of production and is itself structured by a territorial division of labour. Social space is the arena in which class relations and conflicts are produced and reproduced. Marx (1970 [1845], p. 245) was acutely aware of the geographic dimension of class relations and conflict, stating that “the foundation of every division of labour that is well developed, and brought about by the exchange of commodities, is the separation between town and country”. Engels elaborated, stating that “the abolition of the antithesis between town and country is no more and no less utopian than the abolition of the antithesis between capitalists and wage workers” (quoted in Borodulina, 1972, p. 158). This led Nairn (1975, p. 10) to argue that in the world-system, the periphery could be viewed as the world’s countryside, whereas the core is the world’s city.

Raymond Williams (2021, p. 1) examined the distinction between town and country within our collective understanding. He argued:

‘Country’ and ‘city’ are very powerful words, and this is not surprising when we remember how much they seem to stand for in the experience of human communities. In English, ‘country’ is both a nation and a part of a ‘land’; ‘the country’ can be the whole society or its rural area. In the long history of human settlements, this connection between the land from which directly or indirectly we all get our living,

and the achievements of human society has been deeply known. ... On the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue. On the city has gathered the idea of an achieved centre of learning, communication, light. Powerful hostile associations have also developed: on the city as a place of noise, worldliness, and ambition; on the country as a place of backwardness, ignorance, limitation. A contrast between country and city, as fundamental ways of life, reaches back into classical times.

Marx and Engels therefore illuminate that the spatial division of labour is not a separate process to class conflict but lies within their conception of the division of labour, while Raymond Williams illuminates the cultural dynamics of these value-laden terms (Smith, 2010, p. 135). Soja (1989, p. 78) stated that the link between the core and the periphery on one hand and class relations on the other is “dialectically inseparable” while Ernest Mandel (1976, p. 43) argued that “the unequal development between regions and nations is the very essence of capitalism, on the same level as the exploitation of labour by capital”. It is from this starting point that a world-systems analysis enters; it is an attempt to reintroduce an analysis of the spatial aspects of capitalism, class relations, and inequality.

Perhaps the most well-known exponent of world-system analysis is Immanuel Wallerstein (2011, p. 229) and it is worth quoting his definition of a world-system:

A world-system is a social system, one that has boundaries, structures, member groups, rules of legitimation, and coherence. Its life is made up of the conflicting forces which hold it together by tension and tear it apart as each group seeks eternally to remould it to its advantage. It has the characteristics of an organism in that it has a lifespan over which its characteristics change in some respects and remain stable in others. One can define its structures as being at different times strong or weak in terms of the internal logic of its functioning. What characterizes a social system in my view is the fact that life within it is largely self-contained, and that the dynamics of its development are largely internal.

World-systems are therefore not specific to capitalist society or the modern era. Before the European ‘discovery’ of the Americas it would have been possible to conceive of a Mesoamerican world-system, or the world-system of the Roman Empire. Despite linguistic confusion, therefore, a *world*-system does not have to encompass the entire world, it must only be a “social system ... that life within it is largely self-contained”. Pertinent to this analysis is Wallerstein’s view that world-systems are “*largely* self-contained and that the dynamics of its developments are *largely* internal” (emphasis added). The use of “largely” clearly leads to some fuzziness in choosing the appropriate unit of analysis for a world-system. Whether the continent of Europe constitutes a separate world-system therefore depends on a value judgment on the parameters of “largely” and the period under discussion. Before 1492CE, it is conceivable to talk of a North Atlantic world-system, or a world-system of the Mediterranean, yet perhaps after this period, it is more apt to refer to a global, capitalist world-system.⁸

Types of World-Systems

Wallerstein contended that world-systems can take two forms: world-empires and world-economies. In world-empires, a single political system extends over most of the area of the world-system; the world-system of the Roman Empire is an example of a world-empire.⁹ World-systems where there is no single political system are defined as world-economies. The modern world-system is a world-economy, which now extends over the entire globe. The improvement in the technologies of transport

⁸ The importance of 1492 and why this may be used as the starting point for the current world-system will be discussed later.

⁹ Wallerstein accepts that the *actual* power of that empire may not be equally strong across all regions.

and communications in the 16th Century stretched the possible size of the world-system, meaning that by the 19th Century, a truly global world-system was created.

Before world-systems were global, they were inherently confined by spatial and geographical borders to a much larger extent than exists today. While discussing pre-capitalist trade and exploitation, Meiksins Wood (2002, p. 84) argued:

these disjunctions and imbalances [between rich and poor] were, needless to say, reinforced by the basic practicalities of transport and communication. The whole system, indeed, was based on the fragmentation of markets, detachment of one market from another, the distance between sites of production and sites of consumption, the geographic separation of supply and demand. Mercantile wealth dependent precisely on the relative inaccessibility of markets and the possibility of profiting from an endless process of arbitrage between fragmented markets.

In essence, the more confined nature of the pre-capitalist economy was a prerequisite for the specific trade conditions, property relations, and relations of production that existed.

While to give a singular date or 'moment' for the creation of the modern world-system is impossible, as it embodies a process, rather than a singular event, it is possible to denote a general period from which the world-system developed. Its roots can be found in the period after 1492 and the 'discovery' of the Americas, linked with the new economic system developing in the English countryside during the 16th Century. To quote Meiksins Wood (2002, p. 98):

Now, obviously, the long and complex historical processes that ultimately led to this condition of market dependence could be traced back indefinitely. But we can make the question more manageable by identifying the first time and place that the new social dynamic of market dependence is clearly discernible. ... We [have] considered the nature of pre-capitalist trade and the development of great commercial powers that flourished by availing themselves of market opportunities without being

systematically subjected to market imperatives. Within the pre-capitalist European economy, there was one major exception to the general rule. England, by the sixteenth century, was developing in wholly new directions.

She attributed the different conditions in England¹⁰ to the following: the strong centralisation and unification of England under monarchy since the eleventh century, its relative connectedness by roads and water transport, and its large concentration of land in the hands of the aristocracy, rather than in the commons. This led to a social structure of tenant farmers rather than a large peasantry as was the case on the European continent.¹¹ This meant that both the aristocracy and tenants were pushed to increase labour productivity to extract surplus value.

The effect of this system of property relations was that many agricultural producers became market-dependent in their access to land itself, to the means of production. Increasingly, as more land came under this economic regime, advantage in access to the land itself would go to those who could produce competitively and pay good rents by increasing their own productivity. This meant that success would breed success, and competitive farmers would have increasing access to even more land, while others lost access altogether (Wood, 2002, pp. 100-101).

In defining social formations, modes of production, and world-systems, Amin (1974, p. 74) makes an important contribution. In pre-capitalist society there existed many social formations such as slave societies, tributary societies, feudal societies and so on and these social formations and modes of production could coexist at the same period. The capitalist mode of production, however, differs:

While precapitalist formations are characterized by a stable co-existence of different, inter-connected and graded modes [of production], the capitalist mode destroys the others: It has a tendency to become exclusive. The condition of the tendency to

¹⁰ Meiksins Wood deliberately discussed the conditions that existed in England, rather than in Britain and this is made clear in her work.

¹¹ A more in-depth analysis of these processes will be undertaken in a later chapter.

exclusiveness is that it is based on the widening and deepening of the internal market (this applies to central capitalist formations and not to peripheral formations). In the peripheral formations, it will be seen that the dominant capitalist mode subdues and transforms the others: it disfigures them, deprives them of their functionality and subjects them to its own, without however radically disintegrating and destroying them.

This leads to two fundamental points. Firstly, the capitalist world-system may have begun in its embryonic form after 1492, but it widened and deepened over time. Secondly, and in contrast to earlier epochs, the capitalist mode of production affects all social systems; it becomes exclusive, unlike earlier systems.

Geography and the World-System

Today, a division of labour exists within the modern world-system which “is not merely functional – that is, occupational – but geographical. That is to say, the range of economic tasks is not evenly distributed throughout the world-system” (Wallerstein, 2011, p. 230). A central facet of world-systems analysis is the notion of a worldwide division of labour (Bornschiefer, 1983, p. 11). A spatial-economic hierarchy exists whereby the world is divided into a core, periphery, and semi-periphery, each of which has a specific role and function.

It is important to note that we cannot *a priori* assume that a particular “economic task” is core-like or periphery-like. An activity can become at a particular point in time a core-like activity, but it has this characteristic for a limited period (Arrighi & Drangel, 1986, p. 18). For example, textile production would have been considered a core activity during the 18th Century. Today, it would be considered a peripheral activity. This follows the path of innovation espoused by the evolutionary economist Joseph Schumpeter. For Schumpeter (1928, pp. 376-378), it is this creative destruction

that defines capitalism; it has the ability to redefine and reinvent itself. As this passage shows, core-like processes continually shift, change, and develop:

For expansion is no basic fact, capable of serving in the role of a cause, but is itself the result of a more fundamental "economic force," which accounts both for expansion and the string of consequences emanating from it. This is best seen by splitting up the comprehensive phenomenon of general industrial growth into the expansion of the single industries it consists of. If we do this for the period of predominantly competitive capitalism, we meet indeed at any given time with a class of cases in which both entire industries and single firms are drawn on by demand coming to them from outside and so expanding them automatically; but this additional demand practically always proceeds, as a secondary phenomenon, from a primary change in some other industry—from textiles first, from iron and steam later, from electricity and chemical industry still later—which does not follow, but creates expansion. It first - and by its initiative - expands its own production, thereby creates an expansion of demand for its own and, contingent thereon, other products, and the general expansion of the environment we observe - increase of population included - is the result of it, as may be visualised by taking any one of the outstanding instances of the process, such as the rise of railway transportation. The way by which every one of these changes is brought about lends itself easily to general statement: it is by means of new combinations of existing factors of production, embodied in new plants and, typically, new firms producing either new commodities, or by a new, i.e., as yet untried, method, or for a new market, or by buying means of production in a new market. What we, unscientifically, call economic progress means essentially putting productive resources to uses hitherto untried in practice, and withdrawing them from the uses they have served so far. This is what we call "innovation." (emphasis in original)

This argument is developed further by Petruszewicz (2019, p. 18) who stated the following:

As 'core'/'periphery' is a relational concept, one should be careful not to associate this shorthand with any permanent list of traits. 'Core'/'periphery' refers always to an unequal relation, but the inequality may be expressed in changing forms. In fact, the commodities involved in the exchange have changed dramatically over time, especially between industrial and agricultural products: what were core products would become peripheral, and vice versa. Most of the time, the 'coreness'/'peripherality' had to do with the wage and profit levels of each product as well as with degrees of technical sophistication.

Today, the core specialises in control over capital, technology, research and development, and the most advanced and sophisticated products. Chirot (1977, p. 13) defined these countries as economically diversified, rich, powerful societies that are relatively independent of outside controls. The periphery on the other hand is more reliant on raw materials, and standardised and routinised industrial production.¹² They are economically over-specialised, relatively poor, and subject to direct or indirect manipulation by core states. The semi-periphery plays an intermediary role between core and periphery, it generally holds regional, but not global power as well as being towards the middle of the income scale.

Multinational corporations play an important role in solidifying these dynamics between core and periphery as they are central to the global division of labour which is both functional and geographical. They play a crucial role in orchestrating the production and distribution of goods and services across different regions, often exploiting disparities in labour costs, regulatory environments, and resource endowments to maximise profitability. This leads to the concentration of certain industries and economic activities in specific regions, while others are relegated to peripheral positions within the global economy. For example, with regards to the car

¹² Raw materials can be important economic sectors for core countries as well; the USA is a gas producer, while agriculture remains strong in most core countries, however these economies are more diversified and less reliant on narrow sectors of the economy.

industry, Pavlinek (2022) has shown that low-wage, routinised industrial production was first moved to peripheral regions *within* auto-making countries such as from the Paris region to Normandy and Lorraine, northern to southern Italy, from Stuttgart to Bremen, and so on. This was followed by expansion into integrated peripheries like Spain and Portugal from the 1980s, and Eastern Europe from the 90s.

According to Chase-Dunn, Kawano, and Brewer (2000), the global core, periphery, and semi-periphery can be delineated in Figure 7 below. The categorisation of all countries here is far from unproblematic; it is a fair assessment that Russia has returned to a semi-peripheral position if it was ever a peripheral country in the first place. Its 'peripherality' is linked to its political isolation from the North Atlantic and the Western European core. However, Iran is isolated from these political actors and maintains a semi-peripheral position. Furthermore, the oil exporting countries of the Gulf are in a peculiar position; they are both *dependent* in that they rely on oil exportation, yet the vast wealth that exists in the hands of the central state and their monarchies means that they have the power to buy large foreign sports teams, attract football world cups, and own high-end airlines (Woertz, 2012) (Koch, 2020) (Hertog, 2017). They are therefore not in the same position of peripherality as other countries. Lastly, southern Europe and Turkey's categorisation seems relatively idiosyncratic; there is no real metric whereby Portugal could be considered a core country while Greece Turkey, Slovenia, and Croatia remain peripheral. A downgrading of Portugal, and perhaps Spain to the semi-periphery and an upgrade of Greece, Slovenia, Croatia, and Turkey to the semi-periphery seems a fairer assessment. However, whilst being slightly outdated, Figure 7 helps set a foundation for further inquiry.

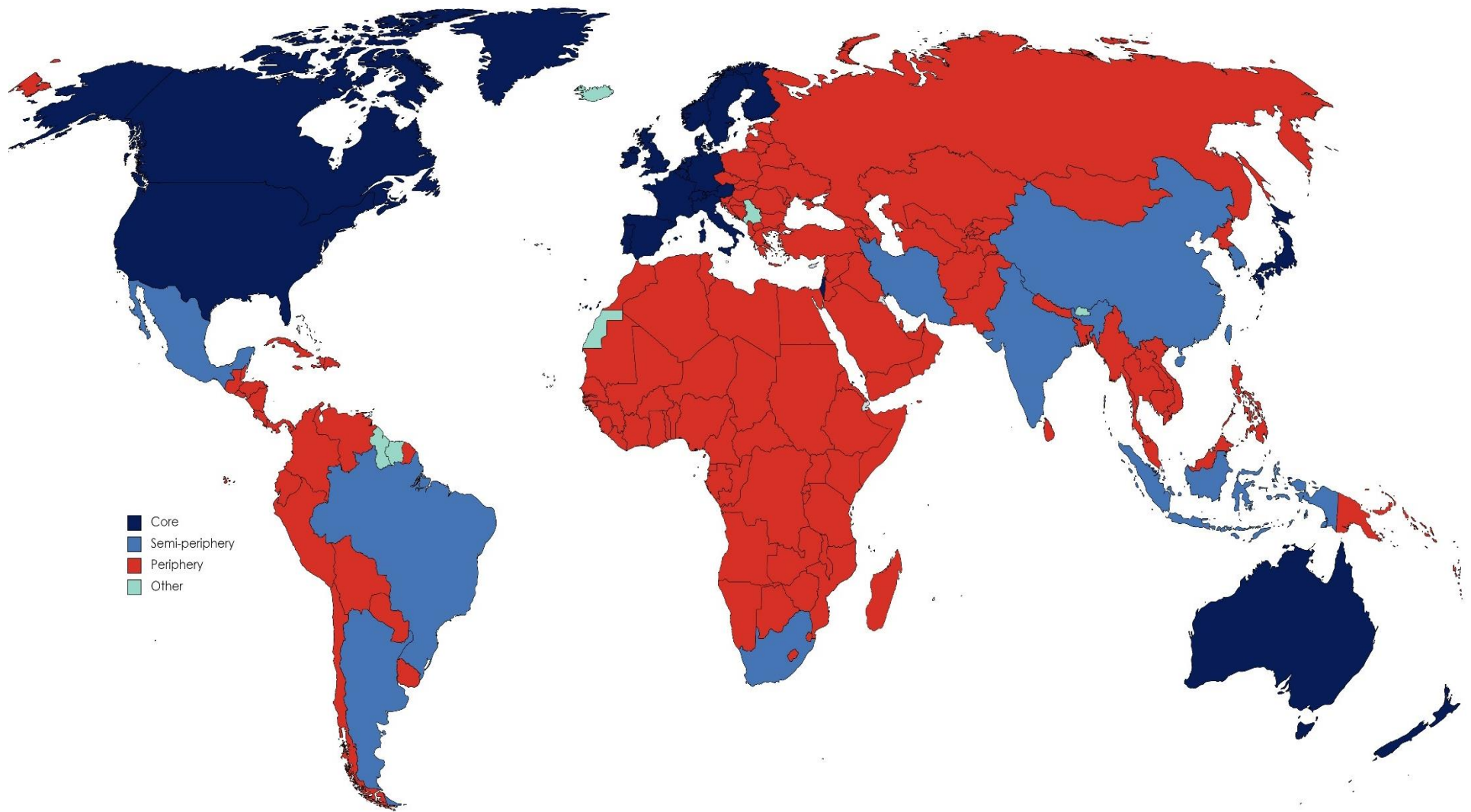


Figure 7: The Core, Periphery, and Semi-Periphery in the world-system. Author's Own. Classifications taken from (Chase-Dunn, et al., 2000).

The Periphery in the World-System

It seems counterintuitive but “there is a strong reverse correlation between the level of economic development, and the share of the primary sector in the economy” (Radetzki, 2010, p. 1). This is despite the reality that primary commodities are necessary for human existence, let alone development. However, Figure 8 confirms that such a negative correlation exists. The outlier at the upper end of the table is Norway which is accounted for by its discovery of oil at a relatively high level of development.

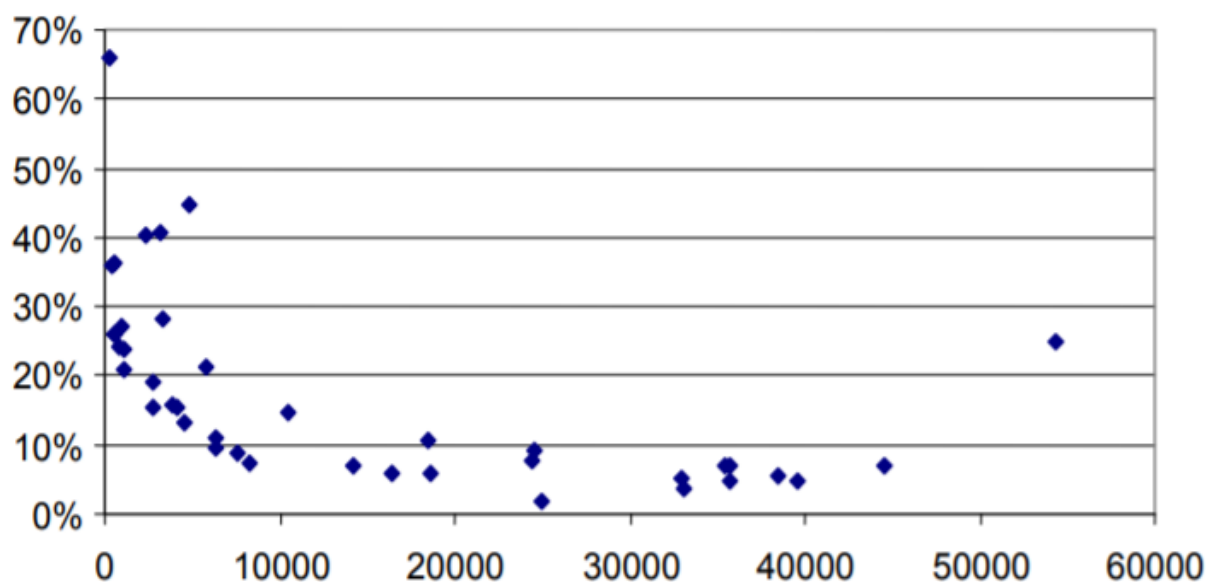


Figure 8: Cross section of 38 countries, showing the share of the primary sector in country GDP (%) and GDP per Capita (\$) at market rates (2004). Source: (Radetzki, 2010, p. 2).

The periphery’s over-specialisation in primary resource exportation leads to four important consequences. Firstly, the international demand for raw materials is relatively income-inelastic; improvements in technological capabilities allow the core to produce more from fewer raw materials (Magdoff, 1969). Any increase in the peripheral country’s productivity in exporting or extracting raw materials does not

therefore necessarily correlate to an increase in demand. Any increase in productivity may only lead to lower per-unit costs, rather than a rise in income for the peripheral country (Furtado, 1965). As Radetzki (2010, p. 3) argued:

the higher the value, the less primary material inputs will be needed per dollar value represented by the items. The essence of economic development is to move the centre of the economy's gravity down the list, towards goods with ever higher value per kilogram. In consequence, as countries grow richer, the raw materials input needs will grow more slowly than the overall economy. Materials savings will be further boosted by technological progress which is typically weight-reducing. The need for primary materials inputs tends to stagnate with economic development and has started to shrink in absolute terms in some prosperous nations, as their economies grow even richer. In any case, global economic growth has exceeded the demand growth for virtually all raw materials. Sophisticated modern economies have become masters of substitutability, permitting them to do without a particular material.

Secondly, the price of raw materials is more volatile and prone to price fluctuations when compared to processed and finished goods. This means that longer-term, rational government planning is difficult as there is no certainty whether income will remain constant or increase. This situation is exacerbated by the dependence of peripheral countries on core countries for more advanced technologies and value-added products, further hindering their balance of trade. Humphrey (2006, p. 380) showed that low-income countries had on average one price shock (a decline in real prices of 10%) per country every three years between 1981 and 2001. He continued:

Low-income countries were 13% more likely than other countries to experience a commodity price shock in the 1981-2001 period, [and] 60% more likely to experience a terms of trade shock. These shocks not only tend to hit poor countries disproportionately, but also harm the poor in each country disproportionately.

Zanias (2005, p. 56) similarly argued that an overreliance on primary commodities is particularly harmful to development because the relative prices of primary commodities do not fall gradually (which could at least be accounted for), but there are instead large downward shifts or shocks which leads to a rapid deterioration in the terms of trade.

Thirdly, since peripheral countries tend to lack more technologically advanced forms of capital, much of the production of raw materials is financed by foreign firms who then repatriate much of the profit that accrues (Gomez, 1966).

Finally, specialisation in the exportation of raw materials impedes government investments in other sectors which could lead to more stable, longer-term growth (Galtung, 1971a). Peripheral countries have a comparative advantage in the exportation of raw materials (Samuelson, 1970), whereas, without government protectionism, higher value-added products in immature industries cannot compete with the products of core states. In the longer term, the maturation of these industries could diversify the economy, leading to more positive outcomes for the country in question.

The trends discussed above were observed by Raul Prebisch (1950) and Hans Singer (1975) and have become known as the Prebisch-Singer Hypothesis. The hypothesis, according to Sapsford and Balasubramanyam (1994, p. 1743)

has stood the test of time remarkably well. ... There can be few hypotheses in economics that have stood the tests of both time, and new statistical techniques, so well.

The harsh irony is that peripheral countries are correctly performing their economic functions according to classical economists such as David Ricardo (1821) and Adam Smith (2012 [1776]). The issue is that classical economists failed to consider that the internal dynamics of peripheral societies are conditioned by their position within the capitalist world-economy. Without understanding the wider dynamics at play in the

world-system it is not possible to understand the internal dynamics of such societies. Karl Marx (2011 [1848]), in a directed attack against the likes of David Ricardo and Adam Smith, said the following:

We are told that free trade would create an international division of labour, and thereby give to each country the production which is most in harmony with its natural advantage. You believe, perhaps, gentlemen, that the production of coffee and sugar is the natural destiny of the West Indies. Two centuries ago, nature, which does not trouble herself about commerce, had planted neither sugarcane nor coffee trees there. If the free traders cannot understand how one nation can grow rich at the expense of another, we need not wonder, since these same gentlemen also refuse to understand how within one country one class can enrich itself at the expense of another.

Pertinent to the analysis of economic diversification, Harvard University has created an Atlas of Economic Complexity by using their Economic Complexity Index which can be found in Figure 9. What is particularly striking about this figure is the mirroring of world-system positions in Figure 7. This Atlas seems to further corroborate the Prebisch-Singer Hypothesis; core position and economic diversification are correlated.

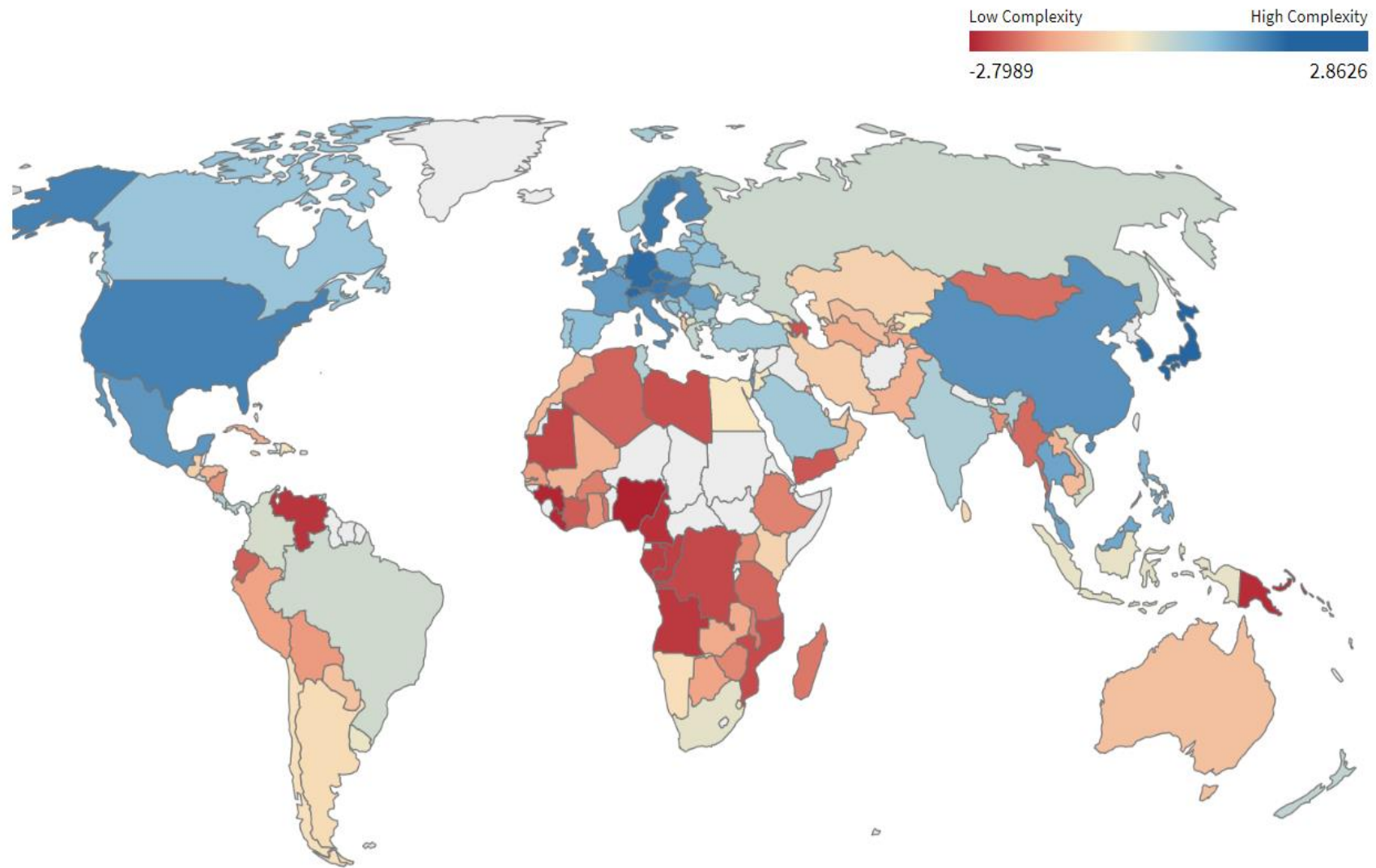


Figure 9: Atlas of Economic Complexity, 2019. Source: (Harvard University Growth Lab, 2013).

The Semi-Periphery in the World-System

Chase-Dunn (1988, p.30) characterised certain functions of the semi-periphery. He argued that firstly, the semi-periphery includes a mixture of both core and peripheral economic functions and in essence plays an intermediary role between the two. Secondly, the semi-periphery can be understood as a literal geographical location, spatially located between the core and the periphery. Thirdly, the semi-periphery is an intermediary through which the activities of the core and the periphery are completed. This intermediary role as both exploiter and exploited plays an important political dimension within the world-system. The existence of a semi-periphery means that the system can avoid too sharp a polarization between both poles. The semi-periphery deflects some political pressure which would normally be directed towards core states, thus inhibiting alliances between poorer nations. For example, Mozambique may feel aggrieved by the actions of South Africa, or Uruguay by Brazil, thus making cooperation more difficult. Economically, the semi-periphery provides an outlet for capital investment from the core into lower-wage industrial production. Importantly - and in moving away from the modernist approach of 'stages' of development - semi-peripheral countries should not be understood as being at an intermediate stage of development between the core and the periphery. Countries in the semi-periphery can move from their position to that of the core (they can also move from the semi-periphery to the periphery), but this is not a given. As Arrighi and Drangel (1986, p. 11) argued:

The existence of a relatively stable intermediate group of states is at variance with the expectations of modernization [theory]. According to modernization theory, intermediate positions are temporary because they are transitional. States come to occupy intermediate positions on their way from backwardness to modernity.

The Capitalist World-System

Since the current world-system is a capitalist world-economy, it is important to understand how capitalism affects and shapes the world-system. The laws of capital accumulation hold that accumulated capital has a higher rate of return than labour power. Small differences in initial conditions therefore become larger over time. Gunnar Myrdal (1957) termed this process “cumulative causation”, whereby the competitive advantages enjoyed by the most developed regions are self-perpetuating. Growth leads to more dynamic economies of scale and leads to investments in new technologies. This in turn leads to greater productivity and therefore, more growth. Myrdal (1970, p. 279) succinctly explained this, stating:

by circular causation and cumulative effects, a country superior in productivity and incomes will become more superior, while a country on an inferior level will tend to be held down at that level or even to deteriorate further — as long as matters are left to the free unfolding of market forces.

In effect, the core powers’ role in assigning to the global south the task of raw material provision in the sixteenth century “is a prime cause of contemporary world inequality” (Delacroix, 1977, p. 797). This analysis is in keeping with earlier theorists such as Lenin (1999 [1917]) and Polanyi (2001 [1944]) who both showed that under a capitalist system, rewards are spread unevenly. In Lenin’s (1999 [1917], p. 45) words:

If [capitalism] could raise the living standards of the masses, who in spite of the amazing technical progress are everywhere still half-starved and poverty-stricken, there could be no question of a surplus of capital. This “argument” is very often advanced by the petty-bourgeois critics of capitalism. But if capitalism did these things, it would not be capitalism; for both uneven development and a semistarvation level of existence of the masses are fundamental and inevitable conditions and constitute premises of this mode of production. As long as capitalism remains what it

is, surplus capital will be utilised not for the purpose of raising the standard of living of the masses in a given country, for this would mean a decline in profits for the capitalists, but for the purpose of increasing profits by exporting capital abroad to the backward countries. In these backward countries profits are usually high, for capital is scarce, the price of land is relatively low, wages are low, raw materials are cheap. The export of capital is made possible by a number of backward countries having already been drawn into world capitalist intercourse; main railways have either been or are being built in those countries, elementary conditions for industrial development have been created, etc. The need to export capital arises from the fact that in a few countries' capitalism has become "overripe" and (owing to the backward state of agriculture and the poverty of the masses) capital cannot find a field for "profitable" investment.

Critiques

Whilst we are interested in the *world-system*, rather than specific actors within it, perhaps the most justifiable critique of World-Systems Analysis is the argument that it is state-centric (Robinson, 2011). This is a critique that this thesis attempts to rectify. By moving away from the central state as the unit of analysis, this work employs a world-systems approach to smaller, non-state regions. It is true that regional inequalities within countries cannot always be adequately captured with a state-centric framework. This thesis is therefore a contribution in this area. This means that internal dynamics, domestic policies, governance, and cultural factors will also be included within this developmental framework. However, it is important to note that world-systems asks us to *unthink* the dichotomy between the internal and the external, because all is internal at the level of the world-system.

A relevant theory with regards to a critique of World-Systems Analysis is that of Institutional Economics. This is the argument that emphasises the role of legal, political, and economic institutions in shaping economic performance and developmental outcomes. In essence, strong institutions are crucial for fostering economic growth (North, 1990) (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013). Institutions are clearly important for understanding economic development, but World-Systems Analysis offers a comprehensive framework through which to integrate historical, economic, social and political dimensions. The institutions *that matter* in Institutional Economics do not develop independently of the structural inequalities and the long-term factors behind the global system. Institutional Economics may explain how and why institutions are important, but not how and why institutions develop in the way they do.

World-Systems Analysis is criticised like Dependency Theory for being overly deterministic. The argument is that countries are locked into their positions within the core, semi-periphery, and periphery. This thesis – via its case studies – will show this criticism to be false. New waves and cycles of accumulation and systemic shifts allow for changes in the global hierarchy (Arrighi, 1994). Since the advent of the current world-system, hegemons have changed at regular intervals, as these case studies can attest. World-Systems Analysis is an inherently long-term, historical approach whereby changes are dynamic and flexible, but may happen over a longer period of time.

A different explanatory model for economic development is that of evolutionary economics as espoused by Nelson and Winter (1985). Evolutionary economics provides a framework for understanding economic change, innovation, and growth. Rooted in principles of biological evolution, this approach emphasises the importance of adaptation, learning, and selection processes in shaping economic systems. Firms are seen as operating based on routines, developed through learning and experience. These routines guide decision-making, production processes, and interactions with

the environment. Over time, firms adapt and refine their routines through a process of trial and error, leading to improved performance and competitiveness.

Innovation is a central driver of economic change according to evolutionary economics. Firms engage in a search for new technologies, products, and processes to enhance productivity, enter new markets, and sustain competitive advantage. Successful innovations are selected and diffused throughout the economy, shaping industry structures, and driving long-term growth. Moreover, firms develop dynamic capabilities to respond to changing market conditions and competitive pressures. Dynamic capabilities encompass a firm's ability to sense opportunities, mobilize resources, and adapt its routines and strategies in real time. These capabilities enable firms to thrive in turbulent environments and navigate uncertainty.

However, evolutionary economics has faced criticisms from a world-systems perspective. The framework tends to overlook broader structural factors and power relations within the global economy. Global power dynamics, geopolitical forces, and historical legacies play significant roles in shaping economic change, yet evolutionary economics may not fully account for these systemic influences. Additionally, the framework may underestimate the impact of globalisation on economic evolution. World-systems emphasises the interconnectedness of economies and the unequal distribution of power and resources globally.

Furthermore, evolutionary economics may not fully capture the historical context of economic development. World-Systems Analysis stresses the importance of historical legacies, such as colonisation and imperialism, in shaping economic trajectories. These historical factors continue to influence economic dynamics and innovation patterns in different regions of the world. Additionally, the framework underestimates the role of institutions and governance structures in shaping economic behaviour. Institutions, both at the national and global levels, play a crucial role in mediating economic interactions and determining winners and losers in the global economy. Taken together, these arguments led to this thesis employing a World-Systems Analysis.

The Application of Dependency Theory and World-Systems Analysis in Europe

Dependency Theory was conceptualised in the periphery and was conceived as applying to countries in the global south. Its application to analyse experiences in Europe may then appear inappropriate. Taken as a whole, Europe, after all, was the exploiter par excellence, which has been overtaken only recently by the United States. Europe is the 'developed' in confrontation with the underdeveloped of the world. However, it has been shown that the rewards and losses of capitalism spread unevenly. There is no *a priori* reason to think that this does not also hold for places within Europe, or that Europe should not also feature comparable divisions of labour and function. Treating Europe as a totality - or countries within Europe singularly - obfuscates the position that each part plays within the world-system.

For example, Rostow (1959) argued that Britain's developmental path was the ideal type which other countries should follow. This should naturally lead to an inquiry into whether other places passed (or are passing) through these same stages of development. Are the poorer states of Europe such as Portugal, Spain, Italy, Ireland, and Greece at a different stage on the same developmental path as Britain, or should they be viewed as being structurally and functionally different, mirroring places like Argentina and Mexico in the world-system? Furthermore, are all parts of the state at the same level of development? According to Rostow's conception of Britain's developmental path, was Wales at the same level of development as the southeast of England? How would one define the developmental level of Italy or Spain, given the differences that exist between Madrid, Catalunya, and Andalucía¹³ or Padania and the Mezzogiorno? By analysing these states as a singular entity, do we obfuscate their varying levels of development?

¹³ The Spanish spelling has been used.

To answer these questions, Dudley Seers (1981) and others found the European Dependency School (EDS). It was his view that the function and structure of poorer European states more closely resembled those of Mexico and Argentina, rather than being on a lower stage of Britain's developmental path. As Dependency Theory was borne from the Latin American experience in the 1960s, the EDS was borne from the experiences of Europe in the 1970s. The EDS argued that a convergence between rich and poor regions had not materialised as had been hypothesised by modernisation theorists, neoclassical economists, and Keynesians. For the EDS, Keynesian regional policies were simply "crutches to try to make the neo-classical model work" (Stöhr & Tödtling, 1979, p. 138). They argued that Keynesianism did not differ from neoclassical economics in its strategy for development, but only in its instruments. The causes of development were still viewed as endogenous, whereby regional inequalities are largely the result of weakness in demand for a region's goods and services and therefore could be addressed by redistributive spending by the central state. Management of demand in different regions could in the long-term lead to full employment and equilibrium, and this would be fostered by incentives for capital investment, public investment into infrastructure, and incentives for employment. Keynesianism, therefore, "treated regions as functional regions without history and geography" (Weissenbacher, 2018, p. 86).

Geographical Cores and Peripheries

A contribution of the EDS was their framing of the core-periphery paradigm in a more literal, geographic sense. For purposes of illustration, the Latin American Dependency School split the world into a 'global north' and a 'global south'. Countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Canada, and Germany are in the 'global north', showing that these terms are functional or economically descriptive

rather than geographically literal. Globally, therefore, the core-periphery paradigm – apart from its focus on the North Atlantic region - is non-geographical, whereas:

in the Western European supra-national core-periphery system ... the countries which are the more economically, socially, and politically advanced are grouped in the centre-north, whilst the rest form a partial ring with their major extent to the south (King, 1982, p. 222).

Dudley Seers (1979) mapped the spatial aspects of the core-periphery paradigm in western and southern Europe. Figure 10 below shows the countries which Seers believed constituted the core, semi-periphery, and periphery of Western Europe.

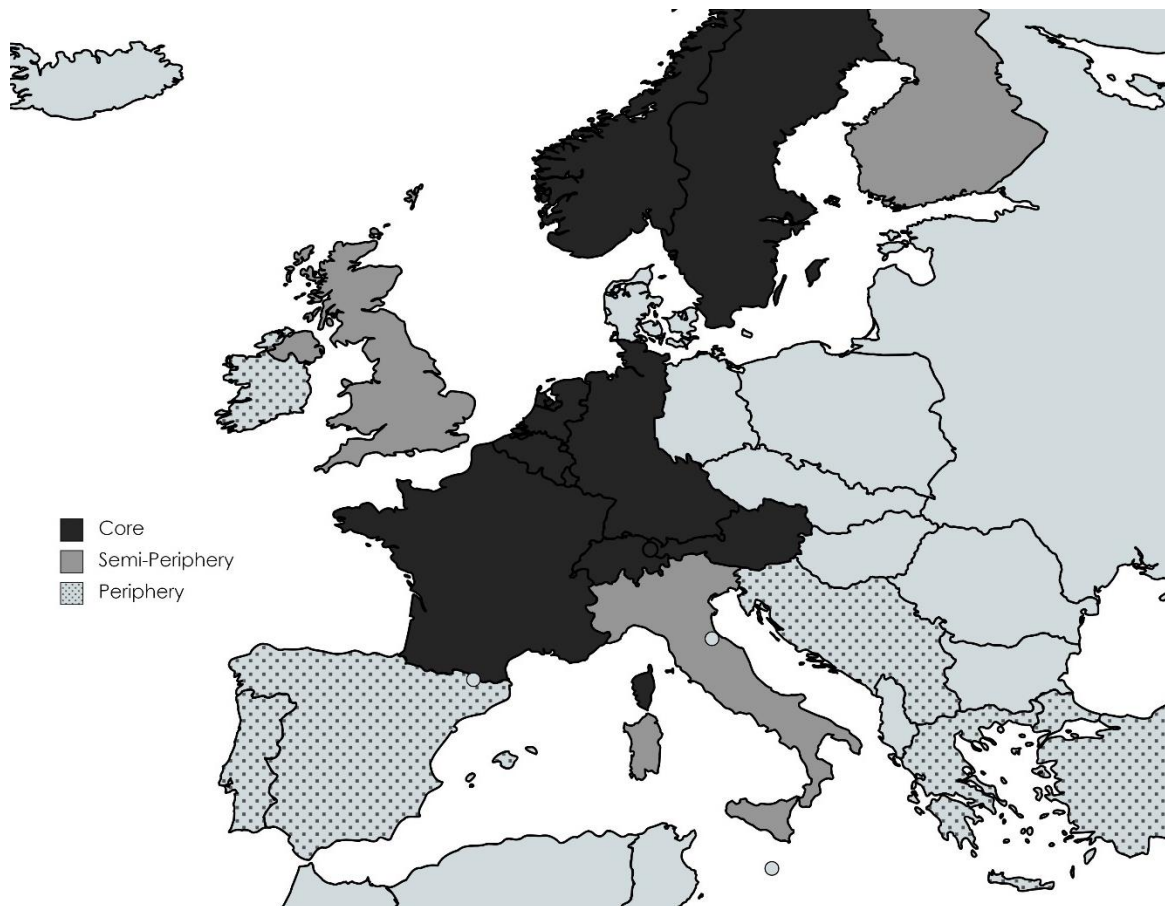


Figure 10: Core, Peripheral and Semi-Peripheral Countries of Western Europe. Author's Own. Reproduced from: (Seers, et al., 1979, p. 17).

At first glance, this map conceals more of the spatial disparity in Europe than it reveals. By using states as the unit of analysis, this map distorts the core position of places such as London, as well as the economic dynamism of northern Italy. Furthermore, to call Corsica a core region due to its relationship with the French mainland is questionable at best. It is therefore likely that states are not the correct unit of analysis to understand the core-periphery paradigm concerning Europe. Fortunately, Seers (1979, p. 21) also created a separate map which he termed the “regional core of Europe” which cut across state boundaries. In this map, the centre of the core – or the “mega-core” as he calls it – begins at the Brussels-Rotterdam-Ruhr nexus and spreads from this starting point. An “incomplete egg” shape is derived which runs from Stockholm, and Oslo in the north, (most of) England to the west, and Barcelona, Turin, and Milan to the south. The “incompleteness” of the egg is due to it not expanding eastward. Figure 11 below shows Seers’ regional core of Europe.



Figure 11: *The Regional Core of Europe*. Author's Own. Reproduced from: (Seers, et al., 1979, p. 21).

This map is more conducive to a deeper understanding of the spatial dimension of the core-periphery paradigm in Europe. It could be argued that the core of Europe should be moved eastward, with Berlin, Vienna and Prague forming a slightly more complete egg. However, this regional map has interesting consequences for our case studies and how, where, and why they fit into the world-system. For example, Catalunya and the Basque Country are the only parts of the Iberian Peninsula which have anything resembling core status. They also enjoy a privileged geographical location in contrast to the rest of Spain. This may have important economic consequences for their position in the core-periphery paradigm. Italy is split between “the two Italies” of north and south. The relationship between the Italian core and periphery, and their relationship with the rest of Europe seems of particular interest. It is also worth noting that the core and peripheral regions of the island of Britain coincide almost perfectly with the constituent nations of the island. The central belt of Scotland and Cardiff in Wales are on the cusp of the core, whereas the rest of both countries are peripheral within Europe.

It is important to remember that although the core-periphery relationship is relatively stable, it is not static and there is room for change over time. It is possible that this incomplete egg has stretched, or it may have contracted. This map should not therefore be viewed unproblematically as representing the core-periphery paradigm today, but instead as a useful starting point for further examination. A spatial fact that alludes to the relative stability of the core-periphery paradigm is how the cores¹⁴ of the semi-peripheral and peripheral regions are oriented to the continental core. The positions of Helsinki, Edinburgh, London, Cardiff, Dublin, Barcelona, Turin, Milan, Prague, and Ljubljana are all oriented within their

¹⁴ It seems counterintuitive but peripheries and semi-peripheries can still have their own cores. If it is accepted that Argentina, for example, is a semi-peripheral country, it can also be assumed that Buenos Aires is likely to be the core of that semi-periphery. Painting with a broad brush inherently means there will be some generalisations; there are likely to be cores and peripheries within Buenos Aires itself. This analysis therefore does not assume that all places within a core or periphery are equally rich or poor but is instead analysing the function of that place within a wider system.

respective countries to the European core. The two countries¹⁵ that do not fit this pattern are Portugal with Lisbon, and Greece with Athens, yet for a host of historical factors in these instances, seaports were preferred to overland travel. These are the exceptions that prove the rule.

Today, the existence of uneven economic development is a more widely accepted view. With regards to growth in Europe, there has been an increase in models that lend from the work of Seers and the EDS such as the 'Blue Banana' and 'The Pentagon'. These models accept that there is a dynamic core and a periphery.

Figures 12 and 13 show these models:

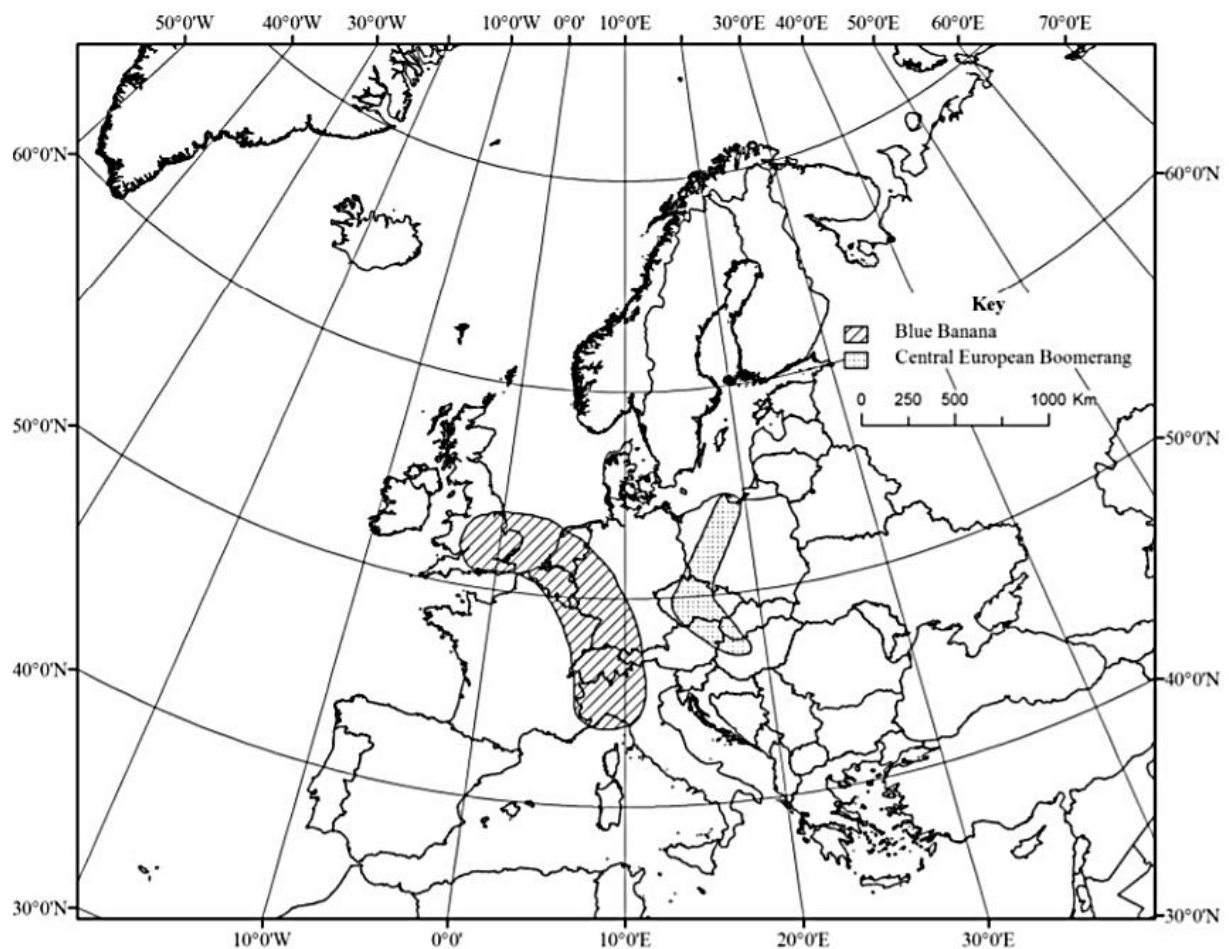


Figure 12: The Blue Banana. Source: (Tóth, et al., 2014).

¹⁵ Madrid also does not fit this pattern, but the capital of Spain was moved during the 16th Century for political reasons. Madrid, therefore, is not a 'natural' capital or entrepôt.



Figure 13: The Pentagon. Source: (Szabó, 2008).

To understand the role and function of the core and periphery of Europe, the relationship between the two must be understood:

backward regions, such as those in southern Europe are not formed autonomously, having, as it were, their own independent existence. Neither are they created incidentally, as a kind of accidental, haphazard by-product of growth elsewhere. ... They are part and parcel of the growth process in the core, and essential to it. ... The European "regional crisis" is not cyclical or short-term, it is fundamental, structural, not only economic but also political and ideological (King, 1982, p. 224).

More recently, Hadjimichalis (2011, p. 255) echoed these sentiments while analysing the sovereign debt crisis in Europe. He argued that:

the foundations of the crisis are embedded in uneven geographical/regional development, which characterizes the socio-spatial structure of the European Union. Public debt is not the cause of the current crisis but one of its manifestations.

The core-periphery system in Europe has a set of spatial patterns (concentration of population, industry, and capital) and a set of spatial flows (movement of migrants, tourists, and capital) that binds the core and the periphery together, and in so doing, leads to the perpetuation and reproduction of this system (Seers, et al., 1979). It is possible to highlight specific processes which are a consequence of, and further entrench, the unequal relationship between the core and periphery of Europe.

Firstly, major investment decisions in the periphery tend to be dependent on consumption patterns in the core. This is true of both personal luxury items and habits of consumption, and the consumption patterns of larger multinationals.

Secondly, the core attracts skilled labour from the periphery which helps lead to more efficient production techniques in the core. This makes innovation difficult in the periphery and thus further entrenches the need to import technology. This can also lead to products in the periphery becoming uncompetitive.

Thirdly, the same processes of weak internal linkages and weak periphery-periphery trade that Andre Gunder Frank (1966) analysed globally are identifiable in the European periphery. King (1982, p. 225) identified that trade between Portugal and Spain - considering their geographical and cultural proximity - was minor. Today, trade between both countries is still relatively small. For example, Portugal accounts for just 7.7% of Spanish exports and 3.6% of its imports (United Nations, 2022). These same weak linkages have led to enclave industries; factories in the Mezzogiorno are called “palaces in the desert” or “Cathedrals without pillars” (Andreoni, 2013, p. 303).

Fourthly, decision-making power is concentrated in the core. Important decisions are made in Brussels, rather than in Athens or Lisbon. This allows multinationals in core states to petition their governments and write the laws of the game in their favour. This also affects information flow; the periphery is acutely aware of political events in the core as these can have serious economic and political consequences in the periphery. The inverse does not hold. This led Wallerstein (2011, p. 230) to argue that in the periphery, the “indigenous state is weak, ranging from its nonexistence (that is, a colonial situation) to one with a low degree of autonomy (that is, a neo-colonial situation)”.

Lastly, tourist and migration flows work in such a way that the core has a large reserve army of labour in the periphery which can be easily swept out in times of economic contraction. For example, EU citizens who have lived in another EU country for less than 5 years can be asked to leave after 6 months of unemployment (European Parliament, 2023). Core countries can therefore benefit from a large workforce in times of economic expansion, while not having to pay social security in times of economic contraction. Furthermore, citizens of core countries use peripheral countries for their consumption; in some instances, the rise of a dedicated tourism industry has changed the societal fabric of peripheral regions. Entire towns have become dependent on a trade that is seasonal and inherently prone to fluctuations.

David Keeble (1989, p. 1) summarised the outcomes of these processes of regional imbalance:

Time and again, 'central' regions of the Community record much better economic structures, income levels and welfare indicators than do its 'peripheral' regions. The latter are in fact distinctive in suffering from markedly lower incomes, GDP per head and hence relative poverty, much higher youth and female unemployment rates, much greater dependence upon agriculture with a marked under-representation of manufacturing and service job opportunities, and manufacturing and service

structures far more biased towards low-tech and consumer-dependent activities, than is the case with central regions”.

The preceding chapters have explicated Dependency Theory and World-Systems Analysis and considered their application in a European context. The next chapter will analyse European state development and the role of the European Union (EU) in creating and/or solidifying the inequalities that exist within Europe and whether this has repercussions for secessionist movements.

IV. Europe: State Development and Integration

Europe offers fertile ground for comparative analysis because most countries - at least in western and southern Europe - are members of the European Union (EU). The existence of the EU allows the study of whether political convergence leads to economic convergence. Political convergence in this instance is meant as countries deciding to join the EU and pool some sovereignty centrally. Economic convergence in this instance means a reduction in economic inequality between regions, rather than solely the implementation of common economic frameworks. To uncover the reality adequately, it is necessary to outline the processes that led to the creation of the EU and how the EU's structures and frameworks - borne from these initial conditions - affect different regions and development. To begin, this thesis will apply the concept of passive revolution to the process of European integration. If this is a viable theoretical lens for EU integration, it may explain some of the deficiencies behind the European Union's attempts to remediate spatial economic differences.

Gramsci's Concept of Passive Revolution

The notion of European integration gained in popularity following the Second World War. Before European integration, spatial imbalances existed across the continent. Integration, therefore, did not lead to the imbalances that exist between regions,¹⁶ however, integration has been incapable of reducing these imbalances to any meaningful extent. As a rule of thumb, the poorest regions of Europe in 1950 are still the poorest today. Viewing European integration through the prism of what

¹⁶ See next subchapter for details.

Gramsci terms “passive revolution” can help illuminate why. As Daniel Evans (2018, p. 490) succinctly explained:

passive revolution is a moment within the history and development of the state, whereby seemingly radical changes to society are in fact carefully managed in a way which preserves capitalist hegemony.

Stefan Kipfer (2012, p. 86) argued that Gramsci was interested in “conjunctures”. These are historical moments whose effects have longer-term historical significance. It was from this starting point that he began to develop his notion of passive revolution. This was the theoretical lens through which he came to understand the Italian Risorgimento.¹⁷ For Gramsci:

the key punctual moment ... was the experience of the French Revolution and its aftermath. This not only made the Italian Risorgimento comparable in terms of the distinct lack of a national-popular hegemonic project articulated in Italy as compared to France, but also allowed Gramsci to see the history of nineteenth-century Europe as a series of passive revolutions, or what he saw as reforms from above (owing to the cumulative process of history) (Hesketh, 2017, p. 402).

The Risorgimento¹⁸ differed from the French Revolution because its leaders were “Jacobin ... only in external form” and did not make “the demands of the popular masses one’s own” (Gramsci quoted in Forgacs, 2000, p. 253). Regarding the revolutionary role of the Jacobins, Gramsci stated that:

The Jacobins ... opposed every ‘intermediate’ halt in the revolutionary process and sent to the guillotine not only the elements of the old society which was hard a-dying, but also the revolutionaries of yesterday – today become reactionaries. The Jacobins, consequently, were the only party of the revolution in progress, in as much as they not only represented the immediate needs and aspirations of the actual physical

¹⁷ Italian Unification

¹⁸ The Italian Risorgimento will be discussed at fuller length in the Italian case study chapter.

individuals who constituted the French bourgeoisie, but they also represented the revolutionary movement as a whole, as an integral historical development. For they represented future needs as well, and, once again, not only the needs of those particular physical individuals, but also of all the national groups which had to be assimilated to the existing fundamental group. ... They were convinced of the absolute truth of their slogans about equality, fraternity, and liberty and, what is more important, the great popular masses whom the Jacobins stirred up and drew into the struggle were also convinced of their truth (Quoted in Forgacs, 2000, p. 255).

The leaders of the Risorgimento differed from the Jacobins due to the weakness of the Italian bourgeoisie and the fact that they could not extend their hegemony over the popular masses. This weakness led to a mutual distrust between Italy's large peasantry on one side and the newly emerging Italian bourgeoisie on the other. This reality meant that most Italians were passive in the events of the Risorgimento. The bourgeois-democratic impulses which in France found a Jacobin expression were in Italy:

satisfied by small doses, legally, in a reformist manner – in such a way that it was possible to preserve the political and economic position of the old feudal classes, to avoid agrarian reform, and, especially, to avoid the popular masses going through a period of political experiences such as occurred in France in the years of Jacobinism, in 1831, and in 1848 (Forgacs, 2000, p. 266).

The concept of passive revolution was first developed to analyse concrete historical events such as the French Revolution, the German Revolutions of 1848-49 and the Italian Risorgimento. However, Gramsci later began to investigate the applicability of his theory to explain other phenomena. For example, he later viewed the rise of 'Americanism' or 'Fordism' as a form of passive revolution. He argued that industrialisation and standardised mass production had changed the social relations that existed between labourer, capitalist, and capital, yet noted no corresponding change in the structure of the state (Buci-Glucksmann, 1980, p. 60).

With this applicability in mind, Bieling (2015, p. 102) created a general framework through which to conceptualise passive revolution. In his view, the term “refers to processes of societal transformation which take place without a sudden, comprehensive, and radical change” and that passive revolutions are marked by three features. Firstly, they are revolutions ‘from above’ or ‘from outside’ which take place without the active involvement and enthusiasm of the masses. Secondly, the economic and political reforms that do take place are piecemeal and aim to stabilise or restore inherited power relations. Thirdly, these reforms lead to an increasing marginalisation of some subaltern social classes or groups. The theory of passive revolution is therefore a lens through which we can analyse:

the survival and reorganisation of capitalism through periods of crisis, when crucial aspects of capitalist social relations are not overcome but reproduced in new forms, leading to the furtherance of state power and an institutional framework consonant with capitalist property relations (Evans, 2018, p. 490).

European Integration as Passive Revolution

Armed with this theoretical underpinning, it is now possible to apply Gramsci’s theory of passive revolution to European integration. This will illuminate why integration has not led to a recalibration of economic power or a reorientation of political strength in Europe. Gramsci (1996, p. 180) stated:

it is necessary to bear in mind that international relations become intertwined with those internal relations of a nation-state, and this, in turn, creates peculiar and historically concrete combinations.

The historical moments that shaped European integration included the Bolshevik Revolution, the Second World War, and the rise of Fordism. These international

events combined with the internal conditions of Western Europe and created the foundation for European integration.

The Post-War period in Europe was one of instability. Firstly, European global hegemony was being challenged by both the United States and the Soviet Union, further spurred by the reduction in Europe's colonial possessions. There was pressure from below from workers who looked to the Soviet example, as well as pressures from above typified by the emergence of the Pax Americana and the maturation of the Fordist economic model. This led to a:

new epoch of passive revolution [which was] exemplified by Keynesianism [in that it] served to stave discontent and expand capitalism while offering real but limited concessions to the subaltern classes. It thereby displaced more radical demands while not offering meaningful political inclusion or economic justice (Bieling, 2015, p. 102).

This view can be expanded: European integration should be included within the general framework of the Keynesian passive revolution which swept across Europe in the post-war years. In returning to Bieling's (2015) three features of passive revolution, European integration satisfies all three requirements.

Firstly, economic and political reforms aimed at stabilising inherited power relations. Integration was an attempt to continue the privileged position of Europe within the world-system. Integration was an acceptance that European countries could no longer maintain their position in the world-system by continuing as individual nation-states. By pooling together, these states attempted to stabilise their world-system position. Furthermore, integration maintained the core position of the major European superpowers qua peripheral European states. Moreover, it was the privileged position of capital and capitalists within those countries that were maintained.

Secondly, integration did lead to the marginalisation of some subaltern social classes or groups. The treatment of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers is an example of this. As Varada Raj (2006, p. 517) argued:

The European project, often characterized as the creation of an open space, free from barriers to flows and where national frontiers no longer mean anything, is a veneer that glosses an intense violence at the borders of an increasingly Fortress-like Europe. This latter violence is absolutely constitutive of the hegemonic project of Europe. This violence not only finds its expression in overt violence—beatings, arrest, detention of migrants—but also pervades the social realm in the most quotidian of instances, such that certain classes of people are made to inhabit an everyday limbo of precarity and indeterminacy in which they have to be borders. The concern of hegemonic projects such as an attempt to build a Fortress Europe is to create a political order that relies upon maintaining a delicate and generalized violence directed against people who live their experience marked as borders, standing in welfare lines, asking for public housing, sitting in police stations, and waiting for hospital treatment.

The borders of the European Union embody the contradictions within the project of European integration. It represents, on one hand, a 'liberation' for core powers and their populations, while continuing to restrict the rights of actors in the global periphery (Parry, 2020). Balibar (2002) described the borders of Europe as a spatiotemporal home for migrants who repeatedly encounter, and are regulated by it, whereas the privileged are allowed to pass freely through those very same borders.

Thirdly, European integration was a revolution 'from above' and 'from outside'. It was 'from outside' because the United States were ardent supporters of the concept. Marshall Plan aid was tied to pan-European cooperation. The Committee of European Economic Co-operation of 1947 determined European-wide¹⁹ priorities for

¹⁹ The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other socialist governments in Eastern Europe were not included in these talks, nor did they receive Marshall Plan aid.

European recovery and specified how to administer Marshall Plan aid. Following this Committee, the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation was formed in 1948. This was the precursor to today's Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). External stimuli, therefore, namely the 'threat' of communism and the USA's new global hegemony created the conditions for European integration. Integration was also a revolution 'from above' because:

[it] was always a top-down elitist project, which envisaged the successive widening and deepening of what was to become the EU as a smooth and harmonious process. Crucially, as it was to become clear, the European project never had a solid political basis, grounded in popular mass consent. It was essentially a project of and for the political and capitalist economic elites of Europe, creating a new space for capital accumulation and a new political territory that would allow those who ruled it to have an equal voice with the USA and USSR on the world stage (Hudson, 2017, p. 139).

The notion that European integration was a top-down exercise is not new. In the 1970s, Lindberg & Scheingold described integration as a "permissive consensus". It was their view that integration was an elite affair, but the process was safeguarded because the European population did not take much interest in European politics. Today, the population of Europe are more interested in European politics *and* Euroscepticism seems to be more prominent. A change in economic hegemony from Keynesianism to neoliberalism may be responsible for this.²⁰ As stated previously, the internal relations of nation-states become intertwined with external relations. The new international economic environment of the 80s intertwined with internal economic change and change at the European level. As Hudson (2017, p. 140) argued:

There was no recognition that there might be limits to the capacity of national states and the supra-national EU to manage such tensions and keep them within politically

²⁰ Morton (2010) argued that the neoliberal turn is another era of passive revolution whereby capitalism has reinvented itself once again.

and socially acceptable bounds, especially over the medium- to long-term. This became painfully clear in the early years of the 1970s as the long post-war Fordist boom ground to a halt, profits slumped and unemployment and inflation rose simultaneously (something that the dominant policy perspectives regarded as impossible), as a result of a combination of conjunctural and structural forces, and the spatiality of the global economy began to change markedly as capital sought to relocate as one strategy to restore profitability.

There is scope therefore to view European integration as a form of passive revolution. Passive revolution provides a method of understanding how elites react to changes at the level of the world-system. The punctual points of history correspond to a change in Western Europe's position in the world-system. This is true of the Pax Americana, the rise of the USSR, and decolonisation. Via the passive revolution of European integration, elites attempted to maintain their position at the level of the world-system. Now it is possible to analyse how this reality has affected the composition of the EU.

The Institutional Make-up of the European Union

Institutional arrangements are designed in the interests of those who make them. In the case of European integration, the arrangements were "economically liberal, politically conservative and anti-communist" (Weissenbacher, 2018, p. 87).

According to Seers and Vaitos (1982, p. 4), the purpose of the European Community²¹ (EC) was to create an institutional laissez-faire system which "would make it difficult for any really left-wing government of the future to exercise controls and carry out far-reaching social changes". The industrial structure of the EU was created in a way that would foster international 'free' trade. Economic competition –

²¹ The institution that existed before the European Union.

which would help foster free trade - was written as a fundamental ideology of the Community in the Treaty of Rome of 1958. This ideology has been used to strike down regional and industrial policies that 'distort' competition (Kiljunen, 1980, p. 212). The founding members of the EC were at a relatively similar level of development. They were relatively wealthy states and consisted of Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany. The structure of the institution changed dramatically after 1986 when it grew to include twelve members: the original six alongside the UK, the Republic of Ireland, Denmark, Greece, Spain, and Portugal. The Community had changed from a rich club to one of unequal partners, with Ireland, Greece, Spain, and Portugal peripheral to the European core. Seers (1979, p. 27) argued:

if there are no major reforms in the Community, there will be, after the enlargement, serious dualism, indeed a sort of colonial system. In the poorer group which already suffers whenever a government of the core adopts financially restrictive policies, the effects could be more severe if they give up the possibility of adopting measures to protect their national economy.

Due to the institutional structure of the EC, which enshrined 'free' market fundamentalism and competition, these major reforms were never forthcoming, further supporting the notion of European integration as a passive revolution.

To their credit, the European Commission has been aware of regional inequalities. However, their answer to this quandary was to allocate more resources towards strengthening competition in the hope that market forces would be the main mechanism through which prosperity would be brought to peripheral regions. It seems that the *cause* of the ailment of the periphery was mistaken for the antidote. As Costis Hadjimichalis (1994, p. 27) argued:

neoliberal policies both at national and EU levels seem to be ignoring historical experiences which show that these very processes of capitalist competition are

precisely responsible for the present situation. National governments and the EU are ready instead to put the blame on the victims.

The EU did not create the inequality that exists between the European core and periphery, nor was it originally responsible for the balance of trade deficits that existed between core and peripheral countries. However, as Stefan Musto (1982, p. 70) succinctly explained:

enlargement will not in itself cause these problems, but it will aggravate and accentuate them. In the present circumstances, it would seem difficult to lessen their effect, since the Community, being geared in every way to the needs of highly developed industrial countries, does not have sufficient structural policy instruments. ... The strategy question is not how the negative consequences of enlargement should be offset with the present division of labour but what new forms of the division of labour are needed to eliminate the disintegrating effects of the structural imbalances in the Community.

The Eurozone and Monetary Union

The disparities between the core and periphery in an enlarged EU were exacerbated by monetary union and the creation of the Eurozone. The pre-existing unequal regional production systems, structurally different regional labour markets, and unequal access to markets were not addressed before or after the monetary union (Hadjimichalis, 2011, p. 259). The neoliberal macroeconomic and fiscal framework of the Euro was designed in the interests of the European core. The creation of the Eurozone and the convergence of prices had the effect of deflating the prices of the European core, raising their competitiveness on global and European markets. In contrast, the prices of products from the European periphery were inflated and these countries lost any form of competitive edge. This was particularly true regarding

products from Southeast Asia. A currency union meant that regions become twice removed from monetary policy due to the transferral of policies upward to the European Central Bank without a concurrent centrally organised tax and benefit system which would help tackle regional imbalances (Martin, 2001, p. 60). Monetary union also restricted nation-states' abilities to apply specific regulatory frameworks such as monetary devaluation, bilateral international trade agreements and the provision of investment incentives.

The Eurozone was working under the neoliberal assumption that regional imbalances would be 'corrected' by market forces. The reality was that exchange flows opened by monetary union generated further surpluses to the European core at the expense of the periphery (Hadjimichalis, 2011, p. 261). What was not understood during the creation of the Eurozone is that the production of uneven spaces is fundamental to the way that capital reproduces itself; Europe contains discriminatory geographies, value flows and locational biases (Soja, 2010). Using Greece as an instructive example of the effect of enlargement based on neoliberal principles, Pollis (1985, p. 110) argued that enlargement would lead to:

the strengthening of those very sectors that would preclude the future autonomous industrial development of Greece. Emphasis is placed on the expansion of the fishing industry ... expansion of agriculture by increasing productivity ... and last, the expansion of the tourist industry. The question of the development of Greece's industrial sector was largely ignored, undoubtedly premised on the doctrine of comparative advantage, since it is widely accepted that Community membership is destructive to Greece's non-competitive industries, albeit potentially beneficial to Europe's multinationals.

Greece shows how Community membership does not necessarily create peripherality but does help to entrench it.

A paradigmatic picture suggested Germany as a role model, personified as the saving Swabian housewife, and proposed mechanisms of private households for national accounts. In that way, everybody could become export champions with a positive trade balance. Somebody must import these exports, and somebody must pay for them. In the case of the EU, the Southern periphery very much belonged to both somebodies until their debt situation slowed this process (Weissenbacher, 2020, p. 60).

Although Greece is an especially extreme case, it is not exceptional regarding the vulnerability of peripheral countries in a core-centred EU. Seers deduced what would happen to peripheral countries after enlargement and monetary union would exacerbate these issues:

Those [countries] in deficit ... have to adopt deflationary policies. The more complete the degree of integration, the more serious this asymmetry is likely to be. If governments in an economic community have given up trade restrictions, foreign exchange control and even freedom to vary the exchange rate, then the only short-term weapons left to deal with a recession in exports (or rise in import prices) are fiscal and monetary policies that lower the level of employment – and wage controls to reduce costs and purchasing power. The effect is to make the governments of peripheral economies in an integrated system highly dependent on those of its core; if the latter give greater priority to curbing price inflation than to reducing unemployment, there is little the former can do but resign themselves to accepting the priority and shaping their own policies accordingly (Seers & Vaitsos, 1982, p. 19).

Political convergence can therefore go hand in hand with economic divergence. The eastern and southern peripheries of Europe have become locked into a particular path of development where the ‘winners’ of integration are unevenly concentrated in the core (Börzel & Langbein, 2019, p. 947). Whether this unequal relationship is tenable in the long term remains to be seen. Seers (Seers, et al., 1979, p. 29) satirically quipped that “enlargement seems impossible: yet it simultaneously appears inevitable”. Today, regional equality within the European framework seems

impossible: yet the disintegration of this unequal system without it appears inevitable. The geographical expressions of uneven capitalist development will have important consequences for future regional integration and disintegration. Edward Soja (1980, p. 224) argued that “the production of space has been socially obfuscated and mystified in the development of capitalism”, yet the spatial consequences of European integration, may demystify the “socio-spatial dialectic”.

The Socio-Spatial Dialectic

Social systems and the space in which they operate exist in a dialectical relationship. Space is socially produced and organised which means that for an analysis to be aspatial or asocial is to miss the relationship that exists between them. Soja (1980) argued that two axes of conflict arise from the capitalist mode of production: vertical (working class and bourgeoisie) and horizontal (core-periphery). The form in which these conflicts take place varies between space and between social systems. This is because space is socially produced differently dependent on the economic base.

Unevenness in the way space is socially produced leads to tensions between geographic areas. In the case of Europe, this tension can lead to two forms of disintegration. Firstly, the European Union as a politico-economic organisation may collapse due to the pervasive unevenness and inequality that exists within it. Secondly, the states of Europe themselves may disintegrate, especially where there is strong nationalist sentiment. The unevenness of the capitalist system does not end at the borders between states; within states there is a socio-spatial dialectic which shapes the terrain of conflict. The relationship that exists between the economy, our society, and our social space must be analysed. Each part of this holy trinity reinforces and shapes the other. As Karl Marx argued, capitalism leads to the annihilation of space by time. And in one sense, he was correct. The entire globe is

now navigable within a day, and money as capital can be moved from one place to another at a moment's notice. However, in another way he failed to account for the ability of space – or perhaps more correctly the people who exist within a space – to fight back. Space or place is more than an empty receptacle, it is filled with the totality of our social relations. The cold materialism of capital may dictate that people 'should' move somewhere with more market opportunities, all else being equal. But not all else is equal. Space includes our homes, our partners, our families, and our nations. Not even capitalism can annihilate that, try as it might. To therefore understand how capitalism and our social relations interact, we must understand how these shape space and how space, in turn, shapes capitalism and social relations. Raymond Williams (1989, p. 242) discussed the importance of place and argued that:

a new theory of socialism must now centrally involve place. Remember the argument was that the proletariat had no country, the factor which differentiated it from the property-owning classes. But place is a crucial element in the bonding process-more so perhaps for the working class than the capital-owning classes-by the explosion of the international economy and the destructive effects of deindustrialization upon old communities. When capital has moved on, the importance of place is more clearly revealed.

State Disintegration in Europe

In many constituent states of Europe, nationalist political parties have emerged as important political players²². Their party structures have become more professionalised, and many are now influential political actors, with some being in government either at a state-wide level or within devolved Parliaments or Assemblies. The European Union has also opened new avenues for these parties, with many sitting as a bloc in the European Parliament as the European Free Alliance. There is also a “Committee of the Regions” which opens political space for the legitimisation of parties of stateless nations.²³ The purpose of this thesis is not to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, or the legitimacy of these political parties. However, political parties are an expression of real or perceived injustices, class positions, group solidarity, and identifications. These positions arise from the material economic base of society and are parts of the superstructure that arises from it. Some nationalist political parties may seem to arise due to cultural grievances, but these cultural grievances exist due to material differences between cultural groups. What is important for this analysis is how the economic base of society makes national identity salient in some cases while not in others. From this theoretical beginning, it will then be possible to turn specifically to our three case studies.

Socially constituted space is the arena in which class and social struggle plays out. In the case of stateless nations, the effect of uneven development means that those places that are *relatively* poor or wealthy compared to the state as a whole are generally more supportive of parties that support secessionism (Kyriacou & Morral-

²² The term usually used to describe political parties that support independence for a territory from the central state is “regional parties”. However, this definition contains an inherent bias within it. These places are not “regions” but are nations. This thesis will therefore use the term “nationalist party” to describe a party that fights for more autonomy, or secession for a territory from the central state.

²³ A stateless nation is here defined as a nation that is not recognised as an independent nation-state. A nation that has its own Parliament but is also part of a wider state, such as Scotland, Wales, and Catalunya are here defined as “stateless”.

Palacín, 2015). The uneven distribution of the rewards of capitalism both between classes and between geographical space leads to political mobilisation. This means that a region which is *under or overdeveloped* compared to the political core is more likely to have strong secessionist movements. It is the *relative* development of a region that is important. In Europe, a country may be relatively developed in *absolute* terms, but it could be conceived of as being relatively underdeveloped within its state and European context. As Nairn (2021, p. 169) suggests:

'Under-development' in this context is of course relative to the general conditions of the 'metropolitan' area of Western Europe. It does not imply any wider identification with Third World underdevelopment (an analogy that has frequently been taken much too literally).

Fitjar (2010) argued that relative *overdevelopment* in a region is more conducive to minority nationalism because these places have more resources available for political mobilisation, meaning that the relative costs of creating a new state is lower. These areas may also dislike the redistributive qualities of the state if it is felt that they are funding 'laggard' regions. This may help explain why secessionism is stronger in Catalunya than in Galicia, or Scotland than in Wales. However, this fails to explain the decision of Ireland to leave the UK; it was certainly the most oppressed part of the state, but also the most underdeveloped. Furthermore, there has been a clear trend towards more support for independence in Wales; an underdeveloped part of the UK. Why there was little pressure for self-government in the 19th and 20th Centuries and why that pressure has grown recently still needs explanation. However, Nairn (2021, pp. 209-210) correctly deduced that nationalism, especially in Europe, could not be reduced to being *solely* about relative underdevelopment. Nationalism has a Janus face:

The dominant progressive myth of anti-imperialism is focussed overwhelmingly upon nationalism as a justified struggle of the repressed poor against the wealthy oppressors. [...] However, it has never been the case that this main current exhausts

the meaning of nationalism. There have also been a number of what could be called 'counter currents' – examples of societies which have claimed national self-determination from a different, more advanced point in the development spectrum. [...] Not surprisingly, this category is mainly one of small nationalities and territories in 'sensitive' geopolitical points. The more advanced and industrialised Belgians developed a successful nationalist movement against the (then) backward and agrarian Netherlands monarchy between 1815 and 1830. In the late 19th and early 20th century the more advanced regions of the Basques and the Catalans developed separatist tendencies against backward central and southern Spain.

The Development of Nationalism

The emotive power of the modern state derives from the fusing of 'state' and 'nation' to create the notion of the modern nation-state. This fusion is perhaps best exemplified by the creation of the United Nations as an interstate organisation. Nation-states are not primordial identities; they have not always existed and may cease to exist in future. They are, however, buttressed by a mixture of ethnic, linguistic, and cultural peculiarities.

Anthony Smith (1991, p. 22) coined the term *ethnie* to describe these underpinnings of national identity. In his view, *ethnies* derive from older forms of belonging and difference and include "shared historical memories", this however does not mean that *ethnies* are unchanging or fixed. Smith (1991, pp. 23-25) argued that *ethnies*:

exhibit both constancy and flux side by side [which means that] the ethnie is anything but primordial, despite the claims and rhetoric of nationalist ideologies and discourses. As the subjective significance of each of these attributes waxes and wanes for the members of the community, so does the cohesion and self-awareness of that community's membership. As these several attributes come together and become more

intense and salient, so does the sense of ethnic identity and, with it, ethnic community.

This speaks to the issue of defining nations, because there is an attempt to “fit historically novel, emerging, changing and, even today, far from universal entities into a framework of permanence and universality” (Hobsbawm, 1992, p. 6). What is of particular importance to this analysis is the notion that identity can become more “intense and salient” at different periods and in different circumstances.

Hobsbawm (1992, p. 12) argued that nations are ‘created’ and therefore they are ‘not real’. As he stated:

no serious historian of nations and nationalism can be a committed political nationalist... Nationalism requires too much belief in what is patently not so.

However, it is argued here that we need a more nuanced understanding of nationalism and that Henri Lefebvre’s (1991) theory of space as concrete abstraction can be used as a foundation. Lefebvre argued that spaces take on a social character: masculine/feminine, working class/capitalist, work/leisure, and so on (Stanek, 2008). These spaces do not physically hold these characteristics but become imbued with social and cultural meaning. This means that these characteristics are “concrete” in that they exist in the social realm and in how we interact with that space, but they are “abstractions” in that without imbuing these spaces with our social understandings, they would not hold this value. In the same vein, nations are “concrete” in that they are imbued with social, political, economic, and cultural meaning but they are “abstractions” because without imbuing nations with meaning they would not exist. Therefore, although nations are *invented* or *created*, this does not make them any less *real*.

Taylor (1994, p. 151) argued that nation-states are unique due to their spatiotemporal imagining as ‘timeless’. There is therefore clearly a gulf between the imagining of a

nation and the reality of its construction. It is this ephemeral characteristic that gives them strength:

All social institutions exist concretely in some section of space, but state and nation are both peculiar in having a special relation with a specific place. A given state does not just exist in space, it has sovereign power in a particular territory. Similarly, a nation is not an arbitrary spatial given, it has meaning only for a particular place, its homeland. It is this basic community of state and nation as both being constituted through place that has enabled them to be linked together as nation-states. The domination of political practice in the world by territoriality is a consequence of this territorial link between sovereign territory and national homeland.

The preceding pages have shown the difficulty in defining what exactly is a nation. However, attempts have been made. Stalin (2015 [1954]) defined a nation as “a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed based on a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture”. Anthony Smith (1991, p. 14) came to a relatively similar definition:

a nation can therefore be defined as a named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members (emphasis in original).

Difficulties arise under both definitions: can you have more than one common language as is the case in Wales, Catalunya, or even Switzerland? How well-defined does the “common territory” need to be, especially considering the changing borders in Europe and further afield over the years? Countries such as the USA and South Africa did not have *de jure* common legal rights and duties for all members until very recently and whether these exist *de facto* in much of the world is also a point worth considering. Furthermore, how does one achieve “common legal rights and

duties” without a central state? In some sense, this assumes that a place is not a nation *until* it has achieved independence. This seems to suggest that nationhood and statehood are inextricably linked. However, when attempting to “fit historically novel, emerging, changing and, even today, far from universal entities into a framework of permanence and universality” there will always be some exceptions (Hobsbawm, 1992, p. 6). For this research, these definitions are a sound foundation.

What these authors all have in common, however, is the view that the creation of nation-states and the development of capitalism are contemporaneous processes. State bureaucracies and national education systems were created and designed to create internal markets for capitalist products and to make citizens loyal to the state. In Eugen Weber’s (1976) wonderful phrase, it was the process of turning peasants into Frenchmen. As Gellner (2008, pp. 48-49) argued:

nationalism is not the awakening of an old, latent, dormant force, though that is how it does indeed present itself. It is in reality the consequence of a new form of social organization, based on deeply internalized, education-dependent high cultures, each protected by its own: state. It uses some of the pre-existent cultures, generally transforming them in the process, but it cannot possibly use them all.

Cores and Peripheries in National Development

As there is an economic core-periphery paradigm, there is also a political core-periphery paradigm. States tend to develop from a politico-economic core such as Wessex in the case of the UK, Paris in the case of France, Prussia in the case of Germany, the Kingdom of Sardinia (Piedmont) in the case of Italy and so on. State formation is the process of a core region conquering surrounding areas which in turn become absorbed into the territorial state (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). These areas become internal peripheries and the administrative and economic system, the

culture, and the language of the core are pushed out to the peripheries. This process - like capitalism - progresses unevenly. The core, which is at the centre of the state that they have created see themselves in the image of the new nation.

Pounds and Ball (1964) mapped what they believed to be the core areas of European states, showing how an original core grows via incorporation, annexation, and conquest. Figure 14 shows their findings.

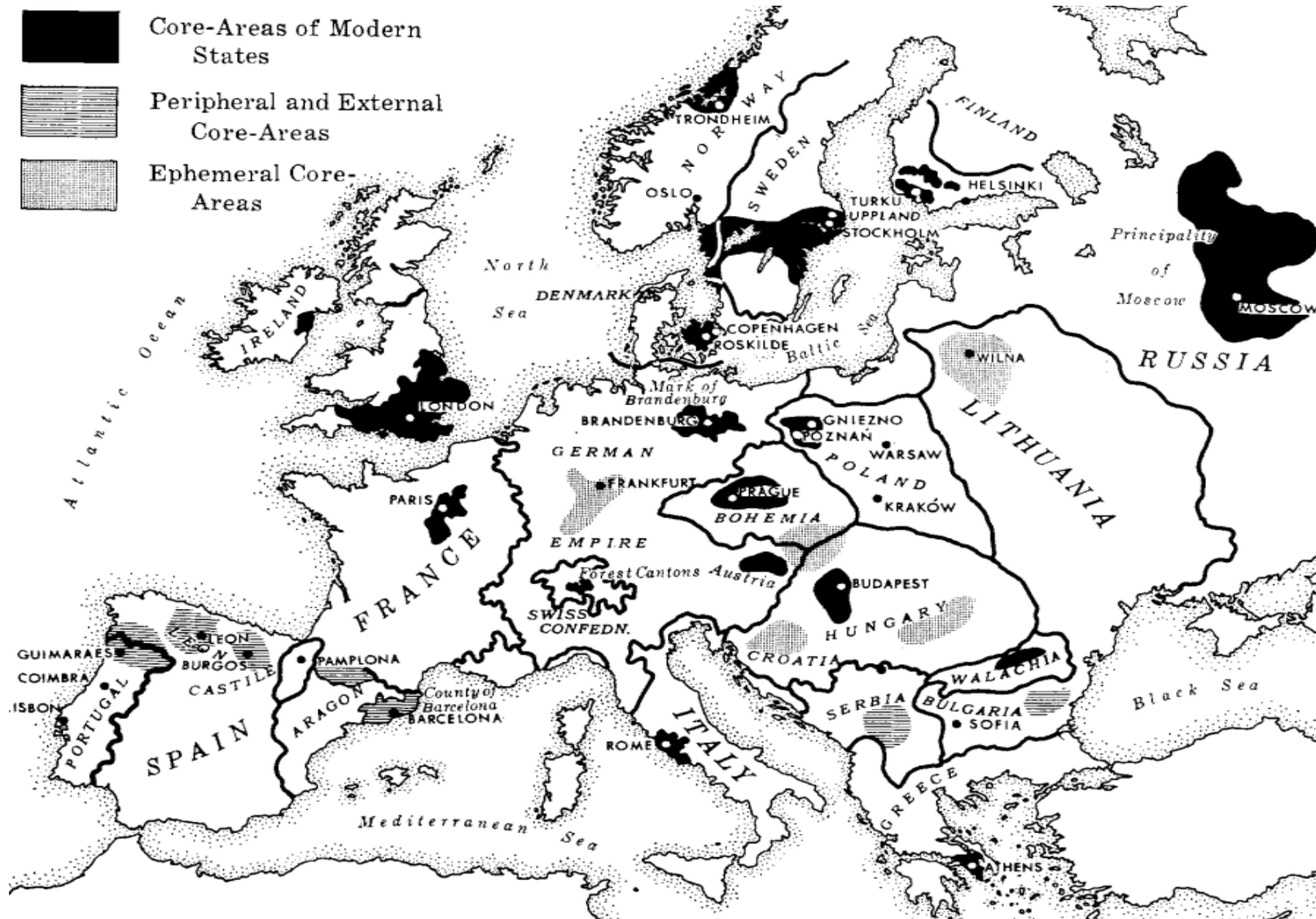


Figure 14: Core Areas of Modern States. Source: (Pounds & Ball, 1964).

The penetration of capitalism and state institutions into the peripheries is restricted by geography, traditional relations of production, and in some cases a different language. These residual differences mean that it is more difficult for the state to penetrate the periphery as completely as it does the core. In many such cases, therefore, politicised nationalist sentiment today is a transposition and consequence of uneven capitalist and state development from hundreds of years ago. As Ernest Gellner (1964, p. 166) argued, nationalism is a phenomenon connected with the uneven diffusion of industrialisation and modernisation. Tom Nairn (1975, p. 8) attempted to find the roots of the begrudgingly persistent political nationalism of stateless nations:

The subjectivity of nationalism is an important objective fact about it; but it is a fact which, in itself, merely reposes the question of origins. The real origins are elsewhere. They are located not in the folk, nor in the individual's repressed passion for some sort of wholeness or identity, but in the machinery of world political economy. Not, however, in the process of that economy's development as such — not simply as an inevitable concomitant of industrialization and urbanization. They are associated with more specific features of that process. The best way of categorizing these traits is to say they represent the uneven development of history since the eighteenth century. This unevenness is a material fact; one could argue that it is the most grossly material fact about modern history. This statement allows us to reach a satisfying and near-paradoxical conclusion: the most notoriously subjective and ideal of historical phenomena is in fact a by-product of the most brutally and hopelessly material side of the history of the last two centuries.

The persistence of minority nationalism is therefore due to the relationship between two complementary forces: the unevenness of capitalist penetration and the unevenness of state penetration. The process of 'turning peasants into Frenchmen' was less complete in the periphery than in the core. Herein lies one of the major contradictions of capitalist society; on one hand capitalism remorselessly spreads to

all corners of the globe and unifies it in a truly worldwide system. At the same time, this process of social upheaval engenders a new fragmentation of that society (Nairn, 1975, p. 11). Capitalism both leads to integration and disintegration. Humanity has become unified in a world-system, yet this unification has led to the disintegration of old social relations.

In his analysis of nationalism, Charles Tilly (1994, p. 133) distinguished between “state-led nationalism” and “state-seeking nationalism”. This is in essence another way of differentiating between minority and majority nationalism. What is of interest is his view that state-seeking nationalism only developed in response to state-led nationalism. This leads to an inquiry about the dialectic which exists between minority and majority nationalism. It seems counterintuitive, but modern, political, minority nationalism could only be devised *after* the creation of nation-states. Minority nationalists do not see themselves in the image of the nation; the image created by the majority. As the bourgeoisie create their own gravediggers, so too, nation-states create theirs. Minority nationalism therefore would not exist without the rise of capitalism and the fusion of 'nation' and 'state'. Minority nationalism is the antithesis of majority nationalism; its dialectical whole. By viewing this relationship dialectically, it is possible to state that majority nationalism and the creation of the nation-state is the *thesis*, and minority and state-seeking nationalism is the *antithesis*. The attempted *synthesis* of this contradiction has been attempted by too many states to mention. It is sufficient to say that no state has completely eradicated this contradiction although many have tried.

The dialectic between majority nationalism on the one hand and a minority national identity on the other is not one-sided but constantly changing and in motion.

According to Rokkan (1999, p. 63), the core-periphery relationship is crucial to both actors whereby unless one breaks free from the other, they will both continually redefine themselves in terms of, or in opposition to, the other. Therefore, an increase in national identity in the periphery can lead to a reaction from the core, including a

possible refutation of peripheral national rights and a jingoistic support of the majority nation. Furthermore, identity should not be viewed as a predestined and pre-given 'thing'. It is itself shaped by history, class position, and individual experiences and these processes themselves shape identity.

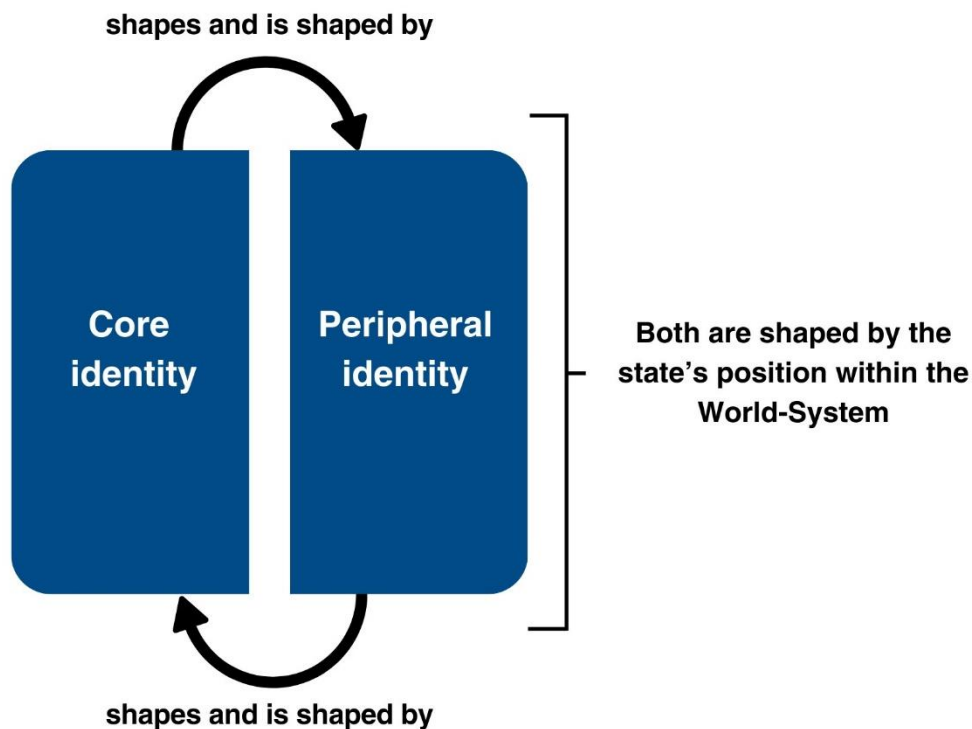


Figure 15: The Dialectical Relationship Between Majority and Minority Nationalism. Author's Own.

The preceding pages are the theoretical foundation on which to build a theory of the position of stateless nations within the world-system in Europe. Firstly, it was important to conceptually frame the debate within world-systems analysis.

Secondly, it was important to link these processes with nationalism in stateless nations. This was important for two reasons, firstly, it is due to national antagonisms

and feeling that these regions can indeed be called *nations*. With no feeling of national difference or of framing some struggles as *national* struggles, the foundations on which any theory of *nation-states* becomes untenable. Secondly, by viewing nationalism (and therefore nations) in this way, it becomes clear that “nationalism is not a set of isolated instances each to be explained in its own terms but rather as an integral part of the development of a ‘world-system’ in modern history and in this spirit links ... to the recent works of ... Immanuel Wallerstein” (Orridge, 1981, p. 190). It is now possible to turn specifically to the three case studies and discuss their relative *over* or *under*development in a national context and begin to place them conceptually within the world-system.

V. Case Study 1: Spain

Spain is paradoxically an old state that undertook internal nation-building relatively late. As Juan Linz (1975, p. 425) stated, "Spain today is a state for all Spaniards, a nation-state for a large part of the population, and only a state but not a nation for important minorities". As Weber argued that France must 'make Frenchmen', and Massimo d'Azeglio that 'we must make Italians', the Spanish state, too, had to 'make Spaniards'. This process, however, was an uneven one.

André Lecours (2001, p. 211) showed that a considerable number of people living in the Spanish state did not hold 'Spanish' as their main identity. He stated:

regional identities are strongest in the Basque Country (49.7%), the Canary Islands (47.9%), Navarre (38.4%), Asturias (33.4%), Catalunya (31.8%), Galicia (24.2%) and Andalucía (20%) where between one-fifth and one-half of inhabitants feel only or more Basque, Canarian, Navarrese, etc. than Spanish.

These statistics need explaining. Firstly, we should be clear that linguistic, and cultural differences do not necessarily translate to a difference in national identity. Switzerland is the prime example in this regard; the country has four official languages, yet this has not led to a push for Balkanisation nor a serious threat to Swiss identity.²⁴ Furthermore, the relationship between language and nationalism has been inconsistent at best:

language and historical identity is in itself insufficient as an explanatory model. This is indicated by the fact that much of the Catalan industrial and commercial elite had abandoned Catalan in the eighteenth century, but in the early twentieth century, they

²⁴ The only 'serious' threat to Balkanize Switzerland emerged from outside, when in 2009 Muammar Gaddafi proposed to the G8 that Switzerland should be 'abolished' and distributed between France, Germany, and Italy along linguistic lines. The proposal did not go any further, probably as Gaddafi forgot to consider to which state the Romansch speakers of Switzerland should be incorporated.

became the bankrollers of the major Catalanist party, the Lliga Regionalista. At the same time, Catalan was widely spoken in the Balearic Islands and Valencia, but strong nationalist movements did not grow up (sic) in those territories prior to 1936. Furthermore, Galician was far more widely spoken than Basque and even Catalan, yet nationalist parties were weaker than in either of these two territories (Mar-Molinero & Smith, 2020, pp. 12-13).

Secondly, if identity is solely the direct consequence of linguistic or cultural differences, we would expect to see an equally strong identity in the French Basque Country or French Catalunya as that found in Spain. As stated previously with regards to the economies of countries; culture and identities that exist in a place are not hermetically sealed. Identities shape and are shaped by specific historical, institutional, and economic contexts. By dialectically analysing the relationship between the peripheries of Spain and the central Spanish state the situations in which regional identities become salient should become apparent. Identity mobilisation should not be viewed as either constant or pre-determined. Recent figures from 2023 show that 38.2% of respondents in Catalunya now feel more Catalan than Spanish or Catalan only (Staista, 2023). This is roughly 7% more than Lecours found in 2001. If identity and identity mobilisation were static, we would not expect to see a change. *Something* has happened. To answer *what* has happened it is necessary to look back at the formation of the Spanish state.

Nation-Building in Spain

In Spain, nation-building, the modernisation of the state, and industrialisation were contemporaneous processes. The project of building the Spanish state in the nineteenth century, however, was slower and less thorough than in the Western European countries it followed.

The integration of the peripheral areas, the acceptance of the State and the dissemination of the Castilian language progressed slowly and already by the end of the nineteenth century regional movements in Catalunya, the Basque Country and Galicia tried to propagate their own separate identity and language (Storm, 2004, p. 143).

The roots of some of the idiosyncrasies of Spain's national development can be found in the time before industrialisation. The fall of Spain from a pre-eminent colonial power to an internally and externally weak state in the nineteenth and twentieth Centuries needs to be addressed.

Firstly, Spain had been independent since the eleventh century, and as an old state, it did not need to legitimate itself through modernisation or nation-building processes characteristic of 'new' European states such as Germany, Belgium, or France after the establishment of the Third Republic.

Secondly, in stark contrast to the situation in England (Britain later) or France, the Spanish monarchy had always been "confederal in structure and never created fully centralised institutions" (Payne, 1991, p. 479). Importantly in the case of Spain, political unification did not come from conquest but from marriage. The union of the Kingdoms of Castilla²⁵ and Aragón was completed in 1469 with the marriage of Isabel and Fernando. These kingdoms were themselves decentralised with the

²⁵ The Spanish Spelling has been used.

Basque provinces and Galicia having some autonomy within the Castilian kingdom and Catalunya, Valencia, the Balearic Islands, Aragón itself, as well as Sicily and Sardinia having their own parliaments within the kingdom of Aragón. As Junco (2020, p. 89) argued:

the dynastic union had a number of specific features. It comprised separate kingdoms with different legislations and autonomous institutions, which even maintained custom borders between them, thus differentiating the confederation from what we would today regard as a nation-state.

Braudel (1995, p. 659) came to similar conclusions, arguing that Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella, was not a nation-state, but an association of kingdoms, states, and peoples united in the sovereigns.

Political unification took place between the kingdoms of Castilla and Aragón, *rather* than Catalunya and Castilla. However, Catalunya was the most powerful member of the *Aragónese* confederation (Lecours, 2001, p. 216). In a testament to Catalunya's strength, when Valencia and the Balearic Islands were absorbed into the confederation, it was Catalans that settled these lands. They left a linguistic and cultural heritage which is still felt today; these areas are called the *Països Catalans* (Catalan Countries). Catalans were, therefore, able to extend their power within this framework of confederation and were not a peripheral player. The patchwork of largely autonomous regions which existed in the Kingdoms of Castilla and Aragón continued within the new administrative system post-1469. This is quite different to the cases of both Wales within the United Kingdom and of the Mezzogiorno in Italy as will be discussed later.

Thirdly, Spanish identity was traditionally based on a national religion of Catholicism. This was different to places such as France whereby civic institutions

were the foundation of national identity. The *Reconquista*²⁶ and the expunging of *Al-Andalus*²⁷ from the collective Spanish memory were important events in combining Spanishness with Catholicism. This new reality was embodied within the union of Ferdinand and Isabella and the Crown. As García-Sanjuán (2018, p. 128) argued:

the role played by Catholicism ... was not only political, but also had important social and ideological expressions and a decisive influence on the new nationalist way of understanding the past. A cohesive ideology based on the principle of the indissoluble unity between Spanish national identity and the Catholic faith spread.

Interestingly, current Andalucían nationalists, far from expunging the role of the Moors, tend to paint an idyllic picture of Moorish control that brutally brought to a close by conquest (rather than reconquest) at the hands of the Castilians (Molinero & Smith, 2020, p. 8).

Although the above alludes to weaknesses in Spanish nation-building, Junco (2020, p. 95) argued that this did not mean a Spanish identity did not exist:

There is something in which both Spaniards and non-Spaniards certainly agreed by the middle of the nineteenth century: there was such a thing as a Spanish identity, a Spanish character, a Spanish 'soul' or 'essence', with very definite traits; the Spanish way of being was, in fact, one of the stereotypes most widely accepted among the European collective identities of that period. This international recognition concurred with a similar internal acceptance. Throughout the whole nineteenth century nobody seriously challenged the existence of a Spanish nation, the same as nobody challenged the unity of the Spanish State: certainly not the Carlists in the 1830s and not even the federalists of 1873.

²⁶ Literally translated as 'reconquest'. It was the process of Christian Kingdoms reconquering Moorish Lands in southern Iberia.

²⁷ The name given to Muslim-controlled Iberia.

Lastly, there has been no real or perceived foreign threat to the Spanish state in the last two hundred years or so (Payne, 1991) (Storm, 2004). Spain did not have an experience like the Franco-Prussian war, nor did it take part in either World War. Vast numbers of people were never called to arms and instilled with patriotic fervour; the entire population was not mobilised to defend the motherland in exchange for social welfare and electoral rights. The “nationalisation of the masses” (Mosse, 1975) never took place in Spain.

The specific dynamics of the Spanish state meant that the centripetal forces emanating from the core (in this instance, Castilla) were relatively weak, while the centrifugal forces emanating from the periphery (such as Catalunya and the Basque Country) were relatively strong. The dialectical relationship between core and periphery therefore had a contrasting character to the one experienced between the south-east of England and Wales of which more will be said later. In the case of Spain, it was not possible to think in terms of a ‘developed’ core and a ‘backward’ economic periphery, instead, the strong peripheries became “alternative centres to Castilla” (Muro & Quiroga, 2004, p. 20). These peripheries were (and are) economically advanced, politically linked to, and culturally differentiated from, Castilla.

State-Building in Spain

While Spain’s state-building initiatives in the nineteenth century were weak, disjointed, and fragmented, such initiatives were undertaken. The most successful of these processes was the integration of a Spanish-wide economy. A Spanish Stock Exchange was created in 1831, a unified tax system was created in 1845, the Bank of Spain was formed in 1856, and a national currency – the Peseta – was introduced in 1868. The more ‘cultural’ side of Spanish state-building, however, was less complete

and far-reaching with national symbols such as an anthem not being officially adopted until 1908. It was in this period, at the intersection between 'modernity' and tradition, and the concurrent contradiction between centralisation and autonomy that national identity did not only become salient in Catalunya but also the Basque Provinces. This is of importance to this analysis as it shows that the same processes affected all of Spain, yet in diverse ways. An analysis of this kind illuminates whether processes are specific to Catalunya, the wider Spanish state, or vary across regions.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, the Basque provinces²⁸ continued a political practice called the *fueros* and it was from this political practice the seed of national identity emerged. The *fueros* was a political agreement between the Crown and the three Basque provinces which gave the latter the right to retain their own legal system. Importantly in the case of the Basque provinces, these laws were often passed down orally in the Basque language. This introduced:

a dimension of collective distinctiveness to the Basque political landscape. The fueros became crucial elements in the historical construction of the Basque identity because they symbolised both internal unity and distinctiveness concerning the rest of the peninsula (Lecours, 2001, p. 216).

The Spanish state aimed to rationalise, centralise, modernise, and standardise its internal procedures. The existence of the *fueros* in the Basque provinces did not fit within this new structural framework. The Spanish state, therefore, attempted to dissolve the *fueros*.

This new reality led to conflict, culminating in the Carlist Wars of the nineteenth century (1833-1840 and 1876-1878). The Carlists fought in favour of traditional

²⁸ Lecours (2001) argued that the three provinces that constitute the Basque Country today could not be considered a 'country' until the turn of the twentieth century due to a lack of common historical experience. The notion of a 'Basque Country' was created from the three Basque provinces. The words are therefore not meant to be used interchangeably but are used to denote different periods in the process of creating a 'Basque nation'.

society and the continuation of the *fueros*. On the other hand, were the *Christinos*: the supporters of the Spanish Crown. The Carlists were unsuccessful in their struggle, leading to the abolition of the *fueros*. The old political elites of the Basque provinces generally fought on the side of the Carlists, their loss led to a reduction in status, power, and capital. This led these elites to rearticulate their claims and grievances in 'national' terms. The Carlist leader, Sabino Arana, took the old tenets of Carlism (autonomy, religion, and traditionalism) and superimposed them onto ideas regarding the specificity and 'purity' of the Basque language and race (Medrano, 1994). Arana's beliefs were far from unproblematic, and he borrowed from northern and Western Europe's racist ideas.²⁹ He argued that "the Basques formed a pristine European race, which had remained unconquered in the Cantabrian mountains and Pyrenees throughout the ages" (Mar-Molinero and Smith, 2020, p. 8). This loss in the Carlist Wars, however, did mean that for the first time, the *provincial* claims of a Basque region were transposed as part of a wider, *national* claim. Arana proclaimed that there was indeed a Basque community which was culturally, linguistically, ethnically, and socially unified, and distinct from the rest of Spain (Conversi, 1997, p. 53).

In the context of this struggle against centralisation, Arana created several Basque symbols: a name for a 'Basque Country' beyond provincial borders (Euskadi), a flag, an anthem, a national holiday and a political party, the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV) (Lecours, 2001, p. 217).

A Basque *nation* rather than Basque *provinces* was therefore created.³⁰ The case of the Basque country is instructive in that it shows how nations are formed from very real cultural, sociological, political, and historical processes or *ethnies*, yet the process of transforming these factors into a politically salient mobilising force is dependent on

²⁹ For a history of these views see (Losurdo, 2014).

³⁰ This does not presuppose that the Basque nation is any less 'real' than any other nation. All nations are in some way created and imagined. They all suffer from attempting to convey a primordial beginning whilst obstructing their clearly modern, capitalist, origins.

the material changes in society. We are reminded of an earlier referenced quote that “the most notoriously subjective and ideal of historical phenomena is in fact a by-product of the most brutally and hopelessly material side of the history of the last two centuries” (Nairn, 1975, p. 8). The formation of a national identity, therefore, is not spontaneous. It can be buttressed by linguistic and cultural *distinctiveness*, but it needs to be cultivated and ‘created’. The territorial organisation of the early Spanish state contained within it the embryonic seeds of regional distinctiveness which could in time crystallise into a national or regional identity.

This relationship between politics and culture on one hand, and the economy on the other is worth analysing. In keeping with Marx’s ideas of the economic base and superstructure of society, one aspect reinforces the other (Marx, [1859] 1904, p. 11). The cultural and political underpinnings of the new Basque *country* led to a particular economic model. This model was based on the protectionism of Basque (rather than Spanish) industries. This meant that during the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, the Basque Country’s most important industries such as steel were owned by Basques (Azurmendi, et al., 2008). Furthermore, these Basque capitalists were financed by Basque – rather than Spanish – banks such as the *Banco de Bilbao*, *Banco de San Sebastian*, and the *Banco de Comercio* (Barrutia, et al., 2003, pp. 18-26). This cultural distinctiveness continues to be of economic importance today and has affected the economic position of the Basque Country relative to the rest of Spain. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Basque’s main heavy industries became antiquated and uncompetitive relative to the emerging Asian Tigers. Due to these industries being embedded, rather than externally owned, the Basque Government gave generous subsidies to Basque industries to retrain, adapt, and enter new markets (Elola, et al., 2017). This meant that the Basque Country did not experience the same crushing unemployment that places such as Wales experienced after the closing of much of its heavy industry. Cultural distinctiveness and decisions made at the beginning of the

20th Century, therefore, have helped shape the economic position of the Basque Country today.

The Catalan 'Rebirth'

Nineteenth-century Catalunya witnessed three separate, yet interrelated processes. Firstly, the mid to late nineteenth century was a period of national 'regeneration'. The buttressing (and creation) of cultural symbols, and a new-found love for the Catalan language followed the European Romantic tradition on the continent. Muro and Quiroga (2004, p. 23) argued that:

the process of recovery began around the 1850s when the Catalan language, which had been neglected for over 200 years, started to become widely used in the public sphere. What came to be known as the Catalan Renaixença (Rebirth) began as a cultural movement that did not imply rupture with Spain, but later constituted the basis for political nationalism.

These early Catalan nationalists also borrowed the European's racist discourses and used them for their own political gains (Marfany, 2016). They "developed the argument that Catalans were of European Celtic or Aryan stock, while the Castilians were Semitics of African descent" (Mar-Molinero and Smith, 2020, p. 8).

Secondly, in the 1830s, Catalunya became the first centre of Spanish industrial development. The industrialisation of Catalunya meant that it was on an increasingly divergent economic path to Castilla which was still largely dominated by pre-industrial capital relations. The uneven dispersion of capitalist and industrial relations in Spain - and between Catalunya and Castilla specifically - meant that Catalunya could pull away and cement its position as the pre-eminent economic force on the peninsula (Shafir, 1992, p. 108). The pre-eminent position of the Catalan

economy meant that the bourgeoisie in Catalunya were mainly indigenous, rather than Castilian imports.

The third interrelated process was the complete penetration of the internal Spanish market and its importance to Catalan capitalists. Internal market liberalisation and the completion of the rail network induced the creation of a national market. The completion of the railways led to a massive 86% reduction in transport prices (Martínez-Galarraga, et al., 2015, p. 505). This completion of the internal Spanish market was of importance to Catalan manufacturers. Catalan cotton and woollen textile enterprises were relatively immature at the beginning of the 19th century and would not have been able to compete with sustained pressure from more mature industries in England and the Netherlands. The Catalan bourgeoisie therefore relied on the Spanish state's protection tariffs, which sheltered Catalan industry while simultaneously creating a home market for these products (Schmidt-Nowara, 1998, p. 615). The textile industry underwent a technological revolution between the 1830s and 1850s which brought it up to European standards. Subsequently, by 1860, the Catalan industry had captured eighty per cent of the Spanish market for textile products (Medrano, 1994, p. 553). Consequently, the Catalan bourgeoisie did not push for separatism in this period.

Furthermore, the organised working class of Catalunya were mainly anarcho-syndicalist or Marxist in nature, and therefore, they viewed the national question as a secondary concern. As Smith (2020, p. 174) argued, "within the anarchist movement there was also a more radical, passionately internationalist strand, which regarded any compromises with nationalism as heresy". Ironically, the strength of syndicalism within the Catalan working class may have led the Catalan bourgeoisie to lean on the central Spanish state for protection from possible revolution, rather than viewing the central state as a hindrance (Medrano, 1994) (Lecours, 2001).

Far from being economically peripheral, therefore, the Catalan economy was the driver of industrial development in Spain. In fact, by the end of the 19th century, a

quarter of the 200 largest Spanish corporations were Catalan (Medrano, 1994, p. 557). By 1930, a core-periphery structure of GDP per capita in Spain had “completely formed” (Rosés, et al., 2010, p. 246). The economic core of Spain was a triangular area with its vertices in Madrid, the Basque Country and Catalunya with peripherality increasing the further one moved towards Portugal. Far from being economically or politically peripheral at this time, Catalunya enjoyed a relatively privileged position and its merchants – and later capitalists – relied on the central Spanish state for markets and protection.

Catalunya, Spain, and Empire

An understudied factor in the changing salience of Catalan identity, as well as the weakness of the Spanish state’s internal nation-building processes, is the role of the Spanish Empire. Before the 19th Century, Spain’s colonial possessions meant that the state could look outward for markets rather than needing an internally strong home market. The Empire also had important implications as to how the Catalan bourgeoisie viewed the advantages and disadvantages of membership in the Spanish state.

In 1898, Spain lost the last major remnants of its once-vast colonial empire. The Spanish-American War was a humiliating defeat for the Spanish and the outcome was that Cuba became (nominally) independent³¹ and that Puerto Rico and the Philippines were also ‘lost’. At home, these events were simply called *El Desastre* (The Disaster). Storm (2004) argued that this was a real turning point in Spanish history. The loss of these economically important colonies stimulated regional movements both in Catalunya and the Basque Country. Before *El Desastre*, “Catalans

³¹ Cuba did become independent from the Spanish but to all intents and purposes a neo-colonial relationship between Cuba and the United States of America then emerged.

and Basques implicated in the colonial project defended and promoted the Spanish nation as fiercely as any Castilian" (Schmidt-Nowara, 2004, p. 199). After *El Desastre*, the Catalan bourgeoisie were "exasperated" by the Spanish "regime's inability to defend their interests" (Mar-Molinero & Smith, 2020, p. 13). Beforehand, the Catalan bourgeoisie may have favoured some administrative decentralisation, but they fervently defended the 'national' colonial market and the centralist tendencies of the Spanish state in this regard.

To further understand the importance of the Empire to Catalunya, it is necessary to analyse the significant role of colonies in the Catalan economy and the central role of Catalans within the colonial system. In the 19th Century, "by far the largest percentage of merchants [in Cuba] were from coastal Catalunya" (Schmidt-Nowara, 1998, p. 610). In Santiago – the largest Cuban port at the time – 70% of all merchants were Catalan. Merchant capital from these sources was important in fomenting the Catalan industrial revolution and it was therefore in the interests of Catalan capitalists to remain part of Spain as this granted them access to Spain's colonial possessions. The loss of the colonies meant that the Catalan bourgeoisie lost access to these markets and thus began to question the benefits of being tied to a weak central state incapable of quelling colonial rebellion and defending its interests from the United States.

Not only did the possession of colonial empires have economic effects, but it also had sociological ones. Not only were these regions sources of labour power, resources, and markets, but they also meant prestige, power, and status. In 19th Century Europe, to possess colonies was to be 'modern', industrialised, and a 'Great Power'. In this regard, the United Kingdom and France were in a pre-eminent position, and this weighed heavily on Spain as well as the relative latecomers to 'nationhood' in Germany and Italy. In Germany, the need to 'catch up' with the colonial powers of France and Britain meant that the country colonised most of the as-yet 'unclaimed' regions of Africa which included parts of present-day Rwanda,

Tanzania, Namibia, Central African Republic, Chad, and Nigeria. By the onset of the First World War, Germany had the third-largest colonial empire in the world. The importance the Nazis placed on *Lebensraum* can also be viewed as a form of European, colonial expansion. In Italy, fascism and the push for colonial possessions went hand in hand. At 'home' in Europe, Italian irredentism strived to bring ethnic and Italian-speaking areas of other states under the wing of the newly formed Italian state. Abroad, Mussolini pushed to restore Italian dominance over *Mare Nostrum* (Our Sea), the name given to the Mediterranean by the Roman Empire. This culminated in Italy's fixation with attempting to conquer present-day Libya and Ethiopia.

The major difference between the Italians and Germans on one hand, and the Spanish on the other was that the former countries projected their longing for colonies onto the future, whereas in post-1898 Spain, their status as a colonial superpower was irredeemably relegated to the past (Storm, 2004). Spain had essentially become – and would stay – a second-rank power. This perception was cemented from the outside as the loss of colonial territories led Lord Salisbury to proclaim in 1898 that Spain was a 'dying nation' (Muro and Quiroga, 2004, p. 24).

This led to a dialectical tension in the nation-building process in Spain: on one hand it made the creation of a national Spanish mythos and consciousness increasingly untenable as the nation had lost its mystique. This in turn pushed the upper and middle classes in the 'periphery' such as in Catalunya and the Basque Country to look inward at their regional movements as a bulwark against a weakening Spanish state and an identity which relegated them to second-class citizens within the world-system. The end of the Spanish colonial enterprise meant that the ideological and economic ties that bound the regions of Spain together started to unravel. A Catalan MP of 1898 argued in Parliament that if Spain had been a successful nation, there would have been no attempt or reason to bring the legitimacy of the state into question (Dalle Mulle, 2017, p. 23). The dialectic between a rise in Catalan sentiment

and national feeling on one hand and the declining global power of the Spanish state via the loss of its colonies on the other was therefore inextricably linked.

Catalunya, Spain, and Fascism

Not all people experienced Catalan identity in the same way; class position interacted with national identity. Between 1900 and the end of the Spanish Civil War, the Catalan bourgeoisie was mainly represented by the *Lliga de Catalunya*; a political party which fought for bourgeois Catalan interests such as lower taxation of industrial profits. However, the *Lliga* did not push for Catalan independence, mainly due to their fear of the revolutionary potential of the Catalan working class (Medrano, 1994, p. 550). The class and national interests of the Catalan bourgeoisie coalesced into a halfway position between inclination and aversion to the central Spanish state. The Spanish state may have been unpopular, but it was a safety net for the Catalan bourgeoisie, which could be used as a bulwark against its radical working class. In fact, in the tension between class and nation, the Catalan bourgeoisie decided that class was of primary importance to them. Primo de Rivera - who reigned over a period of dictatorship between 1923-1930 - was supported by the *Lliga de Catalunya* as he offered a reprieve and a means to restore order in the face of growing working-class agitation (Medrano, 1994) (Dalle Mulle, 2017). The *Lliga* was a traditionalist, anti-democratic party, yet one that saw itself as the motor for the industrialisation of Catalan and, by extension, Spanish society. As Ehrlich (1997, p. 212) argued, the *Lliga* and the Catalan bourgeoisie “had abandoned their ethnic identity in favour of capitalist concerns”.

The fact that Catalan capitalists had supported the side of reaction in the 1920s paved the way for a more egalitarian and left-wing Catalanism to be espoused for the first time. The republican nationalists of Catalunya actively opposed the

dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and they collaborated with left-wing political groups to restore democratic rule. The main political winners of the fall of Rivera's premiership in Catalunya were the *Esquerra Republicana* (The Republican left). They decisively won the municipal elections of 1931 and called for the right to self-determination as well as for the rights of workers, welfare measures, and agrarian reform (Medrano, 1994, p. 291). It was this process which created the more progressive Catalanism that is prevalent today. Beforehand, Catalan identity was mainly weaponised by the Catalan bourgeoisie to improve their position in relation to Castilian capitalists. The never-ending dialectic between Spanish and regional identities continued apace with Spanishness – partly in reaction to the newfound strength of identity in the peripheries – moving towards authoritarianism.

The defeat of the Spanish Republicans and socialists in the Spanish Civil War consigned Spain to 35 years of dictatorship and fascism under the leadership of Francisco Franco. Franco viewed the *raison d'être* of his regime as “the eradication of the twin evils of communism and separatism” (Medrano, 1994, p. 292). The strength of separatist feeling in the periphery led Franco to impose a homogenous, totalising vision of Spanish identity with the Castilian language, identity, religion, and culture being viewed as the sole arbiter and lens through which to view Spanishness (Moreno, 1997, p. 75). To complete this process, Franco relied on violence as well as cultural and linguistic assimilation to suppress regional identity.

The notion of unity was central to the Francoist ideology. The Patria, according to Franco himself, was 'spiritual unity, social unity, historic unity'. Catholicism was to be the 'crucible of nationality'. In this pursuit of unity, the state was to be central. It was through organised power that the nation would be re-made, and the people disciplined. This unity, imposed by the state, entailed an iron centralism which denied the existence of regional cultural difference (Richards, 2020, p. 150).

Payne (1991, p. 487) argued that the violent, overbearing nature of Spanish identity that was thrust onto the periphery “had the counterproductive effect of reawakening

intense nationalist feeling in the most distinctive regions". Regional nationalism and popular mobilisation against the Francoist state therefore became conflated; to be Catalan was to be liberal-democratic whereas a Spanish identity became conflated with authoritarianism. It was as if to 'be Catalan' itself became an act of resistance against the central state.

During the Francoist dictatorship, Catalanism was culturally peripheral. This was the first time that it could be stated that to be Catalan and to be Spanish could be viewed in direct contradiction to one another. Of course, even today many people in Catalunya feel no contradiction in feeling both Catalan and Spanish but during the dictatorship, both identities were in tension with one another. Beforehand, Catalan identity had been used by political actors as leverage against the central state but these tensions hardly, if ever, led to direct conflict between *Catalanism* and *Spanishness*. As already noted, the Catalan bourgeoisie sided with the Spanish against their 'indigenous' working class in the 1920s, showing that identity was used tactically and was context dependent.

Dictatorship, however, did not adversely affect Catalunya's economic position in relation to the rest of the Iberian Peninsula. Francoism needed to rely on the economies of Catalunya and the Basque Country to drive the Spanish state, despite their supposedly inferior identities and cultural traditions. Dalle Mulle (2017, p. 35) argued that Catalunya "experienced impressive economic development" during the dictatorship. In fact, between 1960 and 1973, the Catalan economy's GDP grew an impressive 8% a year and amassed an unequally large share of the foreign direct investment that poured into Spain (McRoberts, 2001, p. 92). By the end of the dictatorship, per capita income in Catalunya was 30% higher than the Spanish average. Catalunya accounted for 16% of the population but 20% of GDP and 26% of industrial production (Giner, 1980, pp. 51-54). Despite intense cultural discrimination from above, Catalunya's position within the Spanish economic system remained unchanged. It, Madrid, and the Basque Country continued to be

the most dynamic regions of the Spanish economy with the more peripheral regions of Spain still being dependent on them for value transfers and surplus capital (Álvarez, 2003). Catalunya remained *overdeveloped* relative to most of Spain. Of importance to this analysis is the fact that cultural peripherality and a core economic position can therefore coincide (even if being highly analogous and asymmetrical). Despite internal repression, Catalunya continued to attract inward investment and have unequally large shares of Spanish GDP. The case of Catalunya shows how pervasive, sticky, and all-encompassing capital accumulation and cumulative causation are. Thirty-five years of dictatorship was not enough to undo the technological head-start that Catalunya had achieved in the 19th Century. Regional differences and imbalances in Spain were stubborn, even in the face of political repression against those areas which were economically most advanced.

The Return to Liberal Democracy: Catalunya in the World-System

Since the fall of Francoism, the political dynamics of the Spanish state have changed immeasurably. However, economic differences seem as stubborn as ever. It is possible that unequal regional income distribution may have actually worsened in Spain in the last decades (Tirado, et al., 2016, p. 97). Important growth poles have developed in the north-east of Spain around Catalunya, Navarre, and the Basque Country. Spanish accession to the EU has exacerbated this issue due to the northeast's geographic location granting it easier access to key European markets.

In recent years the relative poverty of the southern and western Spanish provinces has increased and the spatial polarization of income at the beginning of the 21st century is more striking than ever. European economic integration can only reinforce this tendency. Therefore, in the case of Spain, progress in the political and economic integration of Europe calls for the design of territorial cohesion policies aimed at

counteracting the structural elements of economic regional inequality highlighted above (Tirado-Fabregat, et al., 2015, p. 24)

In the case of the Basque Country and Navarre (which includes some 'Basque' regions within it), their specific economic agreements with the central Spanish state mean that they have "near fiscal autonomy", this means that revenue transfers from the relatively wealthy Basque Country and Navarre to the relatively poor Spanish south does not take place (Gray, 2015, p. 63). In fact, "the relatively low contribution made by rich *foral*³² (Basque Country and Navarre) regions to the solidarity fund" has been viewed as the main weakness of the Spanish system (Bristow, 2009, p. 24). Castells (2014, pp. 285-286) concurred, stating that:

one of the most decisive reasons for the current uneasiness in Catalonia is the permanent comparison with the much more favourable results obtained by the special financing system of the Basque Country ('Concierto'). The Basque government has full responsibility for the collection of all taxes (including VAT and corporate tax). An amount is returned to the state ('cupo') to compensate the central government for the provision of general services in the region.

Catalunya does not have fiscal autonomy, yet it accounts for 16% of the Spanish population, 19% of Spanish GDP, and its GDP per capita is 20% higher than the Spanish average. Both Catalunya's purchasing power parity and GDP per capita are generally higher than the EU average whereas Spain is below the EU average on both measurements (Castells, 2014, p. 278). Figure 16 shows the GDP per capita in Spain's regions between 1995 and 2019. Catalunya's low was 99% of the EU average and reached a high of 115% of the average. Only 6 of Spain's 21 regions reached 100% of the EU average at any point in this period.

³² Local Government.

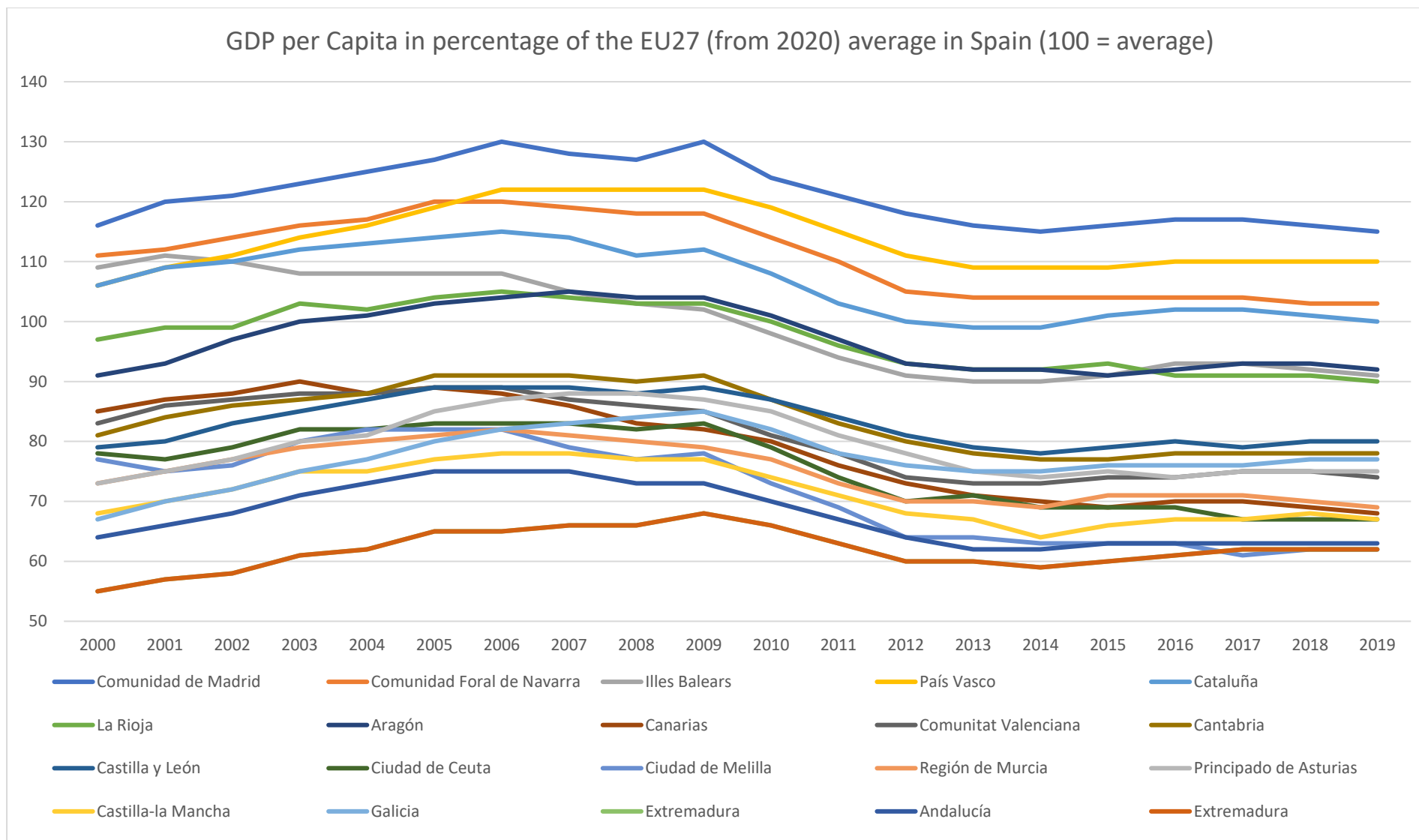


Figure 16: GDP per Capita as a percentage of the EU27 average (from 2020) in Spain (100 = average). Author's Own.

The continual strength of Catalunya's economy relative to the rest of Spain is impressive. From 1860 to 1995 Catalunya stayed in the top three ranking positions for GDP per capita in Spain (Martínez-Galarraga, et al., 2015, p. 512). Figure 17 shows that since 1995, this situation has stayed relatively stable. Catalunya was in the top 4 positions for all but one year, where it was in fifth position. The Basque Country's and Navarre's position in second and third position illuminates two points. Firstly, it shows why Catalunya would want the same economic agreement as these regions; it clearly helps both to maintain their privileged economic positions. Secondly, it shows why the Spanish state would be averse to such a situation as it would lose another source of income with which to fund government activities as well as its redistributive power to poorer regions (Boylan, 2015).

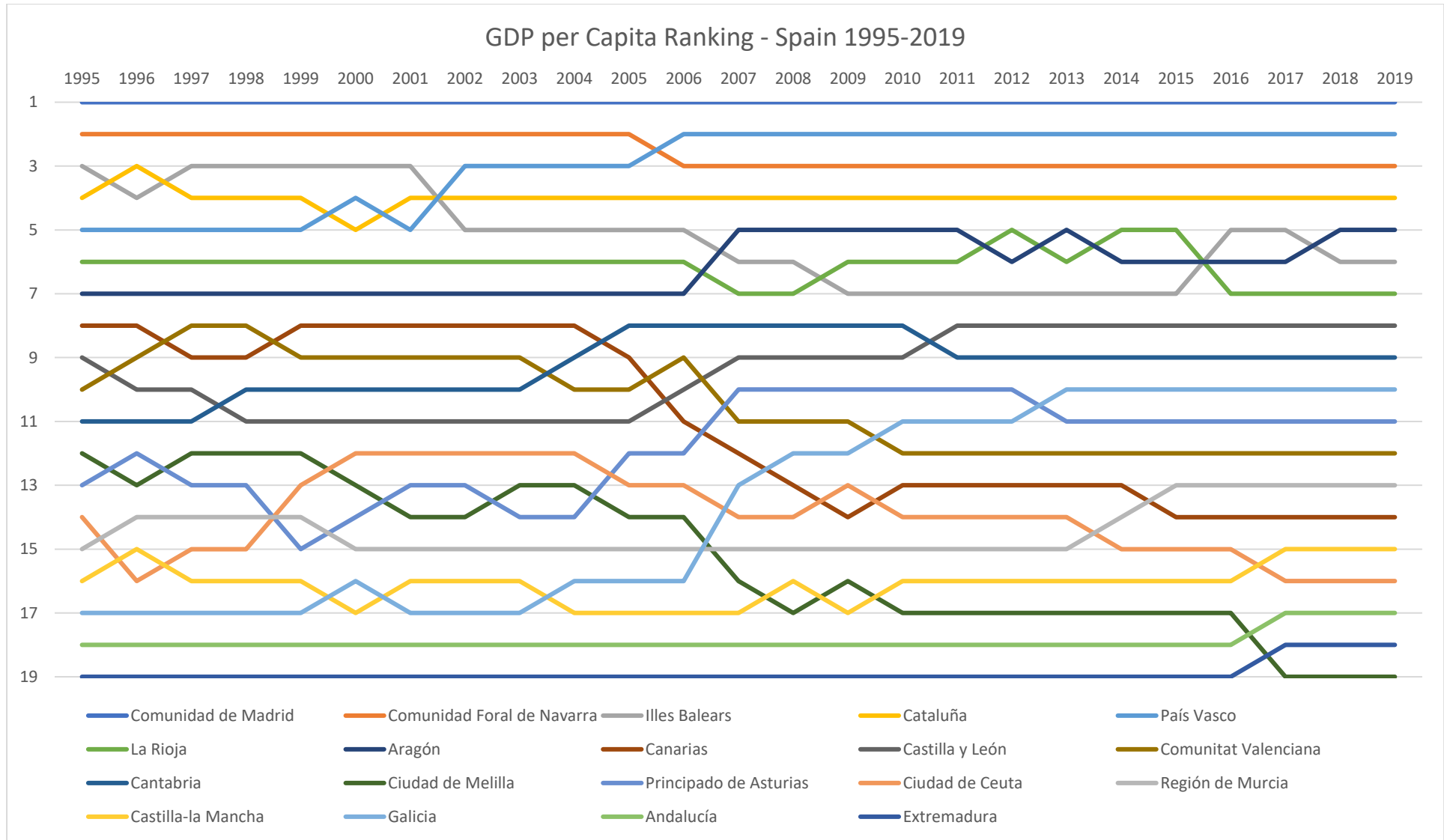


Figure 17: GDP per Capita Ranking - Spain 1995-2019. Author's Own.

The cumulative effects of economic development are clear. Civil War, fascism, and dictatorship did not change Catalunya's relative position within the economy. Figure 18 shows the persistence of regional economic differences in Spain. By analysing GDP per capita in the Basque Country, Catalunya, and the rest of Spain it is possible to see that both the Basque Country and Catalunya have maintained their positions at the forefront of the Iberian economy.

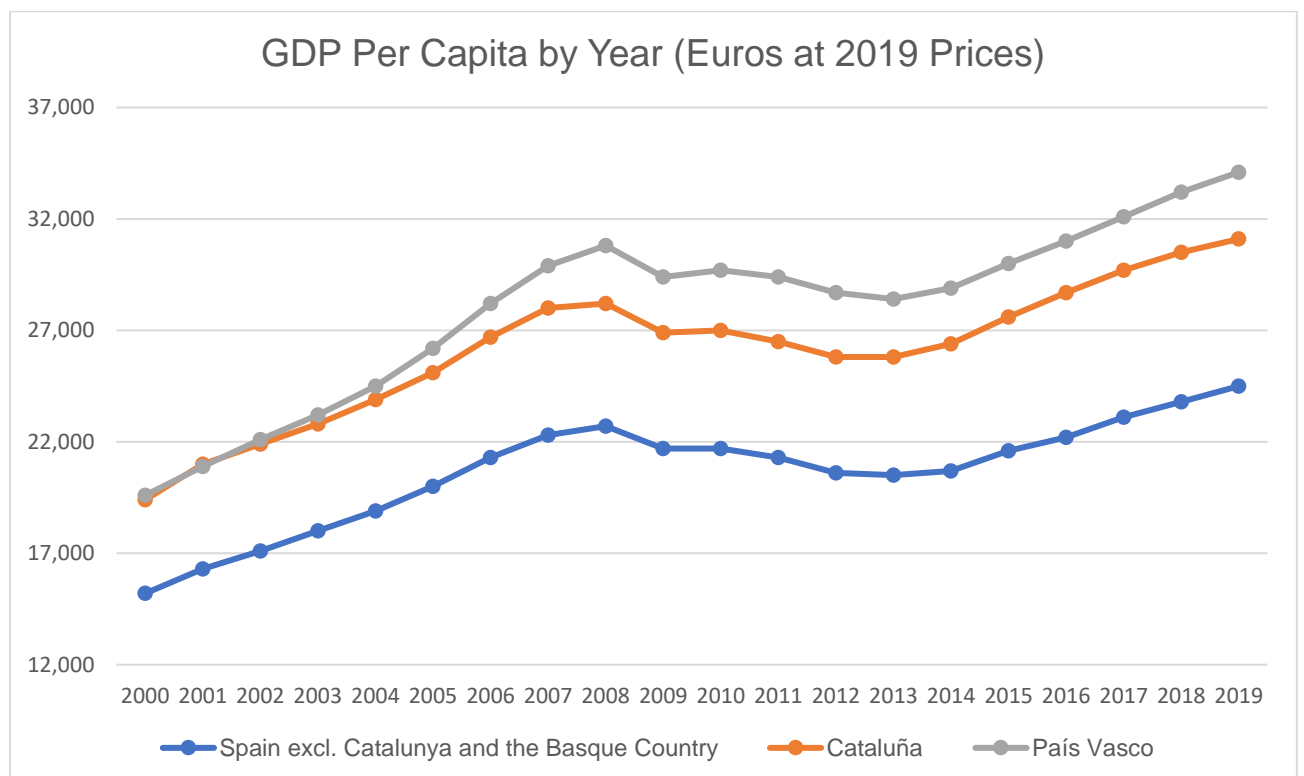


Figure 18: GDP Per Capita by Year in Spain. Author's Own.

Recent years have seen an upsurge in support for Catalan independence. It has been assumed that the reasons for this stem from the cultural differences that exist between Catalunya and the rest of Spain. However, since the fall of Francoism and the reinstatement of Catalunya as an Autonomous Community in 1978, calls for secession and even a 'Catalan only' identity have been relatively weak. As recently as 2001 it was shown that Catalunya lagged the Basque Country, the Canary Islands,

Navarre, and Asturias in holding a regional only or more regional than Spanish identity (Lecours, 2001). One would not therefore expect that calls for secession would be strongest in Catalunya of all parts of Spain. This suggests that identity interacts with politico-economic considerations where its salience waxes and wanes dependent on the current material reality. This material reality is linked with the international situation and the position of a given place within the world-system. Catalan identity in terms of secessionism first became salient after 1898, when a change in Spain's location within the world-system meant that membership of the state was no longer viewed as a net benefit. Identity, therefore, became a protective mechanism against the weak Spanish economy. Conversely, membership of the Spanish state post 1978 was beneficial to Catalunya as it more easily granted entry into the European Union. Within the EU, Catalunya could reorientate its economy towards the European core and away from the rest of Spain. Here, a Catalan identity, fused with Europeanness, was used to exploit new economic opportunities. Why, therefore, has there been an increase in support of independence in the last decade or so? This new reality cannot be disentangled from the financial crisis of 2008, the Spanish state's peripheral position in the EU, Catalunya's stronger semi-peripheral or core position within the system, and the Spanish state's reliance on taxes from Catalunya to fund government projects.

In the United Kingdom, Wales and Scotland receive money based on population, rather than relative need (Bristow, 2009) (McLean, et al., 2008). In Spain, taxes are collected centrally by the Spanish government and are then remitted back to the regions. Taxes and government revenues are transferred to those regions that are relatively more in need, rather than on a population basis.³³ Under this system of attempted fiscal equalisation, rich regions like Catalunya support poorer ones.

Catalunya raises 19% of the central government's tax revenue but only receives 14%

³³ In the United Kingdom, welfare payments are not Barnettised but are paid out on a basis of relative need as well. However, most government transfers in the form of education, housing, healthcare is based on spend in England and relative population.

of the state's revenue (Boylan, 2015, p. 762). This has created a situation in which many Catalans feel resentful and want more of their tax revenues to stay in Catalunya. Secession in this regard can be viewed as a way of ensuring the end of the 'subsidisation' of poorer regions within Spain. Boylan (2015, p. 774) argued that:

Catalan independence is a function of grievances over fiscal policy, with the theoretical understanding that Catalunya wants to retain its wealth rather than subsidise other regions in the country suffering from poorer economies.

Serrano (2013, p. 534) undertook a survey to analyse the reasons people supported Catalan independence:

63.5% of respondents supporting independence mentioned welfare reasons, while only 25.4% mentioned issues related to the national conception of Catalonia or their feelings of 'Catalanness'.

Similarly, in surveys conducted between 2010 to 2015:

to the question "What do you think is the most important problem of Catalonia?" the largest group has responded "unemployment and job precariousness" (with a 46% average). "Relations Catalonia-Spain" always comes in fourth place (with a 19% average), after "dissatisfaction with politics and politicians," and "the working of the economy". Furthermore, "in a most recent survey: "What is the main motivation for you to have become independentist in the last few years?" "Catalan language and culture" was the answer of only 2.5% (Colomer, 2007, p. 958).

Additionally, independence-oriented Catalan political parties have centred the debate around economic arguments, rather than a concentration on cultural matters. Both *Esquerra* and *Lliga* allude to the Catalans being 'robbed' by the central Spanish state despite the fact it is Madrid itself which 'loses' most from the policy of state transfers (Dalle Mulle, 2017). Some form of progressive tax revenue transfers is to be expected in modern states (Joumard, et al., 2012), the claim that Catalunya is being 'robbed' rather than paying according to its ability and the need of others is not

convincingly made. As will be discussed later, this grievance is strikingly similar to the Lega Nord's claim that Padania is being robbed by the poorer Mezzogiorno. It seems that the secessionist movement in Catalunya is linked to both the unequal economic reality between it and southern Spain, and their differing positions within the world-system.

Spain as Semi-periphery

Within the global division of labour, Spain³⁴ satisfies all the indicators of a semi-peripheral country as espoused by Chase-Dunn (1988, p. 30). The functions of a semi-peripheral country were listed in a previous chapter and were as follows:

- A mixture of both core and peripheral economic activity, playing an intermediary role between the two.
- A geographical location which is spatially located between the core and the periphery.
- Intermediator through which activities of the core and the periphery are completed.
- Provides an outlet for capital investment from the core into lower-wage industrial production.

Spain's position as a semi-peripheral country is best exemplified by its relationship with Latin America on one hand, and Germany on the other. Each function will be considered in turn with these specific relationships in mind.

³⁴ It is possible that with the inclusion of the Basque Country and Catalunya, Spain could be at the cusp of the core, however, the purpose here is to show that entry into the Spanish state does not grant these places with a core position; it is these places that improve the position of Spain, not vice versa.

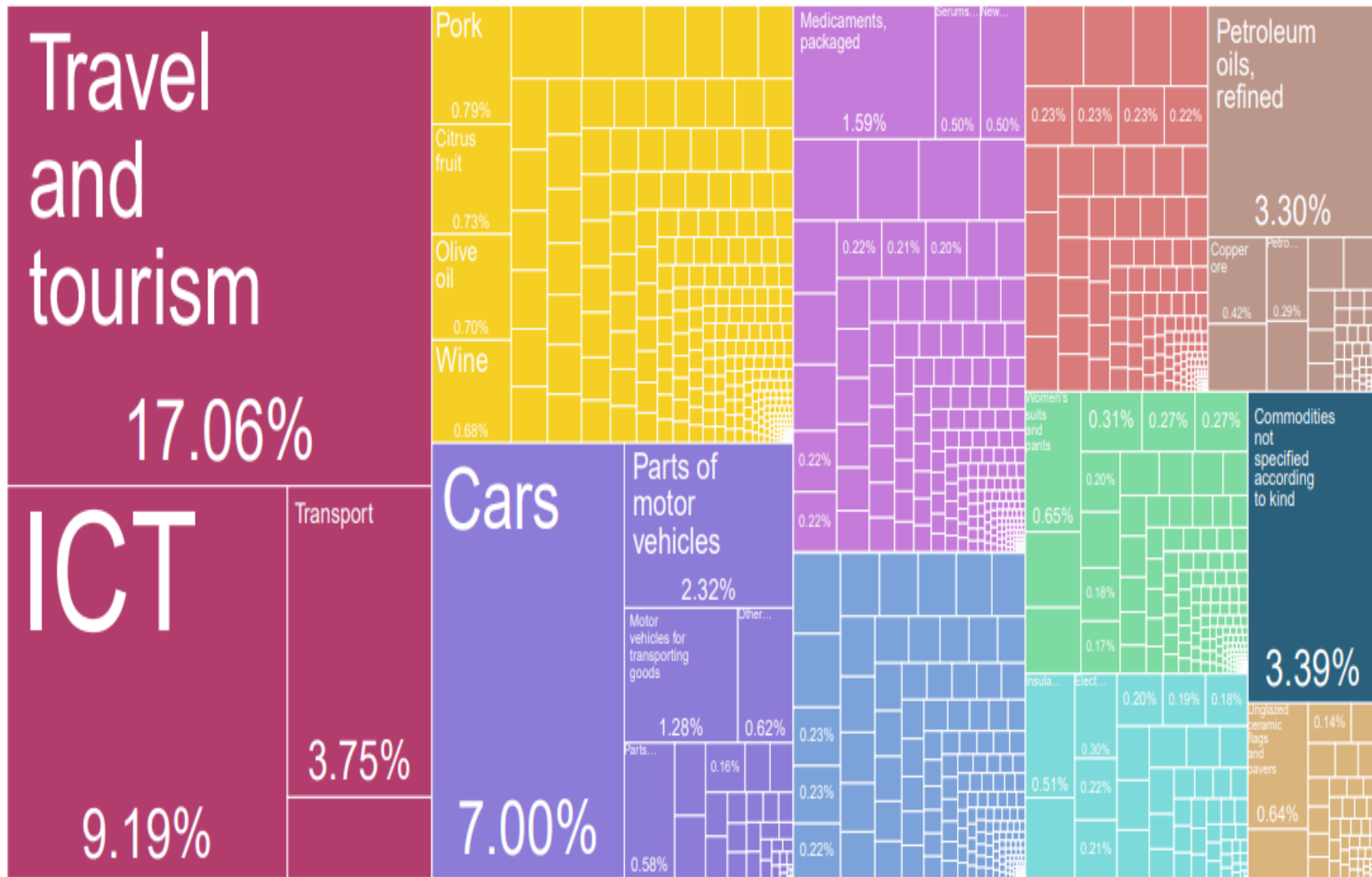


Figure 19: Atlas of Economic Complexity, Spain, 2018. Source: (Harvard University, 2023).

Firstly, by analysing the Atlas of Economic Complexity for Spain in 2018,³⁵ we see a mixture of both core and peripheral economic activity. Travel and tourism are generally peripheral economic activities. They may help *grow* an economy, but they do not necessarily *develop* an economy. There exists a wealth of research which suggests that long-term reliance on tourism replicates and reinforces historical patterns of dependent, economic development (Chaperon & Bramwell, 2013) (Britton, 1982) (Britton, 1987) (Britton, 1991) (Fletcher, 2013). Cars/motor parts are generally core activities, although this economic activity could be low paid, 'unskilled' work on the production line. Pharmaceuticals is likely to be a core activity, while the exportation of foodstuffs tends to be a peripheral economic activity. The ICT sector would generally be considered a core activity, but aspects within it, such as call centres would be a peripheral activity. The data does not allow for this depth of analysis, however, what emerges is a mixture of core and peripheral activity.

Secondly, although a geographical location which is spatially located between the core and periphery is not a necessary factor for semi-peripherality, Spain does satisfy this factor. The Iberian Peninsula is the closest region of Europe to Latin America, it also lies between Latin America and the core of Europe. Furthermore, it is not only Spain's geographical location but also its cultural location that is important. In a sense, Spain straddles the European and Latin American worlds. It shares a culture with the European core such as Germany, while also sharing a cultural and linguistic affinity with Latin America. As Martinez and Jareño (2014, p. 131) explained:

due to the role that Spain has played in the history of Latin America and Europe, with strong cultural and social links in both institutional environments, Spain could be described as occupying an intermediate position between the two regions. ... A common language, shared roots of the legal and educational systems as well as the

³⁵ Data for 2020 was available but this data was distorted by COVID and the inability for foreign travel and tourism. 2018 therefore offers a better foundation for analysis.

importance of family businesses and informal relationships and institutions, are contextual aspects shared by Spaniards and Latin Americans alike. At the same time, ever since Spain entered into the European Union, Spanish institutions have increasingly conformed to common European standards, where a large number of institutional-level political, social and economic policies are determined by centralized European authorities. This intermediate position between Europe and Latin America is manifestly evident in the majority of indices that measure cultural and/or institutional differences.

Thirdly, Spain is an intermediary through which activities of the core and the periphery are completed. This is particularly true in the banking and telecommunication sectors. By 1999, the Spanish financial system was the second largest supplier of funds to Latin America with 14% of the total, the USA led with 22% of the total (Sebastián & Hernansanz, 2000, p. 10). Spain's expansion into the banking sector was twofold; on one hand, there was an insertion of Spanish banks into Latin America such as *Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria* (BBVA) and *Banco Santander Centro Hispano* (BSCH).³⁶ These became the two largest foreign banks in Latin America. Secondly, Spain acquired subsidiaries via the acquisition of Latin American banks. Figure 20 shows some Spanish subsidiaries within Latin America. Toral (2008, p. 518) showed the extent of Spanish insertion within the Latin American banking sector, stating:

In 2005, BBVA and BSCH had \$270.6 billion managed customer funds (\$125.2 billion and \$145.4 billion, respectively) in Latin America, a figure 28 per cent greater than Argentina's GDP in 2005. They had 36.9 million customers in retail banking (16.6 million and 20.3 million, respectively), and 124,350 employees (61,604 and 62,746, respectively). 43 per cent of BBVA's net profit and 32 per cent of SCH's came from their Latin American subsidiaries.

³⁶ Both Banks are *Basque* rather than Spanish, thus without its political 'peripheries' the position of Spain would worsen even more.

		Shareholding (%)	Group
Argentina	Banco Francés	67	BBVA
	Banco Río de la Plata	79	BSCH
Bolivia	Banco Santa Cruz	90	BSCH
Brazil	BBV-Brasil	100	BBVA
	Excel Banco de Investi.	100	BBVA
	BBV Credito Financ.e Inv.	100	BBVA
	Banco Santander Brasil	100	BSCH
	Banco Meridional	97	BSCH
Chile	BBV Banco BHIF	53	BBVA
	Banco Santander Chile	86	BSCH
	Banco Santiago	44	BSCH
Colombia	Banco Ganadero	63	BBVA
	Banco Santander Col.	60	BSCH
Mexico	BBVA-Bancomer	33	BBVA
	Serfin	100	BSCH
	Banco Bital	8	BSCH
	Banco Mexicano	100	BSCH
Peru	Banco Continental	41	BBVA
	Banco Santander Perú	100	BSCH
Venezuela	Banco Provincial	53	BBVA
	Banco de Venezuela	98	BSCH

Figure 20: Spanish Subsidiaries in Latin America, 2000. Source: (Sebastián & Hernansanz, 2000, p. 39).

Spain, in turn, acted as an outlet for German banks to make large profits for their shareholders, mainly through investments and loans in the Spanish housing sector. By 2009, German banks had over 240 billion Euros in outstanding loans to Spain (Thompson, 2015, p. 857).

Within the Eurozone, meanwhile, Spain's role during the bubble years was to provide record returns for northern European capital, above all from Germany, France, and Britain. Between 2001–06, foreign capitals invested an average of €7 billion a year in Spanish property assets, or the equivalent of nearly 1 per cent of Spain's GDP, much of it in second homes or investments for British and German nationals. High levels of

domestic demand, boosted by asset-price Keynesianism, also offered important markets for German exports (López & Rodríguez, 2011, p. 10).

Similar developments are evident in the telecommunication industry. By 2006, Spain accounted for 40% of all European FDI in Latin America and this was primarily located in this sector (Galán & González-Benito, 2006, p. 171).

In early 1990 Telefonica (a Spanish company) did not have a single customer in Latin America. In 2005 it had 98 million (70.5 million in mobile telephony, 21.8 million in fixed telephony, 5.2 million in internet and data, and 0.5 million in pay-TV). It also had 131,968 employees in Latin America and 41.5 per cent of its consolidated revenue came from its Latin American subsidiaries. With 180.9 million customers worldwide, Telefonica had become the third largest telecommunications company in the world by number of customers (Toral 2008, p. 521).

Similar developments were taking place in Spain, with core European states using FDI to buy Spanish companies:

The run-up to integration into the European Community on 1 January 1986 saw a frenzy of investment, as European capital recognized the market opportunity opened up by the Iberian countries' entry into the EEC. German, French, and Italian multinationals took up key positions within Spain's production structure, buying up most of the big food-industry companies and the public-sector firms that were being privatized, taking over much of the supermarket sector, and acquiring what remained of the major industrial companies (López & Rodríguez, 2011, p. 7).

This shows Spain's position as both exploiter and exploited. By the turn of the Century, almost 80% of FDI to Spain had its origin within the European Union, while only 16% of FDI from Spain went to the rest of the European Union, going instead to Latin America (Sebastián & Hernansanz, 2000, p. 16). Pla-Barber and Camps (2012) defined Spain as a "springboard country". In effect, MNCs from a third-party country use their subsidiaries in a springboard country as a bridge or

gateway to other markets, usually relying on the cultural/linguistic/social similarities that exist between the springboard country and the final destination. They argue that “the problems German business managers face in Latin America are not encountered by their Spanish counterparts” which means that “German firms use their subsidiaries in Spain to manage their activities in Latin America” (Pla-Barber & Camps, 2012, p. 521). Figure 21 shows their model which shows continuity with the core-semi-periphery-periphery triad already analysed. This analysis has therefore shown that Spain, taken as a whole, should be considered semi-peripheral within the world-system.

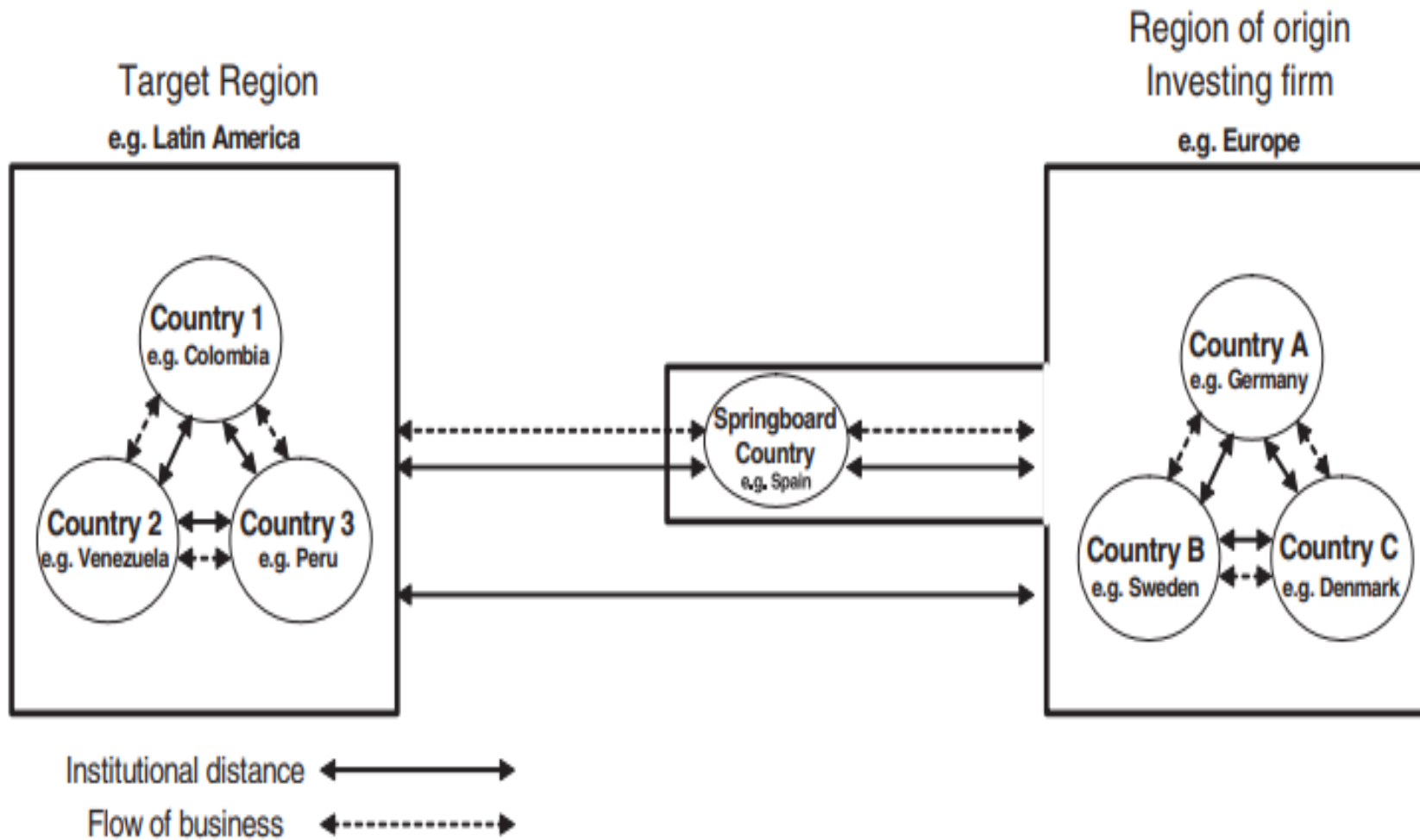


Figure 21: Model of a Springboard Country. Source: (Pla-Barber & Camps, 2012).

Catalunya as Core?

Catalunya lies somewhere between a semi-peripheral and a core region within the world-system. Its current link to a semi-peripheral state means that it cannot elevate itself to a truly core position, independence is therefore a means through which it can improve its position within the world-system. The reorientation of the Spanish economy outwards and towards western and northern Europe since the fall of Francoism means that the rest of the Spanish economy is less important to Catalunya than it once was. Previously, the Spanish economy ensured access to external colonial markets and a large home market for Catalan products. After Francoism, inclusion within the Spanish state meant easier access to European markets via EU accession. Since the creation of the Eurozone, and the exacerbation of Spain's unequal position in the world-system since 2008, membership of the Spanish state has become a less attractive proposition; an independent Catalunya would still be able to trade with the rest of Europe and keep the same currency. Ehrlich (1997, p. 206) argued that "Catalans claim to be 'more European' than the dominant nationality" and that they actively framed and reorientated themselves in this way. As Castells (2014, p. 278) argued:

The Catalan market absorbs 26.7% of total sales, the Spanish market 34.5% and the rest of the world 38.8%. However, even if the Spanish market is, by far, the first country destination for Catalan exports, its share has been sharply decreasing over time, as the Catalan economy has opened to international markets, mainly to the EU. While Spain accounted for 47.1% of Catalan exports (i.e., excluding the sales to the Catalan domestic market) in 2011 (and the rest of the world for 52.9%), it accounted for 63.5% in 1995 (and the rest of the world for 36.5%). Thus, in sixteen years, the share of the Spanish market in Catalan exports has declined by 16.4 points. Spain has strongly lost importance for the Catalan economy compared to the rest of the world, both because the Spanish market has decreased as a destination for Catalan exports

and because, even if the sign of the commercial flows is still positive for Catalonia, the percentage has sharply decreased over the years. An existing long-term trend has been reinforced by the crisis of the last few years.

The Eastern enlargement of the European Union changed the economic function of the southern peripheries (southern Spain, Portugal, southern Italy, Greece). The EU now has an abundance of peripheries, making the southern peripheries less important for the functioning of the world-system in Europe. This is exacerbated by the Eastern periphery generally having better educational attainment and stronger industrial structures due to the importance the socialist system placed on these factors (Caraveli, 2017). Furthermore, they are also geographically closer to the core of Europe. This meant that “low-cost producers in the East started to displace exports from the South” This indicated “a replacement of imports from the South through imports from the East, particularly in sectors related to the German manufacturing core” (Gräbner & Hafele, 2020, p. 10). The core benefitted from new low-wage labour markets whereas the southern periphery suffered from increased competition and a reduction in structural funds. The north-east of Iberia, due to its comparatively core position relative to the southern periphery was not in direct competition with the new peripheries of the east.

In discussing this reality, it is possible to analyse the financial crisis of 2008. This event was indeed global, but it did not affect all regions in the same way. As Figure 22 shows, it was those very regions of Spain that enjoyed a relatively core position that were able to recover from – or at least minimise the effects of – the financial crisis most successfully. The financial crisis, therefore, while global, was not felt the same across space.

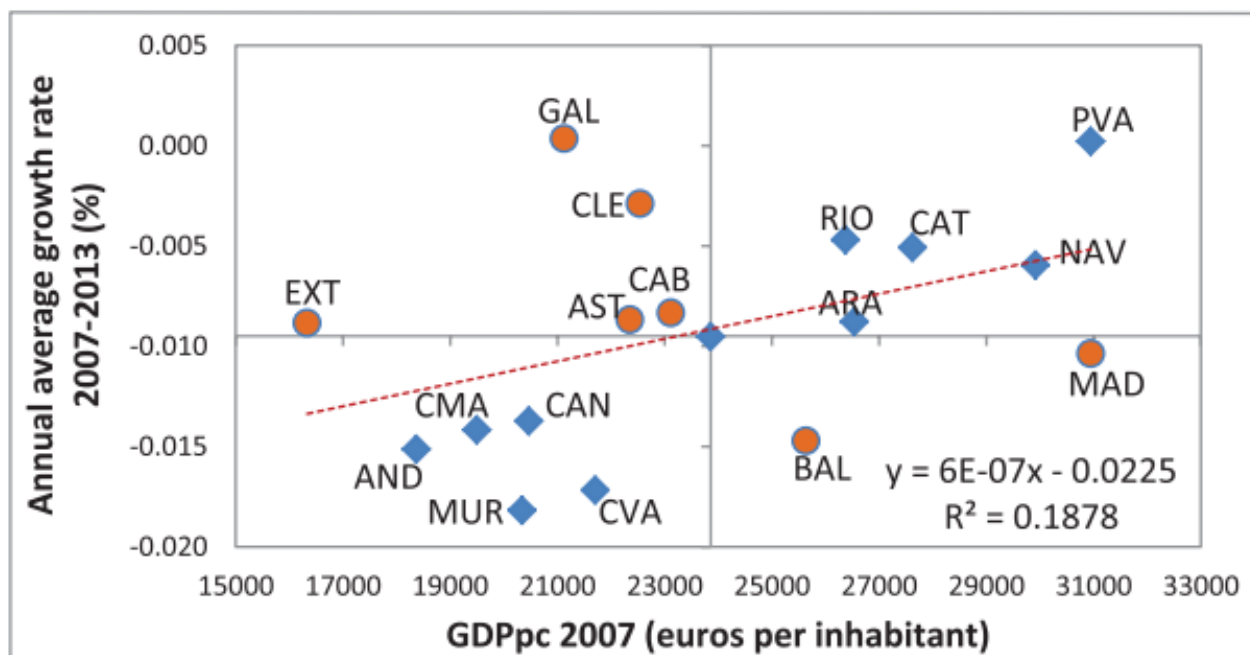


Figure 22: Regional GDP per capita and annual growth rate in Spain. Source: (Cuadrado-Roura & Maroto, 2016, p. 6).

In its entirety, what this means is that the costs of exit have been reduced and the possible gains of secession have increased. National sentiment is a necessary but not sufficient condition to make secessionism possible. In returning to Chase-Dunn's (1988) definitions of core, periphery, and semi-periphery, Catalunya fits uneasily between the peripheral south and the European core. Returning to Seer's (1979) regional core of Europe can help in this analysis. Catalunya is not placed in the "yolk" of the European core, but is at its fringes, both in a literal geographic sense and in the fact that it has a comparatively sizeable percentage of exports to the rest of Europe compared to the rest of Spain. Catalunya receives a relatively sizeable percentage of foreign investment that comes to Spain which shows that it is an outlet for capital investment from the yolk of the core. Furthermore, the migratory structure of Catalunya is of interest: it receives net inflows of migrants from other parts of Spain whilst simultaneously suffering from the emigration of workers with high human capital to the European core (Bonifazi & Crisci, 2020). In these regards,

Catalunya is attempting to improve its position within the world-system; the feeling is that leaving a peripheral state is one of the best ways of achieving that aim.

Catalunya is an example of Nairn's overdeveloped region (2021 [1977], p. 169):

But there are also several regions whose key problem has been determined in a wholly different fashion [to underdeveloped regions]. They occupy a different location altogether in the general history of the economic development process. These are the areas whose problem is that they developed more rapidly and successfully than the territory surrounding them. They have never been 'relatively overdeveloped' in relation to the European core-areas of industrialisation, of course — the Ruhr, the English Midlands, and so on. But they have been so in relation to the larger states dominating them politically. They became dynamic, middle-class enclaves in a more backward country — capitalist societies struggling to be free, as it were.

This tendency never disappeared. Figure 23 is an attempt to conceptually place Spain and Catalunya within the world-system, starting from the merger of Castilla and Aragón. This is complemented by an attempt to measure the flux in support of Catalan autonomy or secession. What this shows is that support for Catalan autonomy increases when the position of Spain within the world-system worsens but is weak or non-existent in periods where Spain enjoys a relatively strong position within the world-system. It shows that a dialectical relationship exists between peripheral nationalism on the one hand and core nationalism on the other. Both identities are shaped by the relative position of the Spanish state in the world-system.

The preceding chapter has conceptually placed both Spain and Catalunya within the world-system. The width and breadth of time and content that has been covered invariably means that broad strokes were necessary to cover the most important factors. A historical perspective was necessary to explain the longer-term processes behind the relationship between Catalunya and Castilla. Taking modern Catalunya as the starting point would be analogous to taking a snapshot in time. This can

uncover some truth, but not all. History is a collection of dismantled almosts. Places are an accumulation of all they are and have ever been and are a modern transposition of our past. To understand the processes behind a place's position in the world-system today, we must uncover how these factors interact and how the past interacts with the present. Like the fig tree in Sylvia Plath's *Bell Jar*, history branched out, and "from the tip of every branch, like a fat purple fig, a wonderful future beckoned and winked". However, unlike Plath, the present did not sit in the crotch of the fig tree, starving. One fig, one present, was chosen from an indeterminate number of equally possible, equally plausible presents. It is our role to study the fig from this branch, while also trying to theorise why the others withered.

Catalunya and Castille's Changing World-System Position

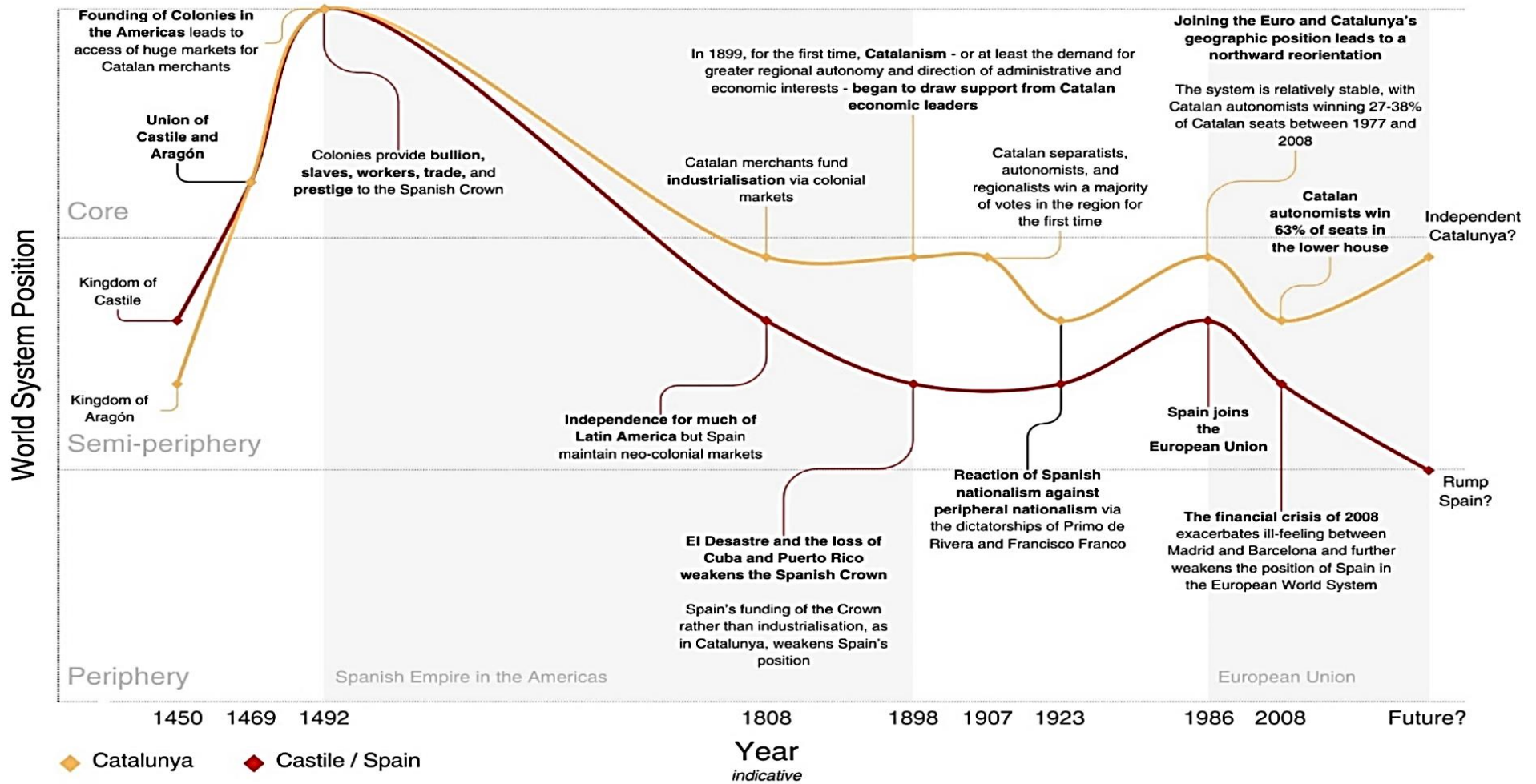


Figure 23: Catalunya and Castille's Changing World-System Position. Author's Own.

VI. Case Study 2: Italy

The second case-study is that of Italy. To analyse the weaving contours of history – and its effect on nationalism – this chapter has delved deeply into the peninsula’s history. This chapter, therefore, has taken a *Longue Durée* approach to history. For convenience, the rest of the chapter will continue as follows:

- An analysis of the Italian city-state system - which was particular to the peninsula – and how this affected the world-system position of the Italian peninsula between the 12th and 18th Centuries.
- An account of the Italian Risorgimento, including an analysis of the ‘Southern Question’ which was borne in this period.
- An economic account of the fascist period as well as an analysis of the way the Southern Question was articulated in this period.
- An analysis of the post-war consensus in Italy, including the politico-economic attempts to ‘overcome’ the north-south divide. This will include an analysis of Italy’s position within the world-system.
- An analysis of the ‘modern’ period – from 1990 onward – which includes the invention of a *Padanian* national identity, its relationship to the south, and its relationship to the world-system.

In reading this case study, it is important to remember that in some sense, it is difficult to talk of an ‘Italian’ history. After the fall of the (western) Roman Empire in the 5th Century, ‘Italy’ - in Count Metternich’s words - became nothing more than a “geographical expression”. This changed only in 1861, with the creation of the Kingdom of Italy.³⁷ Before this date, the history of Italy is one of varying, competing, and diffuse political kingdoms, city-states, and duchies on the Italian peninsula

³⁷ This situation is further muddled by the fact that in 1861, the territory which became the Kingdom of Italy did not constitute the territory of Italy today (this was not completed until after the Second World War).

(Braudel, 2019). In this regard, there was no singular 'Italian' history (to the extent one can be expected to exist). However, nation-states inherently rely on creation myths to consolidate their legitimacy. In this regard, all national histories - the history of a nation told by themselves - are revisionist histories. The narrative of what is Italy (and therefore 'Italian' history) derives from the creation myth told by these new Italians both to themselves and the world. The story of the Italian *Risorgimento*³⁸ (literally translated as 'Resurgence') was told by the winners, that is, the *Piedmontese*. The history of Piedmont became the history of Italy.

Today, Italy is a valuable case study for this analysis for several reasons. Firstly, it became a nation-state relatively late compared to many other states in Western and Southern Europe. Secondly, there exists an economic dualism between the former Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the North. Thirdly, there exists a movement for the independence of Padania in northern Italy, which is championed by the Lega Nord party. This is of interest because the conception of Padania is new, having its roots in the 1980s, allowing for an assessment of how world-system position, the unevenness of economic development, and nation-building initiatives interact in new as well as old contexts.

The Italian City-State System

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to give a full history of the Italian peninsula. Instead, it will examine how historical processes have shaped Italy's world-system position (and the position of its constituent parts) today. For this reason, the analysis of Italy will begin with the Italian city-state system; a system that was unique to the

³⁸ The *Risorgimento* is the name given to the period of events which led to Italian unification. These events are usually said to have taken place between the 1820s and culminated in 1871 when Rome was made the capital of Italy. The Kingdom of Italy, however, was proclaimed in 1861 while Rome was still in possession of the Papal States.

Italian peninsula in the period under discussion, and one that shaped Italian state-formation in the 19th Century.

The Italian city-state system developed during a period of growing volume and complexity of trade and in the shadow of the Papacy (Epstein, 2000, p. 281). To begin, city-states did not want to create new centres of institutional power. The consuls³⁹ of these cities looked to the ruling bishops, the episcopal palace, and their administrators as centres of authority. As Epstein (2000, p.282) argued “political and cultural continuity with the real and imaginary past was upheld by the continued importance of the bishop as the main focus of public authority and by institutions like the public forum inherited from Antiquity”. These consular roles developed at the end of the 11th Century, with the first being established in Pisa in 1085.

Contemporaneously with the creation of these consuls, the increased volume and complexity of trade on the Italian peninsula encouraged the emergence of craft and merchant guilds. The relationship between these institutions was self-reinforcing and both reacted to the same economic stimuli and impulses. On the one hand, the art and merchant guilds needed the consuls to establish and uphold reciprocal rules of engagement with other guilds across the peninsula and further afield. Meanwhile, the newly established consuls relied on the new economic power of these guilds to solidify their own economic and political power. In essence, the main purpose of both consuls and guilds was to secure the property rights of both artisans and aristocrats.

At the inception of these institutions, their role was mainly defined as facilitating and securing internal trade within the city-state, especially with regard to maintaining control over their rural hinterlands. As these city-states developed, the same trade impulses which led to the creation of consuls and guilds within city-states led these institutions – via the institutionalised power now enshrined within

³⁹ Consuls were comparative to Aldermen in Medieval England. They are best understood as an aristocratic class.

the city-state system – to seek trade with other like-minded states. Hicks (1969, p. 34) argued that by the beginning of the 12th Century, the city-state should be “regarded as a trading entity, [and] a body of specialised traders engaged in external trade”.

Trade was especially important for the Italian peninsula in the 12th and 13th Centuries due to its favourable geographic position. Figure 24 shows the trade routes of Europe, North Africa, and Western Asia in 1212. This map shows the geographical importance of the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas for trade. The position of the Italian peninsula within this world-system meant that they were at the core, both geographically and economically. Due to the privileged position of the Italian peninsula, the region could maintain a large number of city-states as viable political and economic institutions. Successful political and economic models lead to mimesis via institutional diffusion, as attested by the rise of Jacobite movements across the European continent in the 18th Century. In Italy, by the end of the 12th Century, there were 300 city-states in the Italian peninsula due to mimicry of the successful major Italian city-states (Epstein, 2000, p. 286).

Banaji (2020, p. 31) described Italian hegemony in the Aegean in this period as follows:

By the terms of the treaty of 1082⁴⁰, Venetian merchants could buy and sell in every part of the Empire, free of duty or customs examinations. Many ports were opened and vast territories made accessible to them for free trade. These privileges, renewed by the emperors of the twelfth century rendered the Venetians virtual masters of the commercial life of the empire. By the thirteenth century when the Genoese came into Byzantine economic life in a big way and similar wide-ranging concessions were granted, Italian merchants, whether Genoese or Venetians, became so entrenched in Constantinople that they controlled the economy of that city. And by the end of the thirteenth century, the islands of the Aegean (the Archipelago) were being divided

⁴⁰ The Byzantine-Venetian Treaty was a trade and defence pact which gave Venice major trading concessions in exchange for their support against the Normans.

between Genoese and Venetian control, the Aegean's east coast becoming the heart of Genoa's maritime domain.



Figure 24: Trade Routes in 1212CE. Source: (McEvedy, 1964, p. 73).

Although the entire Italian peninsula could be deemed geographically central in the Medieval world-system, most city-states that were economically core were found in the north. Geography once again played a part in shaping this reality. Figure 25 shows the topography of the Italian peninsula:

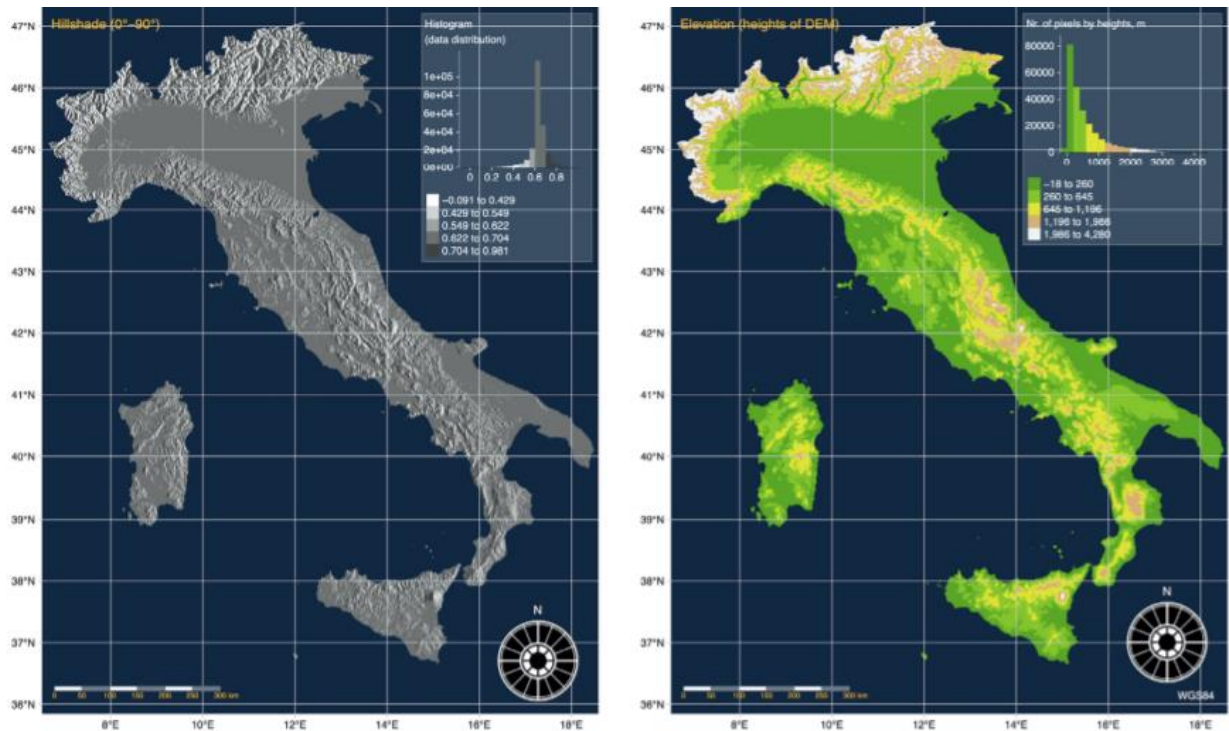


Figure 25: Map of hill shade in monochrome colours (left) and elevation map (right). Source: (Lemenkova, 2020, p. 107).

As shown in Figure 25, the topography of Italy varies greatly between the north and south. The Apennine mountains run through central and southern regions whereas the Po Valley in the north offers fertile and navigable plains. Better means of transport and communication meant that the northern city-states could work together in both military and commercial matters as shown by the Lombard League of 1176. In contrast, southern cities were disadvantaged by the greater distance that separated them, as well as by the lack of navigable watercourses (Jones, 1997) (Wickham, 1998). To the extent that cooperation did exist, it was more common for city-states such as Puglia and Bari to cooperate with Venice than with other southern states such as Naples. Similarly, Naples cooperated more with Rome and Genoa than with its southern counterparts. The impulses of the mercantile economy which relied on cooperation, trade, and business relations and which made northern city-

states rich, could not embed themselves very deeply in southern Italy (Epstein, 2000, p. 285).

The City-State System from the 15th Century

As shown, at the beginning of the 12th Century roughly 300 city-states existed in Italy. By the end of the 15th Century, this number had been reduced significantly. Figure 26 shows that by 1494, the number of city-states had been reduced to about a dozen.⁴¹ Between the 12th and 15th Centuries, city-states had a finite number of actions they could take. They could extend their territories to access larger markets, or trade more efficiently in existing markets by enforcing clearer property rights. The increased competition between merchants which in the early days of the city-state system helped lower transaction costs in the end led to diminishing returns to trade. It was possible for the time being to navigate these bottlenecks by trading with rival cities, but without a single jurisdiction, city-states were encouraged to free-ride or default. In the absence of such coordination, the only viable path was to establish a single authority to enforce the rules of the game. To this end, territorial units expanded to enforce these property rights to trade which reduced the number of city-states as the weaker succumbed to the stronger.

⁴¹ It is outside the scope of this thesis to give a detailed account of how and why the number of city-states diminished. For such an analysis see Epstein (2000) and Hicks (1969) who both argued that the reduction of city-states was due to the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall (TRPF).



Figure 26: The Italian Peninsula in 1494. Source: (Brennan & Houde, 2017, p. 93).

The specific conditions that existed in Italy by the end of the 15th Century, whereby 12 separate centres of power existed, contributed to its late state development.

Balance of Power theory, as used in the field of International Relations (IR) is a tool that can be useful in defining the interstate system in Italy in this period. Heywood (2015, p. 11) characterised the theory thusly:

The term 'balance of power' has been used in a wide variety of political contexts, but it features most prominently in international relations, where it has been accorded several meanings. As a policy, the balance of power refers to a deliberate attempt to promote a power equilibrium, using diplomacy, or possibly war, to prevent any individual state from achieving a predominant position. As a system, it refers to a condition in which no single state predominates over others, tending to create general equilibrium and curb the hegemonic ambitions of all states. Although such a balance of power may simply be fortuitous, neorealists argue that the international system tends naturally towards equilibrium because states are particularly fearful of a would-be hegemon, or dominant power, The term is also sometimes used to refer to power relationships generally, unconnected with the idea of equilibrium. This makes it possible to talk, for example, about 'the changing balance of power'.

Pertinent to this analysis is the notion that states deliberately attempt to promote a power equilibrium and this is indeed what happened in Italy. Andersen (2018, pp. 2-3) argued that in the 1480s Niccolò Machiavelli talked at length about the relationship between Italian city-states and that this period was characterised by “the city-state of Florence and its ruler Lorenzo de Medici [balancing] against the Republic of Venice”. The 16th Century Italian historian Francesco Guiccardini argued that all states were watching one another to ensure that the system remained in balance so that no one state could dominate the peninsula. This meant that “one should therefore not help the strong, ... but help the *weakest* part so that a balance can prevail” (Andersen, 2018, p. 3) (emphasis in original). As Braudel (1995, p. 657) argued:

By the fifteenth century, the city-state was already losing ground; first signs of this crisis could be detected in Italy during the early years of the century. In fifty years, the map of the Peninsula was entirely redrawn, to the advantage of some cities and the detriment of others. It was only a partial eclipse. The upheaval failed to achieve what may have been at issue – though I doubt it – the unification of the Italian Peninsula. Naples, Venice, and Milan in turn proved unequal to the task. The attempt in any case would have been premature: too many particular interests were at stake, too many cities eager for an individual existence stood in the way of this difficult birth. So, it is only partly true that there was a decline in the power of the city-state. The Peace of Lodi, in 1454, confirmed both a balance of power and a deadlock: the political map of Italy, although simplified, was still a patchwork.

The Peace of Lodi meant that the situation on the Italian peninsula differed from that which took place in most of Western Europe. Nation-states have tended to develop from a political or economic core. By the 15th century, these cores had started to coalesce and spread their authority in much of Western Europe. By this period, France was a unitary state under the king, Wessex had managed to spread its authority over much of England *de jure*, and *de facto* over much of Wales, and the Kingdoms of Castilla and Aragón, two cores, had now been united by marriage on the Spanish peninsula. Via home markets, centralised bureaucracy, and the growing secular religion of nationalism, the roots of ‘the nation’ could begin to grow in these areas. The same was not true of the Italian Peninsula.⁴²

The political and economic core of Italy took longer to develop as the Italian peninsula had competing cores for much longer. Fubini (1995) argued that the lack of a centralised system in Italy was the reason the heavily centralised French state

⁴² The Peace of Lodi had another important consequence, it “institutionalized the northern Italian balance of power, [and] provided a model for the institutionalization of the European balance of power by the Westphalia treaties two centuries later” (Arrighi, et al., 2004, p. 277). This, importantly, was the origin of the idea of state sovereignty which would come to define European inter-state competition in the capitalist period.

could successfully invade the peninsula in 1496. The creation of national institutions and systems in other parts of Europe also bore economically on the Italian peninsula. Cipolla (1952, pp. 180-181) argued that the north Italian economies were mainly dependent on the large-scale export of manufactured produce, namely woollen and silk textiles and “large invisible exports in the form of worldwide banking operations and maritime export”. As Marx and Engels (1970 [1845], p. 76) argued in the German Ideology, the fledgling capitalist enterprises in the Netherlands, France, and the Low Countries needed the creation of home markets to mature. This meant that:

manufacture was all the time sheltered by protective duties in the home market, by monopolies in the colonial market, and abroad as much as possible by differential duties. The working-up of home-produced material was encouraged (wool and linen in England, silk in France), the export of home-produced raw material forbidden (wool in England), and the [working-up] of imported raw material neglected or suppressed (cotton in England).

This nuanced protectionism was coupled with the creation of national institutions, such as banking systems, which further undercut the economy on the Italian peninsula which lacked its own large home market.

The Changing Position of Italy within the World-System

According to Leilo Basso (1956/2021)⁴³ the ‘discovery’ of the Americas “moved the economic centre of gravity from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic and ushered in Italy’s economic decline”. In essence, the centre of the world-system had

⁴³ For the translation of Basso, I am using an unpublished MA thesis. The bibliographical reference can be found under (Sahota, 2021). Within the text I am referencing Basso directly, with the date when the work was first published in Italian and the date in which the work was translated into English.

reorientated from the Italian peninsula to the Low Countries, England, and Iberia. In fact, according to Quijano and Wallerstein (1992, p. 549), the Americas did not 'join' a pre-existing world-system, but instead:

the modern world-system was born in the long sixteenth century. The Americas as a geosocial construct were born in the long sixteenth century. The creation of this geosocial entity, the Americas,⁴⁴ was the constitutive act of the modern world-system. The Americas were not incorporated into an already existing capitalist world-economy. There could not have been a capitalist world-economy without the Americas.

As Wallerstein (2011, p. 38) argued:

three things were essential to the establishment of ... a capitalist world-economy: an expansion of the geographical size of the world in question, the development of variegated methods of labour control for different products and different zones of the world-economy, and the creation of relatively strong state machinery in what would become the core-states of this capitalist world-economy.

The decline in Italy's relative importance, the advent of capitalism, and the creation of the Americas as a geosocial entity were all, therefore, intertwined. Basso (1956/2021) argued that the increase in the availability of precious metals, movable wealth and traffic from the Americas meant that Italy found itself behind in its process of capitalist development and that this "was ultimately aggravated by its division into many small states". Before the 'discovery' of the Americas, Venice was Europe's largest bullion market, buffered by the decision of Florentine merchant-bankers "to make the Rialto Europe's pivotal exchanger market from the early years of the fourteenth century" (Banaji, 2020, p. 21). Before the influx of precious metals

⁴⁴ The geographical location of what we now call 'The Americas' has clearly existed for millennia, yet it was not called 'The Americas' and constituted its own world-system. Therefore, it is possible to talk of the 'creation' of the Americas in the same way we discuss the 'creation' of nations and states.

from the Americas, therefore, Venice was “Europe’s banking palace” (Mueller, 2019, p. 354).

Hobsbawm (1954, p. 34) went as far as to say that during this period the “Mediterranean ceased to be a major centre of economic and political, and eventually of cultural influence and became an impoverished backwater”. Carlo Cipolla (1952, p. 334) was equally gloomy about Italy’s changing fortunes in the 16th and 17th Centuries. He argued:

by the end of this century [the 17th], Italy had become an economically backward and depressed area; its industrial structure had almost collapsed, its population was too high for its resources, its economy had become primarily agricultural. The great change came mainly between 1600 and 1670. In these seven black decades, the industrial structure of Italy collapsed.

Davis (1975, p. 10) showed that Dutch ships had become more efficient and technologically advanced in the 17th Century which led to better naval navigation and a reduction in the importance of the Mediterranean Sea. By concentrating on carrying capacity and cost of operation, “they evolved hull forms that maximised cargo space above overall dimensions”. These technological developments meant that Italy’s position – as the end of a land-based Silk Road and as core to Mediterranean trade – had been rendered obsolete by Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and British exploration, and exploitation. A new, expanded, world-system had been created, and Italy was no longer at its centre. The new dynamic of the world-system meant that Atlantic trade was replacing Italian Mediterranean trade, whereby Genoa’s value of goods imported had reduced by one-third between the start and end of the 17th Century (Cipolla, 2013, p. 199). Figure 27 shows the main Eurasian trade routes that existed by the 17th Century, and why Italy’s position had faltered by this period.

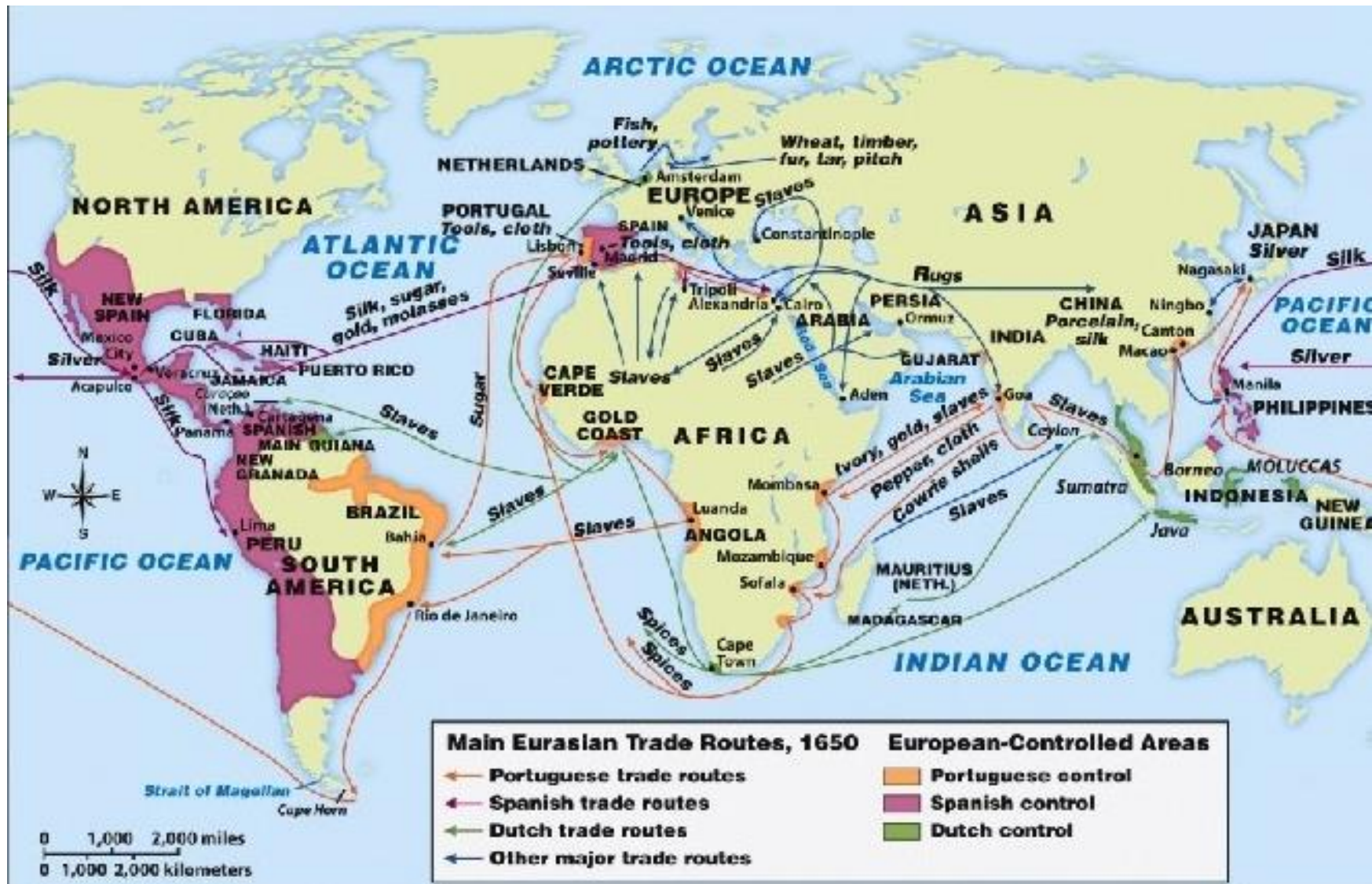


Figure 27: Main Eurasian Trade Routes, 1650. Source: (Henretta, et al., 2007)

In attempting to explain the fall of hegemonies or cores within the world-system, Wallerstein (2011b, p. 59) argued that there were two main factors:

first, the factors that made for greater economic efficiency could always be copied by others — not by the truly weak but those who had medium strength — and latecomers to any given economic process tend to have the advantage of not having to amortize older stock. Secondly, the hegemonic power had every interest in maintaining uninterrupted economic activity and therefore tended to buy labour peace with internal redistribution. Over time, this led to reduced competitiveness thereby ending hegemony.

The hegemonies that Wallerstein was referring to were those of the Netherlands, Britain, and the USA, and the situation that led to the collapse of the Italian city-states are similar, but not the same. Regarding his first point, it is not true that other states copied what made the economies of northern Italy efficient, instead, they in effect changed their market audience. Even after the Italian city-states had started to decline in economic importance, the quality of their textile products was of far superior quality compared to that produced in the Netherlands, Britain, and France. The difference lay in the fact that the products of these countries were much cheaper:

Italian industry, which had its hands tied by the complicated regulations of the old town guilds, persisted in the production by traditional methods of articles excellent in quality and out of date in fashion. This now proved to be a serious drawback. First, the English and Dutch and then the French invaded the international market with new types of textiles, lighter, less durable, brighter, and livelier in colour. These materials were of a type which was distinctly inferior in quality to the traditional Italian textiles: but they cost much less (Cipolla, 1952, p. 182).

The markets for these textiles therefore changed from one for elite consumption to one with wider appeal and accessibility. Arguably, this was a form of early mass-produced consumer goods compared to the exclusivity of Italian goods. It is,

however, fair to say that latecomers did have the benefit of not having to amortize stock as the Italian city-states would have to do. Wallerstein (2011, pp. 19-20) refers to this change in his analysis of Italian city-states as successful feudal – rather than capitalist – economies:

Long-distance merchants (based often in northern Italian city-states) capitalised on poor communications and hence high disparities of prices from one area to another. [...] Feudalism as a system should not be thought of as something antithetical to trade. On the contrary, up to a certain point, feudalism and the expansion of trade go hand in hand. [...] Yet a feudal system could only support a limited amount of long-distance trade as opposed to local trade. This was because long-distance trade was a trade in luxuries, not in bulk goods. It was a trade which benefitted from price disparities and depended on the political indulgence and economic possibilities of the truly wealthy. It is only with the expansion of production within the framework of a modern world-economy that long-distance trade could convert itself into bulk trade which would, in turn, feed the process of expanded production.

Regarding Wallerstein's second point, the Italian city-states indeed became economically uncompetitive. The guilds which at one point meant that northern Italy was at the centre of the world-system were now antiquated and hindered the development of new, more productive, modes of production. These guilds also meant that wages were higher on the Italian peninsula than in the Atlantic as they acted similarly to trade unions (though with different class interests). Wood (2002, p. 44) argued that in the 1620s, the Venetians were "undersold and driven off the stage" and that they complained about the low price and lower cost of silk sent out by the English. This situation was exacerbated by the plague of 1629-30 which affected the Italian peninsula. Like the consequences of the Black Plague, a reduction in the number of workers available (both 'skilled' and 'unskilled') meant that wages increased (Alfani & Percoco, 2019). The difference lay in the fact this plague was concentrated almost exclusively in Italy. This meant that wages did not increase

across all of Europe, but instead further exacerbated Italy's unfavourable position with the emerging powers on the North Atlantic. The world-system position of the Italian peninsula relative to its north-European neighbours would give rise to important conditions within the creation of the Italian nation-state.

Malanima (2003, p. 268) attempted to measure the GDP per Capita of those living on the Italian Peninsula from the 15th Century to the founding of the Kingdom of Italy. According to their analysis, relative GDP per Capita was highest in 1440AD and had not yet recovered by the creation of the Kingdom of Italy. The relative decline in the importance of the Mediterranean and the Italian peninsula is highlighted by the drop between 1440AD and 1580-1590AD when the centre of the world-system moved towards the Atlantic.

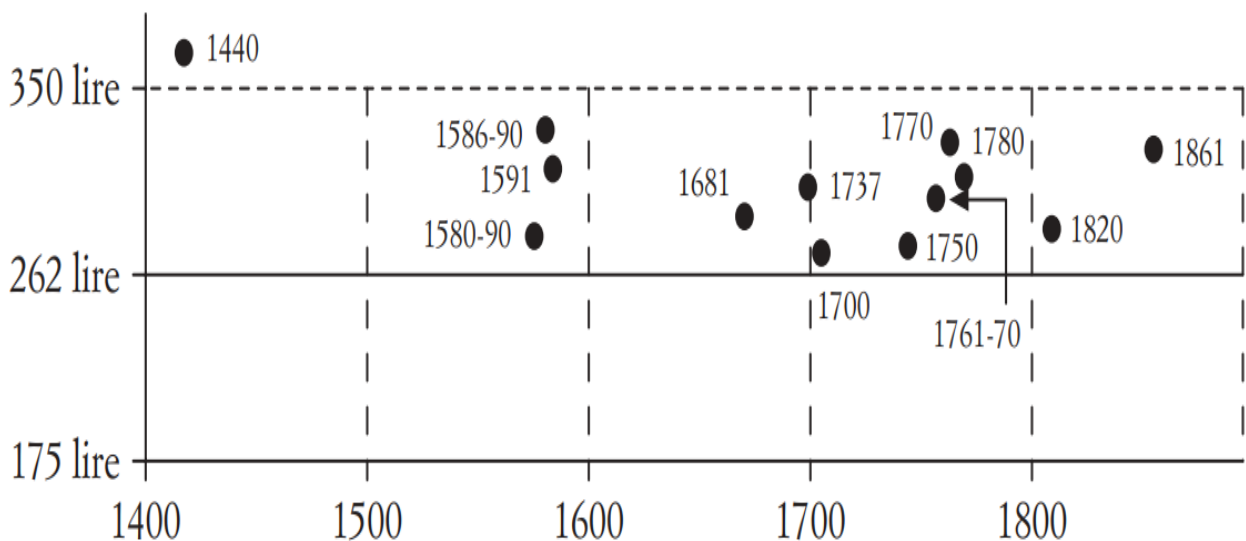


Figure 28: Estimates of Per Capita GDP (1860-1870 Italian Lire) in Italy (15th-19th C).

Source: (Malanima, 2003, p. 268)

The Italian Risorgimento

The Kingdom of Italy, proclaimed in 1861, marked the emergence of a modern Italian state. This process integrated the previously sovereign political actors of the Kingdom of Sardinia⁴⁵ (1720-1861CE), the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (1816-1861CE), the Grand Duchy of Toscana (1567-1860CE), the Duchy of Modena (1452-1860CE), and the Duchy of Parma (1545-1860CE). Further expansion of the new Italian state was undertaken in 1866 with the annexation of Veneto from the Austro-Hungarian Empire following France's victory over them, and in 1870 when 'Italian'⁴⁶ troops entered Rome. This led to the surrender of Rome and Lazio to the Kingdom of Italy and the absorption of the Papal States (756-1870CE). Italian unification was finally completed in 1918 with the acquisitions of Trentino-Alto - or Sud Tirol⁴⁷ – and Friuli-Venezia-Giulia from the now-defunct Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The unification of Italy led to the elimination of tariff and trade barriers that existed between the formerly independent states, this meant that capital could move more freely across the peninsula and led to the state being the single political locus instead of the patchwork of states that existed beforehand. Although the process that led to the creation of the Kingdom of Italy was described by the leaders of this movement as the "unification" or "resurgence" (Risorgimento) of Italy, the reality is that this process was pushed by one actor in particular: the Kingdom of Sardinia⁴⁸ (Riall, 2002) (Smith, 1988). Snowden (1972, p. 268) argued that the Risorgimento could be

⁴⁵ The Kingdom of Sardinia included Piedmont which was the economic power of the peninsula.

⁴⁶ These troops were from Piedmont and were in essence under the control of the kingdom of Sardinia, they were therefore loosely Italian, rather than *Piedmontese* troops.

⁴⁷ Sud Tirol has a German-speaking majority of inhabitants and possesses its own movement for its unification with the Austrian region of Tyrol. In fact, it was reported that 46% of its inhabitants supported secession from Italy (Nationalia, 2013).

⁴⁸ Although this entity was called the Kingdom of Sardinia, Sardinia had always been of secondary importance to its rulers, the House of Savoy. The capital was to be found in Turin, rather than Cagliari, and the strength of the Kingdom was to be found in Piedmont and Genoa rather than Sardinia.

“best described as the conquest of the peninsula by its most commercially advanced part – Piedmont”. In other words:

Piedmont was the furthest along the path to a market economy, with the most developed public administration and ability to indebt itself to pay for the best army. The internal pressures on it to achieve larger markets and to spread its debt load over a larger base incentivized it to seek territorial expansion (Duca & Duca, 2006, p. 823).

The creation of the Kingdom of Italy was therefore the product of a particular process of unbalanced integration dominated politically by the Kingdom of Sardinia, whose predominance gave its ruling class - an emergent autochthonous bourgeoisie - control of the state apparatus. In explaining the unification of Italy, Gramsci argued that “the currents born based on the productive development of the more advanced countries ... transmit their ideological currents to the periphery” (quoted in Morton, 2007, p. 613). In essence, the institutional arrangements and frameworks of the new Italian state underwent a process of mimesis based on the French example. This meant that unification in the Italian case “was not so much a question of freeing the advanced economic forces from antiquated legal and political fetters but rather of creating the general conditions that would enable these economic forces to come into existence and grow on the model of other countries” (Gramsci, 2011, p. 76). This view is echoed by Duca and Duca (2006, p. 823) who argued that:

under the banner of Vittorio Emanuele II, Duke of Savoy and ultimately King of Italy, the Piedmonts who led Italy’s unification imported French administrative law to assist in building the State by assuring a state of law. This effort was not to ensure individual rights, but rather to ensure effective administration of State power.

This meant that “the Risorgimento was an attempt ‘to ‘patch up’ structural weaknesses engendered by the position of the Italian state within an international system of uneven development” (Morton, 2007, p. 614). As Molinari wrote during

the Risorgimento in 1854: “the division of humanity into autonomous nations is essentially economic” (quoted in Lalor, 1888, p. 957).

The Risorgimento is therefore best described as an economic revolution from above, rather than a specifically national-cultural revolution. While there may have existed an essence of cultural solidarity on the Italian peninsula in the form of a shared *ethnie* (like that shared by the Hellenistic world on the Greek peninsula), a strong, politically nationalist sentiment cannot be said to have existed before or during the Risorgimento. For example, it has been surmised that only 2.5% of the population of Italy spoke ‘Italian’ at the moment of unification, the rest spoke various and mutually incomprehensible languages (De Mauro, 2017, p. 41). A sense of shared cultural-linguistic affinity might therefore have been an important *justification*⁴⁹ for unification by the elite, but it was certainly not a pressing matter for much of the people on the peninsula.

The Risorgimento and the Roots of ‘The Southern Question’

The political unification of Italy was therefore steamrolled by the most economically advanced region of the peninsula: Piedmont. The economic insecurities that pressed on the Piedmontese elites to follow a policy of political unification also pressed on post-unification Italy. The new Italian state looked westward to the French, and British states as examples of development to follow, and were alarmed by the rising strength of a newly unified Germany. It was the view of the Italian intelligentsia that Italy – especially the South or the Mezzogiorno – was much more economically backward than their European counterparts and that answering the question of backward development was of primary national importance. Thus the ‘Southern

⁴⁹ Language may have been used to justify unification outwardly, but the main impulses behind unification were economic.

Question' was born. Schneider (2020, p. 39) argued that the Mezzogiorno's 'backwardness' was widely noted and discussed during the Risorgimento. The general feeling was that:

the agrarian system of the Neapolitan Kingdom seemed to hold the whole economy back, although agriculture was argued to be the country's natural vocation. Wedded to antiquated crops, methods, and technologies, and resistant to innovation, the system was viewed as increasingly wasteful, inefficient, and even irrational. Critics lamented above all the persistence of ill-defined and confused property relations.

The backwardness with which the North viewed the South is seen in the work of Cesare Lombroso; the man who founded the subject of criminology. In his view, criminality was linked to race, and he extrapolated these theories to explain the differences between North and South Italy. As quoted in Schneider (2020, p. 99):

the Mafia is a Sicilian variant of the ancient Camorra, a variant shaped perhaps by a more tenacious adherence to secrecy, typical of the Semitic race [and] it is to the African and Eastern elements (except the Greeks), that Italy owes, fundamentally, the greater frequency of homicides in Calabria, Sicily, and Sardinia, while the least occur where the Nordic races predominate.

Davis (2012, p. 510) argued that this process of Othering was an important part in creating an Italian identity in the north:

the South provided an 'Other' that served to define the features and attributes of the true Italians – a means for defining the national identities of the newly unified Italians and establishing norms to which southerners were expected to conform.

A version of hybridity as employed by Bhabha (2012) is to be seen in Italy whereas the South was both 'us' and 'them'. Differently to France or Britain who for the most part projected the 'them' onto the Colonies, Italy - which at the time had no Colonies – projected their orientalism onto an internal other.

This was the story that Risorgimento actors and historians have painted. However, whether it is true needs further inquiry. It is without doubt that illiteracy was widespread, and that poverty, ill-health, and insecure land tenures weighed heavily on the southern peasantry, yet it would be fairer to situate the south within its historical context. Anyone who has read a Dickens novel knows of the sheer destitution the working poor of Victorian Britain had to survive; the average life expectancy of the urban poor in Victorian England was 15 (Greene, 2001). The development and backwardness that existed in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies should therefore not be viewed as a dichotomous opposition, “but as different relative positions on a material and temporal continuum. In this representation, at once pessimistic and optimistic, the Two Sicilies was a backward country, but one in which progress was possible” (Schneider, 2020, p. 38).

Figure 29 shows the GDP per Capita in Italy’s Regions between 1871 and 2009. These estimates make for a sombre reading. Yes, a difference did exist between the Mezzogiorno and the rest of the country, but this difference would not have varied much from other European states. The northwest and Lazio were the most economically advanced parts of the Italian peninsula at the time of unification, but their head start was far from insurmountable. From these estimates, the Mezzogiorno had 85% of the Centre and North’s GDP per Person in 1871 but this has reduced to under 60% today. Far from alleviating the Southern Question, it is possible that the Risorgimento created it.

	1871	1891	1911	1931	1938	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2009
Piedmont	2116	2516	3446	4354	5348	7061	10768	16054	21278	26473	31125	27953
Aosta Valley	-	-	-	-	-	7604	14472	17964	22771	28047	33593	33436
Liguria	2844	3349	4597	5763	6469	7778	10678	15417	19858	26867	29499	27490
Lombardy	2272	2681	3566	4319	5356	7369	11992	17752	23735	29111	35220	32355
Northwest	2276	2692	3646	4529	5510	7335	11470	16969	22188	28070	33484	30656
Trentino Alto Adige	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3211	3664	5092	9495	13440	20441	27769	35084	33230
Veneto	2071	1864	2579	2615	3236	4721	8565	13148	19640	26057	30665	29446
Friuli Venezia Giulia	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	4424	4573	5362	7505	13307	19840	26867	30366	28880
Emilia Romagna	1944	2460	3225	3832	4011	5381	9234	15125	23462	27862	33240	31068
Northeast	2014	2127	2854	3292	3691	5082	8769	13931	21205	26982	32020	30347
Tuscany	2151	2376	2911	3720	3888	5058	8663	13958	20040	24506	29526	28494
Marche	1682	2043	2421	2496	3036	4125	7130	12060	19148	23673	26869	26177
Umbria	2034	2362	2759	3499	3687	4336	6950	12299	17783	21683	25920	23990
Lazio	2997	3644	4459	4901	4585	5145	9406	14170	18985	26751	30583	30399
Center	2200	2585	3141	3884	3976	4900	8623	13692	19385	25224	29417	28751
Abruzzo	1635	1573	2032	2223	2239	2796	5466	10986	15763	20526	22965	21158
Molise	-	-	-	-	-	-	4960	9248	13524	16893	22504	20592
Campania	2196	2253	2815	2854	3159	3331	5825	9447	12159	16291	17705	16679
Puglia	1828	2367	2543	2987	2766	3128	5572	9964	13160	17101	18193	17091
Basilicata	1371	1722	2194	2461	2185	2267	4797	9937	12450	13885	19738	19047
Calabria	1418	1552	2095	1967	1884	2257	4462	8850	11704	13815	17434	17297
South	1834	2011	2469	2615	2647	2960	5425	9659	12760	16453	18410	17503
Sicily	1928	2160	2543	2885	2766	2796	4788	9301	12341	16129	17894	17426
Sardinia	1598	2180	2744	2997	3183	3032	5882	11251	12942	17703	20660	20437
Islands	1862	2169	2579	2910	2863	2844	5041	9765	12960	16523	18572	18172
Center/North	2180	2502	3279	3937	4477	5920	9822	15138	21078	26913	31830	29987
South	1842	2064	2505	2713	2720	2921	5294	9685	12832	16476	18464	17709
Italy (Euro 2011)	2049	2327	2989	3506	3853	4813	8158	13268	18202	23141	27113	25740

SOURCE: See the text. All estimates are at historical boundaries and based on present populations. Aosta Valley was included in Piedmont until 1938; Molise was included in Abruzzi until 1951.

Figure 29: GDP per Person in Italy's Regions, 1871-2009 (Euro 2011). Source: (Felice & Vecchi, 2015, p. 548).

D'Attoma (2017) looked at differences in tax compliance between the north and south as a proxy for loyalty and trust in the new Italian state. His view was that tax compliance was (and remains) higher in the north than in the south because the north saw themselves in the image of the new nation whereas the South tended to see the church as a bulwark *against* what they deemed to be a foreign and heavy-handed state. D'Attoma (2017, p. 80) goes on to suggest that:

the often-conflictual relationship between the Catholic Church and the state, as well as how that conflict unfolded in Northern and Southern Italy, defined two separate attitudes regarding political unification, and hence toward the state. While Southerners perceived the Catholic Church as a source of protection against foreign occupying forces from the North, Liberal Democrats who favoured the national state expropriated a disproportionate amount of taxes from the South to fund public investment in the North. This led Southern individuals to seek ways to avoid paying taxes that they saw as illegitimate. By contrast, Northern citizens were more likely to pay taxes, since the state would spend that money in ways that benefited them.

Petrusewicz (2020) also looked at the role of the Church in the south. They argued that unification led to a strengthening of the position of reactionary southern landlords to whom many peasant farmers were indebted. Before unification, the Church acted as a form of welfarism and a bulwark against the harshest excesses of this landlordism. However, post-unification, northern industrial interests and southern landlord interests coalesced and created what Gramsci termed "the historical bloc". One interest group reinforced the other in a way that privileged both northern industry and the large farm holdings and landlords. In effect, the reactionary elements of southern society which made development difficult were buttressed by northern interests. The historical bloc's power and weakness came from Italy's passive revolution; the passivity of the Risorgimento meant that the historical bloc could form due to the lack of any truly popular, mass, organic movement yet, this also meant that the historical bloc was susceptible to being

supplanted by any popular force in Italian society. These views are far from conspiratorial on the side of the Mezzogiorno; proof exists of a very real worsening of the South's economic position relative to the North. Figure 30 shows the GDP per Capita in the South as a Percent of northern GDP per Capita from 1860-2010.

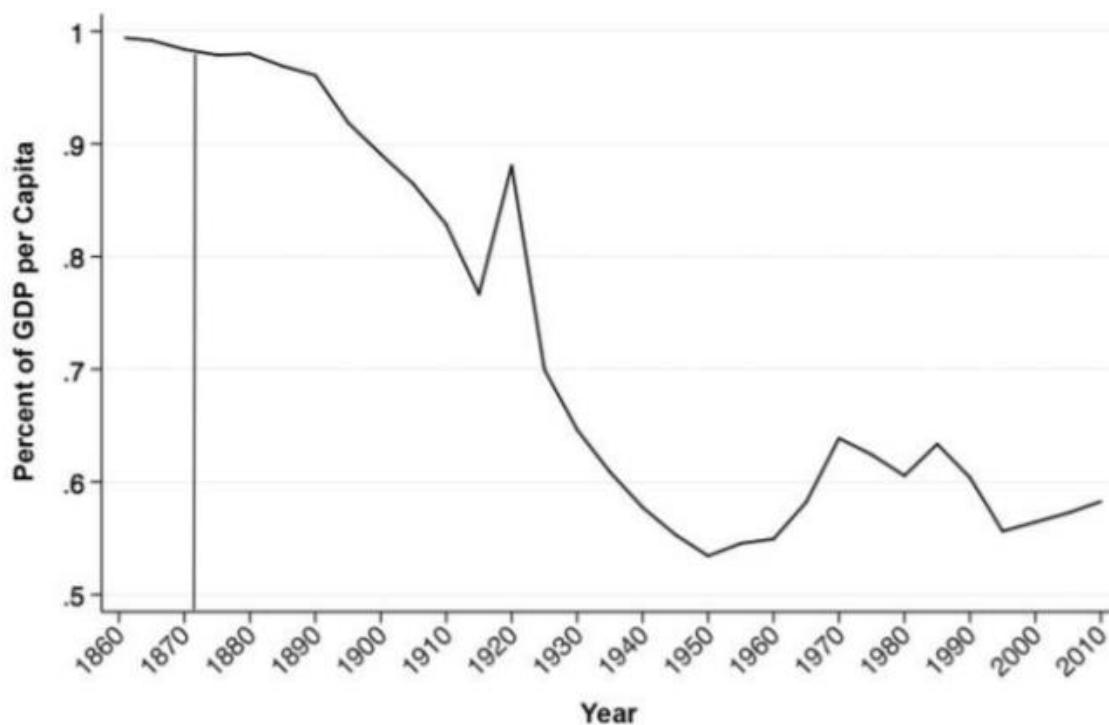


Figure 30: GDP per Capita in the South as a Percent of Northern GDP per Capita from 1860-2010. Source: (D'Attoma, 2017, p. 84).

In the Spanish case study, this thesis argued that the unification of Castilla and Aragón meant that the trade barriers that existed between them collapsed, thus expanding the mercantilist - and later capitalist - market. In Italy, a similar process was undertaken. Riall (2002) argued that the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies followed a protectionist economic policy and that, generally, producers were protected from the worst price fluctuations and volatility, this policy was not dissimilar to that pursued by Britain, the Netherlands and Spain a century or so earlier. Petruszewicz (2020, p.

212) also argued that the protectionist policy of the South was economically beneficial and that there existed dynamic economic sectors, “in particular, those linked to high value-added cash crops like olives, citrus fruits, specialised Mediterranean market-garden products, and processing industries”. It is possible, therefore that it was the early integration into the world and now-unified Italian market which led to a worsening of the South’s relative position. It is possible that northern Italy used the South for its own development:

the South paid a disproportionately high amount of taxes; it made up only 27% of GDP, but 32% of the tax base, while the North generated 48% of the national wealth and paid only 40% of the nation’s taxes. Due to a much larger agricultural base in the South, higher taxes on grain disproportionately affected the South, while the North benefited the most from public spending. In addition, since bread was a staple of the Southern Italian diet, increased taxes on grain also hit Southern peasants the hardest. As Clark notes, the state imposed an unprecedented tax burden in the South at the time of unification, which funded the development of the North. The North’s political dominance meant that it controlled decisions about taxation and public spending, which favoured citizens in the North and extracted important resources through taxation from the South, exacerbating the North-South economic divide. Between 1862 and 1897, 455 million lire were spent on landfills in Northern and Central Italy, while only 3 million were spent on such resources in the South. The majority of school and railway spending was also concentrated in the North. Development in the South certainly suffered after unification, and as a result, so did Southerners’ relationship to the newly formed state (D’Atomma, 2017, pp. 83-84).

The preceding pages have argued that historical revision was necessary to better explain both the relationship between the Mezzogiorno and the rest of Italy and the roots of southern Italy’s underdevelopment. This historical account is of importance as this relationship continues to play a prominent role in Italian politics and economics today. This is especially true in the creation of a north Italian “Padania”

which in essence has been created in reaction to a perception of southern Italy as different to the North, the roots of which can be found in the Risorgimento period. As Snowden (1972, p. 271) argued, a particular vision of the South had been disseminated by the bourgeois press about the South, and by the early 20th Century, it was an issue the more progressive forces in society were both aware of and trying to rectify:

The first problem to resolve, for the Turin communists, was how to modify the political stance and general ideology of the proletariat itself, as a national element which exists within the ensemble of State life and is unconsciously subjected to the influence of bourgeois education, the bourgeois press, and bourgeois traditions. It is well known what kind of ideology has been disseminated in myriad ways among the masses in the North, by the propagandists of the bourgeoisie: the South is the ball and chain which prevents the social development of Italy from progressing more rapidly; the Southerners are biologically inferior beings, semi barbarians or total barbarians, by natural destiny; if the South is backward, the fault does not lie with the capitalist system or with any other historical cause, but with Nature, which has made the Southerners lazy, incapable, criminal and barbaric - only tempering this harsh fate with the purely individual explosion of a few great geniuses, like isolated palm-trees in an arid and barren desert.

It is important, however, to note that not all contemporaries of the Risorgimento viewed the Mezzogiorno in this way. An Italian geographer named Elisée Reclus noted in 1876 that any 'barbarity' that existed in the South was because the people were "armed not by vengeance, but by poverty" which was in part because they had been "annexed to the Kingdom of Italy" (Ferretti, 2016, p. 4). This reality was obscured and obfuscated by many of the 'new Italians' of the North both during, and after the Risorgimento.

Fascist Italy

The roots of fascist Italy can be found in the Risorgimento and the historical bloc of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The lack of a popular foundation to the Italian state meant that it was always susceptible to any popular force from either the left or right. Although the popularity of fascism should not be overstated - and there were always movements in Italy which fought against it - fascism became a means of containing the strains of modernisation by rallying a popular base around conservative aims, it was, in Barrington Moore's (1966, p. 477) view, "an attempt to make reaction popular and plebeian". Fascism, however, mainly derived support from the petit-bourgeois and middle classes in the urban industrial centres of the north, the landowners of the commercialised farms in the Po valley, as well as from ex-servicemen returning from the First World War. In analysing the elite-driven nucleus of fascism, Morton (2007, p. 615) argued that:

within the uneven development of the world market, the ideology of fascism was recognised as an attempt by the ruling classes in Italy - allied with a social base in the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie that was created as a result of transformations in rural property - to develop the productive forces 'in competition with the more advanced industrial formations'. The political economy of fascism was therefore a response to 'the intervention of Anglo-American capital in Italy' that signified the growing predominance of finance capital over the state. 'What is fascism, observed on an international scale?', asks Gramsci, 'It is the attempt to resolve the problems of production and exchange with machine-guns and pistol-shots.

The rise of fascism can therefore be linked to world-system position; unification was intended to improve the relative position of Italy within the global and European state-system. Instead, Italy found itself in competition with Anglo-American capital at home, had weak exports abroad, and had no real colonial Empire to speak of.

Fascism was therefore a reactionary, passive revolution which attempted to improve Italy's standing at home and abroad. As Gramsci stated, "is not 'fascism' precisely a new 'liberalism'? Is not fascism precisely the form of 'passive revolution' proper to the twentieth century, as liberalism was to the nineteenth?" (quoted in Morton, 2007, p. 615).

In Italy, the outcome of the First World War was to swell the fascist ranks. It was originally treated as a simple way for the Italian government to create a national consciousness, with military conscription and the creation of a war-economy towards national goals. The war, however, rather than being completed in months, dragged on for years. The original nation and state-building efforts of the war in the end led to disenchantment. This worsening economic situation created fertile ground for fascism to take root. As Snowden (1972, p. 271) argued:

the Italian entry into World War I was in part an operation of domestic politics, an attempt to overcome the gap between the two Italies—the 'real' and the 'legal'—by means of a truly national effort, with the temptations of easy colonial conquest and the diversions of a politics of prestige. In the end, however, the strategy backfired: the war was not won, as expected, within a matter of months, but became a prolonged collective trauma. Indeed, in the effort to wage the war with an unwilling nation and an army of peasant soldiers, the government managed to survive only by mortgaging its future—by promising the masses that a victorious conclusion to the war would be tantamount to a social revolution. The promise made to the soldiers was unmistakable. "Save Italy, and She's Yours!" was the message that was circulated in the trenches.

The First World War was derived from inter-imperialist competition and led to the death and displacement of millions of people, it also further exacerbated regional economic differences in Italy. The war effort "inexorably steered public procurement toward enterprises in the so-called 'industrial triangle' (Lombardy, Piedmont, and Liguria). The north also benefitted from deflationary measures and an autarchic

policy, which meant an intensification of industrial production in advanced sectors, most of which were located there" (Felice and Vecchi, 2015, p. 531). The march of fascism which began in 1919 had the residue of the First World War, the passive revolution of the Risorgimento, and the Southern Question as its basis. Like the continued strength of the North in Francoist Spain, Italian fascism in no way changed the economic disparity that existed between north and south. Mussolini's policy of autarchy simultaneously improved the situation of the North and worsened that of the South. The need to be industrially self-sufficient meant that state grants and capital were sent to northern industries, thus further improving the position of the North relative to the South.

The Mezzogiorno suffered from Mussolini's autarchic policy of self-sufficiency in foodstuffs as it meant a reduction in profitable crops such as wine, grapes, and citrus fruits and an increase in less profitable crops such as wheat (Felice and Vecchi, 2015, p. 531). As Alacevich (2013, p. 97) argued, Mussolini's policies "chained peasant families to underconsumption and to the exploitation of their weakest members (children, the elderly), in a desperate, predatory agriculture, which was the only way to gather resources essential for survival".

Furthermore, the Mezzogiorno used to have a release valve when work became too scarce: migration. Many Southerners throughout the 19th Century had emigrated to places such as the USA, Argentina, and northern Italy.⁵⁰ In fact, from 1861 to 1985, "approximately one Italian in every four emigrated" (Del Boca & Venturini, 2005, p. 305). In 1913, for example, 76.9% of transoceanic emigration from Italy came from the South, even though the South only accounted for 17% of the population (Ibid., p. 307). Mussolini placed restrictions on emigration which placed additional pressure on Italy's poorest regions. While migration could never 'solve' the discrepancy that

⁵⁰ In fact, this is large reason as to why Juventus is the most well-supported team in Italy. Many southern migrants moved to work in Turin's industrial sector. Juventus therefore became a team not only for those from Turin, but for many migrants and their families as well.

existed between north and south though it could always help alleviate some of the worst aspects of poverty via remittances, demographic 'alleviation', as well as wage equalisation of sorts.

Fascist Italy and the Changing Southern Question

In explaining the duality that existed between conceptions of Southern *Italianness* as both 'progressive' and 'primitive', 'internal' yet 'other', Jane Schneider (2020, p. 285) argued that:

The representation of Italy as a nation divided or even manqué, a fragile and artificial union of two divided and estranged Italies, raises questions about alterity understood in both collective and individual terms. Generally, we suppose that the consciousness of a group can be integrated through a rhetoric of alterity; insiders reinforce their own identity by constructing an external, deterritorialized "other." In the Italian historical context, however, the rhetorical construction of a South opposed, and even inimical, to the North escapes this pattern to produce a more richly complex figuration. On the one hand, southerners continue to invoke the figure of a land invaded, of centuries of foreign oppression, of the abandonment of an artistic heritage - a position which places the South in the realm of alterity to Italian nationhood. On the other hand, a reciprocal figure emerges in which this alterity must be internalized to imagine a territorially integral Italy.

Pandolfi (2020, p. 285) argued that this division "of a double Italian identity was overcome only for the briefest moment when the Fascist regime proclaimed its agenda of transforming Italy into a late colonial empire". As alluded to earlier, Mussolini pushed to restore Italian dominance over *Mare Nostrum*, culminating in Italy's fixation with attempting to conquer present-day Libya, Somalia, and Ethiopia. Italy's internal "other"; the South, gave way to an external other in a fashion like

other European countries. In this regard, Italy was never unique in that it othered people, though, for the most part, the Other was external. Of course, there were and are internal Others such as the case of the 'Celtic Fringe' in Britain (Colley, 1992) (Harvey, et al., 2001) or even the non-Castilian regions of Spain. However, there seems to be a gradation of Otherness; the Welsh were less Other than Indians, and Asturians were less Other than the indigenous peoples of 'Spanish America'. In these cases, alterity and similarity tended to blur; this is perhaps best exemplified by the Irish case. The Irish were 'white', yet Other, the same, yet different. This became clear after large emigration from Ireland to the United States; they were 'whitewashed negroes' (Eagan, 2000) before 'becoming white' (Ignatiev, 2012). Yet this was something that the racialised Other could never do. Before the rise of fascism, Italy did not possess an external Other to racialize. During the fascist period:

intellectuals and political leaders came to construct a representation of a unitary national identity. Only then did the many complex elements that composed the Italian nation come together to affirm that identity, overriding and obliterating the rhetorical strategy of an Italy divided between North and South. In the international upheavals of the 1920s, when the nation-state of Italy was quite fragile, the Fascists generated the collective dream, indeed delirium, of achieving superpower status, giving birth to a national identity that had been up to then paradoxical. North and South as enemies did not figure in the everyday discourse of fascist intellectuals. An image of Italy as a utopian project, a hazy veil that hid complex differences, grew to cover the entire national territory. The Southern Question gave way to the rhetorical figure of Italy defined as the direct descendant and inheritor of Imperial Rome (Pandolfi, 2020, p. 285).

Fascist Italy was therefore nostalgic for an imperial past and anticipated an imperial future, however, this sentiment had its roots in the Risorgimento period. "Leaders such as Francesco Crispi (1818–1901), Italian Prime Minister on various occasions

between 1876 and 1896, respond[ed] to exigencies of internal politics by conjuring up ‘the mirage of colonial lands to be exploited’ in an attempt to displace exploitation from the Mezzogiorno onto colonial expansion” (Morton, 2007, p. 616). In the end, this idea tumbled like the house of cards that it was. The end of the Second World War saw the felling of fascism, though to this day we have not heard its death rattle. The lingering remnants of fascism which exists in the country as well as the differing experiences of north and south in the final years of the war have further muddied the notion of a united Italy. The South’s liberation began at the end of 1943 with the American landing in Sicily and the liberation of Naples. The North on the other hand continued under the control of Mussolini until his execution by Partisans in April of 1945.

These eighteen months signalled the loss of a coherent representation of national homogeneity and the possibility of an undivided national confederation; a loss that could not be recovered. There followed the emergence of the polarized discourses of Italian Marxist culture, with its rhetoric of resistance, and of Italian anti-communism, which characterizes the resistance against the Fascists as the work of traitors, only interested in settling personal scores, perpetrating massacres under the cover of an ideology of freedom and betraying their kin who were under arms (Pandolfi, 2020, p. 289).

Post-War Italy: A New Dawn?

The political economy of post-war Italy cannot be understood without placing it within its international context. Across Western Europe, the spectre of communism was felt by all ruling classes. This fear was particularly strong for the Italian ruling classes, and for good reason. Between 1948 and 1987, the Italian Communist Party finished second in every General Election. However:

after the initial phase, which entailed collaboration between parties on the anti-Fascist front and a mutual approach between the masses of southern peasants and the State, there followed the expulsion of socialists and communists from the government in May 1947 (Alacevich, 2013, p. 96).

This led to a situation whereby the Communists were supported by roughly a third of the population of Italy while simultaneously being locked out of government for the entire period. A bloc of interests coalesced around northern industrialists and a system of personal patronage to the Christian Democratic party in the South. This meant that the idea that the Communists were 'traitors' during and following the Second World War could fester. Italy's politics in the post-war period was therefore directly shaped by the world-system and its position within it; on one hand, there was the Communist Party of Italy (CPI) which was perceived to be aligned with the Eastern Bloc (even though the CPI were relatively autonomous from Moscow and espoused a form of Eurocommunism⁵¹ (Urban, 2019)) and on the other there was the 'Socialist' Party, and the Christian Democrats which tended to call for class unity, rather than class struggle, as was the liberal post-war tradition.

Two other interrelated processes heavily shaped post-war Italian politics; Marshall Plan Aid and European integration. Italy received roughly 11% of the total Marshall Plan Aid (Fauri, 2010, p. 80). This aid gave new impetus to Italian politicians to finally 'solve' the 'Southern Question'. 1950 saw the creation of the *Cassa per il Mezzogiorno* (Fund for the South); a government body specifically created to stimulate growth and development in the South. While leaving outcomes to one side for the moment, this was an enlightened policy which understood the importance of place in economic development. The fund was at first created to administer Marshall Plan Aid and was borne from a changing attitude toward poverty and development.

⁵¹ It is outside the scope of this thesis to give an account of the differences between the Communism of the Eastern Bloc and Eurocommunism, for a discussion of these differences see (Amin, 1980).

Areas of the South such as Matera became known as “Italy’s shame”, however what was now deemed shameful was that governments had allowed people to live in such poverty for so long, rather than those who lived in poverty. This change in outlook was helped by writers such as the communist Carlo Levi (2006) who wrote his book ‘Christ Stopped at Eboli’ about his time spent in the South during the fascist era. He stated:

They live submerged in a world that rolls on independent of their will, where man is in no way separate from his sun, his beast, his malaria, where there can be neither happiness, as literary devotees of the land conceive it, nor hope, because these two are adjuncts of personality and here there is only the grim passivity of a sorrowful Nature. But they have a lively human feeling for the common fate of mankind and its common acceptance. This is strictly a feeling rather than an act of will; they do not express it in words, but they carry it with them at every moment and in every motion of their lives, through all the unbroken days that pass over these wastes.

This passage talks of the structural reasons behind poverty, that things happen “independent of the will” of the poor, and that it is not possible to live completely and freely while such suffering exists. The *Cassa* would therefore be this national policy which would end this poverty and end Italy’s shame.

The Cassa Per il Mezzogiorno

The *Cassa* – which existed from 1950 to 1984 - was more than aware of the difficulty it faced in overcoming the South’s underdevelopment. In 1953, they published a report that stated “that 85% of the of the poorest Italian families lived south of Rome” (Forlenza, 2010, p. 335). This is in keeping with D’Attoma (2017, p. 90) who argued that:

Southern Italy in the 1950s [was] similar to many underdeveloped countries. The disparities between the North and the South were so considerable and evident that the state instituted the Fund for the South—a rural spending agency providing roads, housing, and water to rural areas.

The successes of the fund, especially in the early years, however, should not be underestimated. The Mezzogiorno's antiquated agricultural sector was overhauled which included "mechanization, extension of irrigated areas and the introduction of fertilizers [which] sustained an absolute growth in productivity and production for at least twenty-five years" (Alacevich, 2013, p. 101). This meant that between 1952 and 1961, the growth rate of the Mezzogiorno was 5.2% per year. The original strategy of the Fund was related to primary agricultural production, but by 1957 "it had been transformed to favour the relatively capital-intensive steel, chemical, and petrochemicals industries" (D'Attoma, 2017, p. 90). This strategy also seemed to be working. As Davis (2020, p. 206) noted, "Bank of Italy estimates suggest, for example, that between 1947 and 1983 production per capita increased threefold in the South". Why, therefore, does Italy's dualistic economy persist?

Firstly, although Marshall Plan Aid was important in creating and funding the *Cassa*, most of the Aid did not go to the South. This was because the Plan's main objective was to support the reconstruction of production systems in Italy and Europe. There was an original imbalance among imports in favour of northern industries. The largest imports were, in order of importance, fuel, cotton, cereals and machinery (Fauri, 2010, p. 168). Furthermore, although the growth rate of the Mezzogiorno was 5.2% per year on average between 1952 and 1961, it was 5.9% in central and northern Italy, meaning that the differences between them grew (Alacevich, 2013, p. 101). As Davis (2020, p. 206) argued, "Southern Italy is still at the bottom of the European league in terms of per capita income and production, suggesting that in real terms the North-South gap may have widened". This fact leads to uneasy questions for modernisation theorists: growth between the 1950s and 1980s was real, pronounced,

and improved the material lives of many millions of people. However, these differences have not alleviated the *relative* position of the South compared to the North. Recent years have seen a relative regression in the South's position compared to the North. Whatever growth that did exist was not embedded within the structures of the South; its internal linkages remained weak and fragmented compared to the north of Italy and much of Europe.

Whatever the nature of postwar economic and social change, change there has been – and on a scale without precedent. Yet these changes have not been accompanied – and this is where modernization theory is most obviously wrongfooted- by a decline in those structural problems traditionally associated with the Mezzogiorno – poverty, unemployment, institutional and structural inertia. Indeed, until very recently, there has been notable deterioration on all these fronts, and a massive qualitative decline in the structures of civil society and the quality of life (Davis, 2020, p. 209).

Figure 31 shows that despite the growth and increase in productivity that the South experienced in the post-war period, this did not lead to any substantive change in the South's position *relative* to the North.

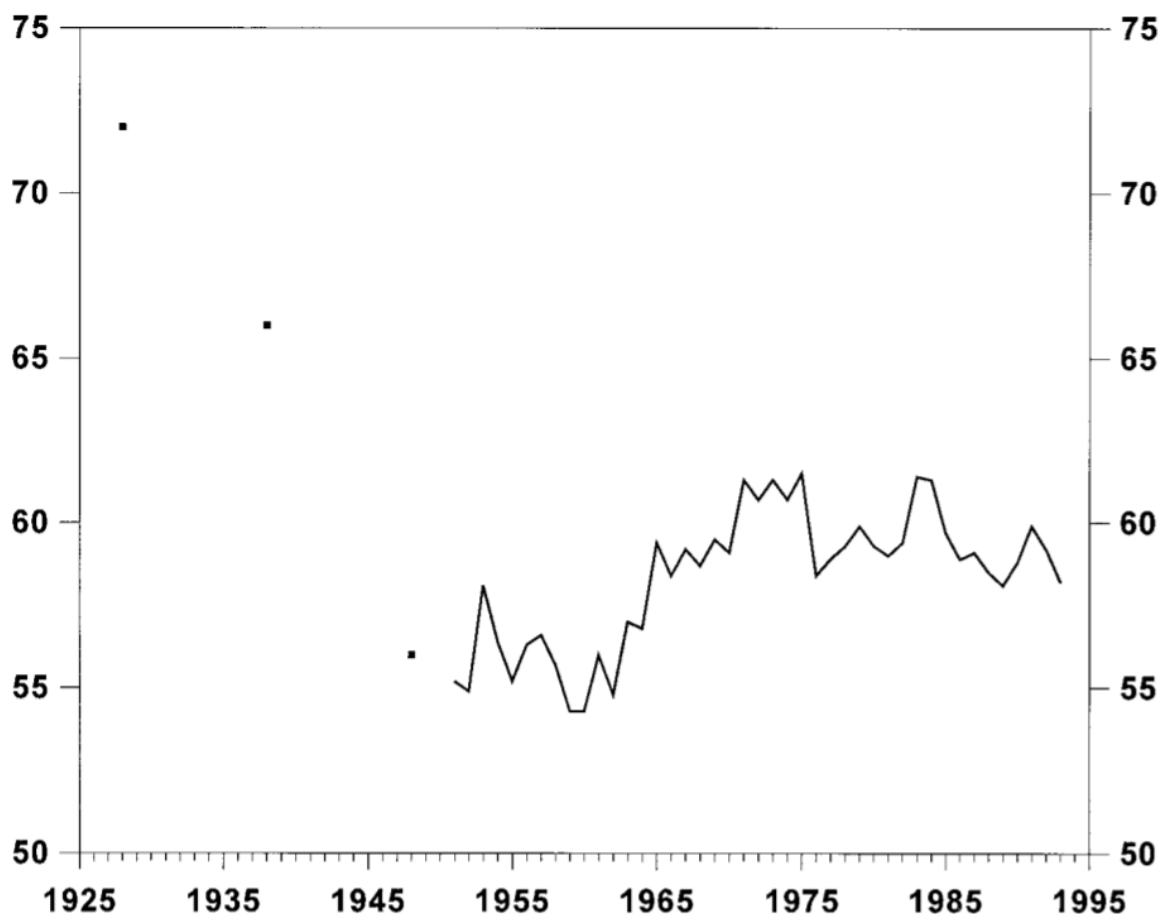


Figure 31: Southern Italian GDP per capita, 1928–1993 (North-Centre Italy = 100). Source: (Boltho, et al., 1997, p. 244).

A tentative explanation is that these spurts of development came ‘from outside’ rather than being endogenous to the Mezzogiorno. This in many ways echoes the reality of southern integration into the Italian state. The protectionism of industries which existed in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies disappeared with the Risorgimento. Similarly, although workers in the Mezzogiorno would have benefitted from government funds, the creation of new industries, and the modernisation of agriculture, it is also a fair assessment that northern capitalists would have benefitted *more*. Firstly, Graziani (1978, p. 362) showed that “the large plants established in the Mezzogiorno were branches of industrial groups based in the north, which tended to favour traditional suppliers located there at the expense

of potential sources of supply which could have been developed in the newly industrialising regions". This meant that some of the processes that dependency theorists saw in dependent states also took place in the Mezzogiorno. Firstly, as Frank (1966) argued, northern investment extracted surplus profits from the Mezzogiorno and moved it back to the north. Furthermore, Monte and Luzenberger (1989, p. 223) argued that northern firms benefitted greatly from tax allowances. Up to 70% of profits in the Mezzogiorno were tax-free which meant that it was northern companies, rather than central and local governments which benefitted. This meant that there was less money to reintroduce into the system.

Southern factories were called "Cathedrals without pillars" (Andreoni, 2013, p. 303) due to the lack of linkages that existed between them. The institutional arrangement of the *Cassa* made this inevitable. Martinelli (1985, p. 75) clearly explained this, arguing that the Mezzogiorno suffered from a:

lack of control over investment and decision making, in particular over profits, ... [had] little opportunity to innovate both products and processes, because they mainly produce at the most mature phases of the product life cycle ... [and] the underutilization of regional human capital, because of the low profile of the occupational structure which derives from such small multiplier effects. There thus develops a vicious cumulative process: branch plants do not plug into the regional economy and therefore do not raise the level of local knowledge and interindustry linkages.

The lack of indigenous firms in the Mezzogiorno continues to this day. 27 Italian companies are on the Forbes 2000 list, all but one of these companies are based in the North. The only company that is not from the north is the smallest and is number 1985th on the list; an oil and gas company based in Sicily (Forbes, 2023).

Guarascio and Simonazzi (2016, p. 317) argued that although there existed an industrial network of manufacturing firms in the Mezzogiorno, "its local systems of

production are characterized by a scattered presence of firms producing intermediate inputs and investment goods". In fact, by analysing the degree of completeness of the value chains, Bronzini et al. (2013) showed that the linkages in the South - measured in terms of additional workers activated - are seldom greater than half the number observed in the Italian north. In effect:

the low density of its value chains makes the Southern industry dependent on external inputs: the leak of imports from the Centre-North weakens the correlation between the expansion of industrial production and the growth of the chain. Finally, a much higher share of firms in the Southern value chains is in a weaker contractual position compared to their Northern counterparts (Guarascio and Simonazzi, 2016, p. 317).

Andreoni (2013, p. 317) characterised southern Italian development as "dependent industrialisation" and argued that even though there existed a strategic industrial policy, the headquarters of such businesses were from the North. This meant that there was a lack of organic linkages in the South, because the North controlled developmental strategy. This meant that "the kind of industrial policies implemented since 1950 triggered a process of dependent industrialisation which left Southern regions with the unexploited potentials of several cathedrals without pillars".

Furthermore, in the case of the Mezzogiorno, we see the trends that Galtung (1971a) and Samuelson (1970) hypothesised regarding export specialisation in low value-added and primary materials. Guerrieri and Iammarino (2007, p. 935) for example, note a "specialization in resource-intensive and slow-growing sectors (such as agricultural and food products, wood, petrochemicals etc.)". This meant that in 1991, the Mezzogiorno accounted for 36.1% of the Italian population, 25.2% of the GDP, and only 18.2% of the value-added industry (Leonardi, 1995, p. 166). This is in complete contrast with the centre-north where "the most relevant sectors in exports are mechanical machinery and transport equipment, but also metals and metal products, chemical products, and textile and clothing. Exports of products in which

Italy records revealed international comparative advantages tend to concentrate in Centre-Northern regions” (Buch & Monti, 2010, p. 669). Although Italy, taken as a whole, is considered a ‘developed’ country, the Mezzogiorno includes many features of dependent countries.

From the evidence available, it seems a fair assessment to state that the South has been intentionally underdeveloped by the North, especially in the years directly following unification. The *Cassa per il Mezzogiorno* was an attempt to right these wrongs, but it was unable to do so due to the economic toolkit employed. It is fair to describe the processes that took place in the Mezzogiorno in this period as growth without development. As Flammang (1979, p. 50) argued, ‘growth’ refers to the expansion in size of a thing, and ‘development’ refers to a change in the characteristics of a thing. The economy of the South ‘grew’ in this period, but it did not ‘develop’. The fund was discontinued in 1984, *partly* due to its failure in stimulating development in the South, but *also* due to EU competition laws which meant that it was more difficult for governments to intervene in economic matters which ‘distorted’ market competition.

Italy since the 1990s: The Nationalism of the North

This thesis has tended to concentrate on southern Italy – or the Mezzogiorno – and with good reason. Apart from Sardinia, the entire Mezzogiorno was part of the same political entity for centuries before the unification of Italy. It is the place that most closely resembles the definition of a ‘nation’ given earlier. One might therefore expect that if there was a movement for autonomy or independence in Italy, one

would expect to find it in the South.⁵² After all, this is the area that has done *worst* out of unification, it had its own capital in the form of Naples and has continually been Othered by northern Italians. However, it is in the North of the country where a vibrant ‘independence’ movement exists. Calls for northern autonomy grew rapidly over a short period of time. As Figure 32 attests, autonomists went from being fringe players to a major political force in the 1990s. Furthermore, the Lega Nord have even entered the national government as a minority partner under Silvio Berlusconi’s Premiership. This was helped by the clean hands scandal which swept Italy in the mid-90s, but what else accounted for this change and what is the relationship of political economy to the rise of nationalism in the north?

⁵² There was a short-lived campaign for Sicilian independence in the late 1940s and early 1950s. This movement could not be considered popular or to have coherent political aims. The political party that pushed for secession from Italy, for example, called for Sicily to become part of the United States of America.

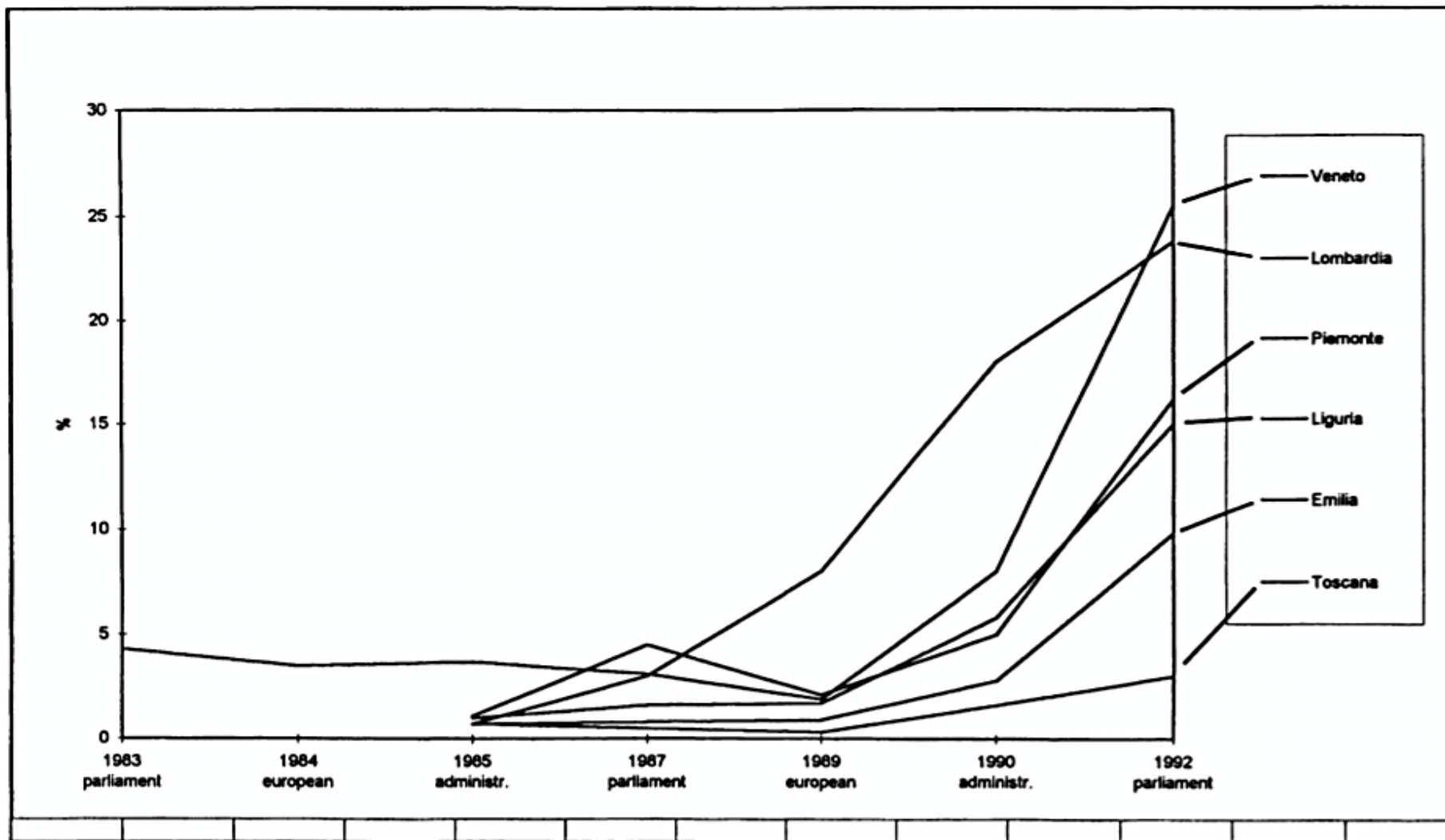


Figure 32: Electoral Results of Autonomist Parties. Source: (Eva, 1997, p. 66).

Padania: Inventing a Nation

The name given to the new 'nation' in northern Italy is Padania. Padania derives its name from the river Po which runs through the north-west of the country.

Independence for this 'nation' is pushed by the *Lega Nord* (The Northern League) – or to give its full name *Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza della Padania* (Northern League for the Independence of Padania) - which was created in 1991 from an amalgam of different 'Leagues' or parties in the North such as the *Liga Veneta*, *Lega Emiliano-Romagnola*, *Lega Lombarda*, and the *Alleanza Toscana*. Although the Lega Nord has invented a new identity for the North, its identity is based on the long-standing, entrenched perception of cultural differences that exist between the North and South. As Agnew and Brusa (1999, p. 126) point out "what is remarkable in the case of Northern Italy today is that we can see before our eyes the attempted invention of an identity that has had no prior existence". The Lega embody a rupture from earlier politics in Italy, and this stems from their different political aspirations. The goal of the Italian polity from the Risorgimento through to the post-war era – at least outwardly – was to *overcome* the difficulties on the path to development across all of Italy, especially the South, and to bring the living standards of *all* Italians to those enjoyed in western Europe. The Lega on the other hand contend that the difference between the North and the South, both culturally and economically, is too large meaning that the North constitutes a separate people. The pseudo-scientific usage of genealogy and geography has been of importance in creating a '*Padanian*' identity (Albertazzi, 2006). Hague et al. (2005) argued that Padanian nationalism has attempted to root itself in *Celticity*, that is, north Italians are northern European, are part of the wider European pan-Celtic family and are therefore implicitly both white and distinct from southern Italians. For example, on the Lega's website, the following is stated:

All the peoples of Padania descend from the same original ancestors, which can be categorized into three principal groups: the first and the oldest are the Ligurians; the second group are the Celts and the Venetians, which come from diverse areas but have similar cultures and traditions; and the third group are the Goths, the Longobards and all the other Germanic peoples that inhabited the North of Italy. In contrast, the ancestors of the Italians are the Etruscans and the Greeks, which were the dominant cultures of the Italian peninsula (quoted in Hague et al., 2005, p. 164).

This supposedly different ancestry between north and south has led to different *cultures* and *mentalities* existing between the two Italies. The Lega Nord argues that northerners have a stronger work ethic and are more entrepreneurial and law-abiding. This is contrasted with the supposed characteristics of the South: laziness, living on government handouts, and a propensity toward criminality (not too dissimilar to Cesare Lombroso's pseudo-scientific views of a century and a half ago). In essence, northern Italians are culturally north European, and the South is culturally Mediterranean; the relationship between culture and the economy in the eyes of the Lega, therefore, is that different cultures have led to different economic outcomes. The North is richer due to its different culture and lineage, this is the *primary* reason in their eyes and therefore it leads logically that it cannot be overcome as it is innate to the South and the Mediterranean. Whilst analysing Padania, it is necessary to keep in mind the cultural and geographical *fuzziness* innate in the definition. As Figure 33 below attests, geographically defining the parameters of Padania has been particularly difficult for Lega leaders. On the right, areas of Umbria, Marche, Tuscany, and Emilia-Romagna are included within the new nation even though the river Po does not flow through these areas. Furthermore, some of these regions were to be paired with Lazio in their proposal for a federal Italy; this is the region which encapsulates the Lega's grievances via their notion of 'thieving Rome'. In addition, Padania includes within it German-speaking regions of Italy which themselves want more autonomy such as Sud Tirol.

It seems that the Lega's definition of inclusion within Padania rests more on economic wealth, than it does on any cultural or geographic marker, as shown in Figure 34.

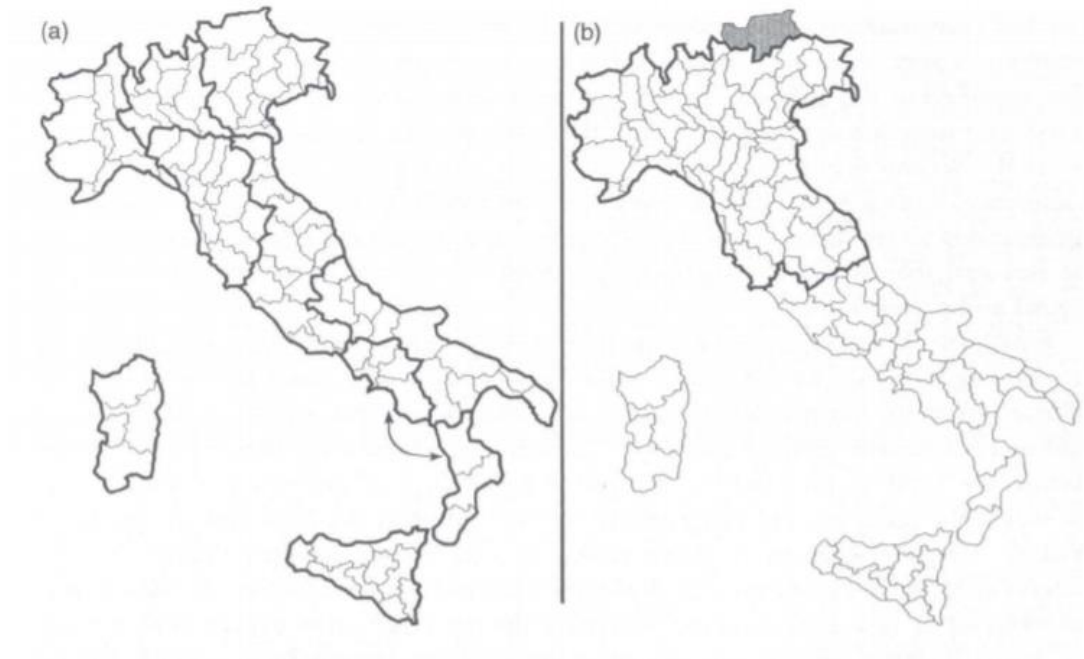


Figure 33: Two of the Northern League's territorial schemes: (a) regions for a federal Italy proposed between 1994 and 1996 and (b) Padania, the 'unit of choice' since 1996. Source: (Agnew and Brusa, 1999, p. 121).

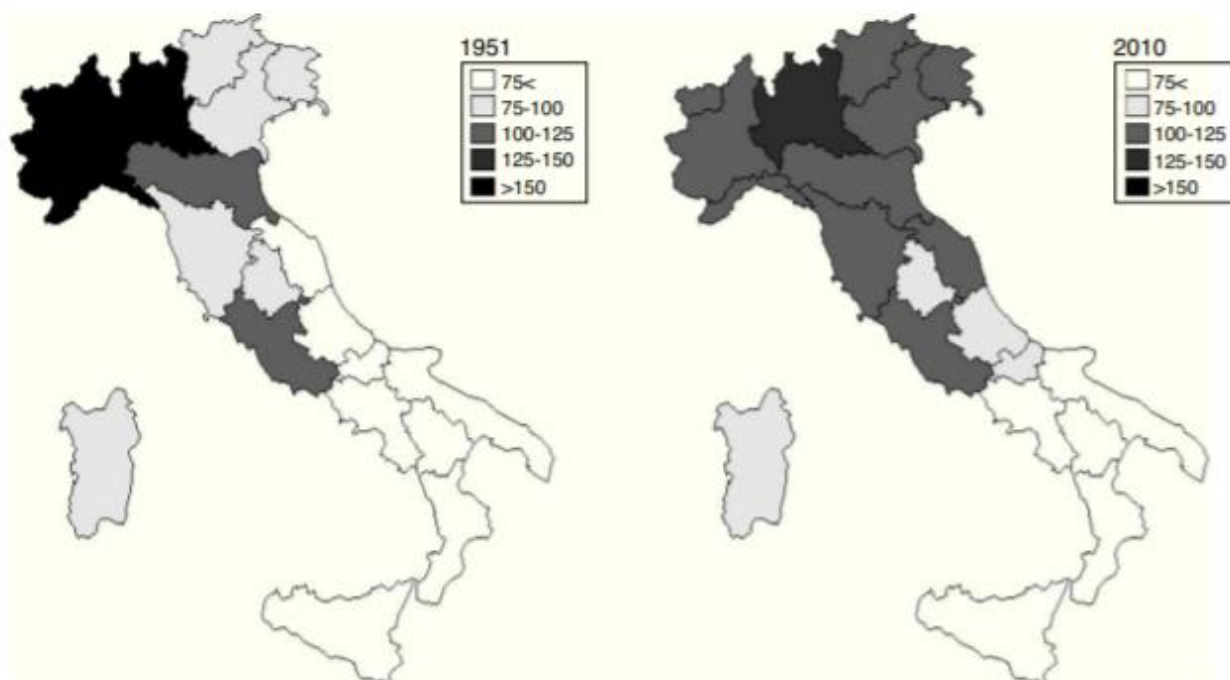


Figure 34: Regional per capita GDP 1951 and 2010 (Italy = 100). Source: (Daniele & Malanima, 2014, p. 169).

It's the Economy, Stupid.

Inventing an identity is an important aspect in legitimising grievances; in this regard, the invention of Padania is relatively similar to that of the invention of the Basque country after the Carlist Wars. It is however a fair assessment that the Basque Provinces had deeper cultural and linguistic distinctiveness – or a stronger *ethnie* – than exists in northern Italy. However, the framing of these disagreements as a battle between culturally distinct regions is relatively similar. In the case of Padania, its identity was originally shaped as a refutation *against* the South. Underpinning all the apparent cultural, genealogical, or geographical peculiarities in Italy, however, was the economy. Let us not forget that the locus of the Lega Nord's strength is in exactly those parts of Italy which pushed the creation of the Kingdom of Italy. On the surface, the case of Padania seems to be a particularly idiosyncratic in that it calls for

independence from the very state its ancestors helped create. These seeming idiosyncrasies become a little more typical when we consider the economy whereby the grievances of the Lega Nord stem almost entirely from this starting point. The Party have inverted the economic reality of Italy and has argued that the North suffers from economic victimisation. Without creating too strong a comparison between Catalan grievances and those of Padania - as Catalan politicians do not use the inflammatory, racist language of the Lega Nord - some of their supposed grievances are comparative in content, if not in form. The Party continually alludes to the unfairness that exists in the tax and spending system of Italy and that northerners get less than southerners. The per-capita state expenditure is roughly proportional to the population of the North and South, and while the North does contribute more than the South, this is because it is wealthier (Giordano, 2000). This echoes the Catalan grievance that there is a transfer of money from Catalunya to other parts of Spain, yet this is also proportional on a wealth and population basis. Both movements therefore dislike the redistributive elements of their respective states, yet both movements seem to disregard the historical, geographic, and economic factors that led to their comparative advantage in the first place.

Linked to the above, the Lega continually allude to the 'domination' of the state apparatus by southerners and the patronage systems that exist between politicians and the people in the South. At face value, both points hold *some* merit, especially when taking an ahistorical approach. Firstly, the larger percentage of southerners within the organs of state alludes to the differing avenues to employment in the North and South. Public sector pay is equalised across Italy, while private sector employment remains more scarce and worse paid in the South (Alesina, et al., 2001) (Pagani, 2003). This situation was exacerbated in the post-war era with the moving of north Italian branch plants to the South. The propensity of southerners to work in the public sector cannot be untangled from the North's history of using the South as a resource of cheap labour and markets. Furthermore, the patronage systems that

undeniably did exist between the Christian Democrats and vested interests in southern Italy were first created in the period of Italy's historical bloc, that is when the interests of northern industrialists and southern landowners coalesced; personal fealty and patronage which kept much of the southern population pliant was therefore a policy that was at first supported by northern interests and should not be viewed in isolation of this. Figure 35 shows the continuing persistence of per capita differences that exist between the North and Centre, and the South of the country. Within this general context, it is understandable why the South should receive redistribution from the North.

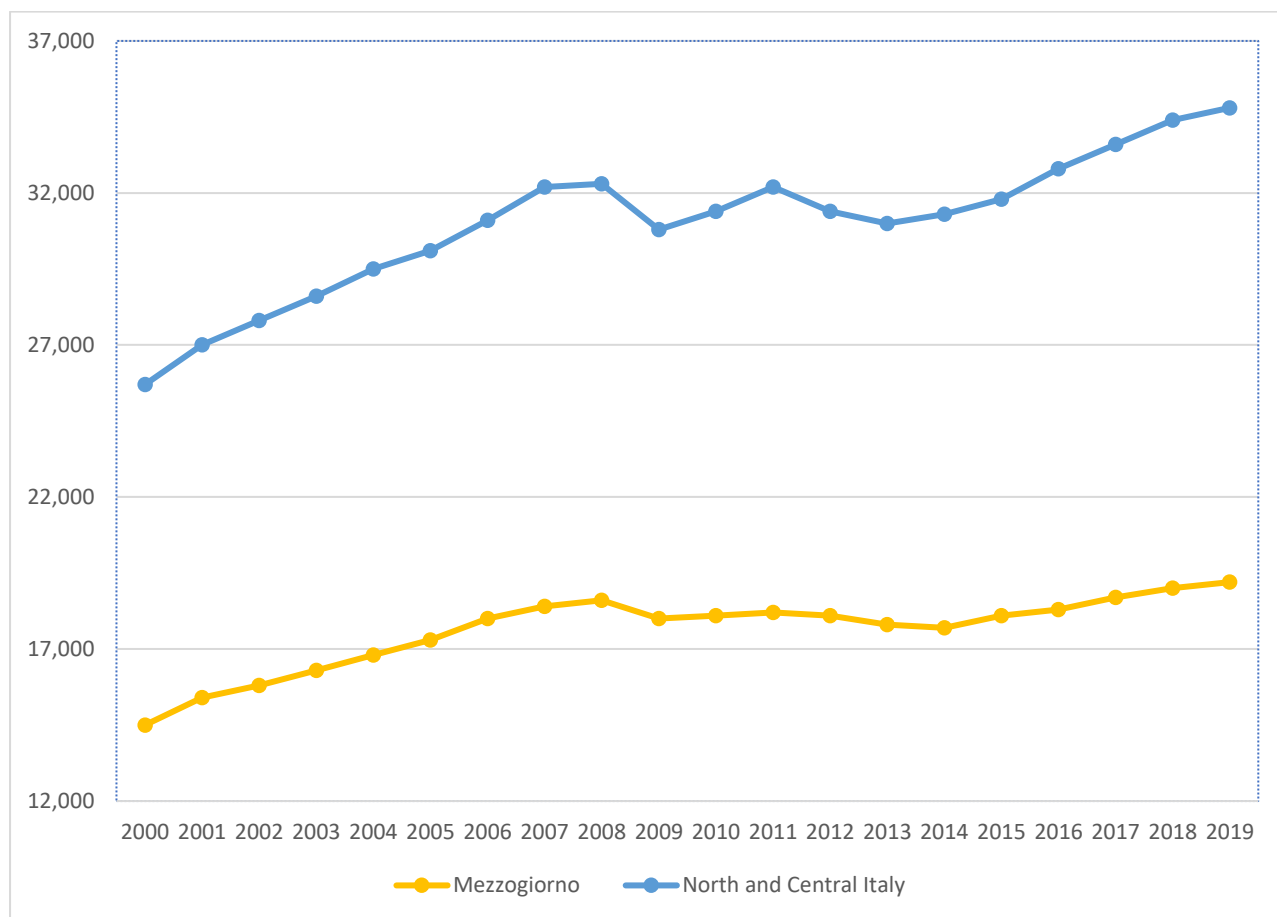


Figure 35: GDP Per Capita by Year (Euros at 2019 Prices). Author's Own.

Figure 36 is a starker representation of the fossilisation in the relative position of regions within Italy. The bottom 8 positions in 1995 are the same 8 in 2019. All of these regions reside within the Mezzogiorno. With regards to Padania, only Lazio – which begins in 7th place and ends in 6th – is higher than any single region within Padania. 12 of the 13 highest-placed regions fall within Padania. Lazio only breaks this mould due to its position as the capital city, the centre of world Catholicism, and its specific history under the Papal States. However, it is still unable to break the dominance of the North. Perhaps this fossilisation could be excused if the gap between the wealthier regions and the poorer was being reduced. However, by using measurements from Figure 25, it is shown that in 2000, the average wage in the Mezzogiorno was 56% of that in North and Central Italy, by 2019 this number was 55%. Not only has there been no change in relative regional position, but there has also been no change in regional inequality that exists between places.

Regional GDP per Capita Ranking - Italy 1995-2019

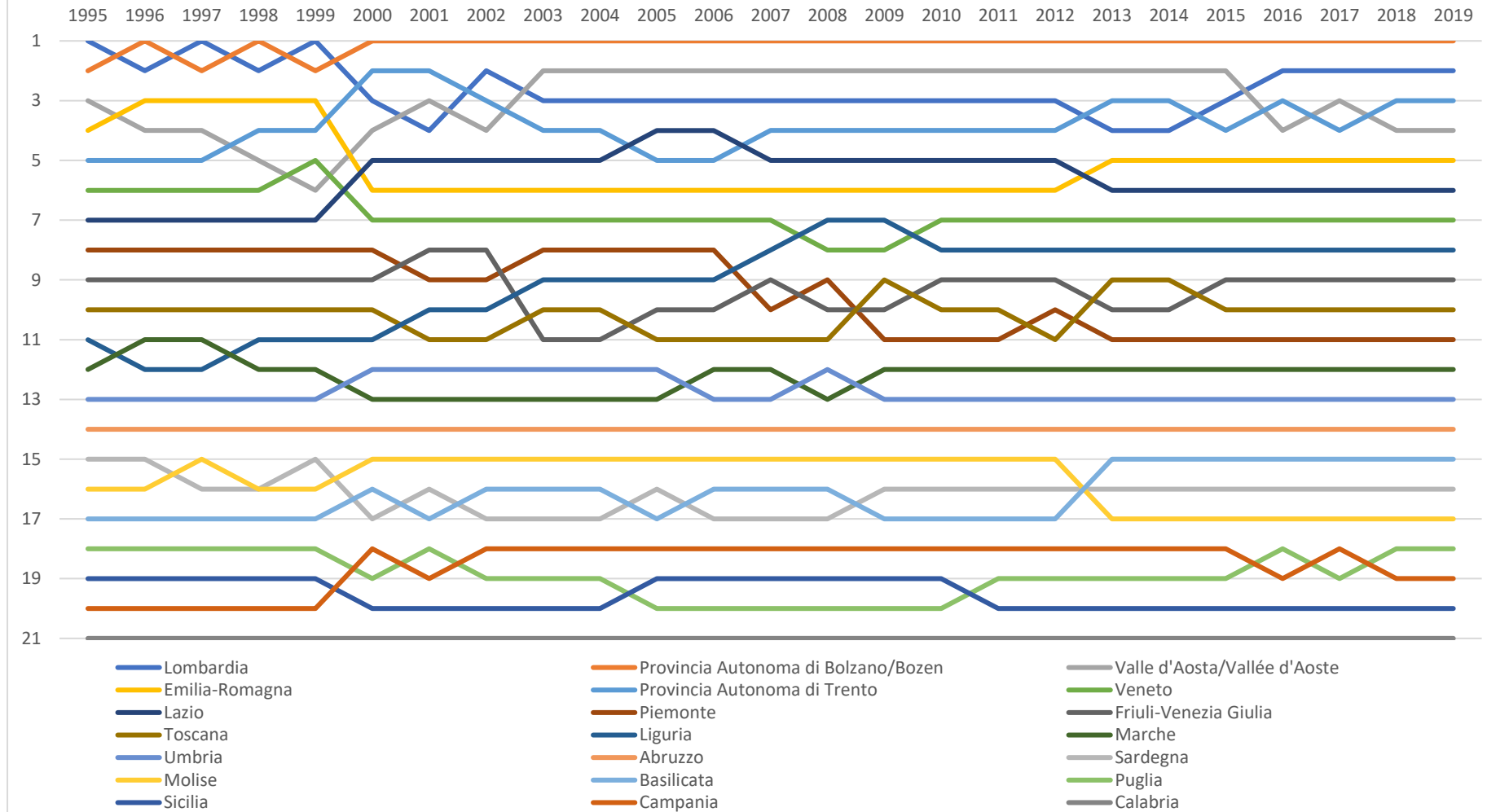


Figure 36: GDP per Capita Ranking by Region. Italy 1995-2019. Author's Own.

By taking an EU-wide approach, the unevenness in regional GDP remains stark. In 2000, the Mezzogiorno was in the 8 lowest rankings and only 1 of its regions had a GDP per Capita higher than the EU average (Abruzzo with 104%). Padania on the other hand ranged from 170% of the EU average and a 'low' of 112% (Marche). The relative GDP per capita of each Italian region worsened by 2019, which meant that the Mezzogiorno fell even further behind the EU average. For example, Calabria went from having 71% of the EU average in 2000 to only 56% in 2019. Although the relative position of Padania also worsened, 10 of its 12 regions still had an above-average GDP per capita in 2019, the only two regions that did not were Umbria and Marche: perhaps unsurprisingly the two Padanian regions closest to the Mezzogiorno and furthest from the North.

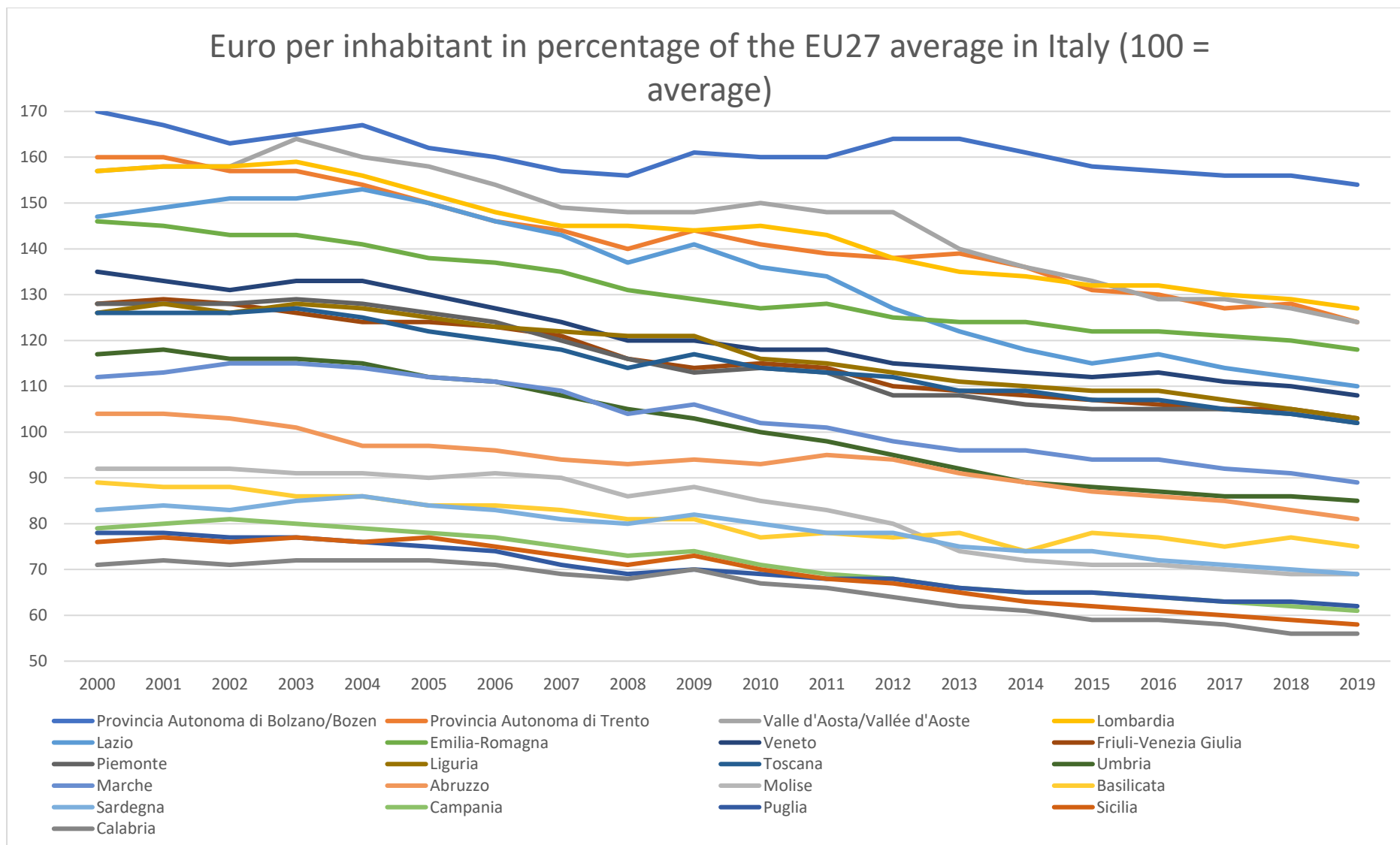


Figure 37: Euro per inhabitant in percentage of the EU27 average in Italy (100 = average). Author's Own.

The International Context

The final question to answer is: 'why now?'. The preceding pages have shown that the duality that exists between North and South Italy is just as old as the creation of the Kingdom of Italy itself. Why, therefore, has the Lega Nord only risen to prominence in the last 30 years or so? It is not an understatement to say that the example of the Soviet Union pressed heavily on Italy throughout the 20th Century, there is an argument to be made that it was *the* external factor that impacted Italian society. As alluded to earlier, the Communist Party of Italy (CPI) were continually the second-largest party in the post-war period. This meant that all other parties, of both the right and 'left' existed in a fragile alliance against the communists, this held for Italian-wide parties and regional parties of the North and South. The spectre of communism haunted post-war Italy, meaning that national unity in the face of a wider 'threat' was paramount. It is no coincidence that the Lega Nord rose just as the Soviet Union was falling; no longer were the CPI the second-largest party, and no longer did Italian unity supplant regional interests. The dissolution of the Soviet Union was in Gramsci's terms, another 'punctual point' in history.

The second international factor was the further deepening and widening of the European project. The Lega have a difficult and contradictory history with the EU. Before the incorporation of Italy into the European Monetary Union, the Lega were strong supporters of the North joining the Euro, but not the South. It was their view that the EU's economic liberalism would be beneficial to northern capitalists but only if the North were not tied down by the South's economic uncompetitiveness. More recently, the Party has become more Eurosceptic; not of the EU's economic policies, but rather of what they perceive to be a bloated bureaucracy which works in the interest of bigger states (ironically, these states are considered France and Germany, and not Italy). The Lega therefore espouse a particular vision of Europe which is based on the Committee of the Regions, which would give smaller states

the flexibility needed to navigate economic waters. The EU's Committee of the Regions was founded in 1994, just as the Lega Nord were rising politically. The European avenue gave legitimacy to the Party, it also to some extent detoxified the Party as it could work alongside 'similar' Parties. The processes behind the rise of the Lega Nord therefore stem back centuries to the creation of the Kingdom of Italy in some instances, but it was the changing world-system - especially the collapse of the Soviet Union - which meant that such a Party and such an idea could arise at this specific epoch.

Italy in the World-System

This case study has shed light on the creation of Italy as well as the relationship that exists between the North and South of the country. The Italian peninsula's position in the world-system throughout the last 1000 years or so has affected its internal politics; from the city-state system to the rise of the Lega Nord. What is of theoretical value is how world-system position shaped the relationship between north and south. For example, the world-system position of the Italian city-states meant that no one economic and political centre could develop, thus inhibiting the creation of a national nucleus until much later than in France or Britain. In the 20th Century, the strength of Piedmont coupled with the mimesis of the Jacobite tradition led to territorial and state expansion from the North to the South, following the tradition of those countries at the core of the world-system. This was followed by a funding of northern capital on the backs of the South, and it was in this period *after* unification that the north-south divide truly became pronounced. This dialectic between development and underdevelopment that can be seen between countries was transposed onto an internal other in the case of Italy. There is a strong case to be made that the fascism of Italy, Spain, and Portugal, and the Nazism of Germany

arose from insecurities in their respective positions in the world-system, leading to hyper-nationalism and colonial expansion. This was again nothing more than an attempt to 'catch up' with the pre-eminent imperial powers of France, the USA, and the UK which all held their own spheres of influence. Furthermore, the post-war years were characterised by a fragile *détente* between northern and southern interests *against* Italian communists due to the world-system position of the Soviet Union as well as the Balkans to Italy's East. This was at least a period of attempted reconciliation between the economies of the North and South, like the post-war consensus that spread over much of Western Europe and the USA. The rupture in the world-system with the fall of the Soviet Union meant that new forces, unaligned to the historical *détente* between north and south could now arise. Figure 38 highlights these changes and trends.

Mezzogiorno and Padania's Changing World-System Position

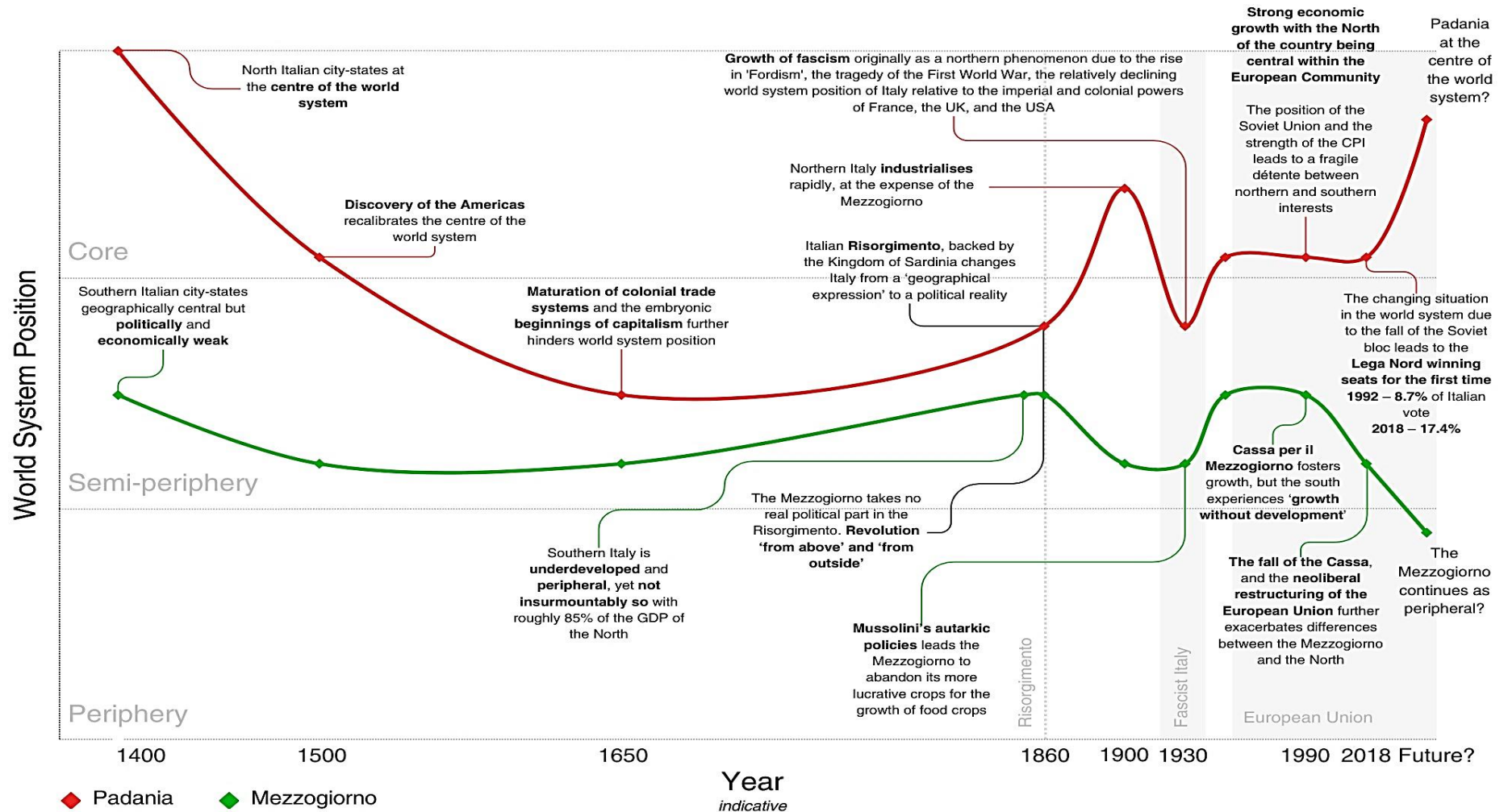


Figure 38: Italy's Changing Position in the World-System. Author's Own.

VII. Case Study 3: The British Archipelago

The difficulty in choosing the correct title for this case study alludes to the inherent fuzziness of statehood and nationhood. There would have been merit in choosing the title 'Great Britain', or 'Great Britain and Ireland', or even 'the United Kingdom'. However, I have decided to use the British Archipelago as used by Bradshaw and Morrill (1996). This is because, over the period considered for this chapter, the composition of the state changes quite significantly; there is the English state, the state of Great Britain, the state of Great Britain and Ireland, and now the state of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Regardless of the changing political dimension, however, each region of the archipelago remained bound via economic and cultural relationships and conflicts. The purpose of this chapter is to move away from the historiography which views England's "neighbouring societies ... as irritating anomalies or inconvenient anachronisms" (Clark, 1989, p. 212) and instead view British history as "the problematic and uncompleted experiment in the creation and interaction of several nations" (Pocock, 1982, p. 318).

This chapter however will look specifically at the relationship between Wales and the state, which was at first English, and then British.⁵³ As with the other two case studies, delineating which periods to cover is a task where we must consider brevity on one hand and depth on the other. This chapter will briefly cover the end of the Norman period in Britain and the pre-Tudor period before moving to the Tudor period and the Acts of Union. The preceding subchapters will then run chronologically to the present day.

⁵³ As noted previously, Wales was part of the English territorial state. The 'English' state therefore included England and Wales.

Medieval Wales

Whilst talking of Medieval 'Wales' it is important not to fall into a teleology and define it in terms of what it is today. Throughout most of the Middle Ages, Wales did not exist as a singular territorial unit, although there existed some cultural and linguistic signifiers which gave rise to an understanding of *y Cymry* relative to the English. There existed a very brief period when Gruffudd ap Llywelyn reigned over all of Wales. He was "the only Welsh king ever to rule over the entire territory of Wales... Thus, from about 1057 until his death in 1063, the whole of Wales recognised the kingship of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn. For about seven brief years, Wales was one, under one ruler, a feat with neither precedent nor successor" (Davies, 2007, p. 100). Although there existed this brief period of Welsh unification, generally in this period Wales was split into Marches in the south and east and separate Kingdoms in the north and west. As Kearney (2012, p. 104) argued:

Although it is tempting, and perhaps, unavoidable, to refer to 'Ireland', 'Scotland' and 'Wales', each of these 'polities' was in fact remarkably fragmented. Even England, with its marcher areas in the north and west, was far from unified. The 'paradigm' which governed political attitudes is best characterised as 'feudal' in the sense that security was felt to lie not in allegiance to a distant and perhaps ineffective Crown but in the service of a local magnate or those linked to him.

Both Marches and Kingdoms in Wales generally paid fealty to the English King, but neither were *de jure* parts of the English Kingdom. While the Marcher Lords did pay fealty to the King, they held a particularly powerful position within British society during the 12th and 13th Centuries. They were of course subject to the King of England, but within their territory, they:

claimed and exercised a measure of authority not surpassed elsewhere within the King's dominions. ... Within his lordship the Marcher Lord was governor and

universal landlord only the lands of the Church lay beyond his reach. Jurisdictionally, his competence was equally wide. Contemporary lawyers characterised it curtly by referring to the March as an area in which the King's writ did not run (Davies, 1979, p. 41).

David Williams (1950, p. 13) similarly argued that in essence the Welsh Marches “consisted of an intricate pattern of almost independent states, separating the territory of the Welsh Princes from England”.

The Marches of Wales has in its way shaped the history of Wales to this day. This area could best be described as a “frontier zone” (Williams, 1985, p. 62) or as a “springboard for conquest, colonisation and domination” (Davies, 1979, p. 47). Modern-day Wales continues to be split along the old border of the Marches; it defines the cultural-linguistic frontier of the (generally) Welsh-speaking west and north and the more linguistically anglicised east and south. The dragon's spiked back protrudes out of the landscape, running its way down the spine of Wales, from Snowdonia in the north, through the Cambrian mountains and to the Brecon Beacons in the south. This acts as a buffer across the bony face of Wales. In the words of Gwyn Alf Williams (1985, p. 62):

In one sense, it has been a frontier between two different human communities, as one people, split by a political demarcation line, developed into two divergent societies operating to different historical chronologies, with different laws and different loyalties, threatening sometimes to become two embryonic 'nations'. Human beings, wrenched apart into divergent historical experiences, interiorized those experiences and those divergences as custom, memory, and tradition. Consider the Serbs and Croats, close kin, indeed ethnically one, who under the radically different disciplines of Habsburgs and Turks, evolved into two distinct and mutually hostile 'nations'. The dividing line in Wales was nothing like as hard and impenetrable as this, but even as a political frontier, it lasted for nearly five hundred years. Nations have been born, lived a span and died in less.

Fernand Braudel (1995, p. 34) also analysed the power of mountains in creating or maintaining culturally distinct regions. He stated:

The mountains are as a rule a world apart from civilisations, which are an urban and lowland achievement. Their history is to have none, to remain almost always on the fringe of the great waves of civilisation, even the longest and most persistent, which may spread over great distances in the horizontal plane but are powerless to move vertically when faced with an obstacle of a few hundred metres.

Despite the difficulty that geographical features bestowed on the fostering of a relationship (whether benevolent or malevolent) between Wales and England, a relationship clearly did exist. RR Davies (1974) argued that between roughly 1282 and 1400 the relationship could be labelled as a colonial one. He argued that the Anglo-Saxon colonists had settled land and had formed a commercial elite in lowland Wales, connected with the construction of castles and areas of settlement in recently conquered Wales. Gwyn Alf Williams (1985) agreed with this prognosis, arguing that the Welsh now passed under the colonial rule of an arrogant, self-consciously alien, imperialism.

What these viewpoints show is that colonialism is not a new phenomenon; we may describe the ancient societies of Greece and Rome, of the Persian Empire, and even the Normans and Danes in Britain as colonial. However, it is also clear that transposing current notions of imperialism and colonialism backwards to the distant past is not necessarily beneficial. Firstly, the issue of defining 'Wales' as a nation in this period is problematic, if indeed

a nation is not merely a historical category but a historical category belonging to a definite epoch, the epoch of rising capitalism. The process of elimination of feudalism and development of capitalism is at the same time a process of the constitution of people into nations (Stalin, 2015 [1954]).

It may be possible to think of the Welsh as ‘a people’ but not as ‘a nation’ in this period. In other words, the Welsh shared an *ethnie*, but a political nation had not yet developed from these building blocks. This material fact affects our understanding of colonialism. Following this point, one must understand that material conditions and the economic base differ from one epoch to another, and that from the economic base, social conditions develop. In essence, one cannot compare the colonialism of feudal societies or slave societies (such as ancient Greece and Rome) to the colonialism found under capitalism (Parry, 2020). As Lenin (1999 [1917], p. 87) argued:

Colonial policy and imperialism existed before the latest stage of capitalism, and even before capitalism. Rome, founded on slavery, pursued a colonial policy, and practised imperialism. But general disquisitions on imperialism, which ignore, or put into the background, the fundamental difference between socio-economic formations, inevitably turn into the most vapid banality or bragging, like the comparison: Greater Rome and Greater Britain.

To conclude, in the same way that transposing current notions of ‘Wales’ must be guarded against, so too does the temptation to transpose current understandings of ‘colonialism’.

The Medieval Welsh Economy

The difficulty in analysing economic data from 900 or so years ago should be clear. Kingdoms could not rely on modern bureaucracies to collect and administer data. However, it is possible to make some general remarks, helped in no small part by the Domesday Book of 1086; a survey of land holdings in England undertaken to help calculate the dues owed to the King, William the Conqueror. No other land survey of this scale was attempted in Britain again until the 19th Century. As alluded to in

Chapter 4, states in Western Europe tended to develop from a politico-economic core and state formation is the process of a core region conquering surrounding areas which in turn become absorbed into the territorial state (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). These areas become internal peripheries and the administrative and economic system, the culture, and the language of the core are pushed out to the peripheries. By the time of the publication of the Domesday Book, a relatively stable core had already developed on the island of Britain. Pounds and Ball (Pounds & Ball, 1964, pp. 27-28) argued that the United Kingdom is one of the most “clear-cut” examples of an expansion from a “clearly conceived core area”. They continue:

The Roman occupation of the British Isles stopped short of the Scottish Border and faded out along the Marches of Wales and in the Celtic Southwest. The states of the Saxon Heptarchy had each a small nucleus for its own tribal territory, but wars between them and the invasion and settlement of Norsemen and Danes in the northern and eastern parts of Britain led in time to the emergence of Wessex which during the last two centuries of Anglo-Saxon history became the dominant power in Britain, extending its authority northward and north-eastward. It was to the ancient Kingdom of Wessex that the Norman rulers in effect succeeded in 1066, and they were obliged to reconquer much of the north of England themselves. Their core area, the material base from which expansion and reconquest took place, was the Thames Valley. Here, the Domesday Book shows us, was a region of relatively dense population, intensive agriculture, and high land values. There were isolated areas of greater wealth and prosperity outside this nucleus-area, as there were also areas of small population density within it, but the former were isolated, and the latter easily circumvented.

Figure 39 below shows two things clearly. Firstly, it shows that there existed a core area – at least in population terms – based around the Thames. This is still the most densely populated and wealthiest region of the United Kingdom today. The second trend is that over time the state has expanded from this initial core area and starting

position, firstly, to the southwest and midlands before eventually incorporating the Celtic peoples of the north and south. In the period of the Domesday Book survey, therefore, the core-periphery divide in the British Archipelago was already slowly being delineated.

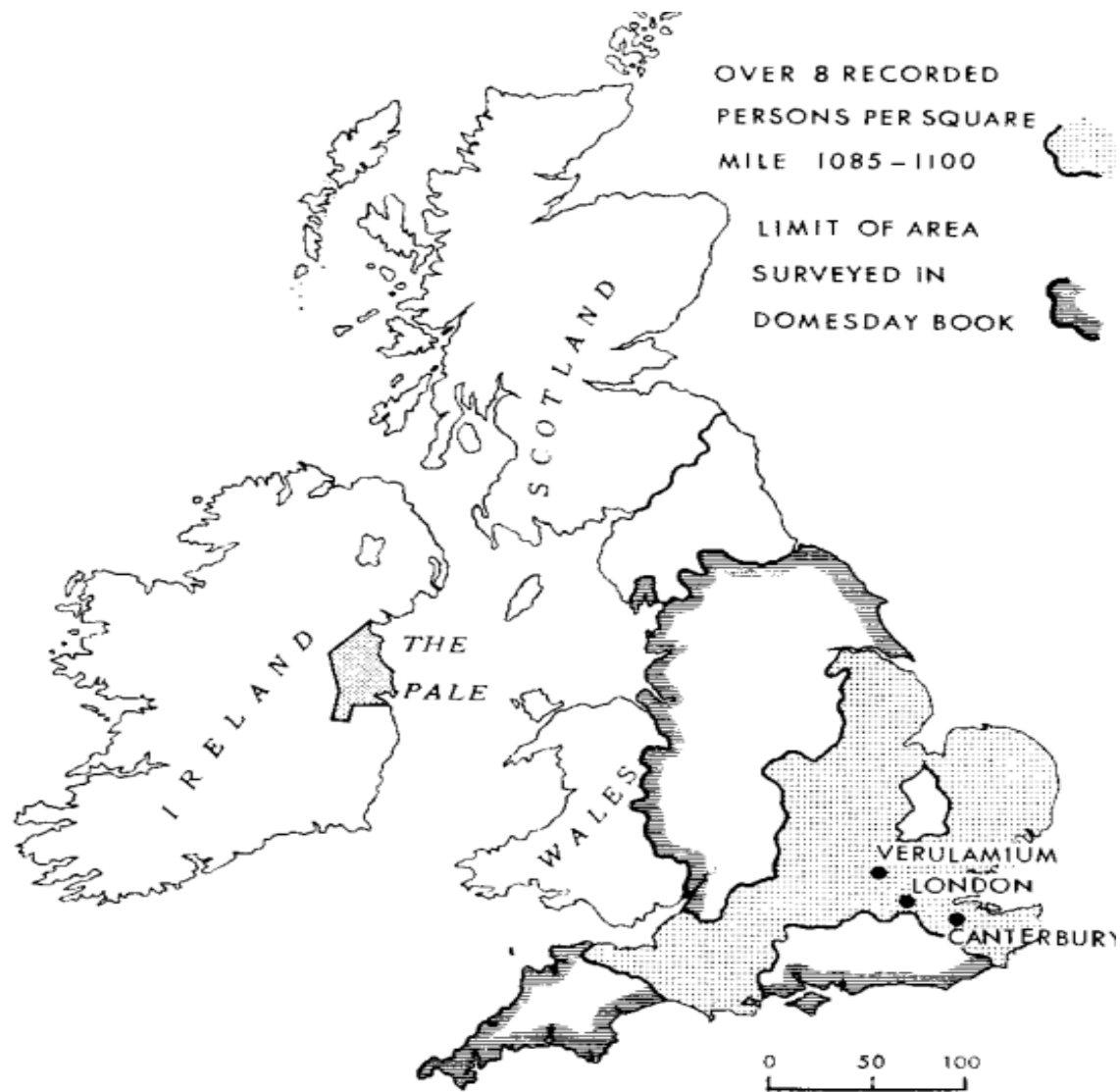


Figure 39: *The Core Area of Great Britain and the Expansion of Sovereignty.* Source: (Pounds and Ball, 1964).

The geographical unevenness which characterised the 11th Century in the British Archipelago continued well into the 13th Century. Although Wales was still not de jure a part of England, “for the first time it [was] possible to speak of England and

Wales as de facto a single political and economic unit and from the 1290s Welsh exports of wool and hides were subject to the same duties as those levied since 1275 in England and Ireland” (Campbell, 2008, p. 896). In this period, the Catholic Church was one of the largest land and wealth owners across Europe, this was no different in the British Archipelago. In 1291-92, Pope Nicholas IV called for the compiling of data on the wealth of English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish parishes so that they could be adequately and correctly taxed to fund an expedition to the holy land. This compilation became known as the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*. Of importance to this analysis is the unevenness in the distribution of ecclesiastical wealth across the British Archipelago which can be used as a proxy for general wealth. According to the *Taxatio*:

the spiritual wealth of the English Church was three times greater than the total for Wales, Scotland, and Ireland combined. Moreover, the four wealthiest English dioceses—Lincoln, York, Norwich, and Salisbury—headed the overall diocesan league table of wealth. Each exceeded in value the whole of Wales; Lincoln, York, and Norwich were individually more valuable than Ireland; and the vast diocese of Lincoln was even worth more than the entire province of Scotland. Nevertheless, the wealthiest Scottish diocese—Glasgow—eclipsed the next tier of English dioceses (Durham, Winchester, Lichfield, and London) and, similarly, was worth far more than the entire ecclesiastical province of Wales and each of the four Irish provinces. Dublin and St David’s, respectively the wealthiest Irish and Welsh dioceses, were poor by comparison (Campbell, 2008, p. 905).

What emerges from this analysis is the clear unevenness in the spatial distribution of ecclesiastical wealth. Three of the four wealthiest dioceses hug closely to the Thames line while York outshines the dioceses of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. England therefore played a core economic role. Scotland is of the middling sort and seems to play a semi-peripheral role between England on the one hand and the peripheral Ireland and Wales on the other. Figure 40 shows that the difference in ecclesiastical

wealth cannot only be explained by the size difference between England and the Celtic regions of the Archipelago alone. Analysing England's total area and lowland area, its ecclesiastical wealth exceeds what one would expect to see about religious houses, ecclesiastical wealth, and several towns.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>Wales</i>	<i>Scotland</i>	<i>Ireland</i>
Estimated % share of British and Irish total				
Land area	41	7	25	27
Lowland area	49	4	15	32
Religious houses	70	3	6	21
Regular clergy	64–77	3–5	6–7	14–24
Benefices/parishes	68	5	8	20
Ecclesiastical wealth (spiritualities)	76	3	<i>c.13</i>	<i>c.8</i>
Large towns (2,000+)	83	1	7	9
All towns	74	10	5	11
Urban population	<i>c.78</i>	<i>c.3</i>	<i>c.7</i>	<i>c.12</i>
Dutiable exports	77		<i>c.14</i>	9
Currency	<i>c.83</i>		<i>c.13</i>	<i>c.5</i>
Relative to total land area				
Religious houses per 100 miles ²	2.08	0.56	0.29	0.97
Mean size of parish (miles ²)	6.1	14.3	31.7	13.6
Ecclesiastical wealth per 100 miles ²	£255	£65	£70	£39
Number of towns per 100 miles ²	1.43	1.25	0.16	0.32
Dutiable exports per 100 miles ²	£560		£170	£100
Relative to lowland area below 500 feet				
Religious houses per 100 miles ²	2.66	1.4	0.75	1.23
Mean size of parish (miles ²)	4.8	5.8	12.4	10.7
Ecclesiastical wealth per 100 miles ²	£325	£161	£179	£49
Number of towns per 100 miles ²	1.82	3.07	0.42	0.41
Dutiable exports per 100 miles ²	£660		£428	£133

Figure 40: Some Comparative Measures of the Economies of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, c.1290. Source: (Campbell, 2008, p. 922).

Geographic Conditions and the Economy

In an age where agriculture was intimately tied to not only subsistence but also trade, the very land on which the people lived had a profound effect on the forms of primitive accumulation possible. Large swathes of Wales and Scotland are mountainous which affects the types of agricultural production available. Hechter (2017, p. 52) suggested there was almost an inevitability to the destitution that these people found themselves in:

the significance of the highland line in the pre-industrial setting can be simply stated as a demarcation of good land from bad. The British highlands were destined to be poor in two respects. First, these regions could not support much population, for it was relatively difficult to eke out a living there. The ratio of men to land was bound to be relatively low. Secondly, there would be little incentive for agricultural improvement since the general ecological conditions were so uncompromising. The lowlands, on the contrary, could support a much more dense population.⁵⁴

David Williams (1950, pp. 13-14) concurred that the different geographic structure of Wales affected its economic structure. Much of Wales was unsuited to the growing of corn due to its heavy rainfall and geology, which meant that animal husbandry via the rearing of cattle (and later sheep) was the main native industry. People lived a semi-nomadic existence, moving uplands in the summer with their herds. This affected the ability of towns and villages to form as they tended to develop in places where corn was more extensively grown. This meant that “at no time before 1500 can the population of Wales have greatly exceeded a quarter of a million. Wales was therefore very sparsely populated, and its inhabitants were fairly evenly distributed, as there were no large towns”.

⁵⁴ If the highlands of Wales and Scotland were destined to be poor, this seems to contradict his Internal Colonialism thesis. If these places, regardless of policy, were in-fact doomed, how is the English state ‘to blame’? More will be said on this later.

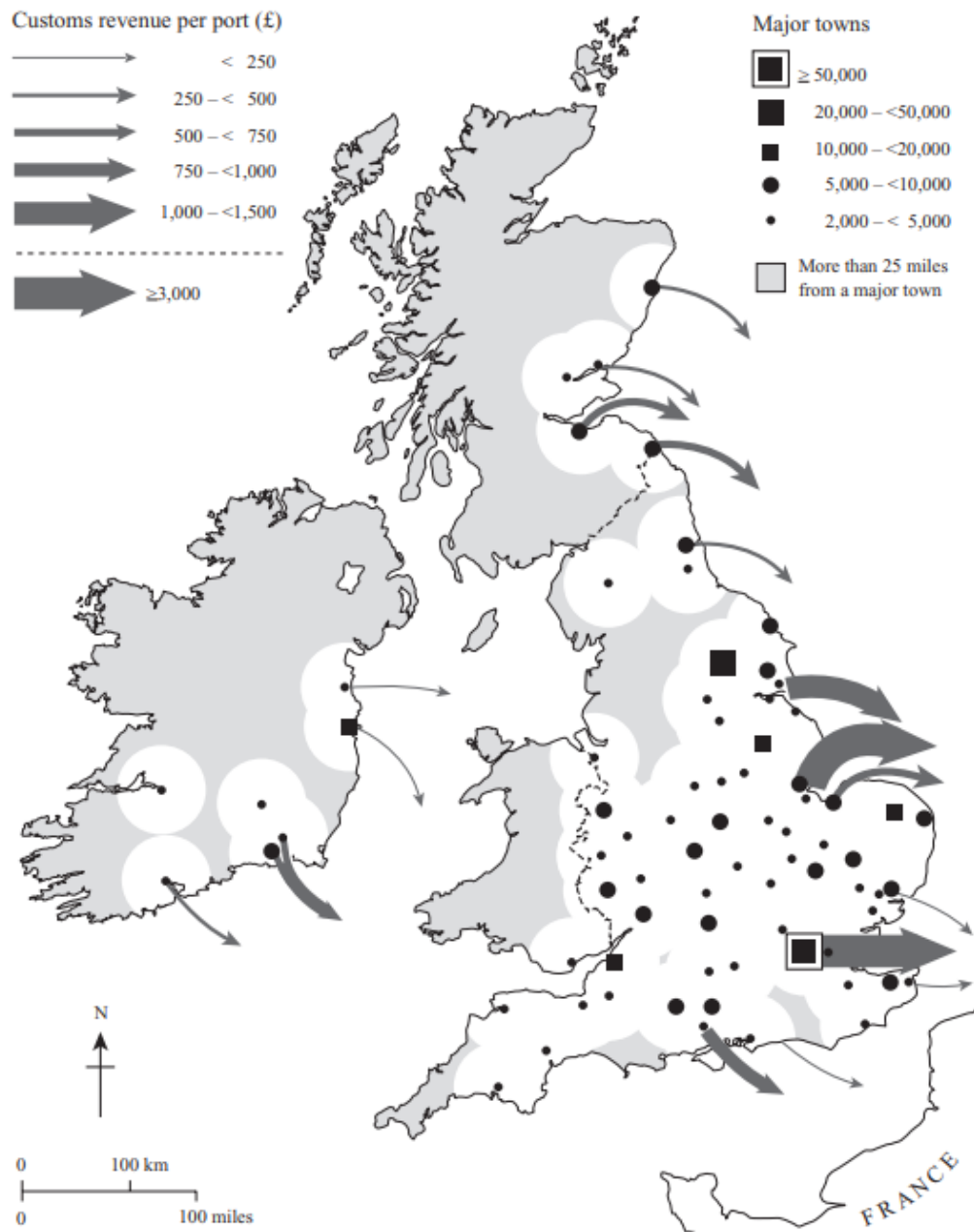


Figure 41: British and Irish Towns and Dutiable Trade, c. 1290. Source: (Campbell, 2008, p. 906).

Figure 41 shows the distribution of towns and the amount of dutiable trade that existed circa 1290. There is an acceptance that these numbers are inherently conjectural due to the dearth of primary data available. However, a few clear trends emerge. The first is how the number of English settlements dwarf that of the Celtic

countries. Due to the natural endowments enjoyed by England in agricultural resources in an agricultural age, one would expect to see some discrepancy in the number of large settlements. However, taking natural endowments as the only factor obfuscates the second trend: the location of English settlements along the border of Wales. The number of market towns along its border such as Hereford, Bristol, Shrewsbury, and Chester suggest that opportunities for trade both from, and to, Wales, were possible. As Bowen (2022, p. 5) argued:

routes running east to west operated more readily than those running north to south. We might thus divide Wales into three broad territories whose urban foci lay in England: the route along the north Wales coast which was centred on Chester; the mid-Wales region which traded principally with Shrewsbury; and the south Wales corridor linking to Bristol.

In analysing the cattle trade in 16th and 17th Century Shropshire and Herefordshire, Edwards (1981, p. 73) argued that cattle “came from several sources but undoubtedly the most important one was Wales” which seems to confirm this hypothesis. The location of these trading towns on the English side of the border, however, may suggest that the trade in Welsh commodities, due to being controlled by English towns, meant that Wales had no independent economic control. Geographical features may help to explain why there were no towns of any meaningful size on the western coast of Wales, but it does not help to explain the location of the eastern border towns. Even Cardiff, the only town of any meaningful size in this period was dwarfed by its neighbour, Bristol. Any internal trade, as could be expected to exist in this period was therefore inhibited by the location of these towns. It is possible here again to draw on the work of Andre Gunder Frank (1966). Although analysing a different historical epoch, he assessed the physical manifestations of distorted development, arguing that the placement of infrastructure in dependent countries does not follow the same functional logic as in developed countries since the economies of dependent countries are more export

oriented. In dependent countries, infrastructure exists to move out raw materials and bring in value-added goods rather than integrating the internal market and economy. Eduardo Galeano (1997, p. 199), in analysing later processes in Latin America stated that “the tracks were laid not to connect internal areas one with another, but to connect production centres with ports. The design still resembles the fingers of an open hand: thus railroads, so often hailed as forerunners of progress, were an impediment to the formation and development of an internal market”. Figure 41 clearly shows the export-orientated nature of the Welsh economy with goods being moved to England. Wales was becoming integrated into the British economy via its exportation of raw materials, but its internal economy remained fragmented and incomplete. This analysis helps supplement the work of Campbell (2008, p. 921) who argued:

in an overwhelmingly agrarian age, it is only to be expected, therefore, that in aggregate the economy of England, with its superior endowment of agricultural resources and more favourable climate for grain production, should have dwarfed the economies of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. The scale of the discrepancy was, however, significantly greater than this simple difference in geographical areas.

Campbell did not suggest why this was the case, Dependency Theory provides a potential rationale. RR Davies (1990, p. 8) echoed some of these sentiments:

‘Wales is incapable of supplying its inhabitants with food without imports from the adjacent counties of England’, remarked William of Newburgh in the later twelfth century. ‘And since it cannot command this without the liberality of express permission of the king of England, it is necessarily subject to his power’. Commercial dependence opened the door to political control. Wales in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was by north-western European standards an underdeveloped country, especially in terms of markets, towns, trade, and the use of coin. It was ripe for exploitation. And exploited it was, especially for its slaves, timber, hides, furs, flock, and herds. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries an army of foreign merchants,

townsmen and settlers bound Wales, more especially southern lowland Wales, to an increasingly England-oriented economy and trade network. However remarkable the resurgence and resilience of Welsh native power may have been in these centuries, it was fatally stunted by its failure to recover the economically rich and commercially developed lowlands of southeast and southwest Wales, now securely under Anglo-Norman control.

Volume IV of the seminal *Agrarian History of England and Wales* (Thirsk, 2011, p. 19) finds similar conclusions for the Tudor period. Figure 42 maps the placement of markets in western England and Wales between 1500-1640. Although this figure does not tell us about the custom revenue from each market, nor which ones were major towns as the above does from Campbell, it does show us the volume and position of markets. Two things become apparent which are in keeping with the above, the first is the low number of markets in Wales itself compared to almost every English region shown. The second is that most markets in/near Wales run along the England-Wales border, rather than being internal to Wales.

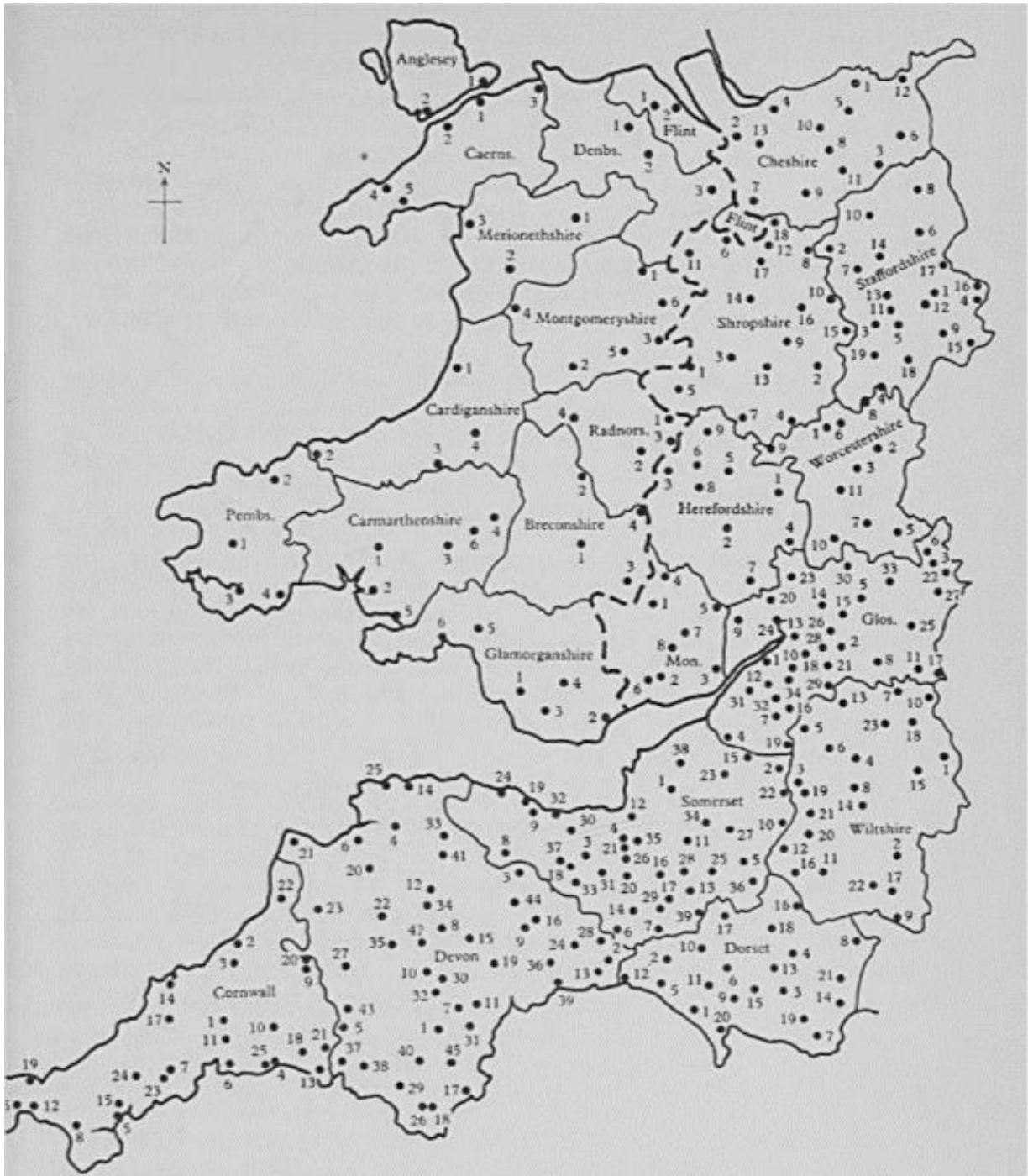


Figure 42: Markets in western England and Wales, c. 1500-1640. Source: (Thirsk, 2011, p. 19).

The Tudors and State Consolidation

The Acts of Union between Wales and England from 1536 and 1542 – and the events leading up to them – have been sensationalised more than most historic events in Wales. Adam Price (2009) of Plaid Cymru, for example, referred to the Acts as a process of “legal lynching” and part of a “Tudor lebensraum”. These remarks are used for dramatic effect, but how much credence, if any, should we give to such a view?

As with English colonialism in the Medieval period, it is important to guard against modern sensibilities and understandings of both the content and form of such events. Indeed, Wales *was* legally annexed by England via these Acts, but that should not lead to comparisons of more recent annexations such as by Israel in East Jerusalem and Golan (Yishai, 1985), or by Nazi Germany in the Sudetenland. The historical, material, and structural forms which existed in the Tudor period mean that the content of such a process differed and that any comparison would lead to “the most vapid banality” (Lenin, 1999 [1917], p. 87).

Much of the reasoning behind the Acts of Union can be explained by the epoch in which such events occurred. As Rhys Jones (2004, p. 602) argued, this period is characterised as the “transition from ‘medieval’ to ‘modern’”, where the increasing complexity of trade, social structures, and the economic base required an increasingly complex and modernised state structures. Gustafsson (1998, p. 194) argued that the early-modern European state was “more intensive than its medieval predecessors” and came together via the incorporation of “more or less well-defined territories” in creating a singular whole. He used the term “conglomerate state” to allude to the disparate entities which had been bound together to create the first steps towards a truly unitary state. The process of ‘unifying’ the British Archipelago in this period therefore was not specific to Wales. Instead, this process was part of a

wider one which attempted to standardise state structures across the island of Britain. As Rhys Jones (2004, p. 602) argued, “several acts promoted during this period bear testimony to the efforts made by the sovereign and parliament to engender this heightened sense of organisational uniformity within the state”. These efforts were generally based around strengthening control over the “borderlands” or peripheries of the English state, which included stripping the courts of Chester, Lancaster, and Durham of much of their power and simultaneously curbing the Council of the North of its strength in 1548 (Bowen, 2022, p. 13) (Kiernan, 1980, p. 108). Furthermore, Kearney (2012, p. 112) argued that:

during the sixteenth century the South succeeded in establishing dominance over the cultures of the North and West. Victories over the Pilgrimage of Grace of 1536, the Cornishmen’s revolt of 1549 and the rising of the northern earls of 1569 brought under southern control areas of England which during the Middle Ages had been largely autonomous.

Within this same milieu should be placed the English Reformation and the dissolution of the monasteries between 1536 and 1541. The Reformation led to a vast change in land ownership whereby old ecclesiastical land was sold, with the profit accruing to the King. This increased the productive capacity of the state to not only wage war against other Kingdoms, but the consequent rise in administrative needs and tasks led to the rationalisation and growth of a central state bureaucracy. Moreover, the dissolution of the monasteries helped pave the way for the growth of capitalist social relations within England.⁵⁵ The Church was one of the most ardent defenders of Feudal property and social relations that existed in English society, with long, copyhold tenures and a striving for self-sufficiency which provided little incentive for capital investment or productivity increases (Swanson, 1989, pp. 229-230).

⁵⁵ This will be discussed in more detail later.

The Dissolution changed these patterns. Although at the time of Dissolution, many tenants were still on long leases, lapsing leases were now renegotiated because the new owners of the land had an outside option: sale on the land market. The new owners of the land likely bought it with a profit motive in mind, and they were able to renegotiate land tenure to claim part of the agricultural surplus which had, before the Dissolution, accrued to tenants under customary land relations. - (Heldring, et al., 2015, pp. 10-11)

The Dissolution helped shift the form of tenure away from the copyhold system towards those of leasehold and freehold, and in so doing, changed the property of land to a commodity to be bought and sold. The value of land (and rent) was now linked to productivity which on one hand created a yeoman class of rich, commercially oriented farmers and a movement to the cities for those labourers that were deemed 'unproductive'. This helped to give rise to a reserve army of labour.⁵⁶

The Acts of Union between Wales and England should be viewed within this general framework of slowly transforming England (and Wales) from a patchwork of semi-independent entities into territorial unity. David Williams (1950, p. 33) argued that these processes were taking place across Europe:

[The Tudors] were typical of the new monarchies which were arising in Europe and were impatient of any feudal survivals which limited their sovereignty. They consciously desired uniformity in government. Elsewhere in Europe, in France and Spain in particular, the same development could be observed, and the modern unified sovereign state was emerging. It was not an accident that in 1532, only four years before the Act of Union of England and Wales, the Breton branch of the Celtic

⁵⁶ A good definition of yeomen can be found in Underdown (1985, p. 24): "A yeoman was usually a substantial farmer concentrating primarily on the market rather than on subsistence agriculture. ... Their increasing acceptance of the ethos of the market justified the pursuit of individual profit, sometimes at the expense of the traditional ideal of the co-operative community. Yeomen were the villagers most able to take advantage of a lord's sale of demesne lands, profit from piecemeal enclosure by agreement, or buy out poorer neighbours driven to the wall by a run of bad harvests".

peoples, separated from the Welsh for a thousand years, was assimilated to France by the Treaty of Vannes.

Furthermore, regarding the question of 'why now in the British Archipelago?', Britain's position within the world-system needs to be addressed. Compared to the continental European powers of Spain and France (although the Netherlands and the Italian city-states could also be added), the English state was a power of secondary importance. It simply could not effectively wage wars against the Spanish and French crowns, the state therefore reorientated its gaze westwards and northwards to the peripheries of the British Archipelago as a way of consolidating power and improving its position within the world-system.

Technological Change in the Tudor Period

Wallerstein (1972, pp. 100-101) spoke of the relationship between the change in the productive forces of society on one hand, and the first attempts at state consolidation on the other:

The absolute monarchy was of course not absolute, either in theory or in fact. It represented rather the first weak effort to establish State supremacy against local lords and outside powers--very strong by comparison with the situation in peripheral areas of the European world economy, but incredibly weak by comparison with twentieth-century governments. The absolute monarchs were the focal point of the two great conflicting forces of the core states of the nascent capitalist world economy: those new productive forces which were making it possible for England (and France) to develop economically and for the monarch to assert himself internally; and those hierarchies derived from earlier times of which the monarch was the pinnacle and the exemplar, and which were the other pillar of the monarch's strength.

Technological change at the intersection of the 'medieval' and the 'modern' helped spur the urge for territorial unity and uniformity. The 15th Century saw the invention of the printing press and by the middle of the 16th Century, this technology was more readily available. RR Davies (1990, p. 121) described medieval Britain before the popularisation of the printing press, as a place "where power is based on oral command, where law is essentially localised and customary, where the flexibility and convenient amnesia of present memory is the basis of precedent, there the ideology of uniformity has limited scope to develop". This shows how changes in productive technology – or a change in the material base of society – changed the legal superstructure that it rested on. If the law cannot be uniform due to the inaccessibility of the written vernacular, there exist fewer impulses for territorial unity, which is itself based on legal unity. This change expressed itself in the development of a new state strata whose role it was to administer, implement, and explain the law: bureaucrats. The rise of a bureaucratic culture meant that territorial and administrative unity were seen as two parts of the same coin; changes that would have been much more difficult to accomplish without the more widespread use of the written word. As Deibert (1995, p. 129) argued:

The movement towards modern state bureaucracies ... thrived in the new communications environment, which provided the tools necessary for rational bureaucratic administration. Indeed, a necessary precondition for the emergence of bureaucratic administration is some form of writing. Thus it is not surprising that the development of modern state bureaucracies in Europe was closely bound up with the spread of secular literacy in the High Middle Ages. ... The relationship between the new communications environment and this particular political development was mutually reinforcing as pressures for bureaucratization drove secular literacy and a demand for standardized communications, while the development of the latter - especially the emergence of the printing press - in turn vastly augmented the scope and scale of bureaucracies. This is evidenced by the fact that, ... early printers thrived

on state commissions for printed administrative records, with state policy actively encouraging the creation of large, national publishing houses. The printed products emanating from these large national publishing houses in turn increased the size of bureaucratic documentation, which necessitated more personnel. This functional complementary manifested itself along a number of different dimensions, which helped reinforce the development of state bureaucracies at this particular historical juncture (i.e., from the 15th century onwards).

The Acts of Union with Wales

To turn specifically to the Acts of Union between England and Wales, David Williams (1950, p. 33) argued that the “Union was to have momentous consequences for both countries. It has determined the course of the history of Wales until our day, and for England, it initiated the development which brought the whole of the British Isles under the central government in London”. To analyse these events, we must begin with the accession of Henry Tudor - or Henry VII - to the throne. Henry’s claim to the throne was tenuous at best; he was the great-great-grandson of John of Gaunt via a mistress - and therefore illegitimate - child. In Wales at least, it was his mythical ancestry which led to his support among the people. His family claimed descent from Cadwaladr ap Cadwallon; King of Gwynedd in the 7th Century and popularised by Geoffrey of Monmouth as the last King of the Britons. Gwyn Alf Williams (1985, p. 123) argued that Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *British History* “became semi-official doctrine” and a central part in “legitimising [Henry’s] genealogy”. Cadwaladr’s standard was that of the Red Dragon which now adorns the Welsh flag. His Welshness played no small part in the fact that he firstly decided to land in Milford Haven, and secondly why he was successful in rallying Welsh support for his cause at Welshpool; a key reason in how he was able to be victorious at the Battle

of Bosworth (Kearney, 2012, p. 117). It is impossible to state definitively how much Henry himself believed in the myth which shrouded him and his family, but it is fair to say he was sincere in his attempt to improve the position of Wales and was proud of his Welsh (and therefore British) heritage. In fact, Henry Tudor – it has been argued - could speak Welsh (Williams, 1985). He also decided to carry the standard of Cadwaladr into battle alongside that of St. George and named his first son Arthur – who later died at 15 - after the fabled King that defended Britain against Saxon invaders.

Gwyn Alf Williams (1985, p. 124) argued that this naming was meant to denote that “the Tudors *were* the Return of Arthur” (italics in original). Henry also “repaid his debt to his Welsh allies by appointing them to key offices in north and south Wales and by naming Welshmen to the Sees of Saint David and Saint Asaph. In due course, the penal legislation against Welshmen holding office and acquiring land was also repealed, not without protest from the ‘Englishry’” (Kearney, 2012, p. 117). Henry Tudor therefore began the process of changing the legal and social position of Wales. Wales was moving away from its position as a colony to something resembling some form of parity, at least in form if not in content. Welsh contemporaries of the Tudor dynasty also viewed Henry Tudor positively and wrote songs and verses in his honour. Siôn Tudur, for example, wrote a poem in Henry’s honour and sent it to Elizabeth the 1st, his granddaughter (quoted in Williams, 1993, p. 246):

*Harri lân, hir lawenydd,
Yn un a’n rhoes ninnau’n rhydd.
I Gymru da fu hyd fedd,
Goroni gŵr o Wynedd*

*Fair Harry, our long-lasting joy,
The one who set us free,
Good was it for Wales all his life,
That the man of Gwynedd was crowned.*

The work began by Henry Tudor, that is, bringing Wales fully under the tutelage of the English state and improving the position of the Welsh within it was completed by his son, Henry VIII. In fact, in the preamble to the Statute of Wales of 1536, Henry VIII referred to the "singular zeal, love and favour that he bears towards his subjects of his said dominion of Wales" (HC Deb, 13 Oct 1942). The Acts were political, and there is no doubt that this statement was itself political, but equally Henry VIII did see England and Wales as one indivisible whole, legislated to improve the standing of the Welsh, and helped to bring the idea of a unified Britain closer.

The Acts of Union dissolved "the quasi-independent marcher lordships—legacies from the Middle Ages—and [led to] the creation of a uniform administrative geography of shires. The main purpose of these so-called Acts of Union was to create an English polity in which the writ of the king or queen extended unchecked by the customary rights of certain privileged barons" (Jones, 2004, p. 609). The purpose of the Marcher Lords was hitherto to quell dissent from the Welsh, but with the expansion of the capabilities of the state, these Marcher Lords had become superfluous, and as possible separate spheres of influence and power, a danger to the Crown. In essence, they had outlasted their usefulness. Dismantling the Marches was, therefore, part of the state's wider 'modernising policies' and they were "incorporated within an administrative system of already existing shires, such as Carmarthen, or amalgamed into new counties, Monmouth, Brecon, Radnor, Montgomery, and Denbigh, freshly created at the Union. The legal autonomy of the lordships was done away with" (Kearney, 2012, p. 117). The idiosyncrasy of the Marches also badly affected trade and the economy, which pushed the Crown to act:

With the growth of trade, there were increasing complaints that the disorder in the Marches and the exactions of the officials were proving a hindrance, particularly to the cattle trade with England. Moreover, the fact that several boroughs and ports lay within the lordships meant a considerable loss to the crown of revenue from tolls (Williams, 1950, p. 34).

This once again shows the clear link between changes in the material base of society and the concurrent changes which took place in the legal superstructure.

With regards to the outcomes of the Acts of Union, some were intentional on the part of the Crown, while others emerged over time. One of the most important – and most conscious – outcomes of the Acts was the enforcement of English common law throughout Wales. The Marcher officials – whose verdicts tended to be ad hoc and based on oral law – were replaced by the Sheriff and Justices of the Peace (Kearney, 202, p. 117). Wales now reflected England. The Justices’

main duty was to maintain law and order by prosecuting criminals who had committed offences within their jurisdiction. They were, however, quick to expand their status and duties, becoming a governmental assembly, a board with governmental and administrative powers. These extra duties extended into the realm of the social—for instance, decisions on the legal rate of wages—the religious—for example, the need to stamp out Catholicism within the newly created Protestant state—and the economic—for instance, the collection of ship money at times when a threat of invasion existed (Jones, 2004, p. 609).

David Williams (1950, p. 43) noted that “nothing illustrated better the change in Tudor policy from intimidation to conciliation than the introduction of this office into Wales”. The Acts of Union therefore positively moved the relationship between the people of Wales and the Crown from one of punitive vindictiveness to one of relative equality (or at least as much as could be expected under a supreme monarch). The Welsh were now equal to the English and enjoyed the same

privileges that they did. They could now send representatives to Parliament, and the Welsh received the full rights as subjects. This very importantly meant that:

Henceforth they could participate in the economic life of the towns both of Wales and England, and these towns acted as a magnet on all classes. To the Welshman of the day, the removal of inequality before the law far outweighed any disadvantages which were involved in the new legislation or were caused by the abolition of the ancient Welsh codes of law (Williams, 1950, p. 37).

Furthermore, in hindsight there existed a clear contradiction in the outcomes of the Acts of Union. On one hand, an ‘independent’ Wales ceased to exist (or at least the embers from which an independent state could emerge were extinguished for centuries). However, previously there did not exist a ‘Welsh’ state. As argued, Wales was a patchwork of semi-independent, semi-servile Marches, Principalities, and Kingdoms. In addition, the Acts of Union meant that “the border between Wales and England was drawn for the first time” (Kearney, 2012, p. 117). Wales moved from being a geographical expression to a material reality. It moved from being an undefined, abstract corner of the British Isles to a real place which included the rule of law, legal boundaries, and a well-defined territory. As Bowen (2022, p. 9) argued, the Acts gave Wales a “corporate identity” for the first time. Far from ‘killing’ Wales, it is possible that the Acts of Union made Wales:

the later Middle Ages [prepared] the way for Tudor political incorporation. Even the Welsh-speaking people of Wales recognised themselves as the descendants of the original settlers of Britain; and there is no strong evidence that between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries they wished to be politically detached from the British state or from a dynasty that so assiduously proclaimed in Welsh and English its Welsh/British origin. The Welsh accepted – often welcomed – incorporation in the English state (Bradshaw & Morrill, 1996, p. 10).

The final major outcome of the Acts of Union was the effect it had on the Welsh language. Although stemming from a position of wanting to give relative equality before the law to those in Wales, the Acts did curb Welsh language provision in the courts. The Statute of Wales of 1536 stated:

Sessions courts, hundred-leets, sheriffs' courts and all other courts shall be proclaimed and kept in the English tongue, and all oaths of officers, juries and inquests and all other affidavits, verdicts and wagers of law shall be given and done in the English tongue, and that henceforth no person or persons that use the Welsh speech or language shall have or enjoy any manner of office or fees within this realm of England, Wales or other the King's Dominions, upon pain of forfeiting the same offices or fees unless, he or they use and exercise the speech or language of English (HC Deb, 13 Oct 1942).

Convenience rather than animosity was the driving force behind this decision. Welsh speakers *were* allowed to take office, Welsh speakers *were* allowed to receive legal representation in court and Welsh speakers *were* allowed to sit on juries. If malice truly were the reasoning behind these Acts, one would expect to see all Welsh speakers, regardless of whether they were mono, or bilingual be barred from all office. As David Williams (1950, p. 38) aptly demonstrates, "to assume that those who framed this legislation had any deliberate intent to suppress the Welsh language would be to attribute to them the ways of thought of a later age. National consciousness in Europe was still far too indefinite and ill-defined for this to have been possible". Furthermore, Wales exists to this day, and there was no clear reduction in the number of Welsh speakers in this period. In truth, the Tudor dynasty assisted the survival of the Welsh language via the printing of the Bible into Welsh in 1588.

To conclude, rather than sounding the death knell of Wales, the Acts of Unions enacted by the Tudors were, for the period, a progressive development in Welsh life. Wilks (2021, p. 7) argued that the Acts meant that "Wales had undergone the

passage from the late medieval to the early modern world". This progressivism was in no doubt helped by their Welsh ancestry, especially in the case of Henry Tudor. However, as with all things it is important to put this period into its wider historical context. The Acts of Union can *only* be considered progressive in the context of the three or so centuries of destitution that preceded them. Compared to the penal codes which made the Welsh second-class citizens in their own homes, and which meant that they could not take part fully and freely in economic life, the Acts of Union, and the reign of Henry Tudor before must have felt revelatory. However, this new legal code did not garner the support an indigenous system would have gained. The average Welsh person, still monoglot, would not have been able to understand the law. Having rights is one thing but having the ability to exercise those rights is another. It is likely that many "were apt to regard it as a means by which they could be tricked out of their rights" (Williams, 1950, p. 38). The legacy of the Acts of Unions, and the Tudors, is one like all history which is steeped in contradiction. Both Henrys were interested more in power and prestige than in helping the Welsh, yet it is also true that both were benign influences on Wales. This however must be tempered with what came before; abstractly the Acts of Union did denote a foreign imposition on the people of Wales, but in the material realities of 16th Century Britain they were a positive force.

The Birth of Capitalism

Although this case study deals specifically with the role of Wales within the world-system, it is important to discern that Wales is but one part of the whole. To understand Wales's position within the world-system, we must also understand how the world-system has changed over time. As argued in the *World-Systems Analysis* chapter, the birth of capitalism engendered a new world-system which over

time expanded across the entire globe. An analysis, therefore, of how capitalism developed and led to our current world-system is necessary before conceptually placing Wales within that world-system.

Debates concerning the root of capitalism have been an important part of Marxist and neo-Marxist historiography and economic history. This discussion first became prevalent in the 1950s with what is now known as the Sweezy-Dobb debate. Sweezy attributed the birth of capitalism to the growth of the market whereas Dobb found the root of capitalism specifically within England (Sweezy & Dobb, 1950). The 1970s saw a renewed interest in this topic with Robert Brenner elaborating on the work of Maurice Dobb, arguing that the root of capitalism is to be found in the changing class relations in 16th Century England⁵⁷, especially in the countryside. This has become known as the Brenner Thesis. Brenner (1976, p. 47) stated:

We will contend that the breakthrough from "traditional economy" to relatively self-sustaining economic development was predicated upon the emergence of a specific set of class relations in the countryside, that is capitalist class relations. This outcome depended, in turn, upon the previous success of a two-sided process of class development and class conflict: on the one hand the destruction of serfdom; on the other hand, the short-circuiting of the emerging predominance of small peasant property.

Before venturing any further, two important points need to be addressed and qualified. Firstly, it is necessary to define capitalism and how it differs from previous economic stages. Secondly, the argument that capitalism developed from the 'superiority' of the economic and social system in Western Europe - elucidated most famously by Max Weber (Weber, 2002 [1905]) – must be refuted. The development of capitalism should not be attributed to a higher level of development, but instead one possible outcome from the specific social relations that existed in Europe during, and

⁵⁷ England is mentioned specifically, rather than England and Wales.

after, the 16th Century. With hindsight, there exists a compulsion to see capitalism as inevitable. That it was bound to develop and ‘mature’ and that its ascendancy was a natural outcome. But to paraphrase Ursula Le Guin, the power of capitalism seems inescapable, but so did the divine right of Kings. Those who lived under the feudal mode of production - an economic system that had existed for centuries - would not have expected it to come crashing down.

Adam Smith (2012 [1776], p. 25) in the *Wealth of Nations* argued that “the propensity to truck, barter and exchange one thing for another... is common to all men, and to be found in no other race of animals”. Leaving aside the fact that other animals such as macaques are capable of bartering and rudimentary economic tasks (Brotcorne, et al., 2017), this quote by Adam Smith conflates two different things. Anthropologists have analysed the human propensity towards exchange and barter throughout ‘prehistory’⁵⁸, including in the Aegean (Michailidou & Dogan, 2008), North America (Carlson, 1994) (Braun & Plog, 1982), and Scandinavia (Jaanusson & Jaanusson, 1988). However, this does not mean that a propensity towards capitalism as has often been extrapolated from this quote. The presence of trucking, bartering, and exchanging does not presuppose the presence of capitalism. To suggest that trade leads to capitalism in a simplistic trajectory is to see the entire Holocene as a teleological, predetermined transition to capitalism. In addition, the conflation of trade with capitalism - or at least as the prerequisite and lower stage of capitalism - is to see the histories of places such as the Italian city-states as one of failure in their transition to capitalism, rather than viewing them as the incredibly successful pre-capitalist societies they were⁵⁹.

Trade in the precapitalist period was based on merchants buying goods in one location and moving them to be sold for a profit in another location, this differs from

⁵⁸ Here defined as the period before written records.

⁵⁹ See Chapters: *The Italian City-State System* and *The City-State System from the 15th Century*.

capitalism which needs a *single* market. Precapitalist trade was predicated on the fact that no unified market existed; merchants could 'buy cheap' and 'sell dear' precisely because they were moving goods from one market to another. For example, in explaining why the Italian City-States were not capitalist, Wallerstein (2011, pp. 19-21) refers to this very point:

A merchant class came from ... resident agents of long-distance merchants (based often in northern Italian city-states and later in the Hanseatic cities) who capitalized on poor communications and hence high disparities of prices from one area to another, especially when certain areas suffered natural calamities. ... Feudalism as a system should not be thought of as something antithetical to trade. On the contrary, up to a certain point, feudalism and the expansion of trade go hand in hand. ... The possibility of convergence, up to a certain stage of development only, of the development of feudalism and commerce. ... Yet a feudal system could only support a limited amount of long-distance trade as opposed to local trade. This was because long-distance trade was a trade in luxuries, not in bulk goods. It was a trade which benefited from price disparities and depended on the political indulgence and economic possibilities of the truly wealthy. It is only with the expansion of production with the framework of a modern world-economy that long-distance trade could convert itself in part into bulk trade which would, in turn, feed the process of expanded production.

Capitalism on the other hand is based on "producing more cost-effectively in direct competition with others in the same market" (Wood, 2002, p. 78). Trade in the precapitalist period was based on *circulation* rather than *production*. Merchants were not interested in the production of goods but in their circulation to other markets. It was the fragmentation of markets both geographically and politically which was the source of merchant wealth.

Precapitalist trade, which created the great commercial powers of the Mediterranean was based on the selling of those goods which adhered to the needs and

consumption patterns of the landed elite, these same elites whose power was based on extra-economic activities and rights rather than purely economic power. This partly accounted for why north Italian artisan guilds, via their expertise and higher quality goods, were so successful in the 12th-15th Centuries but later saw their position undercut by Dutch and English cloth merchants. Dutch and English products were of lower quality but satisfied the need of a new emergent class: the landless labourer. In pre-capitalist society, peasants had access to their means of subsistence and reproduction: the land.

The aristocratic class in England – as generally across Europe – were a landlord class, which parcelled their estates and rented strips of land to the peasantry as tenants, usually over periods of three generations. These peasants would grow their food and produce much of their everyday goods such as clothing (thus explaining why the garment industry generally existed for the nobility and aristocracy). They would also sell or trade any surplus they may have at the local market. The landlord would take what was ‘owed’ to him via extra-economic means. The lord of the manor would rely on extracting surplus labour in the form of rents, tax, coercion, or force via his position as lord rather than by relying on the economic realm and the market. Brenner (1986, pp. 31-32) showed the difficulty in extracting surplus value in the Feudal era and the reliance on extra-economic means, arguing that:

Given the difficulty, in the presence of pre-capitalist property relations, of raising returns from investment in the means of production (via increases in productive efficiency), the lords found that if they wished to increase their income, they had little choice but to do so by redistributing wealth and income away from their peasants or from other members of the exploiting class. This meant that they had to deploy their resources toward building up their means of coercion – by investment in military men and equipment. Speaking broadly, they were obliged to invest in their politico-military apparatuses. To the extent that they had to do this effectively enough to compete with other lords who were doing the same thing, they would have had to

maximise both their military investments and the efficiency of these investments. They would have had to attempt, continually and systematically to improve their methods of war. Indeed, we may say that the drive to political accumulation, to state-building is the pre-capitalist analogue to the capitalist drive to accumulate capital.

Capitalism on the other hand differed because:

only in capitalism is the dominant mode of appropriation based on the complete dispossession of direct producers, who (unlike chattel slaves) are legally free and whose surplus labour is appropriated by purely 'economic' means. Because direct producers in a fully developed capitalism are propertyless, and because their only access to the means of production, to the requirements of their reproduction, even to the means of their labour, is the sale of their labour power in exchange for a wage, capitalists can appropriate the workers' surplus labour without direct coercion. This unique relation between producers and appropriators is, of course, mediated by the 'market'. Markets of various kinds have existed throughout recorded history and no doubt before, as people have exchanged and sold their surpluses in many different ways and for many different purposes. But the market in capitalism has a distinctive, unprecedented function (Wood, 2002, p. 96).

This “unprecedented function” of capitalism is the commodification of everything, even the necessities of life. The production of *things* moves from a compulsion or imperative in its own right (for example the production of food to eat, or clothes to wear) to one where production becomes an imperative in and of itself, especially the accumulation, efficiency, and marketisation of that production. In essence, some form of market, in the sense of barter and exchange may be “common to all man”, but market *dependence* certainly is not common, and is tied to a specific epoch.

Agricultural Capitalism and its Foundations

With an understanding of how capitalism differs from the feudal period, it is now possible to analyse the conditions in England which lay the foundations for the rise of capitalism. Much of the processes described earlier indirectly helped pave the way for capitalism. It has been shown that England by the 16th Century was a particularly centralised and unified state under an absolutist monarchy. Most of the core powers in the Europe (such as Spain and France) were unified under a central monarch, but their sovereignty was more parcellated, with Lords still holding power within their spheres of influence. The Tudors on the other hand had withdrawn the power of the Marches in the West and the Northern Lords, leading to a more codified legal system compared to the fragmented legal systems on the European continent. A secondary and related factor was the demilitarisation of the English ruling class (Kelly, 1984) (King, 2012). The centralisation of power meant that the English ruling class came more and more to rely on the English crown for their protection and their property rights. This class lost their extra-economic means (through coercion or force) of extracting surplus value, leading them to rely on purely economic forms of surplus extraction. This led to a new economic logic being introduced into the English countryside. The aristocratic class, which still *owned* the land that was farmed had to change their way of extracting surplus value from that land. As Wood (2002, p. 100) deduced:

the relatively weak extra-economic powers of landlords meant that they depended less on their ability to squeeze more rent out of their tenants by direct, coercive means than on their tenants' success in competitive production. Agrarian landlords in this arrangement had a strong incentive to encourage - and, wherever possible, to compel - their tenants to find ways of reducing costs by increasing labour-productivity. In this respect, they were fundamentally different from rentier aristocrats, who throughout history have depended for their wealth on squeezing surpluses out of peasants by

means of simple coercion, enhancing their powers of surplus extraction not by increasing the productivity of the direct producers but rather by improving their own coercive powers - military, judicial, and political. As for the tenants, they were increasingly subject not only to direct pressures from landlords but also to market imperatives that compelled them to enhance their productivity. English tenancies took various forms, and there were many regional variations, but a growing number were subject to economic rents - rents fixed not by some legal or customary standard but by market conditions. There was, in effect, a market in leases. Tenants were obliged to compete not only in a market for consumers but also in a market for access to land. The effect of this system of property relations was that many agricultural producers became market-dependent in their access to land itself, to the means of production. Increasingly, as more land came under this economic regime, advantage in access to the land itself would go to those who could produce competitively and pay good rents by increasing their own productivity. This meant that success would breed success, and competitive farmers would have increased access to even more land, while others lost access altogether.

Before the changing of the profit motive and the way in which surplus value was extracted, renting in the feudal era was based on the copyhold system. The terms of this system were customary, generally over generations, and protected against large rent increases. The lord, however, remained the legal owner of the land. This system for the reasons discussed above was becoming untenable, leading “landlords, in search of far higher rents, to dispossess small, customary tenants of their rented land” (Byres, 2009, p. 40).

The statistical data available supports this hypothesis. Clark (2002, p. 304) mapped the relationship between wages and rent. What emerges from Figure 43 is a large upswing in the rent to wage ratio at the end of the 16th Century. These levels then remained relatively stable until further land enclosures and industrial development in the late 18th Century.



Figure 43: Land Rental Values Relative to Wages, 1500-1912. Source: (Clark, 2002, p. 302).

The above may show a large decrease in wages at the end of the 16th Century, rather than a rise in rent. However, Barrington Moore (1966, p. 9) described the “rental boom” of the period, and Kerridge’s (1953, p. 28) research also corroborates the theory that rents increased sharply. This work is shown below in Figure 44. This Figure shows that agricultural commodity prices increased between 1510 and 1659 – and sometimes quite drastically – but these price rises paled in comparison to the rise in rent over the same period. It seems therefore that the change in the wage/rent ratio was due more to a rise in rent rather than a reduction in wages. As Tawney (1912, pp. 188-189) argued in his seminal work on the Agrarian Problem in Tudor England:

The Tudor discipline, with its stem prohibition of livery and maintenance, its administrative jurisdictions and tireless bureaucracy, had put down private warfare with a heavy hand, and, by drawing the teeth of feudalism, had made the command of

money more important than the command of men. It is easy to underrate the significance of this change, yet it is in a sense more fundamental than any other; for it marks the transition from the medieval conception of land as the basis of political functions and obligations to the modern view of it as an income-yielding investment. Landholding tends, in short, to become commercialised.

Decade	Rents on new takings	Wheat prices	Barley prices	Wool prices
1510-9	100	100	100	100
1520-9	95	127	112	93
1530-9	202	123	133	110
1540-9	210	154	147	129
1550-9	308	253	320	171
1560-9	349	263	214	167
1570-9	435	288	233	202
1580-9	329	329	353	188
1590-9	548	455	415	262
1600-9	672	435	468	262
1610-9	829	495	501	Fell to about 175 in
1620-9	699	513	437	1610-25; rose to
1630-9	881	612	557	about 233 1625-50;
1640-9	649	654	516	fell to about 117 in
1650-9	845	573	452	period 1650-85

Figure 44: Estimated Rents and Prices 1510-1659. Source: (Kerridge, 1953, p. 28).

The introduction of market forces into agriculture and rents meant that those farmers who were 'unproductive' lost their means of subsistence and reproduction as a class. Their lands were rented to those farmers which had proven to work the field more productively, ensuring higher rents for the landlord and a higher surplus for the tenant. These new convulsions and imperatives created a new class structure in England, one of large landowners, capitalist tenants, and a large growth – for the first time – in a propertyless class; wage labourers who relied on their ability to sell their labour power for the first time. This process “created a highly productive

agriculture capable of sustaining a large population not engaged in agricultural production, but also an increasing propertyless mass that would constitute both a large wage-labour force and a domestic market for cheap consumer goods - a type of market with no historical precedent. This is the background to the formation of English industrial capitalism" (Wood, 2002, p. 103). The main losers of these changes were the peasantry, and they fought against them vehemently, not out of a position of warmth for the old system, but from the understanding that "custom and tradition was the dike that might defend them against the invading capitalist flood from which they were scarcely in a position to profit" (Moore, 1966, p. 12). As Wallis et al. (2018, p. 871) argued, at the close of the sixteenth century, roughly 66 per cent of the workforce in England worked in agriculture, yet by the end of the seventeenth century, this share had dropped by a third to 43 per cent. Over the same period, the workforce in industry grew from 22 to 31 per cent, and the service industry from 12 to 26 per cent. As Wallerstein (1972, p. 100) argued:

Men were forced off the land rather than forced to stay on it. Some went to the cities, as they were to go in the later enclosures of the eighteenth century, to become proletarians. But many more went in the sixteenth century to newly colonized forest areas where they became the unemployed and underemployed available for the new rural industries, the wage-labourers of increasingly commercial agriculture, and the vagabonds and brigands of which Elizabethan literature is so full.

The Parts of the Whole and the Whole of the Parts: The World-System and Agricultural Capitalism

The Brenner Thesis illuminates the economic and social processes that were taking place in England – or more correctly – the South-East of England in the 16th Century. This thesis argues that Brenner's analysis of the changing conditions within England is invaluable in an analysis of the root(s) of capitalism. However, the changing conditions in England are but one root. As a tree's foundations are based on an interconnected plethora of roots, so too capitalism has at its base a series of interrelated, reinforcing, social and economic structures which give strength to the wider system. The Brenner thesis can inform our understanding of the changing structures in England, but it is unable to answer *why* these changes took place when they did, nor why these changes were able to be exported across the globe. The development of capitalism *in England* is but one part of the whole. The remainder of this section will argue that a world-system analysis illuminates not only the parts but also the whole.

Brenner (1982, p. 29) referred to the relative stability of the feudal system:

In the economy which characterized most of medieval Europe, production was, as a rule, carried out by peasants in "possession" of the land and tools required to produce their subsistence. Because peasants did hold relatively stable and relatively uncontested possession of their means of subsistence, their reproduction required no economic intervention or productive contribution by the lords. As a result, mere ownership of other land (demesne) by the lords was sufficient for them to realize a surplus from the peasants; for peasants were under no economic compulsion to work for a wage on the lords' land or to pay an economic rent to lease it. In order secure a rent - that is, to get the peasants to hand over part of the labour or their product - the

lords had to be able to exert control over the peasants' persons. This was made possible by virtue of the lords' capacity to exercise force directly.

Despite the relative stability of the feudal system, Brenner concedes that at different periods throughout the Middle Ages, there did exist periods whereby class struggle between the peasantry and serfs on one hand and the Feudal Lords on the other was particularly acute. The most famous of these was the Peasants' Revolt – or the Wat Tyler Rebellion – of 1381. The outcomes of these revolts reshaped the balance of power in favour of one class against another, but they did not fundamentally alter the economic or social system of feudalism. Furthermore, Brenner (2001, p. 178) argued that within feudal society, the peasantry was under no imperative for profit-maximisation. He stated:

Precisely by virtue of their possession of the means of subsistence, peasants found themselves shielded from competition on the market, and thus freed from that necessity to maximize exchange value competitively in order to survive that would have been imposed upon them had they owned only some of the means of subsistence (say, plant and equipment and labor power, but not land) and been obliged to purchase the remainder on the market (say, through leasing and paying a commercial rent for their farms). This insulation from competition was fundamental, for it allowed peasants to find goals other than exchange value maximization to be in their own interest. Of course, all else equal, peasants must have wished to maximize the gains from trade, for doing so would have given them the best return for their labor and other inputs. But all else was not equal. Given their restricted resources, their small plots and limited investment funds, as well as the nature of the broader economy around them, they could not find it in their self-interest to attempt to appropriate all of the gains from exchange theoretically available to them.

The Brenner Thesis, on its own, is unable to explain what differed in the 16th Century which led to new economic imperatives and compulsions; the economic logic of

society was changed, and not only the strength or weakness of each class within that system. *Something* must have been different about this new crisis of feudalism.

To begin, by seeing capitalist developments as being largely internal to England - let alone Western Europe - Brenner fails to consider the importance of the 'discovery' of the Americas in not only creating a new world-system but also in creating European – and therefore capitalist – hegemony. The Americas became a source of labour-power, resources, a widening market, bullion for the liquidity of capital, and the primitive accumulation of capital Europe needed. As Blaut (1992, pp. 355-356) argued:

The date 1492 represents the breakpoint between two fundamentally different evolutionary epochs. The conquest of America begins, and explains, the rise of Europe. It explains why capitalism rose to power in Europe, not elsewhere, and why capitalism rose to power in the 17th century, not later. Fourteen ninety-two gave the world a centre and a periphery.

After 1492, Europeans came to dominate the world, and they did so because 1492 inaugurated a set of world-historical processes which gave to European proto-capitalists enough capital and power to dissolve feudalism in their own region. ... By the end of the 17th century, 200 years after 1492 capitalism (or capitalists) had risen to take political and social control of a few Western European countries, and colonial expansion had begun decisively in Africa and Asia. Europe was now beginning to dominate the world and to lead the world in level and pace of development. The world's landscapes were now uneven. They have remained so ever since.

Samir Amin (2010, p. 141) concurs with the importance of 1492 and argues that what followed was qualitatively different. He states that "the establishment of a new system of core-periphery relations between Atlantic Europe and America is not the repetition of the extension of trade in the earlier periods. America does not 'trade'

with Europe; it is moulded to be integrated as a periphery economically exploited by Europe". As Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson (2005, p. 44) argued:

The Rise of Europe between 1500 and 1850 was largely the rise of nations engaged in Atlantic trade and colonialism, and the rise of Atlantic ports. This fact has important consequences for theories of European growth. In particular, it appears that successful theories must give a prominent role to "Atlantic trade" and deemphasize the continuation of pre-1500 trends and permanent European characteristics, such as religion, Roman heritage, or European culture. Instead, the interaction between these factors and the opportunity to trade in the Atlantic appears to have been crucial for the Rise of Europe. ... This period of the "First Great Divergence" likely laid the seeds of the Industrial Revolution and European industrialization as well as of modern capitalism.

The genesis – or roots – of capitalism, therefore, "was not a national phenomenon, but, rather, an intersocietal one" (Anievas & Nisancioglu, 2013, p. 84). The genesis of capitalism is to be found in the transformation of the world-system, and not specifically in changes within national societies. "A transformation of this magnitude cannot be located in a day, a month, or a year. It is a transition. That means that the transformation is composed of a multitude of partial changes, major and minor, which include of course the coming to power in existing state structures" but it is not reducible solely to this change in power (Wallerstein, 1976, p. 281). The changing class structure and mode of production in England did not predicate that capitalism would become the dominant economic mode of production within the world-system. As Blackburn (1997, p. 374) suggested, "the oxygen required by the European furnace of capitalist accumulation, if it was not to succumb to auto-asphyxiation, was supplied by the slave traffic and the plantation-related trades".

One of the ways this "oxygen" was supplied was by the founding and mining of precious metals. By 1561, 85% of the entire world's production of silver came from the Americas (Blaut, 1992, p. 374) and by 1640 it is suggested that at least 180 tons of

gold and 17,000 tons of silver reached Europe from the Americas (Hamilton, 1934). This bullion helped to oil the wheels of capital accumulation in Europe by creating a large source of money capital for trade with the East, especially in spices.

In due time, the influx of silver, coupled with the high value placed on this specie in the East, enabled Europeans to monopolize the trade of Asiatic countries and subordinate their economies, thereby laying the foundations of European domination and colonialism in the region. This domination ultimately enabled the Europeans to channel wealth and resources from every corner of that continent back to Europe (Anievas & Nisancioglu, 2013, p. 98).

Another factor to consider is the importance of slave labour for capitalist development. This system not only assisted in supplying key resources to the industrial process, but it also generated the markets necessary for capitalist growth. As Kearney (2012, p. 130) argued:

Trade with the colonies became a new and important feature of the economies of the British Isles. The prosperity of London was in large measure built upon it. The rise of Liverpool and Bristol was bound up with colonial trade, including the slave trade. Ireland, though excluded from full participation in the English mercantile system, enjoyed a burgeoning trade with the slave-based societies of the West Indies, which provided a market for Irish salt beef and lines. In Scotland, the rapid growth of the port of Glasgow was connected with the tobacco trade.

Slave labour in the West Indies supplied sugar and tobacco on a scale unimaginable before. The northern American colonies provided cheap farms, forests, food, and fish. These products in turn led to large positive balances of trade with the other slaver states such as Spain and Portugal due to their older and antiquated forms of sugar cultivation (Boxer, 1969). The British were paid in bullion from South America which helped turn London into the financial centre of Europe. There existed a feedback loop between the metropole and the colony; the colonies needed

everything from iron chains and nails to woollen clothing for their slaves and these were bought from the metropole. The metropole would feed this money back into the slave economy and the process would continue. In explaining this relationship, Bergesen (2015, p. 151) argued that this relationship was not bilateral but was instead circular in its approach. For example, British manufactures → African Slaves → Cotton Picking/Molasses in West Indies/North America → used to make more British Manufactures. Shown as a core (C) periphery (P) relationship we would have **C-P-P-C**.

As Brinley Thomas (1993, p. 38) argued, slavery and the colonies were the “lifeblood of the imperial economy” and “the most dynamic part of [the economy’s] expansion was generated by the colonies’ demands”. Eric Williams (2021 [1944], p. 52) in his seminal work *Capitalism and Slavery* argued that the rise of capitalism and slavery were inseparable. He stated that:

The [slave] trade thereby gave a triple stimulus to British industry. The Negroes were purchased with British manufactures; transported to the plantations, they produced sugar, cotton, indigo, molasses, and other tropical products; the processing of which created new industries in England, while the maintenance of the Negroes and their owners on the plantations provided another market for British industry.

Blackburn (2015, p. 20) concurs with Eric Williams, and argued that merchants were able to pay good money in the purchasing and transporting of slaves precisely because of the money demand in the regions of Europe where capitalism was taking root. An emerging class of people who earned salaries and rents meant they had the purchasing power to command exotic commodities, which in turn changed them into products of everyday consumption. Rosa Luxemburg (2015 [1913], pp. 275-276) similarly referred to the fact that capitalist expansion was dependent on the penetration of capitalism into historically non-capitalist forms of production both ‘at home’ and in the Colonies. She stated that capitalism:

is producing for a world market already from the word go. The various pioneering branches of capitalist production in England, such as the textile, iron, and coal industries, cast about for markets in all countries and continents, long before the process of destroying peasants' property, the decline of handicraft and of the old domestic industries within the country had come to an end.

This reiterates the necessity to not see the international and domestic as two separate spheres of production, or of following different logics. Each part relates to all others within the wider world-system.

In the case of Wood (2002) and Brenner (1982), their insistence that capitalism originated *exclusively* from changes in the English countryside stems from their narrow reading of the definition of capitalism. For Wood (2002, p. 96), the selling of nominally free labour power in the market becomes not only the *main* defining feature of capitalism but the *only* feature of capitalism. This would therefore assume that colonial trade is unimportant to the development of capitalism, but as Amin (1974, p. 72) argued, capitalism will always follow the path of least resistance, “in the peripheral formations, it will be seen that the dominant capitalist mode subdues and transforms the others: it disfigures them, deprives them of their functionality and subjects them to its own, without however radically disintegrating and destroying them”. As Marx (2021 [1847]) wrote:

Direct slavery is just as much the pivot of bourgeois industry as machinery, credits, etc. Without slavery you have no cotton; without cotton you have no modern industry. It is slavery that gave the colonies their value; it is the colonies that created world trade, and it is world trade that is the precondition of large-scale industry.

Brennerites, therefore, in attempting to ‘return’ to Marxist orthodoxy ends up reducing Marx – and Marxist thought – into an economic vulgarism. The capitalist system has always relied upon ‘unfree’ - or at least unpaid - labour, whether via slavery or work within the home. Marx (Marx & Engels, 1990 [1867], p. 915) himself

was acutely aware of the importance of unpaid labour, and the 'discovery' of the Americas played within capitalist development. Capitalism does not have one root, but roots:

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the expiration, enslavement, and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of blackskins, are all things which characterize the dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation. ... The different moments of primitive accumulation can be assigned in particular to Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, and England, in more or less chronological order. These moments are systematically combined at the end of the seventeenth century in England; the combination embraces the colonies, the national debt, the modern tax system, and the system of protection.

Brenner, on occasion, acknowledges the importance of the international in internal developments. For example, he argued (1982, pp. 52-53) that the centralisation of the English system – which was important for later capitalist development – stemmed from the “solidarity of the Norman aristocracy as a whole, [which] set the pattern for subsequent feudal evolution in England. ... Feudal centralization in England was spectacularly expressed in the outlawing of private warfare, a development previously inconceivable on the Continent”. This outlawing of private warfare meant that feudal lords became to be more dependent on economic, rather than extra-economic means for extracting surplus value. Furthermore, in his analysis of the Low Countries, Brenner explicitly refers to the importance of Spanish bullion from the Americas in developing Dutch capital (Anievas and Nisancioglu, 2013, p. 98) and the role Baltic grain played in the Dutch transition to capitalism. Brenner (2001, p. 69) stated:

The ability to successfully complete the cataclysmic transition from arable subsistence economy to market dependent, export-oriented economy was greatly facilitated by the

spectacular growth of grain imports from the Baltic. From the end of the fifteenth century, prices for grain in the northern Netherlands went from being the highest to being the lowest in Europe, as Amsterdam emerged as the central grain market in Europe. This made for a tremendous subsidy to living standards, facilitating the growth of discretionary spending and specialization. Cheap grain played an especially important role in enabling Dutch agriculture to successfully pursue its specialization for the world market in dairy production and cattle raising. Indeed, by the seventeenth century, in an economy in which perhaps half the population was out of agriculture, Dutch non-food grain exports were almost covering the full cost of grain imports.

Not only did Brenner (1982, p. 67) refer to the importance of grain imports for Dutch development, but he also concluded that the Dutch economy fell behind that of England by the 18th Century due to the rising cost of importation. *Internal* development, therefore, is intimately linked with *external* factors:

although Dutch industry appears to have escaped the "seventeenth-century crisis" with relatively minor damage, its failure to sustain continued development through the eighteenth century appears to have been bound up to an important extent with an overwhelming dependence on overseas grain imports, which rose precipitately in price after 1750.

Brenner, therefore, is aware of the importance of the international context in explaining the development of capitalism in different places, and globally. His insistence, therefore, that capitalism has only one root or foundation seems particularly questionable. Brenner continues to be an invaluable source in explaining how capitalism developed *in England*, but not for explaining how the capitalist *world-system* was created. By using the example of settler colonies, Wallerstein (2011b, p. 103) analysed how the local and the global interacted to create novel combinations:

Colonies in the Americas served two purposes. First, they were a source of so-called tropical produce – sugar, cotton, tobacco – that required a climate not available in most of Europe. The Caribbean was ecologically appropriate, and both Britain and France acquired colonies in this region for this end. The second and quite different function of colonies was as a market for manufactures and reexports. The tropical colonies were a weak market precisely because they tended to use coerced labor to keep down the costs of production. It took European settlers with a relatively high standard of living to create a large enough net collective income to serve this function.

England developed such colonies and France did not. Is the explanation that France needed markets less or that she found her markets in different places? Once again, we return to the factor of size. Was not France able to sell more of its products internally? England needed Europe as a market (for a long time via the United Provinces), and also needed to create its North American colonies. It is all a relative matter.

The Absence of Agricultural Capitalism in Wales

Wales was of course also part of the new world-system which emerged in the wake of the 'discoveries' of 1492. It, however, had a different role and function to England within the world-system. Although Wales was unified with England in the period after the Acts of Union of 1536-1542, the processes that led to agricultural capitalism in *England*, were an *English* phenomenon. The germination of capitalism was hindered in Wales. As discussed previously, the English gentry were generally large estate owners who rented out their lands to the peasantry first in the form of copyholding and then via market forces. These estates are usually passed from one generation to the next via the laws of primogeniture. Primogeniture is the custom that the oldest legitimate male heir inherits the *entire* estate. Before the introduction

of the Land Laws by Henry VIII between 1529-1540 which “aimed solely at the introduction of Primogeniture” (Kenny, 1878, p. 34) there did not exist a unified system of inheritance. However, primogeniture as custom had existed in many parts of England from the Norman Conquest onward (Faith, 1966) (Buck, 1990).

This precedent was set for four reasons. Firstly, primogeniture was the favoured inheritance system of the Normans, and they were able to imprint their customs more deeply in their English strongholds. Secondly, it followed the same process as monarchic secession, giving it a strong normative force. Thirdly, it ensured that the family’s power was maintained more easily as parcellation could lead to a loss of power relative to other households and families. Lastly, the good arable land available in England lent itself to larger estates. As argued previously, this legal situation allied with a new economic imperative, leading to a new social structure which included a swell in the ranks of the landless labourer, those working in services and industry, and in the cities. In Wales, these same conditions did not exist and therefore its social and economic structure was more static. To quote Wallis, et al. (2018, p. 873):

In Wales, we see much less evidence of structural change. The share of those appearing in the probate record who worked in agriculture in the mid-eighteenth century, 66 per cent, was only about 10 per cent below the 75 per cent seen in the late sixteenth century. The share in services had risen by the same amount. Industry was as small at the end of the period as it was at the beginning, at about 15 percent. ... They give an impression of a relatively unchanging Welsh economy, and they fit well with the historical consensus that, despite growing prosperity among some farmers, secondary or even mining activity was slow to develop in Wales.

Wales’s social structure was therefore different to that of England, but this social structure emerged from the material base of Welsh society. It has already been noted that the geographic conditions of Wales were less benevolent than England’s. Howell’s (2016) seminal work on the agricultural conditions of Wales points to the

fact that its ecology was not conducive to the development of large farming units. While large farming units and estates were therefore favoured in England, these same impulses did not bear on Welsh society. As Habakkuk (1987, p. 288) argued:

In some places there were few substantial tenants. In Wales, ... they were scarce, and this must in large measure explain why in 1750 so many Welsh farms were small and fragmented. In England, too, there were regions where farmers with substantial capital were rare because the soil was poor, and the markets limited.

Furthermore, the mountainous lands and poor soil of the Welsh highlands meant that animal husbandry, rather than tillage was favoured by the Welsh peasantry. This semi-nomadic life rested on the commons and its pastures, inhibiting the profit motive for both the peasants themselves and the urge of the landed gentry to hold relatively unprofitable land. Although the statistical data for Wales is incomplete, Figure 45 shows the differing land rental values that existed between regions in England and Wales. What is clear is that the value of land in Wales is consistently lower than in every part of England, apart from 1830-9 where it is valued higher than in the north of England. In the period under discussion, running through the 'Long Sixteenth Century'⁶⁰ Wales does not experience a growth in land value as is generally the case across England.

⁶⁰ Fernand Braudel refers to the Long Sixteenth Century as 1450-1640AD.

Period	All	Holdings 20+ acres	North	Midlands	South East	South West	Wales
1480-1549	44	26	4	11	25	4	-
1550-9	38	23	4	15	16	3	-
1560-9	27	19	7	3	15	2	-
1570-9	27	18	3	8	16	-	-
1580-9	27	14	3	2	20	2	-
1590-9	51	27	8	4	36	3	-
1600-9	63	29	7	13	38	4	1
1610-9	111	52	19	20	61	9	2
1620-9	154	72	14	31	86	22	1
1630-9	146	76	25	30	58	31	2
1640-9	115	60	13	22	59	20	1
1650-9	151	69	25	45	52	24	5
1660-9	127	54	24	25	55	22	1
1670-9	218	95	51	49	83	30	5
1680-9	208	73	31	73	48	52	4
1690-9	246	105	43	60	76	61	6
1700-9	244	121	37	65	92	46	4
1710-9	277	127	63	66	81	66	1
1720-9	328	156	69	95	74	80	10
1730-9	355	143	82	117	81	61	14
1740-9	291	104	80	70	61	60	20
1750-9	250	101	58	69	51	54	18
1760-9	252	105	78	60	53	54	7
1770-9	276	120	75	61	77	55	8
1780-9	593	194	96	224	141	117	15
1790-9	358	176	64	79	112	94	9
1800-9	846	420	150	248	227	198	23
1810-9	1,944	889	366	476	424	633	45
1820-9	4,164	1,572	1,133	1,289	968	719	55
1830-9	2,617	996	119	877	963	429	229
1840-9	130	63	51	10	36	8	25

Figure 45: Linked Observation on Land Rental Values by Period. Source: (Clark, 2002, p. 285).

This agricultural situation, which had existed in Wales for an exceedingly long time, meant that a specific form of social organisation and inheritance had developed over the centuries. Unlike England, where primogeniture was beginning to take root, Wales's inheritance system was one of partible inheritance, called gavelkind. In an Irish context, gavelkind referred to the division of land between the Clan. Wales's system was similar but referred to the division of the father's land among his sons (or daughters if there were no sons) (Goody, 1970, p. 627). The material and geographic conditions of Wales, therefore, led to the inability to farm above

subsistence level and to the importance of pasture held in common. This created a more communitarian social structure compared to that of England. This social structure lasted even after the Land Laws of Henry VIII. Gresham (1971) argued that the 'spirit' of gavelkind was maintained long after its legal abolition. For example, the unit system was a Welsh custom of each son building his own home on his father's land. Although the rise of primogeniture ended the *legal* sharing of land between sons, the convention of farming in common continued late into the 18th Century. Material and social conditions in Wales therefore coalesced differently from those experienced in England. One group of conditions eventually led to the rise of the capitalist imperative, while the other did not.

Although Wales may not have been moving in the same capitalist direction as England in this period, this does not mean that Wales played an unimportant role in the development of capitalism. E.L. Jones (1965, pp. 11-12) referred to the divergence in agricultural production that was taking place in the British Isles from the 16th to the 18th Century. He argued that the light soils of the south and east of England were better suited for grain and cereal cultivation. These crops, in turn, were more profitable than animal husbandry. The heavier soils and the higher ground of the north and the midlands of England, as well as Wales on the other hand, were less suited to these new forms of cultivation and therefore relied on sheep and the fattening and dairying of cattle. The preceding subchapter argued that Dutch reliance on grain exports from the Baltic in the long term led to its comparative decline. The south-east of England, however, was able to concentrate on grain and cereal production for both consumption and export due to having internal peripheries it could exploit for foodstuffs. Regardless of the economic benefit of grains compared to meat and dairy, the latter was still needed to feed England's growing population; this was the role of Wales, Ireland, Scotland, and the peripheral areas of England. E.L. Jones (1965, p. 6) for example, argued that "a supply of dairy products was obtained from Ireland. After 1707, the Scots sent more and more store

cattle to England, and the Channel Islanders found that they could send growing cargoes of "green hides" .

Wales was also part of this wider process. Brinley Thomas (1993, p. 330) refers to the "significance of the changing balance between grain and pastoral farming" which meant that "the Celtic sector concentrated on the production of foodstuffs, such as the rearing of livestock for export to ... England". In analysing the cattle trade in 16th and 17th Century Shropshire and Herefordshire, Edwards (1981, p. 73) argued that cattle "came from several sources but undoubtedly the most important one was Wales". Wales therefore played a secondary – yet crucial – role within the new world-system. The specialisation of agriculture in the south-east of England on grain and cereal cultivation relied on the maintenance of a stable source of meat and dairy for consumption. The function of the Celtic peripheries within the world-system was to provide that source. Wallerstein (2011, p. 230) argued that within the world-system there exists a division of labour "which is not merely functional – that is, occupational – but geographical. That is to say, the range of economic tasks is not evenly distributed throughout the world-system". It seems that this geographical division of labour existed in the British Isles from an early period.

The 'English' Civil War

The form of agricultural capitalism which had begun to rise in the English countryside gave expression to the form of class warfare which arose in 17th Century England and Wales, culminating in the 'English' Civil War and 'Glorious' Revolution. In France, the monarchy succumbed to the decay of absolutism, the Stuart state on the other hand crumbled because it attempted to establish an absolutist regime. As argued previously, some segments of the gentry in England and Wales "gradually gave up the magnate form of politico-military organisation,

commercialised their relationships with their tenants, rationalised their estates, and made use of – but avoided dependence upon – the court. [Thus] agrarian capitalism arose within the framework of landlordism” (Brenner, 1989, p. 302). In essence, this meant that some segments of the gentry had already begun to eschew the extra-economic privileges which stemmed from their position within an absolutist system and had begun to rely solely on economic means of coercion via landlordism for their position of power. As Hill (2011, p. 17) argued, “the gentry’ were not an economic class. They were a social and legal class; economically they were divided”. This newly emerging gentry envisioned a specific form of state which would defend its interests:

Able to profit from rising land rents, through presiding over a newly emerging tripartite capitalist hierarchy of commercial landlord, capitalist tenant and hired wage labourer, the English landed classes did not need to revert to direct, extra-economic compulsion to extract a surplus. Nor did they require the state to serve them indirectly as an engine of surplus-appropriation by political means (tax/office) and war.

What they needed, at least on the domestic front, was a cheap state, which would secure order and protect private property, thus assuring the normal operation of contractually based economic processes (Brenner, 1982, p. 88).

As Callinicos (1989) argued, the Stuarts continually attempted to install an absolute monarchy of a continental style as seen in Spain and France. This was done by the attempts of James I and Charles I to raise money by removing the constraints imposed on them by the landed classes in Parliament. Theda Skocpol (1979, pp. 5, 141, 294) argued that the English Revolution⁶¹ was purely a “political revolution”

⁶¹ Historians such as Christopher Hill (2020) argue that the term ‘English Revolution’ should be used, rather than ‘Civil War’.

and in no way changed the economic conditions that existed within England and Wales. She argued that:

it was accomplished not through class struggle but through a civil war between segments of the dominant landed class (with each side drawing allies and supporters from all the other classes and strata). And whereas the French Revolution markedly transformed class and social structures, the English Revolution did not (Skocpol, 1979, p. 141).

It is the view of this thesis that Skocpol is incorrect in her analysis. At the most basic level there needs to be an understanding of why “segments of the dominant landed class” fought so openly against one another. It has been argued that this was due to one segment of that social and legal class maintaining its extra-economic means of extracting surplus value whereas another segment had moved toward economic means of surplus value extraction via landlordism. This is a social and economic difference, rather than solely political as she argued. Capitalist society emerges from feudal society and is stamped with the birthmarks of that society. Callinicos (1989) succinctly explained this:

The capitalist class develops gradually and molecularly within the framework of feudal relations of production. But a point is eventually reached where its further development requires a change in the form of the state. It does not follow from the fact that such change is required that it will occur, but should it happen, the resulting transformation cannot be seen as merely political. The new form of state has a different social content from the old, one which maximises capitalist development.

In the case of the English Civil War, what emerged was a state where the administrative structures which impeded capitalist development (such as the Star Chamber and High Commission) were abolished and the Crown was subordinated to propertied men (Hill, 1980, pp. 134-135). The Civil War was, therefore, a political, but also an economic revolution. It solidified the gains of the newly emerging

bourgeoisie against the conservative elements of the landed gentry. In Teschke's (2005, pp. 15-16) words:

[it] was the capture of state power, clearly enshrined in the new formula 'King-in-Parliament', by a fairly homogenous and united class of agrarian capitalists. Agrarian capitalism had generated a social-property regime in which the political conflicts amongst the members of the ruling class over the distribution and terms of the rights of political accumulation were replaced by private forms of economic exploitation in the sphere of production.

The new state that emerged had a simple yet profound unofficial motif: 'strong abroad, weak at home'. This meant that 'the market' and 'the state' as well as public and private property came to be more differentiated. This new form of governance was increasingly less personal and dynastic and more 'national' in character.

These events meant that by 1700, "England (sic) possessed the largest national market in Europe, to which Scotland was added by the Union of 1707" (Sayer, 1992, p. 1400). This strong internal market, buttressed by an emergent capitalist class and government helped ignite the tinder of Britain's industrial revolution (Hobsbawm & Wrigley, 1999, p. 50). Von Schmoller (1895, p. 77) – who wrote from a Prussian persuasion – argued that by the turn of the 18th Century, Britain "could begin to think and act in the spirit of free trade [and leave the] toilsome work of national development" which affected his nation amongst others. This newly created 'national' state, which had eschewed absolutism, meant a huge rise in the tax-raising capabilities of the state. These new elites showed a vitality for taxation in the name of 'the nation' and in the name of establishing global hegemony (Mathias & O'Brien, 1976). In fact, throughout the 18th Century, the real spending of the post-revolutionary British state rose fifteenfold (Mann, 2012, p. 483). These conditions gave rise to a period of British hegemony within the world-system; one that would begin with the Industrial Revolution and end with the rise of the United States.

Still to be addressed is the position of Wales within the ‘English’ Civil War. For over a Century, it has been the accepted view within academia that the Welsh as a people were generally in support of the Crown, and Royalist in outlook (Price, 1900) (Thomas, 1962) (Bowen, 2006). For example, Bowen (2006, p. 845) refers to “Wales’s remarkably uniform and passionate support for King Charles in 1642, a support which earned it the appellation of the ‘nursery of the king’s infantry’”. There is less consensus, however, on why this was the case. Mark Stoye (2000), for example, must be commended for his attempt at moving away from an English-only approach to the Civil War. He originally viewed these events as the ‘War of the Three Kingdoms’ before more aptly naming it ‘The War of the Five Peoples’⁶². However, some of his claims as to why the Welsh supported the Crown are not entirely convincing. Stoye (2000, p. 1119) argued:

In 1640 and 41 rumours circulated in England that ‘popish armies’ were being assembled in Wales. Following the Irish rebellion such whispers became louder and more persistent and in late 1641 a full-scale panic was caused in London by reports of a papist plot centring on the Catholic earl of Worcester’s castle in Monmouthshire. These scares fanned the flames of anti-Welsh feeling in England – and reinforced the suspicions of the nascent parliamentary party that the Welsh were disaffected to their cause. Such suspicions were in great measure justified. As we have seen, the Welsh had every reason to venerate the crown. It was the Tudors who had granted them their special privileges, and Charles I and his eldest son who symbolized, in their very persons, the constitutional accommodation which had been granted to Wales. Parliament, on the other hand – which included only a handful of Welsh MPs – had a much weaker claim on Welsh affections.

⁶² The Three Kingdoms being England, Scotland, and Ireland with the Welsh included within the English Kingdom, proving that this title is also not without its flaws. ‘The War of the Five Nations’ includes both Wales and Cornwall.

It is true that many of the Welsh venerated the Tudor dynasty for their Welsh lineage and their incorporation within the English state, however, it is an unconvincing argument that this veneration would pass to 'The Crown' in abstraction. A full century had passed between the completion of the Acts of Union and the 'English' Revolution, and Stoye's claims that the Welsh transposed their feeling of the Tudor dynasty onto the Stuarts does not seem entirely convincing. Stoye, however, is likely correct in his analysis that Parliament did not have much affection in Wales. Stoye (2000, p. 1120) continued by arguing that it was "only a political victory for Charles I [that] could protect the Welsh from the virulent new strain of English xenophobia", whereby Royalism protected "the very identity of Wales itself. ... For English parliamentarians the Civil War had by now become, at least in part, a struggle to reassert England's dominance over Wales: while for Welsh royalists it had more than ever assumed the aspect of a struggle for national survival". Parliamentarians clearly would have used propaganda against what they would term their enemies, as the Royalists would also have done. However, to attest that this was *mainly* a fight for "national survival" seems far-fetched. The first matter is that Parliamentarians also used such propaganda against 'Papists' and defenders of the Crown that existed in England, secondly, the ascendancy of the Parliamentarians helped develop and cement a 'national', British market and identity as Sayer (1992) attested to above. To therefore suggest this was an *English* nationalism which fought against the other constituent nations of the British Isles does not hold weight. The outcomes of the 'English' Revolution do not attest to an English nationalism focused on subverting the other nations in the name of England. Instead, Britishness as a modern political ideology emerged; an identity which allowed for the existence of ethnic or national differences. The Welsh did likely feel threatened by the newly emerging British state; however, this does not necessarily mean they did so due to national differences. As shown in the previous subchapters, the peasantry viewed "custom and tradition [as] the dike that might defend them against the invading capitalist flood from which they were scarcely in a position to

profit" (Moore, 1966, p. 12). Royalism would have fit within the general framework of custom and tradition.

Stoyle's work is a step in the right direction because it understands the difference that exists between places and that British society was not uniform. It places British society "in a context of inherent diversity, replacing the image of a monolithic 'parent society' with that of an expanding zone of cultural conflict and creation" (Pocock, 1975, p. 620). However, in analysing the events of the 17th Century through the lens of 'Five Peoples' it is possible that Stoyle overlooks some of the trends that also unified some of these Peoples. After all, England itself had an "inherent diversity", which perhaps lends itself to the notion that some regions were more closely aligned with their Celtic cousins in outlook. In keeping with the *Longue Durée* approach to history, the events of the English Revolution should be placed within the wider framework of changing economic and social relations. This thesis has already shown that geographical conditions affected the rise of capitalist agriculture, with the southeast of England developing in a different direction from the rest of the island. These different conditions – and the economic and social conditions that emerged from them – may also have affected loyalty during the English Revolution. A proponent of this theory was David Underdown (1985, p. 4) who argued that "the contrasts in popular allegiance had a regional basis, and were related to local differences in social structure, economic development and culture". In explaining this geographic distinction, Christopher Hill (2020, p. 49) argued the following:

The familiar civil war division between royalist North and West, Parliamentary South, and East, is also a division between the relatively backward North and West, and the economically advanced South and East. The North and West were regarded by Parliamentarians as the 'dark corners of the land' in which preaching was inadequate, despite the efforts of many Puritans to subsidize it.

John Penry, a radical Puritan during the English Revolution described Wales as “the most barren corner of the land” (Hill, 1963, p. 81). Figure 46 shows how Christopher Hill’s ‘Dark Corners of the Land’ (amongst other scholarly understandings of the west-east divide) cuts across Wales and northern England. Geography also cuts Britain in two at roughly this juncture. As Hochberg (1984, pp. 744-745) argued:

if a line were drawn from Teesmouth on the northeast coast to Weymouth on the southwest coast, the English (sic) land mass would be divided into two ecological zones: the highlands, with poor soils and a cool, wet climate to the north and west; and the lowlands, with richer soils, lower rainfall, and warmer summer temperatures to the south and east, with the former supporting a pastoral economy and the latter, mixed husbandry. Because the Teesmouth-Weymouth line is a heuristic device, it must be stressed that institutions and social structures associated with the highland zone persisted in the forested and geographically isolated areas located south and east of the Teesmouth-Weymouth line. The findings, nevertheless, suggest that the county constituencies located in the upland/pastoral zone returned future Royalists by a margin of two to one, whereas constituencies located in the lowland/mixed husbandry zone returned future Parliamentarians by a ratio of seven to three.

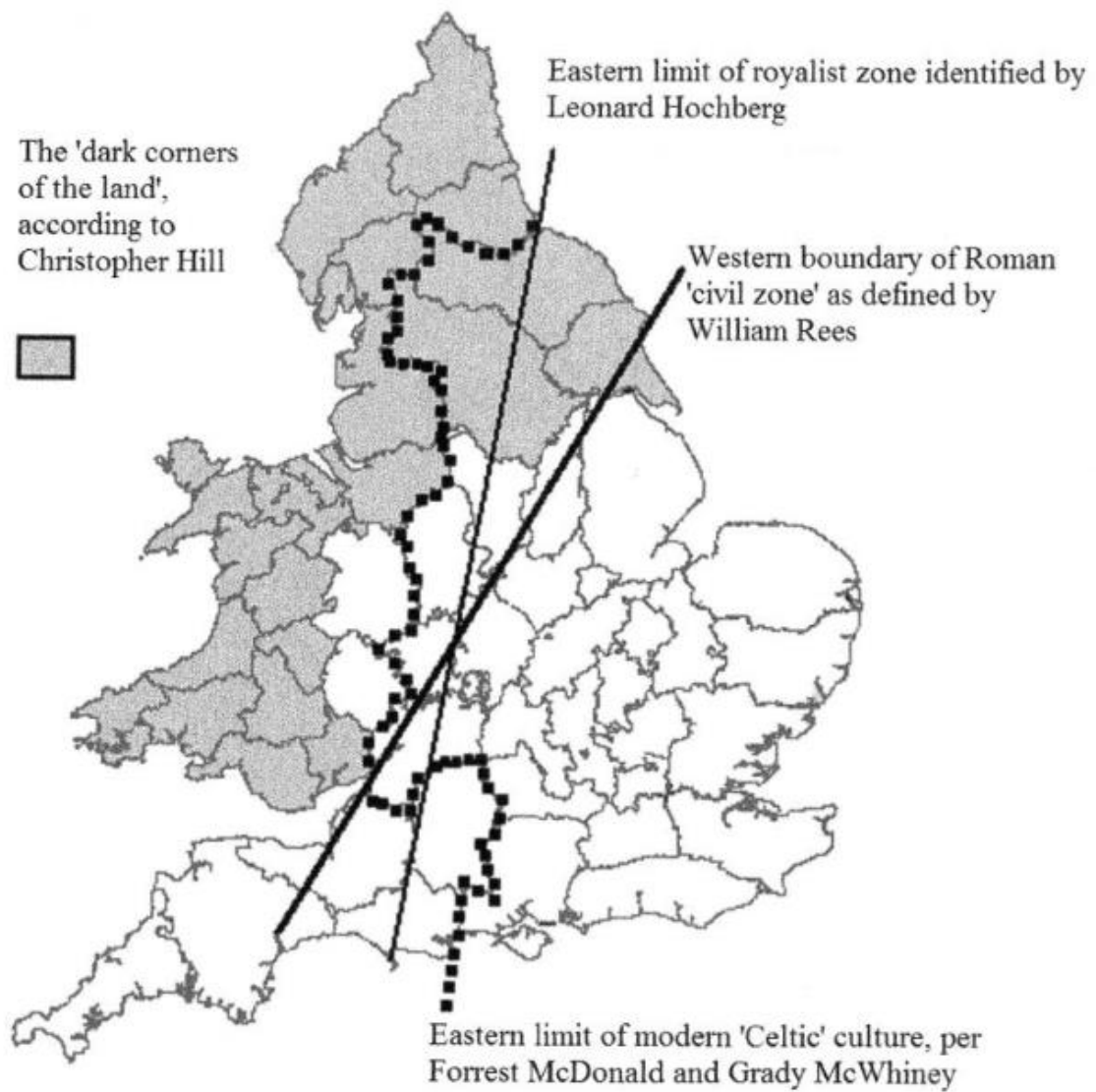


Figure 46: Scholarly constructions of England's 'wild' West, 1950-1985. Source: (MacCannell, 2010, p. 174).



SOUTH BRITAIN : HIGHLAND AND LOWLAND.

(The oldest rocks are indicated in black line. The less resistant limestone and chalk ridges are stippled.)

Figure 47: Highland and Lowland Britain. Source: (Rees, 1959, p. 78).

Those areas to the East of the Teesmouth-Weymouth line were (generally) the same areas that began to move in an agriculturally capitalist direction during the 16th Century. This area of the Isle had undergone an economic transformation, yet an extremely rigid and ordered social structure remained in tension with this economic transformation. Within feudal society, each person was given a 'natural position' within its hierarchy, these new economic imperatives tore asunder the old social compact in the south-east. The 'dark corners of the land' on the other hand, where capitalism was slower to develop and take root, defended tradition and the natural order of things more strongly. While the "majority in Wales favoured a moderate religious line" (Bowen, 2007, p. 240), I argue that this moderation stemmed from the more stable economic base of that society. In the areas that supported Royalism, a conception remained of stability and moderation with the Church and Crown at its heart. On the other hand, Puritanism came to represent a new politics of the 'middling sort' which was more capitalist in outlook, and on the side of Parliament (Hill, 2020). As Underdown explained expertly (1985, p. 40):

The division in the English body politic which erupted into civil war in 1642 can be traced in part to the earlier emergence of two quite different constellations of social, political, and cultural forces, involving diametrically opposite responses to the problems of the time. On the one side stood those who had put their trust in the traditional conception of the harmonious, vertically integrated society—a society in which the old bonds of paternalism, deference, and good-neighbourliness were expressed in familiar religious and communal rituals—and wished to strengthen and preserve it. On the other stood those—mostly among the gentry and middling sort of the new parish elites—who wished to emphasize the moral and cultural distinctions which marked them off from their poorer, less disciplined neighbours, and to use their power to reform society according to their own principles of order and godliness.

In his review of Underdown's work, John Morrill (1987, p. 458) argued that a distinction between arable and non-arable land was a better unit of differentiation

than sheep-corn and wood-pasture that both Underdown and Hochberg had used. However, in the case of Wales, changing the unit of differentiation would not affect the analysis. Today, 90% of Wales's total land area is used for agriculture, yet 79% of Wales's land is designated as Less Favoured Areas. This compares to only 17% of England's land. Livestock accounts for 86% of Welsh agricultural land, while crops account for only 2% of farms (IWA, 2022). It has already been shown that this was also the case in the Long Sixteenth Century. No matter the internal geographic divisions that exist within Wales, the entire country finds itself not only in a 'dark' corner of the land but also a wet, cold, relatively inhospitable region of it. In essence, Britain was divided between a core and a periphery:

England had its peripheral regions and a fortiori Great Britain. These peripheral regions, located within a core state, were fearful of two trends: the gradual strengthening of the English-British state, which threatened them politically, and the triumph of the capitalist elements, which threatened them economically. In Great Britain, these two threats were coordinate; and it is no surprise that the peripheral areas tended to be more hostile to the English Revolution (Wallerstein, 2011b, p. 123).

The Industrial Revolution and the 'Four Cheaps'

Jason W Moore (2015) explained that capital accumulation depends on four inputs: food, labour, energy, and raw materials. It intuitively holds that one must have enough food to feed its populace, enough labour power (free or unfree) to create value, the raw materials needed to create a product, and the energy needed to transform it. For Moore, each social or technological revolution under capitalism has led to the lowering of the production cost of at least one, if not all, of these inputs. In

this sense, they are known as the 'Four Cheaps' of capitalism.⁶³ To take energy as a case in point, 'Cheap Energy' has moved from wood/charcoal to coal, to steam, and to oil. Conversely, each slump within the capitalist system is because these inputs are no longer 'cheap'.

Part of the 21st-century ecological crisis lies in the very fact that energy is no longer 'cheap' both ecologically and regarding extraction. The Industrial Revolution in Britain during the 18th Century saw the simultaneous emergence of all 'Four Cheaps' which both placed Britain as the hegemon of the world-system and solidified capitalism as the primary economic model of that system. Invariably, these four inputs cannot be completely disentangled. As Moore (2015) argued, the Four Cheaps are a way of breaking the Cartesian binary of "Nature" and "Society". Nature is part of society as society is part of nature. 'Cheap Energy', for example, comes from nature, as do raw materials, as do we. Furthermore, labour relies on food, as food for human consumption relies on labour. It is better to see all four inputs as having slightly different impetuses while still being part of the same wider, holistic, "web of life".

Cheap Labour

With regards to labour, it has been shown in the preceding chapters that agricultural capitalism developed in England at roughly the end of the 16th Century. When peasants began to lose their means of subsistence and reproduction – via the rollout of landlordism - the first global process of proletarianization took place. Vast swathes of people were forced to move from the countryside to the cities to look for

⁶³ His argument is that these things are not actually 'cheap', but that capitalism uses them as if they were. Each change in the world-ecological system (such as changing trees to charcoal for energy) influences our entire web of life. Slaves may be 'cheap' in capitalistic terms, but this does not include the human cost paid.

work. For the first time, there existed a reserve army of labour which only had their labour-power to sell. Stobart (2000, p. 149) showed that there was a fourfold increase in the urban population in England during the long eighteenth century⁶⁴. The migration of labourers from rural areas was likely exacerbated by the Parliamentary Enclosures of 1700. Before enclosure, those with common rights could graze their livestock on open fields that belonged to others, and on common pastures. This system of open fields, in which land was subject to differing use rights was changed to one of enclosed fields where the owner or tenant had exclusive rights to that field. There is of course an issue of correlation here; did proletarianization precede industrialisation or vice versa? However, accounts from Daunton (1978), Clark (1995), and Wrigley (2014) all place industry at the heart of explanations for the growth of cities; a process that relied on proletarian labour which now existed to an extent not seen before.

Another source of 'cheap' labour was the slave trade. Although Wales was semi-peripheral within the world-system and did not *lead* the processes linked to slavery, this trade directly led to the growth of the Welsh economy. As Evans (2015, p. 69) noted:

the connections between Welsh industry and Atlantic slavery were real and substantial in the eighteenth century. Atlantic demand, whether expressed in the slave trade or through the provisioning of the plantation complex, was a direct stimulus to Welsh industrial growth.

The slave trade was heavily involved in the development of industrialisation in Wales and the three most important industries in 19th-century Wales: slate, copper, and iron. A slave trader named Anthony Bacon invested his profits from slaving into the Cyfarthfa ironworks in Merthyr. By 1803 it was claimed that this was the largest ironworks in the world. Another slave trader Thomas Coster developed the White

⁶⁴ Running from the Glorious Revolution of 1688 to the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

Rock copper works in Swansea. By 1800, “Swansea had become a major European metallurgical centre which ... supplied 90 per cent of Britain’s copper requirements” (Jenkins & Moore, 2002, p. 396).

Capital and entrepreneurial direction for these ventures usually came from Bristol, then Britain’s premier slave port. Indeed, there was an eerie symmetry between the smelting of copper in South Wales and Bristol slaving. The city’s ‘golden’ age as a slave port extended from the 1710s to the 1740s. It was within just this timeframe that Swansea emerged as the foremost centre of copper smelting in Europe. It was no accident that the two should rise in tandem (Evans, 2015, p. 66).

As with the slave trade more broadly, there existed a feedback loop within the Welsh economy; money from the slave trade was used to develop coal and iron works in Wales which developed products to use in the slave trade. The copper works at Swansea, for example, created *Manilla’s*; a form of copper rod that was given to slavers in Africa (Burnard, 2017). The same pattern existed in Flintshire whereby the Greenfield factory’s specific role was to make and finish copper rods for Guinean merchants (Evans, 2015, p. 67).

The term ‘Wales’ itself would have been part of the daily lexicon for slaves in the Americas. They may not have known where, or what, ‘Wales’ was, but they would have known that the wording used for their clothing was ‘Welsh plains’. Welsh plains were a simple form of woollen cloth which was durable, simple, inexpensive, and of generally low quality, making it an ideal commodity for slave owners. Gwyn (2020, p. 2) stated that the colloquial term for Welsh Plains was ‘Negro Cloth’ due to its direct link to being worn by slaves. She stated:

much has been written about the Welsh woollen industry – not surprisingly, since by the late medieval period, wool was one of Wales’s leading export commodities. Yet, despite strong and detailed evidence, the industry’s connections to slavery are largely ignored. Welsh plains were not only a barter good for the slave traders of West Africa,

but it was also used in significant quantities on the other side of the Atlantic as one of the main textiles for clothing the enslaved in the New World.

By the period of the Industrial Revolution, therefore, Wales had become entirely absorbed into the world-system. It played a semi-peripheral role, especially between West Africa and England. The main reason for its semi-peripherality was due to its vulnerability to the needs of England. Wales benefitted from colonial and imperial developments in England, and it exploited these opportunities, however it was not able to chart its own, independent economic course.

Cheap Energy

Before the middle of the 18th Century, the traditional way of creating energy - whether for heating the home or to manufacture goods - was to burn timber or charcoal. For personal consumption, people would cut trees from the commons. Similarly, any large manufacturer of products would have cut timber from the many forests of Britain. For millennia, this energy would have been 'cheap'; forests were abundant, as were the commons, which meant there was no *need* for any technological advancement or a search for a new source of energy. This began to change in the 18th Century. As Figure 48 shows, the percentage of England's land area which was woodland was declining rapidly. Wales was not saved from this reduction of woodland. Hammersley (1973, p. 594) argued that by the 17th century, the British iron industry had "colonised South Wales" for its supply of woodland.

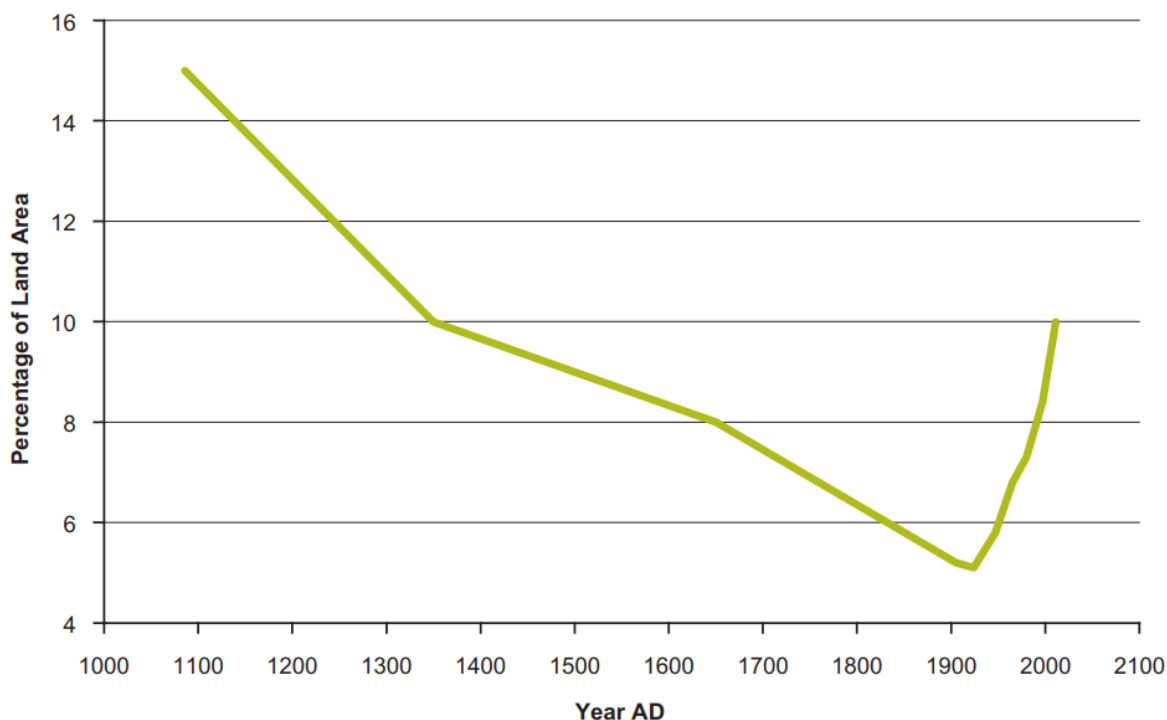


Figure 48: Woodland as a Percentage of Land Area in England. Source: (DEFRA, 2013).

Due to the increasing shortage of timber, Britain began to import timber from abroad by the middle of the 18th Century. By the early 1750s, “timber cargoes comprised over one-half of the total shipping tonnage entering British ports” (Thomas, 1982, p. 333). Gross imports continued to increase after the 1750s, meaning that “between the long swing peaks of 1752 and 1792, imports of fir timber went up from 40,000 to 313,000 tons” (Thomas, 1985, p. 729). The majority of this timber was used for naval shipbuilding, meaning that it did not satiate Britain’s energy crisis. Regarding production, the creation of iron was dependent on charcoal as an energy source. Wrigley (2017, p. 5) stated “that the production of 10,000 tons of charcoal iron required the felling of 40,000 hectares of forest” which was an unsustainable level. Without a suitable supply of native timber, iron or charcoal would also have to be imported. This increase in demand meant that prices on the international market rose, with imported Swedish bar iron rising from £12 per ton in 1763 to £24 per ton in 1795 (Thomas, 1982, p. 333). This began to damage Britain’s terms of trade with its

European rivals. The problem for Britain was that energy was no longer 'cheap'. The state was becoming increasingly dependent on outside sources for its supplies of vital resources.

Necessity, therefore, pushed Britain to look for alternative supplies of energy. This necessity was intensified by huge population growth which led to differing priorities on land use, whether for bread grains, animal pasture, timber for the navy, charcoal for iron, and so on. The solution to this energy crisis came with the substitution of timber and charcoal for coal. Coal had been used before the close of the 18th Century, but technological innovation, spurred by the necessity for invention meant that coal could now be used in a way which was both efficient and cost-effective. In fact, between 1750 and 1850 the output of coal in Britain increased by a factor of ten (Pollard, 1980, p. 212).

The timing of [this] change varied a great deal between the several industries. It came earliest in industries like the boiling of salt in which the use of coal presented no problem of undesired chemical change in the product because the source of heat was separated from the object by a sheet of metal. Industries like iron smelting and hop drying in which contact was more intimate presented greater problems in a period when chemical knowledge was slight. A long period of trial and error commonly elapsed before a successful method of substitution was developed (Wrigley, 2017, p. 4).

Coke-fired blast furnaces began to emerge early in the 18th Century, while it was not until 1784 that "Henry Cort's puddling and rolling process overcame all of the technical problems of using coal to refine pig iron into bar iron" (Thomas, 1985, p. 730). Coal could be used in the production of bricks for building, meaning that timber no longer had to be used as building material. Substituting timber for coal had the effect of 'liberating' production from the physical output limits that were imposed on it by the necessity of a heat source on a landmass with limited wood supply. Where timber would have to be replenished, or a large increase in timber

consumption would affect the ability of later production capabilities, coal 'solved' this problem. Supply was ample, and thus an expansion in use in one industry did not adversely affect others. Energy had once again become 'cheap'. Put simply, the felling of a tree and its burning could release the stored energy from the sun for about a century. With coal, the stored energy which had been accumulated from the sun for millions of years was now available.

The rise of new 'cheap energy' engendered a great expansion in the scale of iron output and a fall in its price. Iron was essential to the Industrial Revolution, and machines that were at first constructed in wood could now be improved and built in iron. The precision that working with metal afforded meant that the invention - and duplication - of the steam engine could push the revolution forward on new railway tracks. This technological revolution helped Britain overcome the geographic obstacles of being a relatively small island. Wrigley (1983, p. 138) eloquently explained the outcomes of a move from an organic economy to one based on fossilised fuels:

No matter how assiduously Icarus may strive, human flight is not possible if the energy employed in the attempt is muscular. Yet what will always elude the flapping of artificial wings is readily achieved with the assistance of mechanical power. An organic economy suffers from certain necessary limitations which are, as Ricardo asserted, ultimately related to physical constraints. An economy which is increasingly based on inorganic raw materials is not so constrained. Its advantages spring partly from the fact that harnessing the stored energy of innumerable past millennia of insolation in the form of coal, oil, and natural gas places at the disposal of mankind vastly greater quantities of energy than can be secured when the annual quantum of energy is limited by the process of photosynthesis. However, the change confers the further advantage that the input of raw materials into the production process, which in an organic economy always creates competition for the use of land, can be achieved from the mouth of a mine rather than from a cultivated field. Between Elizabethan

and Victorian times, England moved gradually from dependence upon a purely organic base to a mixed economy in which a steadily increasing fraction of the output of secondary industry was based on minerals. In so doing she also eased herself clear of the problems which would otherwise have led to increasing difficulties.

Arguably, these changes affected Wales more than they did England. Iron and coal moved Wales from “an impoverished and underdeveloped peasant country [to] ... an industrial nation” (Wilks, 2021, p. 11). According to the Census Data of 1841, Wales maintained a higher percentage of people employed in agriculture compared to England (27.3% compared to 18.8%), but 43.3% of people now worked in heavy industry, manufacturing, and the extractive industries. In Glamorgan, this number even reached 61.3%. Between 1788 and 1839, “production of iron ... increased thirty-six-fold” (Wilks, 2021, p.12). The population of Wales – which had remained relatively stable for centuries – began to increase rapidly in a mirror image of the rise in iron production. As late as 1801 the population of Wales was roughly 600,000, by 1841 it had reached more than a million (Williams, 1985, p. 7).

Cheap Food

Between 1550 and 1820, the population of England grew by approximately 280 per cent “while the population of western Europe minus England grew by about 80 per cent. All the major countries of continental western Europe grew by roughly similar percentages over this period” (Wrigley, 2000, p. 118). In absolute terms, in 1550 England and Wales’s population was roughly 3 million people, while in France it was approximately 17 million (Wrigley, 1983, p. 121). By the turn of the nineteenth century, the population of England and Wales was roughly 9.3 million and by 1851 reached 17.7 million (Razzell, 1965, p. 315). In Wales specifically, the population grew from c. 390,000 in 1700 to 600,000 in 1801 (Jenkins & Moore, 2002, p. 393). Some

factors behind this increase in Britain are easy to delineate; an improvement in medicinal understanding and the rollout of inoculation against smallpox⁶⁵ meant that at the start of the long eighteenth century, life expectancy was 32.4 years, by its end it was 38.7 years (Wrigley, 1983, p. 129). However, this does not account for how Britain managed to 'overcome' the Malthusian dilemma of exponential population growth on a small island with finite resources. The answer lies in the bundling of Moore's Four Cheaps in Britain during the Long Eighteenth Century.

As previously alluded to, the turn to fossilised fuels meant that more of Britain's land could be used for bread grains and pastures for livestock. Decreasing demand for timber inadvertently led to an increase in the land available for other means. This was coupled with the agrarian revolution of the previous century whereby agrarian capitalism had improved the efficiency of the agricultural sector. With the rise of steam and iron, new mechanised equipment further helped to increase crop yields. The need for food brought Wales further under the ambit of England, with "the increasing demand of English cities ... creating a national (sic) market for foodstuffs" (Hechter, 2017, p. 136). This led to improvements in agriculture, communication, and transport being "introduced into Wales from England" and fostered the construction of canals in the 18th Century and railroads in the 19th Century, which significantly lowered transport costs for inland trade (Williams, 1985, p. 177).

The creation of a 'national'/British market for foodstuffs finally ended the differing agricultural relations of England and Wales. Landlordism - which had been a part of English social life in the countryside for a few centuries - was introduced to Wales. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, agricultural tenants in Wales maintained a security of tenure which did not exist in England. The leases of tenant holdings in Wales had traditionally been for a period of three lifetimes, lending a continuity in social relations as well as economic structure. These long-term rents

⁶⁵ The world's first vaccine, first used in England in 1796.

were fixed, meaning a devaluation for the owner, and diminishing rates of return. The inflationary economy at the time of the Napoleonic Wars created a need for flexibility in the setting of rent levels. In consequence, the practice emerged of allocating leases annually, frequently by auction. The inflationary effect of these changed leasing practices was considerable, forcing many tenants off the land. The holdings thus vacated were usually amalgamated into larger units (Adamson, 1991, p. 97). Engels analysed the effect of these changing social relations on the Welsh peasantry (Marx & Engels, 1975, pp. 556-557):

If the peasantry of England shows the consequences which a numerous agricultural proletariat in connection with large farming involves for the country districts, Wales illustrates the ruin of smallholders. If the English country parishes reproduce the antagonism between capitalist and proletarian, the state of the Welsh peasantry corresponds to the ruin of the small bourgeoisie in the towns. In Wales are to be found, almost exclusively, smallholders, who cannot with like profit sell their products as cheaply as the larger, more favourably situated English farmers, with whom, however, they are obliged to compete. Moreover, in some places the quality of land admits of the raising of livestock only, which is but slightly profitable. Then, too, these Welsh farmers, because of their separate nationality, which they retain perniciously, are much more stationary than the English farmers. But the competition among themselves and with their English neighbours (and the increased mortgages upon their land consequent upon this) has reduced them to such a state that they can scarcely live at all.

Inflationary rent and the new agricultural relations in Wales indirectly helped foment the rise of 'Cheap Labour' as more and more Welsh agricultural workers moved to industrial centres for work.

No matter the pace of this technological development, however, Britain would never have been able to feed its burgeoning populace on its resources alone. Pomeranz (2009) and Eric Jones (2003) refer to the "ghost acreage" of industrial Britain which

allowed it to escape from the confines of geography. The Americas - a source of cheap nature and cheap labour - was also a source of cheap food. Colonial rule and slavery in the 'New' World added millions of acres of fertile soil that could be used to feed a growing British population. "The solution was ultimately found in two great frontiers, which yielded two great sources of windfall profit. The first frontier was vertical, moving into the Earth to extract coal. The second was horizontal, moving across the Earth to produce wheat, especially in North America" (Moore, 2010, p. 394). Britain became "the workshop of the world and then exchange[d] her industrial products for abundant cheap food from the continents of new settlements overseas. The New World was called in to redress the balance of the Old. Britain's worldwide network based on coal, iron and steel entailed running down home agriculture ... and in effect endowing the British economy with the equivalent of abundant additional land from overseas (Thomas, 1982, p. 336).

The Long Eighteenth Century was therefore a period where Wales became firmly, and deeply rooted within the political economy of England. The need for each of Moore's (2015) Four Cheaps led to the exploitation of Wales's natural endowments, while simultaneously making it an important part of the expanding world-system. Wales, on one hand, was a central part of Britain's core position on the world-system, while on the other it was not moving to the rhythms of its own internal development and needs but responding to those of England. Its resources were central to the British project, but *internally* it remained politically and economically peripheral due to the fact it was responding to needs and imperatives from outside.

Wales: Internal Colony?

The Industrial Revolution changed each of the nations of the British Isles. For one, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland all experienced considerable population changes in the age of industry. Between 1841 and 1901, the population of Ireland almost halved; many were killed during the Irish potato famine, while others migrated to the United States. In Scotland, Protestants migrated to the plantations of northern Ireland⁶⁶ while in Scotland the highland clearances of the 19th Century destroyed the Clan system and brought many to the more Anglo-Scottish Lowlands. The growing importance of Wales's resources within the British imperial machine meant that the early 20th Century saw a rapid and large increase in its population. This increase was both from outside and from within. Michael Hechter (2017) gave special attention to this period in his book *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development*. He argued that Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and Northern Ireland were internal colonies of England. Hechter (2017, p. 9) stated:

The features of this [internal colonial] model may be sketched briefly. The spatially uneven wave of modernisation over state territory creates relatively advanced and less advanced groups. As a consequence of this initial fortuitous advantage, there is crystallisation of the unequal distribution of resources and power between the two groups. The superordinate group, or core, seeks to stabilise and monopolise its advantages through policies aiming at the institutionalisation of the existing stratification system. it attempts to regulate the allocation of social roles such that those roles commonly defined as having high prestige are reserved for its members. Conversely, individuals from the less advanced group are denied access to these roles. This stratification system, which may be termed a cultural division of labour, contributes to the development of distinctive ethnic identification in the two groups.

⁶⁶ "Northern Ireland" (capitalised) did not exist at the time of migration.

Actors come to categorise themselves and others according to the range of roles each may be expected to play. They are aided in this categorisation by the presence of visible signs, or cultural markers, which are seen to characterise both groups. At this stage, acculturation does not occur because it is not in the interests of institutions within the core.

This thesis has already argued that since 1536, the people of Wales enjoyed the same rights as their English counterparts⁶⁷ and therefore there seems a lack of evidence for the core – or England – wishing to “stabilise and monopolise its advantages through policies aiming at the institutionalisation of the existing stratification system”. This thesis agrees that the spatially uneven wave of ‘modernisation’ (perhaps capitalism would be a more apt word) over state territory does create differences between places, but perhaps this would be better described as a *regional* division of labour, rather than a *cultural* division.⁶⁸ The importance of a regional division of labour within the world-system is referred to by Wallerstein (2011, p. 230): “this division is not merely functional – that is, occupational – but geographical. That is to say, the range of economic tasks is not evenly distributed throughout the world-system”. Turning specifically to the period at hand, Hechter (2017, p. 186) stated:

From 1850 on the industrial enclaves in the periphery experienced continual demographic expansion, while the absolute population size of the hinterland counties either stabilised, as in Scotland, or actually declined, as in Wales, Ireland, and Northern Ireland. Much of the migration from hinterland to industrial areas occurred within regions. Some, however, also was between regions. In general, the periphery fed the core. After 1846, for instance, there was massive Irish emigration to industrial areas in Scotland and England. ... but there was also a movement of population, albeit smaller, from England to the periphery following industrialisation there.

⁶⁷ See *The Acts of Union with Wales* chapter.

⁶⁸ Cultural differences can be superimposed on the regional division of labour, but one is a consequence of the other.

A few areas of inquiry arise from the above passage. Hechter states that “the periphery fed the core” (concerning population). In the case of Ireland, this certainly would have been correct. However, in Wales, the population doubled between 1841 and 1901, numbering over 2 million at the beginning of the 20th Century (Thomas, 1986). Scotland, on the other hand, partly expanded due to immigration from Ireland. The experiences of Ireland, Wales, and Scotland with regards to migration, therefore, are not analogous, despite their shared ‘Celtic’ identities. Hechter, however, hopes to paint the histories of each place as being ‘Internal Colonies’ to England. The commendable attempt by Hechter to re-orientate British history and include the Celtic experience sometimes reduces and flattens the different experiences that existed *between* the Celtic nations. As Kearney (2012, p. 165) argued with regards to the differences between Wales and Ireland:

The consequences of industrialisation were very important for Wales since it saved the country from the massive emigration which took place in Ireland. South Wales became a melting pot in which Welsh, English, and Irish were intermingled, though the great majority were Welsh. There was no equivalent of the Irish famine, no mass emigration to America under conditions of great hardship and no Welsh equivalent of the intense involvement which Irish Americans often displayed in the affairs of their homeland there was thus no counterpart in Welsh history of Fenianism.

Regarding Wales specifically, two possible propositions can be drawn from Hechter’s passage above. The first is that - according to Hechter - Wales is not peripheral in this period. If “the periphery fed the core”, one would assume that Wales’s population would have declined (or have stayed generally stable if the movement were purely an *internal* one) yet it grew substantially. Hechter does concede that there was “a movement of population ... from England to the periphery” but that this was “smaller” than the opposite trend. Wales does not follow this trend. The second proposition is that Hechter did not consider those regions within Wales whose populations grew to be ‘truly Welsh’. This is implied by

his use of the term “industrial enclave”. It is possible that these “enclaves” were the cores being fed by the peripheries. Hechter (2007, p. 149) also argued that these “hinterlands ... became more and more distant, in a social sense, from the industrial enclaves of Wales. The industrial cities were far more cosmopolitan, English-oriented in culture, and secular than these rural hinterlands”.

However, there is a lack of consistency in Hechter’s argument. He maintains that Wales – including the “industrial enclaves” - were peripheral in the 19th Century and makes a direct comparison between the situation of Wales and those of ex-British colonies. He stated (2017, pp. 189-190):

To be English-speaking in nineteenth-century industrial Wales was to be culturally privileged – just as it is today in neo-colonial cities like Accra or Lagos. It was a mark of status and an entrance to privileged company. Englishmen in Wales were in this sense akin to a colonial elite. Their cultural identification, of itself, determined many aspects of their behaviour.

It is clear, therefore, that Wales on one hand does not fit his own definition of peripherality, while on the other, he continues to view all of Wales as peripheral. The more fundamental issue, however, is his ambiguity concerning the position of industrial Wales. These places were not “enclaves”, they were not culturally or ethnically *distinct* from Wales: they were Wales. The immigration from outside did not fundamentally change the social characteristics and attitudes prevalent as “the native inhabitants, in many respects, showed a marked capacity for stamping their own impress on all newcomers and communicating to them a large measure of their own characteristics” (Thomas, 1986, p. 223). Furthermore, the language and culture of Wales remained Welsh even accounting for internal movement and immigration. Even in 1891, 59% of Wales’s population remained Welsh-speaking. Furthermore, 1870 saw the passing of the Elementary Education Act in the Houses of Parliament. This Act created compulsory education for all children in England and Wales aged five to thirteen. Hechter is unable to answer why the “colonial elite” would decide to

include and incorporate the 'Internal Colony' into its educational system. If the English language "was a mark of status and an entrance to privileged company", did the Welsh 'lose' their coloniality with the emergence of English-language education? It is worth remembering that by 1901, 13.8% of the population of Wales had been born in England. This amounted to almost 280,000 people. Furthermore, between 1901 and 1911, 69,000 people from England moved to the Glamorgan coalfields, compared to 34,000 from elsewhere in Wales (Trystan, 2000, pp. 132-133). Hechter (2007, p. 186) argued that "in general, there is no statistical information about the kinds of jobs Englishmen assumed in the peripheral enclaves. ... However, they likely had a disproportionate share of jobs in managerial and commercial categories". These are therefore assumptions made by Hechter to support his argument, rather than facts that shape his argument. It is far more likely that the majority of the 280,000 English-born people living in Wales lived in similar conditions to their Welsh counterparts. Hechter's contortion relies on his singular belief that the division of labour that existed was cultural, rather than regional and class oriented. If the division of labour is inherently cultural, then a difference in income between the Welsh and English *within* Wales must be maintained. If the division of labour is *regional*, it helps to explain how those who moved to Wales became embedded within that culture and society. The economic peripherality of Wales is not due to its *Welshness*, but due to the unevenness in regional and capitalist development. Residual differences and geographical conditions between places make capitalist penetration more difficult in some places than others, and this in turn can lead to lingering cultural-linguistic differences, but that does not presuppose that the division of labour that exists is a *cultural* one. Wales can be economically peripheral, without being an internal colony. Rawkins (1978, p. 520) correctly analysed the shortfalls in Hechter's thinking:

Although such an approach offers a valuable corrective to negative portrayals of the significance of minority nationalism, it must be appreciated that the apparent

'colonial' status of the [Celtic] periphery results from the operation of broad economic forces and structures rather than from a contrived and consistently discriminatory policy on the part of the British state. Certainly, the Scots, Welsh, and particularly the Irish, have been subjected to severe political oppression by the forces of the state at various times. However, though insensitivity to - or ignorance of - ethnic differences within the British Isles has been an uncomfortably recurrent feature of governmental decision-making, this does not serve as the basis for an explanation of current economic and social difficulties in terms of systematic, politically motivated deprivation.

A final critique of Hechter's thesis is his understanding of 'ethnicity' and how this relates to his Internal Colonialism thesis. Hechter is unable to state concretely what exactly ethnicity is, yet he argued that it underpins the cultural division of labour. Hechter (2007, pp. 33-38) begins by equating ethnicity with the national culture one defines with, however, this would imply that British identifying, and Welsh-identifying peoples are *a priori* different ethnicities, regardless of any other cultural/linguistic/hereditary links they may share. However, the real issue that arises from his overly subjective definition of ethnicity and/or culture (Hechter never truly defines either in any meaningful way) is that it allows him to make statements such as:

the objective gains or losses from union with England have little bearing on the widespread sense in the Celtic lands that these unions were fortunate or unfortunate events. It is that subjective sense which must be put to the analysis, for these sentiments provide the social basis for political action and behaviour (Hechter, 2017, pp.68-69).

Subjectivity is important in analysing human associations of any form, but this must be based on objectivity. If we can prove that for most of the existence of the polity of England and Wales, that the population of Wales did not subjectively see themselves as oppressed or imperialised, then his entire thesis comes crashing down. The

objective gains and losses from the union with England is not a secondary question to whether a cultural division of labour exists, it is the central question, yet this is relegated in Hechter's analysis. This thesis has proposed to place this question squarely at the heart of any analysis of cultural or national political sentiment. This thesis, therefore, cannot support Hechter's argument regarding a *cultural* division of labour between England and Wales. However, there does seem to be a *regional* division of labour between the southeast of England and its peripheries to the north and west. The reality, however, is that many people in Wales saw no contradiction between Welshness and Britishness; an issue that Hechter never truly grappled with.

The National/Imperial Contradiction

The 19th and early 20th Centuries saw Wales undergo a cultural revival which followed the same patterns of romantic nationalism that was sweeping across Europe. The idealism of movements such as Young Italy - led by Joseph Mazzini - and the struggle of Hungarian nationalists found receptive ears in Wales, especially in the form of Gwilym Hiraethog. He "was an immensely popular lecturer as well as a writer, and by innumerable lectures throughout the length and breadth of Wales, he made Kosuth and Garibaldi into heroes for the Welsh people" (Williams, 1950, p. 274). The rise of cultural nationalism and Wales's "greater political assertiveness, [led to] the founding of its own 'national' institutions such as the University of Wales, the National Library and National Museum, the growth in the number of Welsh speakers, and the 'cultural renaissance' of Welsh-language literature, education, publishing, and music" (Jones & Jones, 2003, p. 57). Eric Hobsbawm (Hobsbawm & Wrigley, 1999, p. 298) (in a rather sardonic tone) quipped that "Wales was divided into two culturally equal Welsh sectors, which had increasingly little in common with one another except the fact of not being English". These national

symbols of Wales could now at least begin to embellish Welshness with more meaning than “not being English”. This growing Welshness was steeped in the contradictions of its time; there was on one hand a growing sense of confidence in Wales’s position within the world, accompanied by a growing understanding of its distinctiveness to England. On the other, this was an imperial Welshness which found its place alongside imperial England within the British Empire. Supporting the so-called struggle of Italians and Hungarians against their Austrian neighbours could still fit neatly next to the ‘civilising mission’ of the British Empire.

Kumar (2000, p. 579) defined British nationalism of both past and present as an “imperial nationalism”:

My point is that empires, though in principle opposed to claims of nationality, may be the carriers of a certain kind of national identity that gives to the dominant groups a special sense of themselves and their destiny. Such groups - the “state-bearing” peoples or Staats Volker - will be careful not to stress their ethnic identity; rather they will stress the political, cultural, or religious mission to which they have been called. Hence another possible name for this kind of national belonging is “missionary nationalism.” Further, if one wishes to attribute it to one of the two conventional types of nationhood, political and ethnic, its opposition to ethnicity puts it within the category of the political nation.

The political – or civic – conception of British imperial nationalism meant that Wales could navigate both identities; their Welshness and their Britishness in tandem. Their cultural understanding of being Welsh lay upon a political or civic structure which was both British and imperial. Although nationalism studies and wider society often refer to the “nation-state”, the complete fusion of nation and state is rare, even within older states. This may at first seem anachronistic, but it lends itself to a conceptual fuzziness which in the long term makes internal cohesion easier. Within British nationalism there could exist on one hand a degree of ethnic pluralism and distinctiveness to each of its nations, while each could come together

under the umbrella of the “political nation”, buttressed by a shared sense of imperial domination and Empire. As McCrone (2002, p. 182) argued: “being British was not an alien imposition, but a complimentary identity to one’s nationality, and, above all, one with strong imperial connotations in which people took pride and confidence”. For example, David Lloyd George – the only Welsh Prime Minister - stated after his election victory of 1890:

We are Imperialists because we are nationalists ... we know that by the sum of the success, prosperity and happiness attained by little Wales, the great Empire of which she is a part will be the more glorious (Grigg, 1988, p. 6).

We cannot deduce how all Welsh people felt the same way about the imperial project, but clearly, it is more variegated than the notion of ‘false consciousness’ (Qizilbash, 2016) or that the Welsh (in a very apt idiom) had the wool pulled over their eyes. Some clearly would have supported the imperial project and would have attempted to profit from it. Many had little issue with the Empire *per se* but felt that their Welshness lent them a ‘moral agency’ and understanding different to the English (Jones and Jones, 2003, p. 66). Some tried to leave the British Empire behind, most famously by the creation of *Y Wladfa* in Patagonia. With a harsh pang of irony, even this endeavour was marked with British understandings of Empire as these Welsh settlers were more than willing to take land that did not belong to them, regardless of the Welsh cultural stamp which was imprinted on it.⁶⁹

The English, for their part, were the driving force behind Britishness, but it was the ‘civic’ or political which was accentuated, not an ‘English’ culture:

Britain and the British came to be identified with the Crown, with Parliament, with the Protestant religion, and with the worldwide British Empire. All groups in the kingdom were invited to share in this achievement and, where relevant, its spoils; to a

⁶⁹ Although the intention of the Welsh colonists (in their opinion) may have differed from what the English or British did, the fact that the Welsh saw settlement as a viable option shows how European and British thinking shaped them and their understandings.

good extent, all did. Again, no more than in the case of the Austrian Germans or the Russians is this strategy to be equated with undue modesty or altruistic self-restraint on the part of the English. If you are clearly in charge, you do not need to beat the drum or blow the bugle too loudly. To do so in fact would be to threaten the very basis of that commanding position, by reminding other groups of their inferiority and perhaps provoking them to do something about it (Kumar, 2000, pp. 589-590).

The Industrial Revolution helped underscore the relationship between Wales, Scotland, and England and their shared Britishness.⁷⁰ The rise of industry truly was a 'British' phenomenon, it gave a signifier and marker to which each ethnic group could identify. Britain – not England – was the world's first industrial society. In fact, it has oft been argued that Wales was the first proletarian nation. This industrialisation grew hand in hand with Britain's expansive overseas Empire in which the power of one lent strength to the other. Britain was at the core of the world-system and entry within its exclusive club meant that Wales too could climb the economic ladder. Wales was itself now making other nations and regions dance to its economic tune:

But this was not simply a matter of coal export, huge though that was, of John Cory's bunkers straddling the world and south Wales coal keeping the greatest navy in the world afloat, staggering though these were. The capital, the technology, the enterprise, the skill, and the labour of south Wales fertilised large and distant tracts of the world, from Montana and Pennsylvania to Chile, Argentina, and Russia. They helped to deflect the economic development of Spain, wrenching the centre of its heavy industry from its natural base in the Asturias to the region of Bilbao, where Dowlais planted a subsidiary to snatch the high-grade ores and an even higher-grade people, to scatter Spaniards around its own town and out to Abercraf. South Wales firms bought up

⁷⁰ Ireland was always seen as an unfortunate addendum to the notion of Britishness; it was a Catholic nation with much more aversion to the ideas of Britishness than the other minority partners in the Union.

shipping companies and port capital in Rouen, Le Havre, Brest, Hamburg, Marseille, Naples; for years Italy's economic rhythms were those of its Welsh coal imports; the little town of Bardi near Parma, with a few friends, specialised in colonising Wales with their popular restaurants, cafes and chip-shops, supplying some of Wales's most striking dynasties and finding an immortality in Gwyn Thomas's novels. For years, the real economic capital of Chile was Swansea, luxuriating in its nitrate clippers and Cape Horners, though it was North Wales which rivalled the Jacks to provide some of their most ruthless oligarchs to both Chile and Colombia (Williams, 1985, p. 222).

Wales, therefore, was proletarian, yet imperialist, proudly Welsh yet a vital cog in the British Empire; a nation whose view of itself was contorted due to straddling these two worlds (Parry, 2020, p. 176). However, these high watermarks in Welsh culture never truly lent themselves to a real challenge to Britishness or the British state. An 'ethnic' Welshness fit neatly within a wider civic/political Britishness. The pioneers of romanticist nationalism in Wales never attempted to undo the political order. Furthermore, "concerns with the preservation of the Welsh language and the promotion of Welsh literature had no functionality in the revolutionary politics of the period (since the language was a living one for the working class, and 'literature' was largely oral)" (Wilks, 2021, p. 251). In this sense, they shared the same fate as the Basque and Catalan nationalists; they were resigned to high politics rather than delving into the depths of 'real' politics. The Italians for their part did not have a state to dismantle but a state to create. This, on one hand, was successful, but on the other, it created the conditions for fascism to thrive. In all three cases, a romanticist interpretation of the nation was not a sufficient reason for the working classes to carry the banner of nationalism. Welsh liberalism fits within this general framework of romantic nationalism, being both politically British, while maintaining a culturally Welsh identity.

Nonconformism and the Failure of Welsh Liberalism

During the late 19th and early 20th Century, there existed two pillars to Welsh life: Liberalism, and Nonconformism. The influence of the Liberal Party on Wales during this period was extensive. In the general election of 1885, the Liberals won 29 of the 34 seats available in Wales, while in 1910 they still won 26 of 36 seats. By 1922, however, the Liberals only managed a measly 2 seats. The original strength, and later fall of liberalism in Wales needs to be addressed. At the onset, the liberalism espoused was *Welsh* in nature; this was not a liberalism *from outside*, but one that spoke to the social and cultural realities of Wales. It allied itself to the nonconformist tradition; the religion of *y werin*, it also, often, spoke in a Welsh tongue, and even through the political movement *Cymru Fydd* - led at one time by a young Lloyd George - spoke to some form of home rule, if not outright independence. Their aims may have been “restricted to the search for symbolic recognition of Welsh culture and Welsh distinctiveness” (Rawkins, 1978, p. 524) but it at least spoke of, and to, Welsh grievances. Morgan (1999, p. 330) speaks of the trinity that existed between liberalism, nonconformism and nationalism:

Trading on the grievances of their overwhelmingly nonconformist constituency, Lloyd George and his colleagues focused on the intertwined questions of national and religious identity. As the party of privilege and the landed elite, the Tories, they claimed, had always been inimical to the needs and aspirations of ordinary Welsh people, while the established Church, far from being the guarantor of the nation's spirituality, was nothing but the Church of England in Wales. By its long subservience to its 'alien' masters, the Anglican Church had forfeited its claim to be the one authentic Church of the people. It was a politicised non-conformity, therefore, which seized upon the glaring ecclesiastical weaknesses which patriotic churchmen had revealed with such candour, to forward its own aims. In short, it suited Lloyd

George and his friends to reinforce the claim that Christianity (in its nonconformist guise) and Welsh national identity were one.

Wales was a deeply religious country, yet one that viewed Anglicanism as being imposed upon it from the outside. Anglicanism was the religion of the coal and steel masters, the hated Tories, and the English middle classes. Engels (Marx & Engels, 1985, pp. 502-503) analysed this reality in 1844, stating:

The Church of England has an audience, it is true, although it too, especially in Wales and the factory districts, has been to a considerable degree dislodged by the dissenters, but then the well-paid pastors trouble themselves little about their sheep. If you wish to bring a caste of priests into disrepute and cause its downfall, then pay it well, says Bentham, and the English and Irish churches testify to the truth of this statement.

The strength and growth of nonconformism was not an autonomous process, nor one solely linked to the Welsh language. Nonconformism offered a vehicle for the working and rural classes of Wales to resist the hegemony of their landlords and bosses. "Nonconformism grew so dramatically precisely because it offered the means and the strength to oppose the landlords. It created an ideological space enabling the tenantry and workers to step outside their dependence and subservience and to perceive the landlords and bosses as exploitative" (Adamson, 1991, p. 105). Nonconformism was therefore a way of expressing class resistance and struggle, though in an embryonic form; the capitalists may be king on earth, but not in heaven.

The Liberal Party machine had its roots in the newly developing industrial sectors of 19th-century Welsh society. In Wales, they were an 'indigenous' bourgeoisie, but one that had links and interests under the wider British umbrella. This capitalist class - emerging as it did from the old Whigs party - had its interest in tearing asunder the political supremacy of the landed elite. Soft nationalism, twinned with nonconformism was the ideological strategy of the Liberal party to create a class

alliance between the rural tenantry on the one hand and the industrialising south on the other. This alliance, however, disappeared almost as quickly as it had appeared, with liberalism being unable to answer the questions it had posed of Conservatism. In explaining the Liberal dominance and collapse in Wales, Kenneth O. Morgan (1974, p. 163) refers explicitly to the rising middle class in Wales and the tension that existed in their relationship with the working class in Wales:

the key to this Liberal ascendancy, without doubt, is the pressure for social and civil equality from the newly emergent nonconformist middle class. Rising to authority in the small towns of rural and industrial Wales and on the chambers of commerce of the south Wales ports, it was they who led the pressure for religious equality, for educational opportunity, for security for tenant farmers, and for free trade. They were poised in opposition to the age-old ascendancy of the gentry and of the Anglican church. Further, the grievances and the values of these middle-class nonconformists and their working-class supporters were associated with the national grievances of Wales as a whole. To a marked degree, Liberalism and nationalism were fused, and in a real sense, the Liberals were the party of Wales and the vehicle for its growing national consciousness. And this pattern continued, despite such political crises as the schism over Cymru Fydd (the Welsh home rule league) in the mid-1890s or the fierce conflicts over the South African War, down to the outbreak of World War in 1914. Throughout this remarkable era, the involvement of the working class in the Liberal ascendancy was largely assumed. The orthodox view was that Welsh Liberalism was socially and culturally homogeneous. A corollary was that Welsh society was not thought to be marked by the deep chasm between capital and labour that scarred industrial relations in England. The homogeneity of Welsh society was reinforced by the migration of so many Welsh-speaking Welshmen from the rural areas into the coalfield from the 1830s onwards, bringing their values and their cultural and religious institutions with them.

The newly emergent Welsh middle class would have to decide if it would ally with, or against the central British state. Tiryakian and Nevitte (2020, p. 72) defined two forms of nationalism available to the peripheral nation; one forms in opposition to the majority nation, while the other leads to an identification with the current nation-state:

In this instance, elites of the periphery, however culturally, territorially, and "ethnically" differentiated from those of the centre, find it advantageous to view the interest of the nation as best served by being linked with the nation-state. The nation of origin (or the people of the periphery, or the region) is seen as making contributions in the development of a broader societal community, that of the nation-state in its entirety. In a given period of modernity, when the nation-state is perceived to be in a dynamic growth phase providing greater economic, cultural, and political vistas than the home base of the "periphery," elites of the latter may actively make claims that their contributions (or their community's contribution) will enhance and be enhanced by identification and aggregation with the central regime and its developing "national institutions." As described, the phenomenon of peripheral nationalism qua identification with the nation-state is of the same sort of ethnic and class "assimilation" by upwardly mobile individuals who leave behind their strata of origin.

Liberalism in Wales had stressed Welsh grievance and the 'alien' nature of Anglicanism, yet it had also sowed the seeds of its destruction. Helped by Britain's position in the world-system, Welsh liberals maintained that the best way of improving Wales's position was under the umbrella of Britishness, despite their allusions to Wales's peripheral position within it. Liberalism was unable – or unwilling – to answer the material questions that were now being asked by Wales's working class who now demanded bread on earth as well as in heaven. In effect, the liberals were no longer the party of dissent; they may have continued to be nonconformist religiously, but their politics now conformed with those of the

capitalist elite. As Hutchinson (1966, p. 16), “there was no longer scope for a party which had been both the herald of [political] emancipation and the nurse of capitalism. Now that emancipation had acquired a socialist connotation, these two functions were openly in conflict and, consequently, the Liberal party began to disintegrate, with some of its members pulled to the right and others to the left”.

Dangerfield (2011, p. 10) concurred with this assessment:

But the Liberal Party which came back to Westminster [in 1906] with an overwhelming majority was already doomed. It was like an army protected at all points except for one vital position on its flank. With the election of fifty-three Labor representatives, the death of Liberalism was pronounced; it was no longer the left. ... The millstones of Capital and Labor, the upper and the nether, grind slowly, and Liberalism was caught between them. It might put off the evil hour, poor slippery old faith, but they would crush it in the end.

The Labour Party, which emerged in 1900 found fertile ground in Wales to sow. By 1935, Labour-controlled every seat in the industrial South and polled over 45% across Wales. Their success came by adding a material foundation to the pillars of nonconformism (and to a lesser extent) soft nationalism. Labour’s first leader Keir Hardy famously espoused a policy of Home Rule for the nations of Britain. This policy had more in common with today’s devolution than outright independence, but it showed an “accommodation to the social and cultural patterns of Scotland and Wales” (Rawkins, 1978, p. 525). Religiously, “for Hardie, Socialism was Christianity at work, the practical application of the Sermon on the Mount to usher in God’s Kingdom on earth” (Morgan, 1999, p. 332). Welsh sons like Niclas y Glais and Evan Walters also married faith with socialism; a combination that the Liberal Party could not contend with. The latter famously painted ‘The Communist’ depicting a trade unionist as a Christ-like figure leading his disciples in industrial South Wales.

The Liberal Party were not able to maintain their position of strength in Wales because they no longer spoke for the Welsh people. The attractiveness of their

message began to wane when it was clear they did not have the answers to the questions posed by the people of Wales. Liberals found themselves wedged between a romantic understanding of nationalism on one hand, while wishing to elevate themselves within the British state on the other. Liberalism came to represent the ruling class that at one time it had fought against. The Welsh bourgeoisie sided with the British state, rather than its own working class, as the Catalan bourgeoisie did in the same period. In reaction to this, the Welsh found unity within their class, rather than in a nationalist, class-coalition with the Welsh bourgeoisie. If there was a 'failure' of Welsh nationalism in this period, it was due to the inability of the Liberal Party and the Welsh bourgeoisie to offer a materially better alternative and future to the working class.



Figure 49: 'The Communist' by Evan Walters.

All That is Solid Melts into Air

The boom years of heavy industry which has propelled Wales throughout the industrial revolution did not last. The factors behind this were geological, technological, economic, and political. Gwyn Alf Williams (1985, p. 222) argued that in the 19th Century, the “economic rhythms” of North and South America - as well as mainland Europe - “were those of its Welsh coal imports”. By the 20th Century, however, it was Wales that danced to the economic beat of the international system. Morgan (1999, p. 331) described the effects of the collapse of the coal industry in Wales:

By December 1925 the unemployed in Wales comprised 13.4 per cent of the insured population, two years later 23.3 per cent and in 1930 27.2 per cent. (The comparable percentage in England for 1930 was 15.8). If the 1920s were dire, the 1930s were even worse. In December 1930 the eastern valleys of Rhymney and Tredegar registered unemployment at the rate of 27.5 per cent of the adult population, Pontypridd, and Rhondda at 30 per cent, and Newport as high as 35 per cent. By August 1932, when the depression reached its lowest point, 42.8 per cent of all insured Welsh working men were idle.

By the early 20th Century, most of the more easily accessible seams of coal had been exhausted, meaning that the coal industry’s “precipitate decline could be explained locally in terms of difficult geological conditions, ... resulting in high costs of production and dependence upon labour intensive methods” (Day, 2002, p. 33). The South Wales coalfields had always been an area of high production costs. However, Welsh coal was particularly suited for steam-raising, meaning that its superiority in this regard offset its higher production costs. “The steam-raising qualities of Welsh coal were sufficiently marked to ensure a demand for it even though it necessarily cost more to produce. Once the special demand declined, much of the industry was

then doomed: since its higher quality would not be able to offset the greater cost of extraction" (Williams, 1983, p. 46). This is an exemplar of the importance of Cheap Nature and Energy in the continuation and perpetuation of the capitalist world-system; the rise of Cheap Energy from abroad led to the dwindling of more expensive energy from Wales. Morgan (1999, p. 331) argued there was a direct correlation between the cheapening of other supplies of energy and its effect on Wales:

European markets began to be serviced by coal mined more cheaply in Italy, Spain, and Poland, while France and Belgium, which had formerly been among Wales's best customers, began to be supplied (ironically) with German coal as war reparations by the stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles. Former South American markets were also importing United States coal at a cheaper rate.

The unproductivity of Welsh coal could be attributed to technological stagnation and in the end German and US extractive industries had twice the output per man compared to Wales (Williams, 1983, p. 52). In understanding how Germany and the USA as relative latecomers could overtake the cradle of industrialisation, it is important to refer to the role of the semi-periphery in the world-system. According to Chase-Dunn (2018, p. 79):

generally stated, our contention is that semi-peripheral areas are likely to generate new institutional forms that transform system structures and modes of accumulation. These changes often lead to the upward mobility of these same semi-peripheral actors in the core/periphery hierarchy. We will see that the semi-periphery is fertile ground for social, organizational, and technical innovation and has an advantageous location for the establishment of new centres of power. That is why the structural position of the semi-periphery has such evolutionary significance.

Firstly, the above reiterates that the world-system is not a closed system and that it is possible for countries to move from the semi-periphery to the core and vice versa

although this process is difficult to attain. In analysing the “advantages of backwardness” Gerschenkron (1962, pp. 7-8) disagreed with the statist understanding of development as put forward by Rostow and felt that there could be advantages to late development if the society could harness them. He stated:

In a number of important historical instances industrialization processes, when launched at length in a backward country, showed considerable differences, as compared with the more advanced countries, not only with regard to the speed of the development (the rate of industrial growth) but also with regard to the productive and organizational structures of industry which emerged from these processes. ... Industrialization always seemed the more promising the greater the backlog of technological innovations which the backward country could take over from the more advanced country.

Furthermore, Gerschenkron argued that the two most important factors in achieving economic development in the face of backwardness were both the availability of raw materials and the organisational structure of a unified state. Germany only achieved the latter in 1870, and as Thorsten Veblen (1939) argued, in the 1870s Germany was economically and politically 250 years behind the UK, but this gap had been overcome by the First World War. Furthermore, Chase-Dunn (2018, p. 79) argued that before 1880:

the United States was semi-peripheral in the sense that it contained within it a mixture of core and peripheral activities, and U.S. merchants mediated trade between the European core and the Caribbean and Latin American periphery. The United States reached core status in the 1880s, and economic hegemony after World War I. Only after World War II was political/military hegemony embraced.

Both countries therefore used the “advantages of backwardness” that were available to them, and both used the raw materials at their disposal to industrialise rapidly; this was at the expense of Welsh industry. The geological, technological, and

economic backdrop therefore made some reduction in Wales's industrial base inevitable, but it was also political. As John Williams (1989, p. 17) argued, Wales is "an integral but peripheral part of a general United Kingdom economy. The problem would then be simply that for a crucial period, the Welsh role in that economy was so obviously best suited to primary production". When Wales stopped being crucial to British economic development its integral role was moved, yet its peripheral position stayed. In this regard, Wales mirrored the experience of the Mezzogiorno; it experienced growth without endogenous development. Wales had a singular function within British industry and the wider world-system. Wales was fulfilling the role that its comparative advantages assumed from it, yet "by playing to its comparative advantages, Wales had been storing up future troubles" (Day, 2002, p. 33). The idiosyncratic nature of Wales's role within industrialisation and the world-system is perhaps best exemplified by Tom Nairn (2021, p. 174) (my emphasis):

This ambiguous, midway location is explained by the nature of Welsh industrialisation. It was unlike the sort of economic development normally inflicted on backward provinces in being massive, and in transforming (eventually) the conditions of life of most of the population. Speaking of the Heads of the Valleys, the Plaid Cymru Economic Plan states: 'Somewhere on Blackrock, between Gilwern and Brynmawr, there should be a notice; "Welcome to the birthplace of the modern world" — the birthplace of modern industry. Here the early ironmasters established industry on a scale never before seen throughout the world. South Wales became the centre of the iron and steel industry and the techniques developed were copied in every developing country ... For once, Wales led the world'. Nothing remotely comparable could be said of any of the other European countries whose nationalisms superficially resemble that of Wales. However, this industrialisation was like that of such periphery regions in being overwhelmingly guided from outside: it was not the work of a native entrepreneurial bourgeoisie accumulating capital for itself (as in Scotland or the Basque Country) but much more like an invasion from

outside. Previously without the main motor of effective separate development, an urban middle class, Wales now acquired an English or at least highly Anglicised bourgeoisie. This combination, an industrialisation at once enormous and de-centred, was probably unique to Wales.

Post-War (dis)Unity

The experiences of the Second World War created a unifying memory and trauma for the people of Britain. From these embers emerged a distinct form of Britishness, embodied by the election of the Labour Party. This was a Britishness which resembled Wales's aspirations and ideals. As Raymond Williams (2003, p. 99) argued:

Taking culture in its full sense you would be speaking of ... a way of life determined by the National Coal Board, the British Steel Corporation, the Milk Marketing Board, the Co-Op and Marks and Spencer, the BBC, the Labour Party, the EEC, NATO.

In the era post-1945, "regional development policy appeared to provide long-term solutions" (Jones, 2000, p. 12). Keynesian economics brought new stimulus to Welsh economic life, with governments extending their degree of involvement in economic management. The Labour Government of 1945-51 twinned Keynesian economic policy with the creation of the welfare state, exemplified by the National Health Service. In Wales, these nationalised industries such as the Coal Board and Steel Corporation "accounted for a disproportionately large number of employees as compared with the regional average for the United Kingdom" (Mann & Fenton, 2017, p. 105). Britain, therefore, represented 'the State', nationalised industries, and the communitarianism of the National Health Service. It therefore made economic sense for the Welsh to remain under the ambit of the British state. As McCrone (1997, p. 591) argued, the 'national' politics of Wales - via labourism - was British.

While coal and steel were still important industries in Wales, their pre-war decline continued. To counterbalance this loss, Wales – alongside other deprived regions – were opened to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Mann and Fenton (2017, p. 178) stated that in the 1960s:

branch plants of multinational corporations like Hoover and Ford located in South Wales. ... This combination of new manufacturing employment and a larger and decentralised public sector provided new forms of work for young people in Wales. By 1968 there would be more people working in car manufacturing, clothing, or household goods industries than in coal or steel, and by 1970 the number of coal pits had been reduced to 50 from the 300 mines that had been in operation when coal was taken into public ownership in 1947.

The rise in these branch plants is exemplified by the fact that “between 1966 and 1973, 48% of the employment growth was non-Welsh in origin, mainly by overseas firms” (Williams, 1981, p. 285). While in 1973, only 10% of manufacturing plants in Wales were Welsh owned, while branch plants accounted for 70% of all manufacturing employment (Jones, 2000, p. 12). This “rapidly expanding presence of non-British corporations. [Meant that] when economic circumstances become less favourable to high levels of investment and production, it is such branch-plant operations which are the first to be adversely affected” (Mann and Fenton, 2017, p. 179). The hope was that these new branch plants, coupled with the expansion of the public sector and raised education standards would offer opportunities for new forms of employment for the ‘mobile’ middle-class in Wales. The state also relocated some of its activities to Wales in the 1960s, including the DVLA, the Royal Mint, and the Passport Office.

These branch plants tied the English and Welsh economies closer together; these companies were generally headquartered in London or the South-East of England, which on one hand promoted the development of the M4 and on the other resulted

in many of the manufacturing jobs in Wales being 'low-skilled' along the assembly line (Day, 2002, p. 188). This "represented a new dependence which, allied to the old, was to have severe consequences in the following decades" (Jones, 2000, p. 12). Glyn Williams (1981, p. 285) argued that these policies to attract businesses seek to "lower the price of labour and capital by means of taxation and subsidies to make locating in the periphery more attractive to private enterprise. In other words, it involves subsidizing private enterprise to attract it to the peripheral area where there is a ready workforce whose labour can be exploited". Despite the shortcomings of Keynesian economics, it did at least recognise the role of the state in overcoming inequality. This changed with the election of Margaret Thatcher, which Calvin Jones (2015, pp. 276-277) argued embodied a:

consequent ideological shift that, albeit notionally a-spatial, re-cast the regional problem in a whole new light. Previous governments (often dependent of course on votes from the periphery) had seen supporting employment in poor regions as part of the national compact. Under the new orthodoxy, the language of competition applied to industries – and increasingly its host regions – within the national boundaries as well as outside.

In effect, neoliberalism and the language of competition meant that firstly, capital would concentrate on smaller and smaller regions. In the UK, this has generally meant the south-east of England. Secondly, this neoliberal logic has made peripheral regions like Wales less attractive for capitalist investment outside of narrow spaces for branch plants. The British state is then unable – or unwilling – to change this central fact. Neoliberalism meant that it was no longer the state's role to legitimate and promote the activities of local capital; its role was to contend with outside interests, and succour to MNCs to obtain investment or jobs. This led Habermas (1975) to argue that Britain was facing two forms of crises; a rationality crisis because the state was unable to bargain successfully with transnational capital, and a legitimisation crisis due to its inability to argue for the validation of restructuring the

local environment in favour of foreign capital. The United Kingdom's joining of the European Economic Community only exacerbated the economic advantages held by a small set of metropolitan zones within the UK and the EU more generally. This institutional structure which was designed in a way to foster 'free' trade and economic competition paid scant attention to the fact that "neoliberal policies both at national and EU levels seem to be ignoring historical experiences which show that these very processes of capitalist competition are precisely responsible for the present situation (Hadjimichalis, 1994, p. 27).

This change was felt by some in Wales to be *unWelsh* and led to a recalibration of Britishness (Osmond, 2002). Wales held referenda on (some form) of devolution in both 1979 and 1997. Comparing the referendum results of 1979 and 1997 can help illuminate this case. In 1979, roughly 20% of the people of Wales voted in favour of devolution. In 1997, this number was 50.3%. Although the "yes" vote only won by 6,721 votes in 1997, this hides the fact that there was a "dramatic 30% increase in the electorate voting in favour of devolution between the two devolution referenda of 1979 and 1997 [which] indicated that while levels of Welsh and British identity may have not changed much, there had been profound changes in the form of politicisation of the Welsh identity prior to devolution" (Bradbury & Andrews, 2010). Table 1 shows that British/British and Welsh Only identifiers, and Welsh identifiers has remained relatively stable in Wales over the last forty or so years. In fact, 2011 saw a referendum on more powers to the (now) Senedd which passed with 63.49% of people voting in favour, yet the number of Welsh identifiers was lower than in 1979. Bradbury and Andrews seem correct in their analysis that the *form* of Welshness and Britishness may have changed more than the level of identification with each identity.

	1979	1997	2011	2021
	%	%	%	%
Welsh Only	59	63	58	55
British/ British and Welsh	34	26	24	27

Table 1: Welsh Only and British/British and Welsh identifiers in Wales. Author's Own. Data Taken From: Welsh Referendum Study 1997, Welsh Assembly Election Study 1999, Census 2011, Census 2021.

Osmond (1998) argued that the characteristic of Britishness within Wales was “pride in the institutions of Britain, most notably the welfare state system and the NHS”. These two pillars of pride started to crumble in the years between the two referenda. According to Bradbury and Andrews (2010, p. 235) the Thatcher and Major governments

gave [the] greatest impetus to a re-awakening of sub-state national identities ... by undermining the pride in those institutions which embodied values that were simultaneously British and Welsh, such as the welfare state, the Conservative government alienated many voters in Wales from a political process which seemed to have left them disenfranchised and at the mercy of their (seemingly) more right-leaning English counterparts.

What Wales experienced during 18 years of Conservative government was a bifocal changing of ‘Welshness’ but also ‘Britishness’. In Rebecca Davies’s (2006, p. 117) words; “not only did social and economic change in Wales impact upon national

identities in Wales but given Wales's location within the UK, changes at the latter level also impacted on national identities in Wales".

The election of Margaret Thatcher and the rise of neoliberalism, however, were not the only events which shaped the economy as well as understandings of Britishness and Welshness in the second half of the 20th Century: this era also saw Britain's vast colonial empire unravel. As argued previously, Britishness was a political identity and one that rested on the strength of the Empire and its corresponding core – or hegemonic – position within the world-system. "If we accept that Britishness was in essence an imperial identity, then the loss of empire eroded that identity at home and abroad" (McCrone, 1997, p. 592). The Scottish National Party (SNP) and Plaid Cymru became more visible during this era of decolonisation, with Plaid Cymru winning their first Parliamentary seat in 1966 and the SNP following in 1967.⁷¹ Authors such as Mullen and Gibbs (2023) and Massetti (2019) argued that these parties attempted to frame their struggle within this decolonial paradigm. In this regard, nationalist resurgence in the 'old' Great Powers of Europe was seen as the last stage in the fight against imperialism. This viewpoint found its most ardent academic support in the work of Michael Hechter (2007) discussed previously. However, the effect of decolonisation on nationalist demands 'at home' was more strongly linked with Britain's relegation to a semi-peripheral position in the world-system, which the loss of empire accelerated. Political nationalism in Wales began to rise just as the British state's power was diminishing both within the world-system and 'at home'. As Rawkins (1978, pp. 522-523) argued:

From a perspective which places the state in the context of the world economic system, what is significant in the political analysis of Scotland and Wales is the declining power of the British state, rather than an overconcentration of power at Westminster. It is not the growth of state power which has produced an ever-more centralized

⁷¹ The SNP did have a Parliamentarian elected in 1945 in a by-election during the War yet lost the seat later that year.

economy, but rather the tendency for the development of vast national and transnational conglomerate enterprises which has brought about social and economic changes within state boundaries, quite outside the control of the state bureaucracy. In turn, these developments have resulted in a transformation in the character of the state. Massive state intervention in the economy has become essential as movements of capital investment have proved increasingly sensitive to international factors and technological innovations. The task of defending the domestic economy and the social welfare of citizens, and at the same time continuing to attract the foreign capital seen to be necessary in maintaining employment levels and retaining domestic capital which might otherwise be invested elsewhere, has proved especially problematic.

Decolonisation, Britain's semi-peripheral position, and Thatcherism therefore helped give rise to a new form of political Welshness which expressed itself by voting (just) in favour of some national autonomy. The hope was that this would be a new dawn for Wales and its economy.

'New' Wales, Old Problems

Since 1945, Wales's economic history – and now its present – has been characterised by change, but also continuity. On one hand, it is possible to view the era of Keynesianism, neoliberalism, and the Senedd era in a devolved Britain as three separate periods. However, to do so masks the continuities that exist between them. This chapter will consider a new theoretical lens which follows the continuities of the post-war era to the present.

At its centre, both Keynesianism and neoliberalism rely on neoclassical economic assumptions regarding inequality and competition. The difference lies in the fact that Keynesian economics favours demand-side policies while neoliberalism favours supply-side policies (Schmidt, 2019). Keynesianism viewed regional inequalities as

the result of weakness in demand for a region's goods and services and therefore could be addressed by redistributive spending by the central state. Management of demand in different regions could in the long-term lead to full employment and equilibrium, and this would be fostered by incentives for capital investment, public investment into infrastructure, and incentives for employment. Its role was to "expand capitalism while offering real but limited concessions to the subaltern classes. It thereby displaced more radical demands while not offering meaningful political inclusion or economic justice" (Bieling, 2015, p. 102). Keynesianism therefore did not challenge the underlying causes of unequal development although it did attempt to improve economic conditions within the confines of the system. However, the preceding sub-chapter showed that Keynesianism was unable to truly raise the demand for Welsh products; the decline of heavy industry was close to being terminal before Thatcher struck the final blow. Keynesianism "treated regions as functional regions without history and geography" (Weissenbacher, 2018, p. 86).

With regards to economic policy, the capturing of FDI was an aim for all British governments from the 1960s onwards, regardless of whether they relied on supply-side or demand-side policy tools. Between 1979 and 1991, Wales was the most successful UK 'region' with regards to attracting inward investment, receiving 14% of the total between these years (Bradfield, 2006, p. 329). In 1988, Wales had 4 per cent of the UK workforce, yet attracted more than 20 per cent of all new FDI jobs coming to the UK. In 1990, foreign-owned companies represented 22% of the Welsh manufacturing workforce, accounting for 6% of total employment (Hill & Munday, 1991, p. 23). By 1996, foreign-owned firms accounted for 39% of total manufacturing employment, and this number has remained steady with 40% of total employment in the field being foreign-owned in 2005 (Parry, 2021, p. 48). The dominance of FDI was so great that Bradfield (2006, p. 329) argued that the Thatcher government was reliant on foreign investment while Goberman (2013, p. 53) argued that FDI was the "key priority for the Welsh Office between 1974 and 1997". Despite FDI being a clear

policy goal throughout the postwar era, the efficacy of such a policy is not agreed upon. Lovering (1999b, p. 23) quipped that English branch plants were viewed as an issue yet German, Korean, or Japanese branch plants were now somehow seen as advantageous. FDI relies upon regions competing against one another, “such competition means that, in practice, less favoured regions’ prospects are shaped by *external* decisions and forces over which they have little control” (MacKinnon & Phelps, 2001, p. 255) (italics in original). Wales’s lack of control over the decision-making processes of large multinationals, allied with Wales’s comparative advantage lying in its ‘competitive cost base’ led to overseas investors providing low-paid, low-skill jobs. This led public funds to being directed away from local, endogenous companies (Cato, 2004). John Lovering (1999, p. 381) explicitly questioned the efficacy of such a policy:

The endlessly repeated claim that inward investment into Wales has had a transformative influence on the regional economy as a whole is entirely lacking in evidence. Over the decade to 1995, foreign direct investment created very few jobs indeed.

Both Keynesianism and Thatcherism overlooked the spatial aspects of capitalist inequality and development, albeit from different ideological positions. Calvin Jones (2023, p. 3) – while not referring specifically to FDI - argued that we must understand the importance of ‘placeless’ actors and corporations in the making and remaking of space, capital, and society:

It is not enough then to set places against each other; we must consider social, economic, and political actors who have choice over where and how they operate, and who then exercise power to shape these chosen places for functionally narrow self-interest, and in a voluntary and reversible (for themselves) fashion. The placeless then are those whose profits, well-being, identity, or success do not depend on a specific place, but rather on a type of place or places.

Wales, the north-east of England and Yorkshire are all a similar type of place and all compete with each other, helping to entrench the position of each. This reality of comparative advantage and powerlessness was referred to by Dennis Thomas (1991, p. 16) in the *Western Mail*⁷²:

The ability of businesses ... to withstand competitive pressures ... and to benefit from opportunities will depend on their market orientation, the efficiency of their operations and any comparative advantages provided by their location relative to other parts of the UK and EU. The problem is that many other places can offer as many, and in some cases, more advantages than a Welsh location. Coupled with doubts as to the real strength of the economic base [...] large parts of Wales may well struggle as the twentieth century draws to a close.

The twentieth century has now drawn to a close, yet Thatcher's economic logic of competition between geographical areas has remained. This is true despite a 'new' Labour government and the creation of institutions such as the Welsh Senedd. New Labour, under Blair's Premiership introduced supply-side policies which focused on skills promotion (Schmidt, 2019, p. 519). The argument was that these skills would enhance 'employability' and make workers flexible and more able to adapt to a 'new' 'post-Fordist' economy. These skills would lower regional inequality by enhancing the comparative advantage of all the UK compared to abroad. On a Wales level, the capturing of inward investment remains a stated policy goal of the Welsh Government. In 2015, their *Wales in the World* report stated that "as our heavy industries declined, we looked outwards to bring investors into Wales. They were attracted by an excellent and productive workforce, good communications, a *competitive cost base* and access to the massive European marketplace. Today, hundreds of foreign companies invest in Wales and employ many thousands of workers" (Welsh Government, 2015, p. 4) (italics added). Similarly, the Welsh

⁷² A Welsh daily newspaper

Government's Economic Action Plan of 2017 states "our exports and levels of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) continue to impress. ... Our export performance and levels of FDI demonstrate how much confidence the world has in the quality of Welsh business, products, and services and how much they value our people and places as an ideal destination for business investment" (Welsh Government, 2017, p. 1). The Government has also boasted that they have been involved in 95% of all FDI deals in Wales, clearly showing their 'hands-on' approach (Welsh Government, 2023).

Wales's reliance on FDI, which tends to be low-wage, 'low-skilled' and mobile has exacerbated the atomisation of the UK's economic structure, regardless of which party is in government or regardless of new political institutions such as the Senedd. Figure 50 shows the GDP per capita rankings of the regions of the UK. The top four regions in 1995 were the same in 2021, while the bottom three also remained the same. The middle-ranking regions change places with one another but are in no danger of either breaking into the higher tier of regions or falling in with the lower tier of regions. Due to the regional competition that exists between places, Wales fights with other underdeveloped regions for capital investment, usually of low value, while higher-value capital and headquarters move to regions such as the southeast of England and today, Scotland.

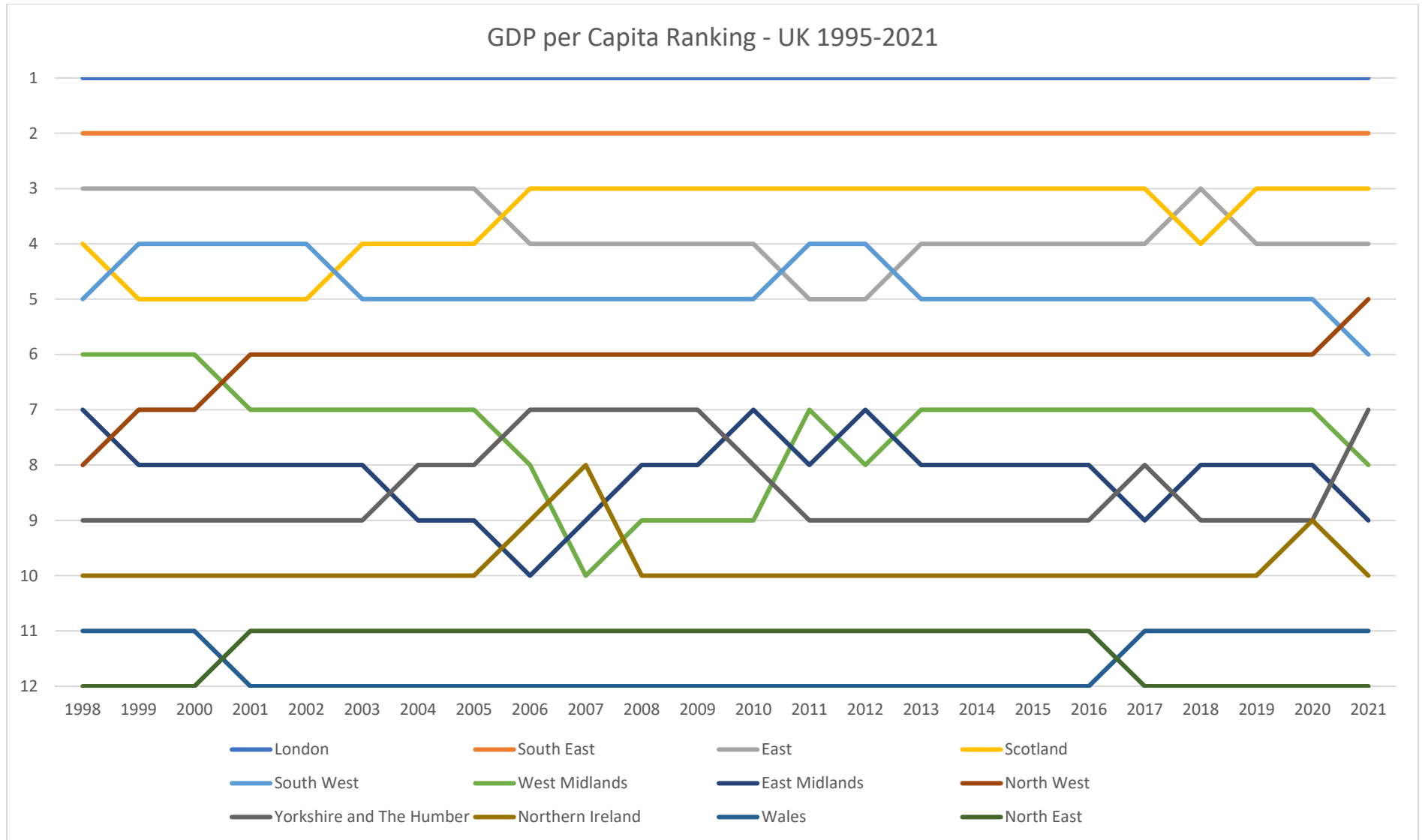


Figure 50: GDP per Capita Ranking UK. Author's Own.

Figure 51 confirms the spatial inequality that exists in the UK and Wales's position near the bottom of the rankings. What is particularly striking is the inequality that exists between London and the rest of the UK, in this regard, the UK is the most unequal of all three case studies. Figure 52 shows the same GDP per capita figures but with London excluded, what emerges is a tiered system with London out in front on its own, followed by a second tier of overdeveloped regions with the south-east of England leading with the East of England and Scotland behind, followed by a middle tier of regions, with the north-east of England and Wales in a separate category at the bottom of the table.

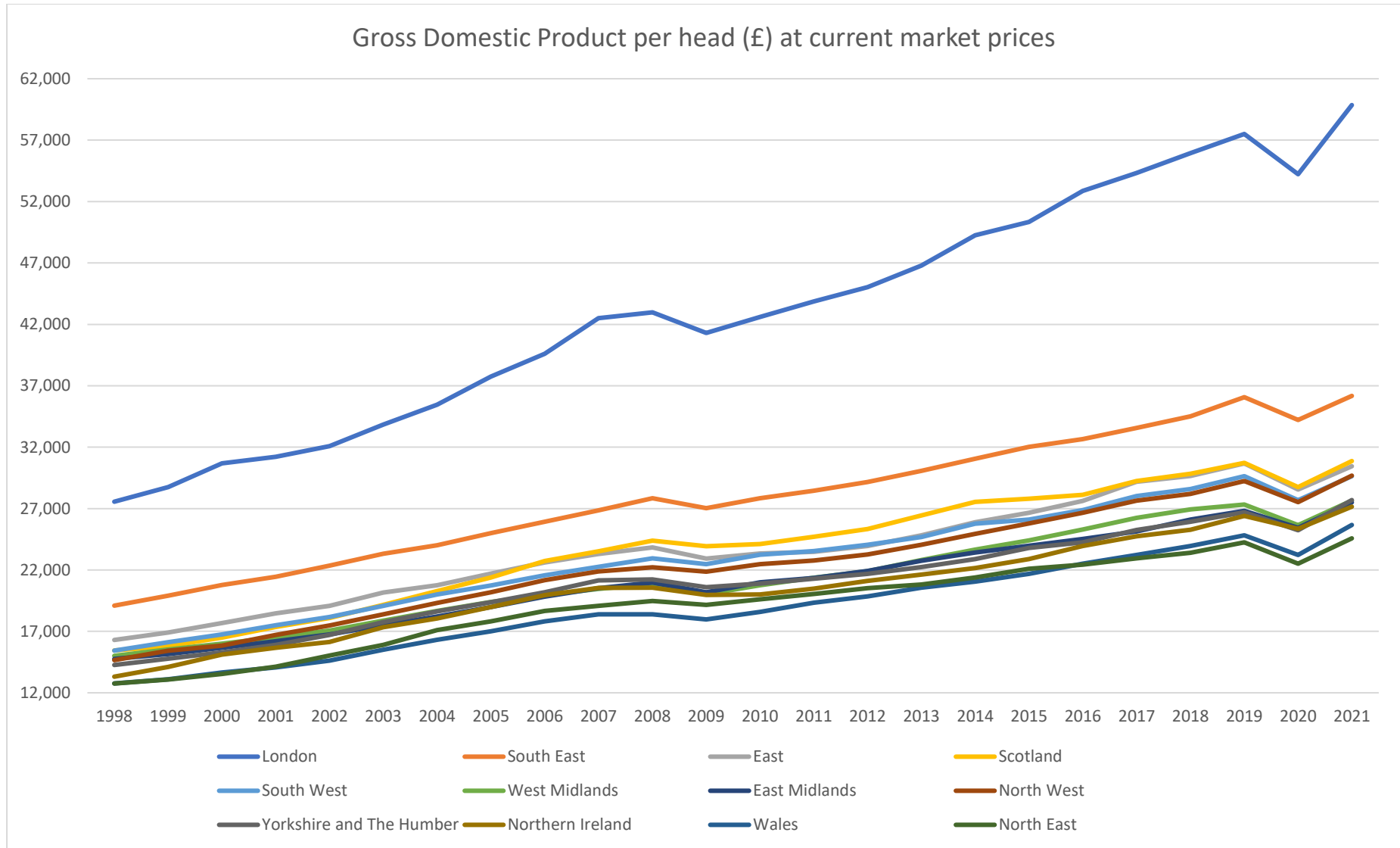


Figure 51: Gross Domestic Product per head (£) at current market prices. Author's Own.

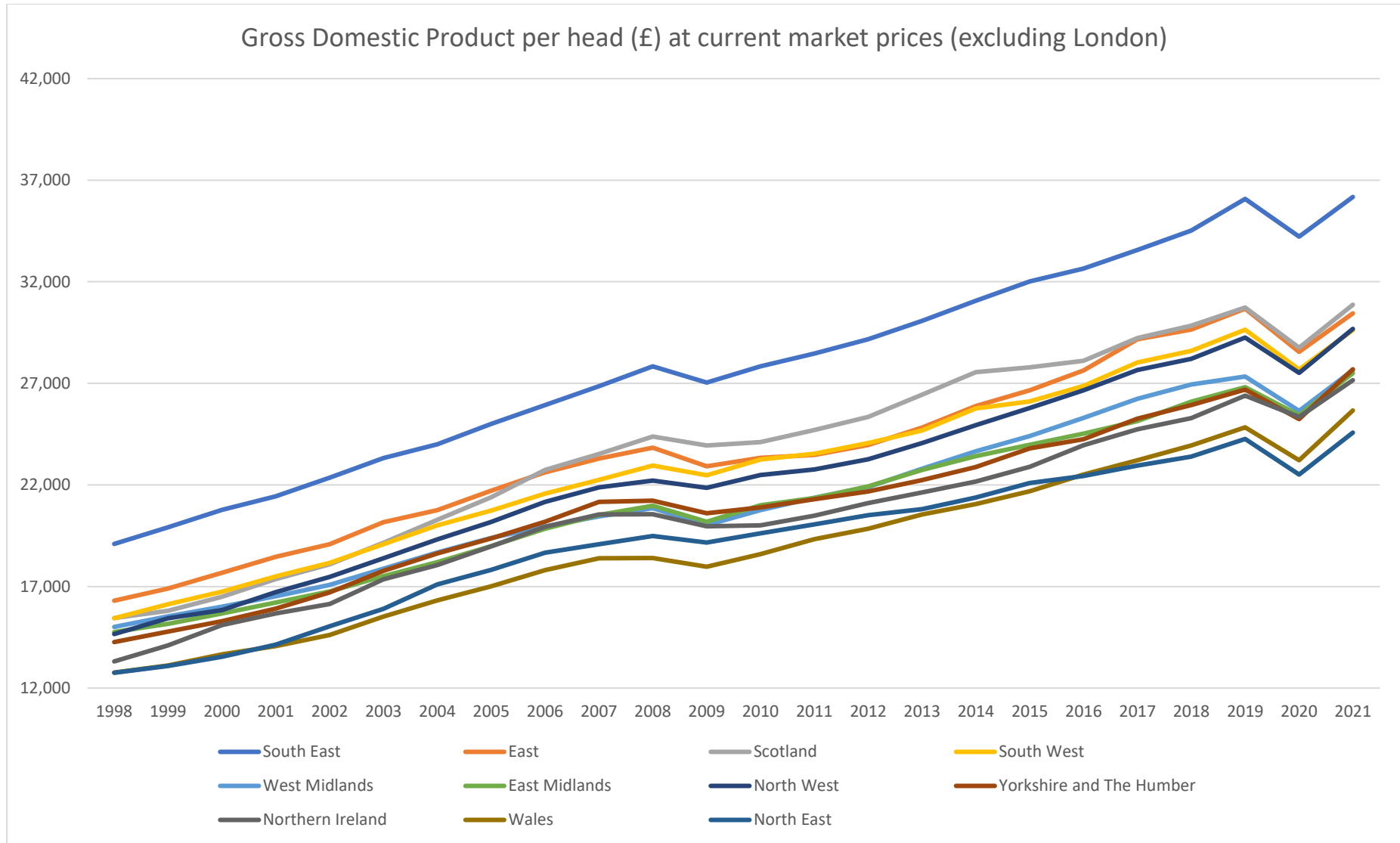


Figure 52: Gross Domestic Product per head (£) at current market prices (excluding London). Author's Own.

Scholars such as Overman (2017, p. 4) have argued that the London economy and its 'redistributive' power are essential for the vitality and health of the UK economy at large. He argued that "there is no evidence pointing to large benefits from spatial redistribution and much evidence that restrictive planning in London has been harmful. ... Harnessing London's growth is key". It is true that "London makes a fiscal transfer of tens of billions to other regions whilst the tax take in Wales is some 33% lower than public spending" (Jones, 2015, p. 279) and one could therefore infer that the strength of London is a net benefit for Wales and other underdeveloped regions due to this value transfer. However, as Cooke (1982, p. 219) argued:

Wales's debt funding is peculiarly distributed in that a greater proportion goes towards the maintenance of her reserves of labour than elsewhere, while considerably less is spent in the sector which has traditionally been thought of as the key regulator of unemployment under demand-management economic policy, the construction sector.

In effect, Wales's function within the international division of labour is to be a region of surplus labour power to be exploited in times of expansion and left idle in times of contraction. It is therefore dependent on the whims of foreign and east-English inward investment. The UK Government's own Public Spending Statistical Analysis of 2021 (HM Treasury, 2021) bears out this fact.

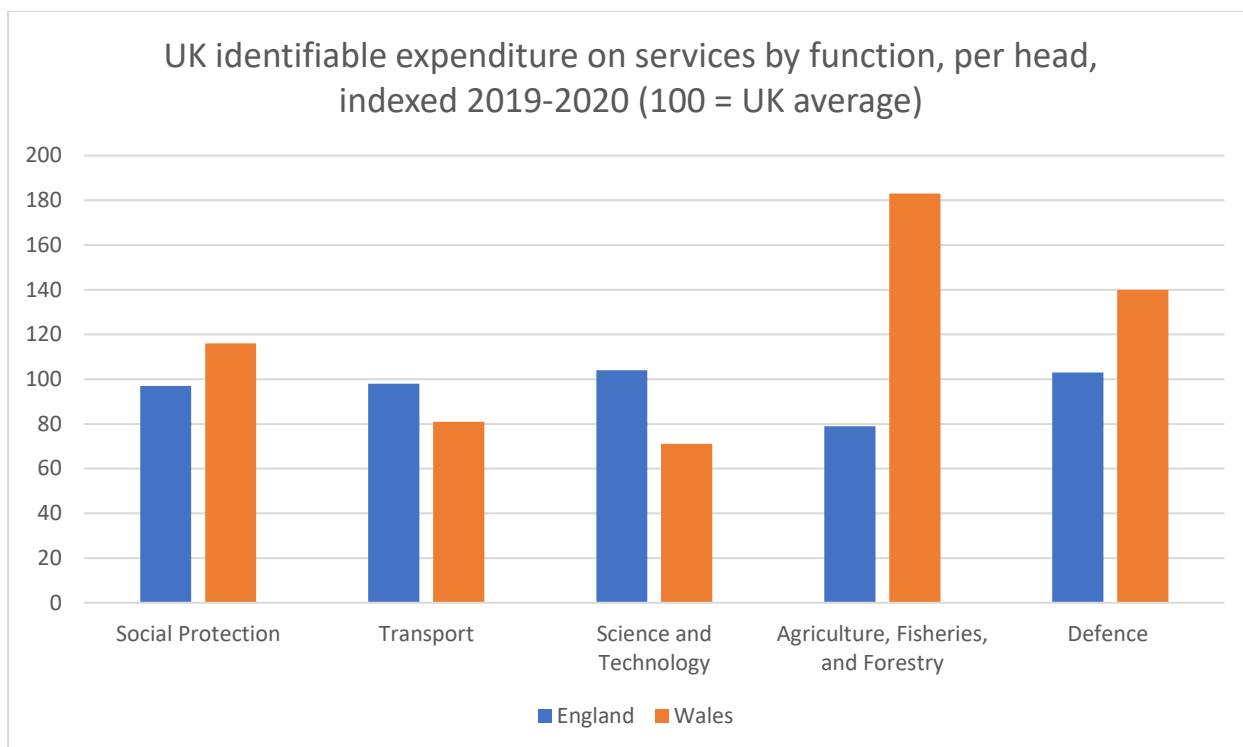


Figure 53: UK identifiable expenditure on services by function, per head, indexed 2019-2020. Author's Own. Data from: (HM Treasury, 2021).

UK Government expenditure is based upon those very industries and services that maintain Wales in a dependent and underdeveloped position, whereby expenditure in England (and London in particular) is based on those sectors that generate higher capital. As Calvin Jones (2015, pp. 279-280) succinctly explained:

Somewhat annoyingly for the peripheral regions, the narrative is usually one of handouts: there is rarer discussion (outside of these regions) about the extent to which often immobile regional resources (natural as well as labour) are levered to the benefit of non-local actors, be these UK-national or increasingly transnational corporations. ... We have promulgated a myth that regions exist on a competitive and largely even playing field, where a few more skills, some better R&D or improved market access might catapult a region up the national hierarchy.

This unevenness in the way that capital and space have been reproduced in the UK has led to social dislocation, with this being embodied in the Brexit vote and different voting patterns across geographic areas.

How Leave was my Valley?

While there has been some generalisation in this work by referring to ‘the Welsh’ or ‘the Italians’, and so on, economics and place coalesce to create specific identities and worldviews. These can create different understandings of Welshness as well as different political outlooks. These differences of understanding and identity may lead to a new fragmentation of society, with some of the Welsh moving towards more nationalist policies, while others might retrench towards unionism. Brexit is an example in this regard of how place, class, and identity coalesce to create different political outcomes. On the 23rd of June 2016, Wales – as well as the UK in its entirety – voted to leave the European Union. The result in Wales came as a shock, the general consensus was that the Welsh were more Europhile than their English neighbours, partly because the EU could give an expression to Welshness separate from the British/English axis, and partly because Wales was a net beneficiary of EU funding. This led Richard Wyn Jones to state that “it is clearly the case that Euro-scepticism is not a prominent feature of Welsh political culture” (Wyn Jones & Rumbul, 2012). Certainly, it was not a feature for political parties in Wales, but the Welsh people decided to eschew the views of their politicians and vote (just) in favour of leaving the European Union. This led the same academic to state that Wales had “shot itself in the foot in this referendum” (Wyn Jones, 2016). On the surface, people in Wales voted for Brexit in very similar numbers to their English cousins, and therefore it was assumed they did so for similar reasons.

It was argued that ‘the Welsh’ had voted to Remain, while it was English immigrants that had swung the vote for Leave in Wales (Leake, 2019). However, this thesis argues that there was a clear Welsh dimension as to why people voted to Remain *or* Leave, and this stems from different understandings and conceptualisations of Welshness that exist across the country. For example, 9 of the 15 local authorities, and 7 of the 10 constituencies with the highest Brexit vote also had higher than average Welsh identifiers. Strong Welsh identifiers, as shown in Figure 54 below, were relatively likely to vote Leave.

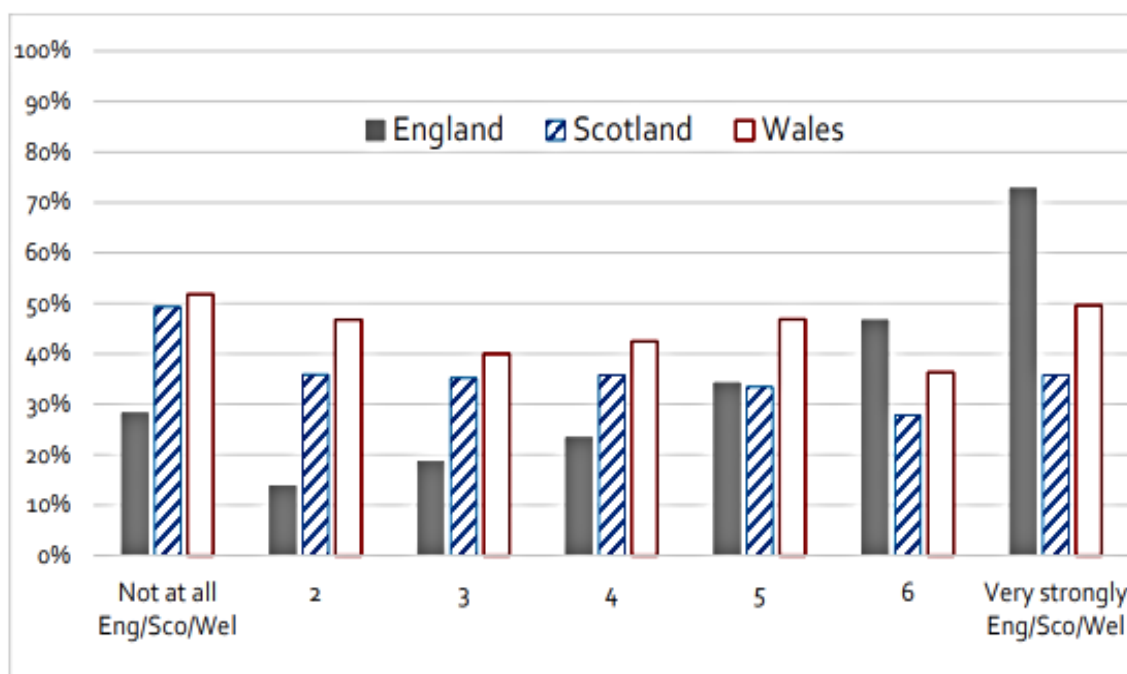


Figure 54: Strength of sub-state national identity and Leave vote (%). Source: (Henderson, et al., 2021, p. 17).

Furthermore, Euroscepticism in some parts of the country – due to the social milieu in which they operate – has a longer history than has been accepted in much of the literature. This thesis previously argued that the best term to describe European integration was that of “permissive consensus”, whereby integration was an elite

affair, but safeguarded by the fact that it was not high on the list of priorities for the people of Europe (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970). The difference was that this permissive consensus was now coming to an end:

The outcome of the referendum, of course, depended on public opinion. Indeed, elite perspectives had interacted with public opinion throughout the last five decades. This interaction is captured by the key concepts of permissive consensus and constraining dissensus. The permissive consensus was characterised by public disinterest in Europe that enabled political elites to promote integration independently of the public's wishes. This permissive consensus was gradually replaced with a constraining dissensus as negative opinions of European integration grew and the public began to diverge in their assessments of EU membership. The dissensus was also characterised by the rise of Eurosceptic political parties and factions within mainstream parties. The permissive consensus to constraining dissensus narrative of Euroscepticism implies people were apathetic, indifferent, or mildly favourable towards Europe in the early 1980s. Public opinion was not initially perceived as an important issue for early proponents of functionalist approaches to European integration. Integration processes were understood as an elite driven venture. Citizens were understood to be ill-informed and to lack coherent beliefs on policy issues such as foreign policy (Moss & Clarke, 2021, p. 548).

The remainder of this subchapter will analyse the economic structure of different parts of Wales, and how this interacts with differing conceptions of Welshness, helping to explain the geographic difference in the referendum result.

By looking at opinion polls and voting patterns in Wales over the last 50 or so years, public ambivalence towards the EU, if not outright Euroscepticism is clear. To begin, in the referendum of 1975 whereby it was asked whether the UK should stay in the European Community, “the Welsh electorate were marginally less enthusiastic about the Union than voters in the rest of the state. In the 1975 referendum 64% voted to remain in the EEC as compared to 67.2% in favour across the UK as a whole” (Wyn

Jones & Rumbul, 2012, p. 558). In a *Eurobarometer* poll of 1998, 34% of respondents in Wales thought British membership of the EU was a bad thing, compared to 30% who thought it was a good thing. This differed from Scotland where the numbers were 9% and 54% respectively (Haesly, 2001, p. 88). In 2012, a Chatham House-YouGov Survey showed that only 26% of people in Wales were in favour of EU membership, while 52% were against it (Knight, et al., 2012, p. 13). This meant that support for the EU was lowest in the Midlands and Wales of all regions of the UK (Raines, 2012).⁷³ Furthermore, a 2014 Survey showed that ‘Welsh Only’ identifiers in Wales were *more likely* to think that UK membership of the EU was a bad thing (38%) compared to ‘British Only’ identifiers in Wales (31%) (Henderson, et al., 2016). Despite calls to the contrary, therefore, Euroscepticism – or at least *Euroambivalence* – has a long history in Wales and cannot be placed solely at the door of the ‘English immigrant’.

At this juncture, it would be of value to analyse the geographical voting patterns of the 2016 referendum in Wales. Not all of Wales voted for Brexit, and neither did all people and places vote for the same reasons, some generalisations therefore - while inescapable - may not capture the complete ‘messiness’ of social life. Figure 55 shows that 5 of Wales’s 22 Local Authorities voted in favour of Remain. These were Ceredigion, Gwynedd, Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan, and Monmouth.

⁷³ Unfortunately, YouGov combine Wales and the Midlands in their disaggregated data, meaning this is not as reliable as it could otherwise be.

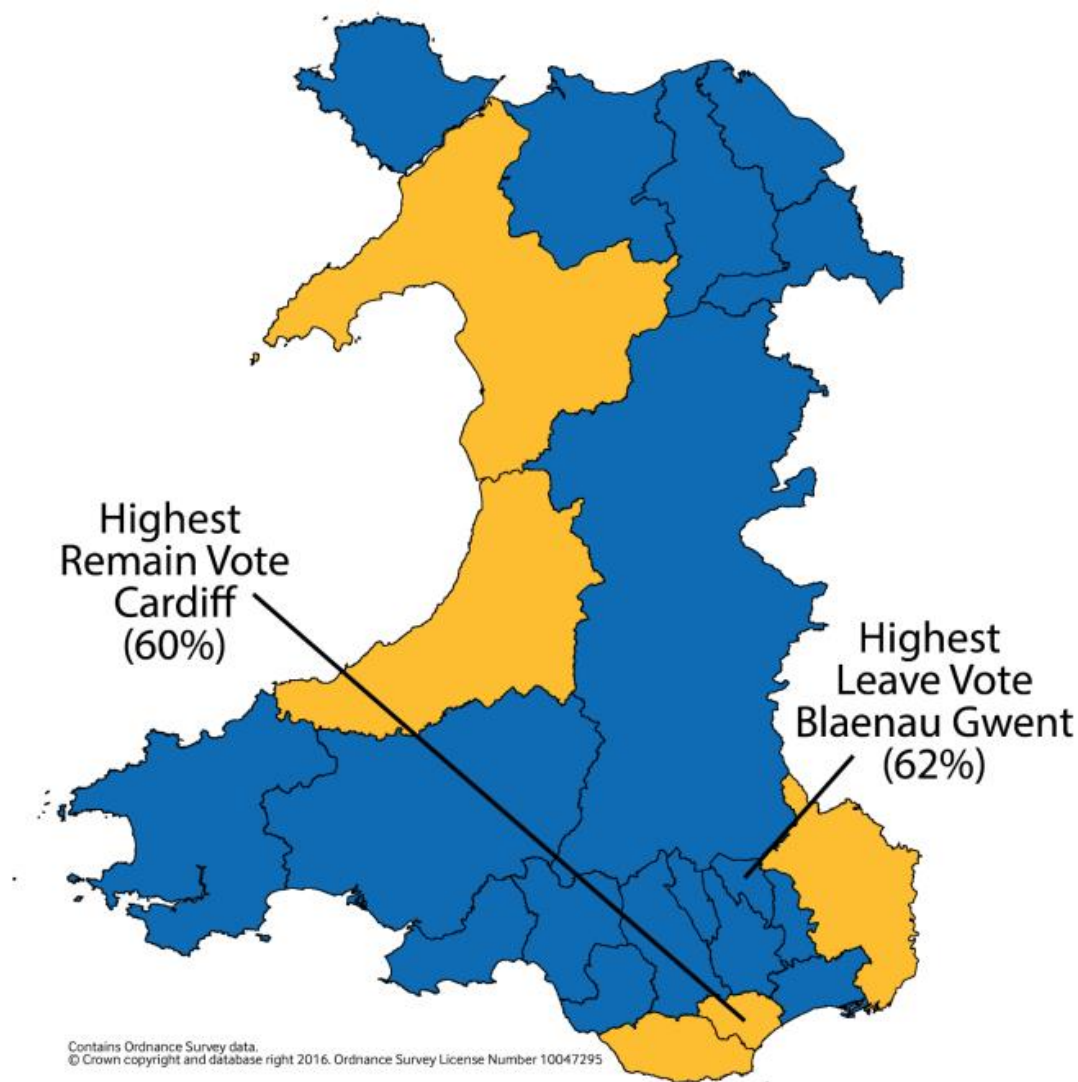


Figure 55: Referendum Results in Wales by Local Authority. Source: (Senedd Cymru, 2016).

At first glance, there does not seem to be a clear pattern regarding why certain places voted Leave or Remain. Cardiff, the Vale, and Monmouth, it is true, share some similar characteristics in that they are generally wealthier parts of the country. However, Ceredigion and Gwynedd do not fit this general pattern. However, the Leave/Remain binary may obfuscate different reasons behind voting Leave/Remain in different areas. That is, Blaenau Gwent may have voted Leave for very different reasons to Powys, while Gwynedd's reasons for Remain may differ from those of Monmouth. This thesis has argued extensively for the importance of understanding

that space is socially produced and organised, and that space contains and shapes our social and economic relations. This territorial division of labour – while acting on a global level – also works on much smaller intra-societal ones. It holds, therefore, that our social milieu and habitus differ from one place to the next, and the conditions arising in our specific social milieu will affect not only *how* we vote, but *why* we have voted that way.

Before turning specifically to the Brexit vote and its relationship with identity, it is worth noting earlier scholarly work that has attempted to map the relationship between geography, identity, and voting patterns in Wales. In 1985, Denis Balsom created what he termed the ‘Three-Wales Model’. It demarcated Wales into three regions and asserted “that party competition and voting behaviour in Wales was defined by three social factors: class, national identity and language” (Scully & Wyn Jones, 2012, p. 656) and that these factors differed across space. Figure 56 below shows the Three-Wales Model. Balsom stated that there is a Welsh-speaking, Welsh-identifying group which is centred on the north and west of Wales. This is the area he designated as *Y Fro Gymraeg*. The fact that Welsh-language prevalence is higher in this area meant that this area would have a higher propensity to support Plaid Cymru. Secondly, there is a Welsh-identifying, non-Welsh-speaking group which is most prevalent in the South Wales Valleys which he designated Welsh Wales, and there is a British-identifying, non-Welsh-speaking group which is situated on the border with England and in Pembrokeshire which is designated “British Wales”. These geographical regions mirror those to which Raymond Williams (2021, p. 320) referred to:

in Wales, we have always been aware of the deep differences between industrial South Wales, rural North and West Wales and the very specific border country from which I myself come.

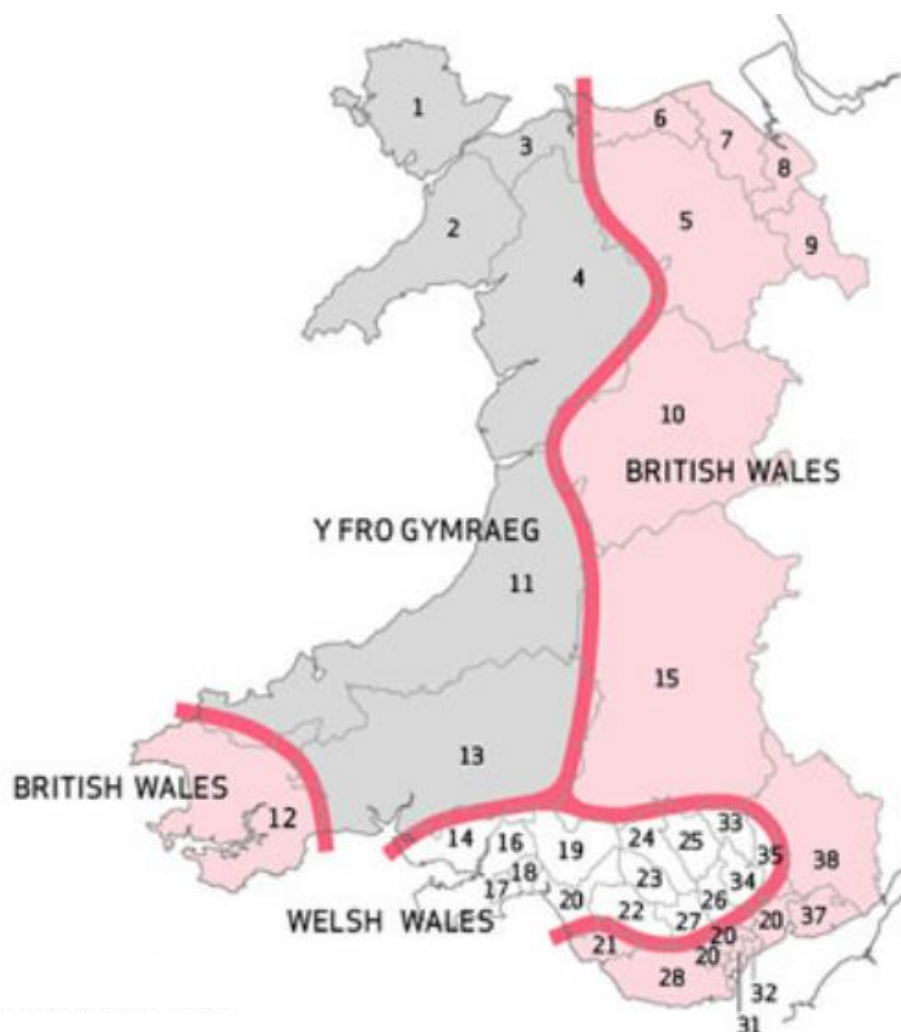


Figure 56: *The Three-Wales Model*. Source: (Balsom, 1985, p. 5).

Balsom used data from the 1979 Welsh Election Survey and found that there were two regions of Wales where around 2/3rds of the population identified itself as Welsh: North and West Wales, and the South Wales Valleys. In British Wales, a British identity was prevalent, although not necessarily the dominant identity. British identifiers were (generally) more middle class, (generally) older and (generally) more likely to have been born outside of Wales, they were also more likely to vote Conservative. This analysis built on earlier work which argued that “31 per cent of the 'British' middle class supports Labour, compared with 53 per cent of

the 'Welsh' middle class; conversely, the 'British' working class is more Conservative (27 per cent) than the 'Welsh' working class (10 per cent)" (Balsom, et al., 1983, p. 304). Different, distinctive milieux therefore existed in Wales, and these milieux gave expression to Welshness in different ways across geographic locations. Both the devolution referendum of 1997 and the Senedd election of 2021 attest to the continued relevance of the Three-Wales Model. Those areas that voted 'Yes' in 1997 corresponded almost perfectly with Balsom's *Y Fro Gymraeg* and Welsh Wales. It seemed that different levels of identification and understandings of Welshness had given expression to different constitutional and political preferences, with British Wales preferring no devolution, while the other two parts of Wales (just) supported some form of political separateness.

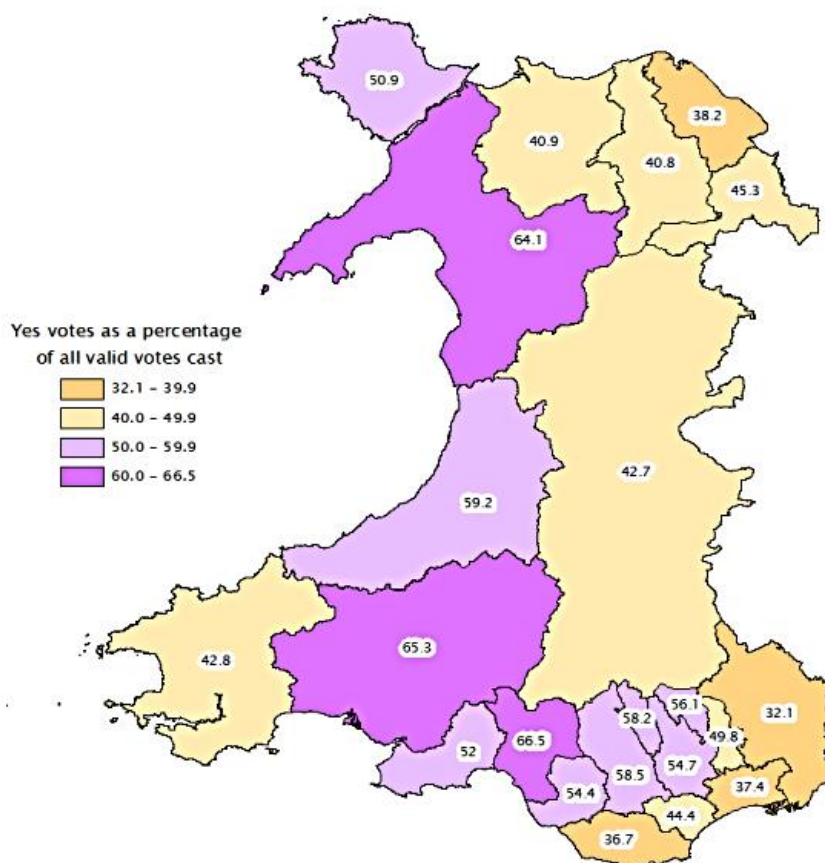


Figure 57: Referendum 1997 results by local authority, proportion of "yes" votes. Source: (National Assembly for Wales, 2011, p. 7).

In the Senedd election of 2021, we also see the continued relevance of the Three-Wales Model. On a constituency level, Plaid Cymru's seats all came from *Y Fro Gymraeg*. Similarly, each of the Conservatives' seats were won in British Wales. Welsh Wales on the other hand is a sea of red, with every single seat being won by the Labour Party. While the Three-Wales Model is too generalised to explain all difference that exists across Wales, its broad strokes can capture some of the different voting cleavages that exist across social and geographical milieux. Let us now return to the Brexit referendum with our new analytical tool.

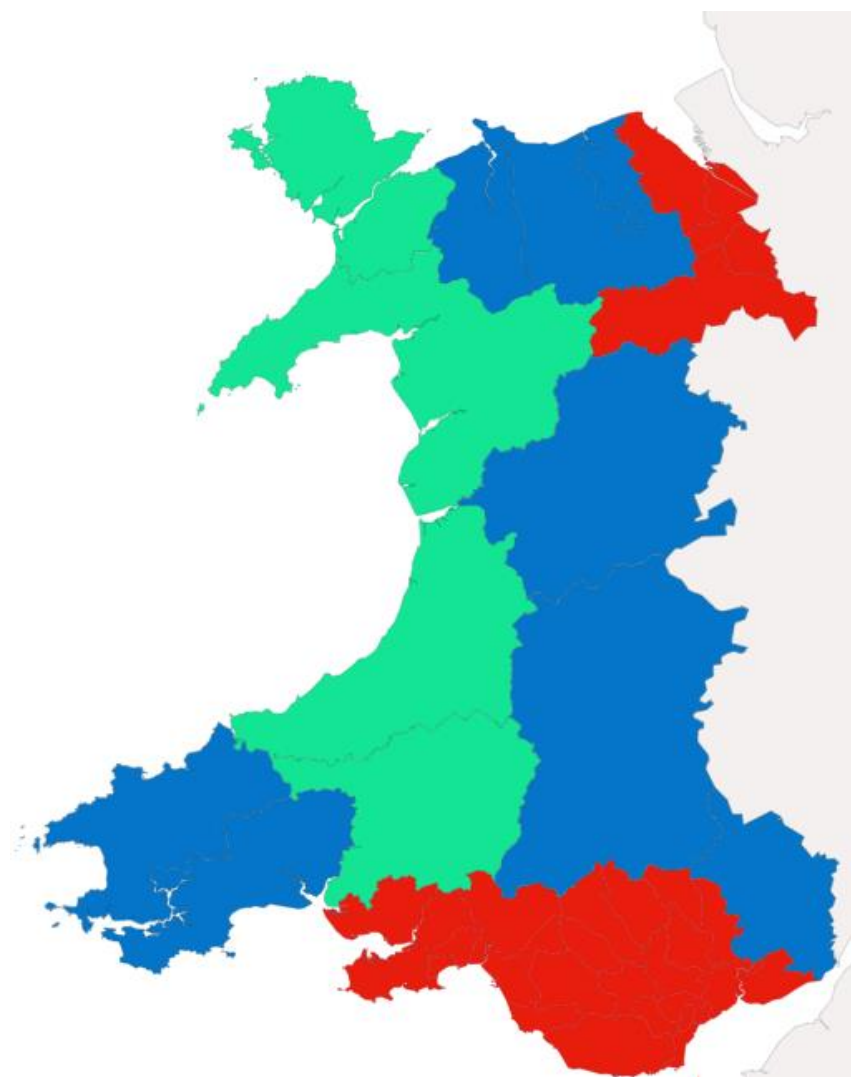


Figure 58: Senedd 2021 Election Constituency Results. Source: (BBC News, 2021).

By using the Three-Wales Model to explain the Brexit Referendum results we see that 2 of the 5 Remain Constituencies are to be found in *Y Fro Gymraeg*. This area has a particular articulation of Welshness conducive to support for the European project. Welsh identifiers here are more likely to view European identity as being “based on the recognition of diversity and pluralism”, with Welshness and Wales having a voice within it (Jones, 1992, p. 332). Nonconformism remains to have some influence here, as does the Liberal tradition, Hughes (2011) argued that these factors in small nations are linked to a particular form of national identity which is nested within Europeanness. These attitudes correspond broadly to those of Plaid Cymru who are strongest in this part of Wales. Elias (2013, p. 48) argued that “Europeanist ideas” have shaped Plaid’s constitutional thinking. They see Europe as a vehicle for cooperation between small nations within a wider international context.⁷⁴ Alignment between the incumbent party in the region and a core of voters may have helped in mobilising support and votes; a reality that was not apparent in much of the rest of Wales. Furthermore, a clear link has been discovered between Welsh language proficiency and propensity to vote Remain; 72% of fluent Welsh speakers voted Remain (Larner, 2019) while a staggering 84% of Welsh identifying, Welsh speakers voted Remain, making them possibly “the most pro-EU demographic group in Britain” (Wyn Jones & Larner, 2021). Gwynedd and Ceredigion remain at the core of the Welsh-speaking heartlands, therefore this coalition of voters and their specific articulation of Welshness helps explain the Remain vote here. This articulation of the EU vote through a Welsh lens was referred to by Trotter and Morgan (2016, p. 2) who argued the following about Aberystwyth:

The narrative was more specifically about the EU as conceived through the lens of Welsh national interest, whether in terms of economic interest (principally for the farming industry), minority language interest (that Welsh is better protected by the

⁷⁴ In the 1970s Plaid Cymru were against Wales’s membership of the EU, although they still had ‘Europeanist’ ideas. The form, however, has changed.

EU than it would otherwise be), and strategic interest (that the EU presents a platform for the assertion of 'Welsh' interest). Among these participants, the perceived implications for Wales of a possible Brexit fell into three categories. The first, and by far the most dominant concern, was that Brexit would entail economic insecurity, chaos, and isolation (including for the UK more generally), especially for more rural regions such as Ceredigion and in particular for farmers. ... The second common concern was that a Brexit vote would leave Wales dominated by England, not only in economic terms but also in terms of governance more broadly.

Why Anglesey and Carmarthenshire did not vote the same way as Ceredigion and Gwynedd need some explanation as these areas, too, are within *Y Fro Gymraeg*. The Three-Wales Model has been criticised for its rigidity and how it creates unity in diverse areas (Scully & Wyn Jones, 2012). It is because Balsom's geographical zones cut across boundaries that are culturally complex that the 'problem' of Carmarthenshire and Anglesey has arisen (Coupland, et al., 2006). For example, eastern Carmarthenshire has many of the same characteristics as Welsh Wales, with the existence of mining towns and communities, while the coastal south more closely resembles Swansea to its East. The areas that more closely resemble *Y Fro Gymraeg* are to be found in the west and north. Anglesey, on the other hand, is a three-way split between all conceptualisation of Wales, with a large English population, a large Welsh-speaking, Welsh-identifying rural population and a Welsh-speaking, working-class population which (apart from language proficiency) more closely resembles the communities of the south. The difference in these places, therefore, is the composition of the balance of forces, whereby different articulations of Welshness and Britishness exist in different numbers. Those areas of Carmarthenshire and Anglesey that identify like *Y Fro Gymraeg* above are *likely* to have voted in similar ways, yet the mass of this group was smaller than in Ceredigion and Gwynedd. This voting pattern, therefore, does not disprove the argument.

The second region to be discussed is British Wales. Due to the prevalence of a British identity in British Wales, a core of constituents likely voted for Brexit for similar reasons as their English cousins. Due to the need for brevity, it is not possible to list all the reasons why the English voted for Brexit, this has been done in other works to good effect (Hobolt, 2016) (Johnston, et al., 2020) (Henderson, et al., 2017). For this analysis, it is sufficient to list some of the characteristics that are found in British Wales that made it more susceptible to voting for Brexit:

the demographics of the British Wales region mark it out from the rest of Wales. It ... has a higher ratio of males to females; has a relatively old population (something which is significant given the correlation between older Welsh people and British identity; and a significant minority (47%) of the population born outside Wales (Evans, 2019, p. 3).

Men were more likely to vote Leave than women, as were older people and English identifiers in Wales. Welsh language competency is also lower, whereby proficiency is positively correlated with a Remain vote. The places in British Wales that no longer neatly fit this description are Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. This thesis will argue in due course that these regions have articulated a new form of Welshness and should no longer be considered part of British Wales. While not analogous, with regards to Brexit, *For Wales, see England* is a fairer assessment of British Wales than any other part of the country.

The final area to be considered in Balsom's articulation of Wales in the Three-Wales Model is Welsh Wales. Each constituency in this area voted Leave. This area is strongly Labour-supporting (who supported Remain), strongly Welsh-identifying, and received large sums of EU funding. The reasons behind the Leave vote here, therefore, need to be explained. The first thing to note is that the referendum shouldn't be viewed in isolation but placed within its historical context. Due to historical amnesia, there is a view that the Labour Party has *always* been in favour of

European membership and integration and that this was the 'natural' left-wing position:

many Party activists and commentators by the time of the 2016 referendum believed that it had always been the position of the Labour Party to be pro-European, perhaps with the exception of the early 1980s. Such a view was reinforced by the majority of the British labour movement campaigning for a Remain vote in the referendum (Hickson & Miles, 2018, p. 876).

To challenge this view, it's important to revisit the referendum of 1975 and the years that preceded it. In the same year as the European Economic Community (EEC) referendum of 1975, Labour held a special conference to debate Britain's membership of the EEC; by almost 2-1 the membership voted to Leave. A large bloc of these votes came from the National Union of Miners and the Transport and General Workers' Union, both of which had a large presence in Wales (Saunders, 2018, p. 57). Strong civic institutions within the social milieu of Welsh Wales were therefore Eurosceptic in the original referendum. Although the 'Yes' vote won in 1975, a breakdown of how different social groups voted shows that Welsh Wales represents the type of area that would have been most Eurosceptic: the working class were more than twice as likely to vote against EEC membership than those in AB social grades, voting to stay was lower amongst union members, and 88% of Conservative supporters voted to stay compared to 58% of Labour members (Clements, 2017). The main thrust of feeling against the EEC stemmed from the left, with the view that it was a 'capitalist club'; a majority of voters (54%) that stated they wanted "a lot more nationalisation" voted to leave, while 79% of people who wanted no further nationalisation or more private companies voted to stay (Ibid).

This reality led Hickson and Miles (2018) to argue that Euroscepticism has a long history within the social democratic tradition and should therefore not be seen as an outlier position. Throughout the 1980s, this position was expressed by the left of the Labour Party, specifically via Tony Benn and Michael Foot. This even led to a 1983

manifesto commitment from Labour to withdraw from the EEC. It is important to note that Michael Foot had been a Member of Parliament for both Ebbw Vale and Blaenau Gwent; two areas deeply entrenched within Welsh Wales. Membership of the EEC was viewed with disdain by this wing of the Party because it was thought it would entail the loss of national sovereignty, making left-wing political actions particularly difficult (Tranmer, 2020). Even by 1987, 40% of Labour supporters were in favour of withdrawal (Moss & Clarke, 2021, p. 549). Many of these same issues were raised during the Brexit referendum of 2016, whereby the left viewed the referendum through the lens of popular sovereignty and “resisting neoliberal Europe” (Eklundh, 2021, p. 210). ‘Lexit’ was supported by trade unions such as the National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers, ASLEF and BFAWA while Arthur Scargill – leader of the NUM during the miner’s strike – stated that EU membership made the miner’s position particularly difficult in the 1980s and supported Brexit (Barnett, 2018). What may be considered ‘traditional’ Labourism as the above still holds an important place within the social milieu of Welsh Wales, and in this regard, it could be argued that it was not the people that had changed their views, but the Labour Party that had changed theirs. Welsh Wales has a specific understanding of Welshness and Britishness that lends itself to supporting Brexit. I propose that the outcome here was the ghost of labour past coming back to haunt the current British establishment.

In explaining the Brexit vote in Welsh Wales, we must also consider the instrumentalist argument. The common-sense assumption was that because Welsh Wales was a net recipient of EU funding, people here would vote to Remain. This is where the argument that Wales “shot itself in the foot” stems from. Wales is indeed a net recipient of EU funding. In 2014, Wales received a net benefit of £ 245 million, roughly equating to 0.4% of GDP (while acknowledging in the same year the UK’s net contribution was £9.8 billion) (Ifan, et al., 2016). However, how this money has been spent – and the general efficacy of EU policy - has been criticised by both

academics and the general population. White elephants such as Technium have been criticised (Pugh, et al., 2018) while others have argued that EU funding has created a certain mindset within the Welsh civil service and society:

many of our interview respondents bemoaned the role that territorial cohesion has played in sustaining a discourse of dependence and victimhood in Wales. For example, an interviewee who joined the then-new Welsh civil service around the time of devolution and the allocation of the first tranche of structural funds recalled a 'great fanfare that this [EU funding] ... was going to open up our communities ... would get them out of poverty' (senior civil servant, governance). Yet, the same interviewee reflected on the situation at the end of the 2000-07 programming period: [The Welsh] Government, I think, was in quite a difficult position whereby our GDP per capita in [West Wales and the Valleys] hadn't really changed and we were still ... below the European threshold. So, on the one hand, this was a bit of an indictment of all the money. Has the money been wasted? On the other, there was this [sense that] we still actually want to stay under the threshold because then we'll qualify for another round of funding (senior civil servant, governance) (Jones, et al., 2020, p. 901).

Wales had qualified for funding for territorial cohesion without fail, yet the ability of this funding to shape citizens to vote for Remain was dependent on whether citizens witnessed clear improvements in living standards during the funding period; EU funding in abstraction did not influence voting behaviour (Crescenzi, et al., 2020). Instrumentally, the fact that funding did not change economic outcomes is epitomised by Ebbw Vale; where unemployment is the highest in Wales and where 62% of those who took part in the referendum voted Leave, also the highest percentage in Wales (Jones, 2017, p. 3). This is a clear example of revenge by a place that does not matter (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018). The Brexit vote was borne from the decades-long abandonment of many parts of Wales. As Henderson et al. (2015, p. 271) showed, 61% of people in Wales felt that Wales got less than its fair share in UK

spending. Furthermore, more respondents in Scotland and England agreed that Wales was underfunded compared to their assessments of each other. As Abreu and Jones (2021, p. 6) showed succinctly regarding the South Wales Coalfields:

Interestingly, however, this level of disenchantment with politics has led to very nuanced outcomes. Those in mining communities are less likely to vote in elections or feel a strong affiliation with a political party, but this discontent also extends to newer populist parties, with those in mining communities less likely to vote for parties on the right (such as UKIP and The Brexit Party) compared to those in other deprived communities. At the same time, coalfields do not seem more likely to lean towards nationalist parties such as the SNP or Plaid Cymru – or indeed feel more ‘Welsh’ or ‘Scottish’ than their equally deprived counterparts elsewhere. We do however see engagement with, or at least some differences on, the EU question, with coalfield residents reporting a slightly higher Leave-orientation, after controlling for demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. The framing of the EU Leave vote as a sui generis ‘protest’ from peripheral communities that felt ignored by mainstream politics, and excluded from economic opportunity, archetypically in the large coalfield of Leave-voting south Wales is supported by our results.

The people who generally lived in these areas were the ‘losers’ of globalisation and this is manifest in the characteristics of those more likely to vote Leave:

- 70% of those finding it difficult to manage financially.
 - 60% of those just about getting by.
 - 76% of those who think things have got worse for them rather than other people.
 - 59% of those who consider themselves working class.
 - 66% of those with an income of less than £1,200 per calendar month.
 - 57% of those with an income between £1,201 – 2,200 per calendar month
- (Swales, 2016, p. 7).

In explaining the more globalised economy and its possible aftermaths, Rawkins (1978, p. 531) correctly prophesied over 40 years ago that:

British political parties have accepted the goals of the decision-makers of the international economy as compatible with their own policies. It is the populations of the periphery which have borne the brunt of the consequences. Political leaders should hardly be surprised when Welsh ... citizens throw off their former allegiances and turn to alternative political solutions.

With regards to Welsh Wales, globalisation and its unevenness is intimately linked with Euroscepticism and distrust of the political establishment more generally. Here, this discontent did not start in the years leading up to 2016, this has been a continuous process for *at least* the last 50 years. These people did not leave 'mainstream politics'; politics left them.

Finally, this thesis has argued that Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan should no longer be considered part of Balsom's British Wales. Instead, these places have reconceptualised Welshness and now constitute what I term Cosmopolitan Wales. This Welshness is based on an institutional, civic, conception linked with the EU, the Senedd, and British institutions that have moved to Wales such as the BBC and HMRC. At the inception of the Senedd, there was a hope that Welshness itself would be recalibrated and that civic institutions would be at the heart of this Welshness (Osmond, 2004) (Osmond, 2002) (Jones & Lewis, 1999). In *The Nations of Britain*, Bryant (2005) conceptualised what he termed "Cymru Wales" or "Modern Wales". Cymru Wales would be a new Wales based on bilingual education, public administration, devolved government, and a Welsh civil society. This Cymru Wales has not taken root outside the narrow confines of Cardiff and the Vale. Ironically, the notion was that Welshness would move away from being a place-based identity, yet this 'new' Welshness is particularly geographically concentrated. Cardiff and its hinterland have become decoupled from the rest of the country. This new Welshness and the institutions it is based on are intimately linked to the European Union:

Immediately after devolution, one of the first tasks of the WAG was to design mechanisms for spending £1.2 billion of EU Structural Funds Objective 1 financing plus match funding, on economic development. For managing the allocation of monies, an extremely complex system of interlocking committees was set up that was responsible for each programme area, involving Assembly and other government, business, voluntary and academic representatives, and experts who were recruited to fill these committees, with approvals given by the external Welsh European Funding Office. At the end of the first year of this process, ... 1700 people had been recruited to manage the approval system and support it administratively. ... costing £36.2 million per year ... an increase of 25% over 3 years (Cooke & Clifton, 2005, p. 443).

The European Union, therefore, helped swell the ranks of a new – ostensibly Welsh – civil service and bureaucracy. Crescenzi et al. (2020, p. 3) - in analysing the effects of EU funding to Wales - found that a large amount of projects were concentrated in Cardiff, whereby the “city acts as a ‘managing authority’ for all EU funds in the Welsh Nation”. Cardiff therefore acts as a redistributive, administrative, and bureaucratic centre for European money, this interacts with institutions such as the UK Government, the Senedd, public sector and third sector institutions, creating a nucleus of ‘high value’ jobs in Cardiff. This is shown in Cardiff’s economic structure. Cardiff has the most jobs in Wales in the following sectors: financial services, ‘professional’ jobs, public administration, production, real estate, construction, and IT services. Furthermore, wages in Cardiff are on average 11% higher than in the rest of Wales (Welsh Government, 2023). Jones et al. (2020, p. 902) discussed the relationship between EU funding administration and regional inequality:

While EU funding programmes ostensibly promise to combat such uneven development within regions, in reality, economic activity in Wales continues to largely concentrate on ‘two main economic arteries’ (senior advisor, economy) along the southern and northern coastline, generating growth that other Welsh communities simply do not benefit from. An interviewee reflected: Cardiff as a city

has seen some of the highest levels of economic growth and population growth compared to ... any city in the UK. But you go 10 miles, 20 miles north [and] it hasn't changed in 30 years (senior advisor, economy).

The new geographic reality has meant that Cardiff's comparative advantage relative to other parts of Wales has improved, further exacerbating the inequality that exists between places. Once again, "less favoured regions' prospects are shaped by *external* decisions and forces over which they have little control" (MacKinnon & Phelps, 2001, p. 255). The difference this time is that the decisions were made in Cardiff rather than London, yet still external to those "less favoured regions". The supply-side policies of Blair and consequent Welsh and British governments to foster skills promotion have solidified the economic gravity of Wales to Cardiff. The Vale of Glamorgan then represents the 'leafy suburbs' of outer London whereby professionals and the new bureaucratic class can live outside the centre of Cardiff; the strength of one feeds the other. Consequently, the Welshness of this area is intimately tied to this newly emergent socio-economic milieu whereby a Remain vote reinforces the views of this social group, not only in instrumental terms but in the fact that it expresses the state-bureaucratic identity of the city and its hinterland.

This subchapter has argued that there are different ways of expressing Welshness and this reality is something that should be kept in mind whenever discussing 'Wales' or 'the Welsh'. These different understandings of Welshness shaped the Brexit vote in differing parts of Wales. By attempting to create difference, however, there is an acceptance this subchapter has also created uniformity. Wales does not fit neatly into three – or four – categories. However, these categories do help give expression to different cleavages and the strength of each cleavage within each region. In a Leave/Remain binary, understanding and analysing the strength of the main cleavage of voters can be enough to explain regional differences. To this end, the Three (now four)-Wales model succeeds in explaining some of the intricacies of

the Brexit vote in Wales. Furthermore, this analysis has shown that voters in Wales viewed the referendum via their own Welsh lenses.

Wales, Nationalism, and the World-System

Welsh nationalism has historically followed the same contours as its history. Welsh identity has always been relatively strong, but the salience of political nationalism has not been always equally strong. This thesis has argued that a Welsh identity – to the extent to which one could expect to have existed – sat neatly within the Tudor dynasty. Henry VII and VIII impressed upon their Welsh lineage and this was central to their claim to the throne.

The social structure of Wales remained differentiated from that of England throughout much of the 16th and 17th Centuries, especially regarding agricultural customs. However, there is no evidence that this led to an increase in the salience of political nationalism. The move away from dynastic rule to one with a ‘national’ character was completed with the ‘English’ Civil War. While it is true that much of the Welsh gentry fought on the side of the Crown, this refers more to their continued use of extra-economic means of coercion, rather than the newly emerging landlordism of the agricultural bourgeoisie. The capturing of state power by the Parliamentarians meant that Britain “could begin to think and act in the spirit of free trade [and leave the] toilsome work of national development” (von Schmoller, 1895, p. 77). Wales was very much part of the Britain that was emerging. The industrial revolution that followed helped incorporate Wales not only into Britain but also into the wider world-system to which it was now a central – yet peripheral – part. Nairn (1981, p. 208) argued that:

Wales shows many of the features of forced under-development: depopulation, cultural oppression, fragmentary and distorted development and so on. These features

are strongly evident in the Welsh national movement too, insofar as it has been a battle for the defence and revival of rural-based community and traditional identity – an identity evoked overwhelmingly by literary and musical culture and having as its mainspring in the language question. But of course, in another key respect Wales is more akin to the relatively over-developed group: like them, it is a great secondary centre of the European Industrial Revolution.

This thesis has argued that Wales's history is slightly more complex than the picture painted by Nairn; its history has included depopulation, and cultural oppression at times, but it also includes the history of a population boom, extensive industrialisation, and access to a British identity which placed the residents of Wales 'above' most others during the period of the British Empire and the industrial revolution. However, Nairn is correct that historically "the Welsh national movement ... has been a battle for the defence and revival of a rural-based community and traditional identity". This refers to its longevity but also its overall weakness as it was unable to garner the support of much of the Welsh population. This defensive and cultural nationalism is best exemplified by the romantic nationalism of the 19th and early 20th Centuries. This led to "the founding of its own 'national' institutions such as the University of Wales, the National Library and National Museum ... and the 'cultural renaissance' of Welsh-language literature, education, publishing, and music" (Jones and Jones, 2003, p. 57) but it did so under an umbrella of British identity. The Welsh were 'not English', but they were indeed British. It was an imperial Welshness which found its place alongside imperial England within the British Empire. This is exemplified by the romantic nationalist pleas of the Liberal Party, whose aims were "restricted to the search for symbolic recognition of Welsh culture and Welsh distinctiveness" (Rawkins, 1978, p. 524). Their overall weakness lay in their inability to offer a materialist answer to the problems facing Welsh society. They were wedged between a romantic understanding of nationalism on one hand, while wishing to elevate themselves

within the British state on the other. The Liberals in essence exemplified the process to which Kumar (2000, p. 579) referred: their ethnic or cultural identity was Welsh, but their civic identity was British. The position that Britishness could elevate the Welsh bourgeoisie was too strong an attraction to fight against.

The post-Second World War era exemplified the dialectical tension that exists between minority and majority nationalism. In the case of the relationship between Wales and England, there exists a tension between three separate forces: Welsh identity, British identity, and English identity, each of which interacts with the other in a dialectical fashion. The post-war era has seen periods of strong, and weak, nationalist sentiment in Wales. Figure 59 below shows the changing world-system position of Wales and England and the consequent changes in political nationalism.

Wales and England's Changing World-System Position

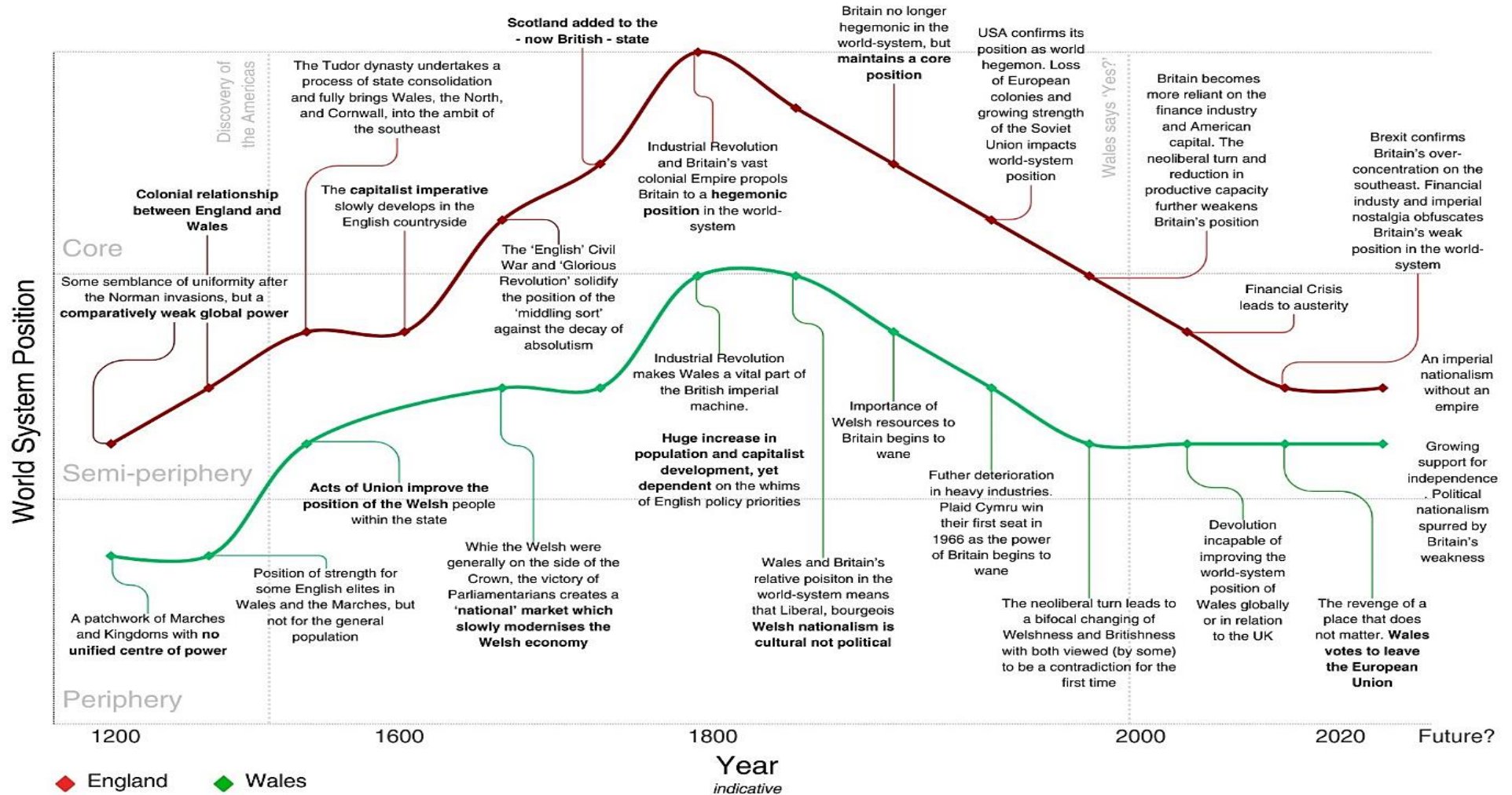


Figure 59: The Changing Position of Wales and England in the World-System. Author's Own.

VIII. Specificities and Generalities: A Comparative Analysis of Case Studies

This work offers a novel perspective in political economy due to two specific innovations. Firstly, it has applied a World-Systems Analysis specifically to stateless nations. That is, the state is no longer the unit of analysis. This offers a unique, insightful approach that both deepens the application of World-Systems Analysis, but also our understanding of political economy at a substate level. The second innovation is the specific analysis of the continuity and change of the salience of nationalism. Much analysis today takes nationalism *a priori* as given and salient. However, this analysis usually takes a snapshot in time. This fresh approach deepens our understanding of political economy generally, and nationalism in stateless nations specifically.

This thesis has now analysed each case study in turn. The next task is to analyse different factors and uncover which are noteworthy for both economic development and the salience of political nationalism. It is not possible to account for each specificity that exists across these case studies. History, economics, and the social sciences deal with humanity, and humanity by its very nature is complex. It is therefore not possible to reduce the totality of social existence into generalisable factors of development or underdevelopment. However, it is possible to give a guide and uncover some factors that increase the likelihood of overdevelopment or underdevelopment and the concurrent relationship with political nationalism. It is important to remember that any general trends uncovered would only be relevant to the case studies above until it is possible to increase our lens of inquiry by including other case studies. This is not an exhaustive list of all factors that may or may not affect economic development, but they are those that are of particular interest to these case studies. This Chapter will consider the following factors in turn: the date of incorporation, the form of incorporation, geographical and geological factors, the

role of colonies and peripherality, the process of nation and state building, and the exogenous/endogenous nature of political economy.

Date of Incorporation

The dates of incorporation for both Wales (into the English state) and Catalunya into the Spanish state (via Aragón) were relatively similar. The union of the Kingdoms of Castilla and Aragón took place in 1469, whereas Wales was officially incorporated between 1536 and 1542. As previously argued, although Wales was not incorporated *de jure* until the 16th Century, Wales – or at least large swathes of it across the Marches – was in some form *de facto* incorporated into the English state from the 13th Century. This may then, therefore, be a basis of difference between these two case studies. However, closer inspection shows that trade between Aragón and Castilla was highly and well-developed from the 13th Century (Luis, 2021) (Shneidman, 1959). These two Kingdoms were therefore not unified but did share economic activity, and trade relations. They were therefore interrelated in a way that was akin to Wales and England, although not analogous. The unification of Italy on the other hand took place much later, being officially declared in 1861, 300 or so years after the other case studies.

Each incorporation, in its own way, represented the rationalisation of state structures and should be understood within that context. The Kingdom of Italy included the incorporation of six separate polities, the incorporation of Wales coincided with efforts to strengthen control over the English peripheries such as Chester, Lancaster, and Durham while the union of Castilla and Aragón was part of the wider process of Reconquista which was completed in 1492 with the fall of Granada. There are therefore continuities across each case study, despite the difference in date.

With regards to our specific case studies, it seems that the date of incorporation, however, is not a salient factor to explain differences in economic development, or political nationalism. We would expect, if this were the case, to see more similarities between Catalunya on the one hand, and Wales on the other. However, Wales shares more similarities with the Mezzogiorno than it does Catalunya, while Catalunya – economically at least – more closely mirrors Padania than it does Wales. A glance at other possible case studies seems to confirm this finding. Andalucía, for example, which was incorporated into the Spanish state only thirty or so years after Catalunya has experienced a very different economic and political history which more closely resembles Wales or the Mezzogiorno than it does Catalunya (Fernández, 2022). Scotland on the other hand - which helped form the new British state - was incorporated in 1707, yet it shares more economic similarities with Catalunya and Padania. Furthermore, its political nationalism more closely resembles Catalunya than it does Wales despite the fact they are both part of the same state (Dalle Mulle, 2017). In addition, *all* of Italy was incorporated within a period of thirty or so years, yet the economic experience of different constituent parts has already been illuminated, even accounting for differences in initial conditions. The gap between north and south widened with incorporation, rather than narrowed, which is a strong case against the *a priori* importance of the date of incorporation. This analysis leads to the conclusion that the date of incorporation – independent of other variables – is not a salient factor in explaining economic development, nor the salience of political nationalism.

Form of Incorporation

Although it is argued that the date of incorporation into the central state is not a salient factor in economic development, the form in which this incorporation took place could offer different results. In Spain, for example, unification between Castilla and Aragón was both confederal and via marriage rather than conquest (Payne, 1991). Aragón was therefore able to maintain some autonomous institutions, with the equality that existed between Castilla and Aragón being embodied within the sovereigns: Ferdinand, and Isabella. As stated previously, Catalunya was the economic power of Aragón, meaning it was their gentry which was at the head of the Aragónese Kingdom (Lecours, 2001). This specific form of incorporation meant that Catalunya was able to expand its power within this framework of confederation, whereby the centrifugal forces emanating from Catalunya to Castilla were relatively strong.

The logic that led towards incorporation in the case of Wales is like that of Catalunya. Both incorporations lay at the intersection between medieval and 'modern' society, with an increase in the complexity of trade, social structure, and technology leading to an impulse to rationalise the state. The form that incorporation took – and the outcomes of this incorporation – however, differed significantly between the two case studies. In a political sense, this thesis has argued that the Acts of Union were a positive force compared to the situation that existed before. Welshmen could now hold office, were represented in Parliament, and official discrimination of difference between the Welsh and English had ceased. However, the indivisibility of Wales and England that Henry VIII oversaw was not entirely positive. The Acts of Union between Wales and England were not mutually agreed to by the English Crown and the Welsh (to the extent to which a unified voice existed). It was therefore a one-sided incorporation. This had long-term effects on the ability of Wales to develop its own economic life and an independent political

expression. Importantly, Welsh institutions and Welsh Law were disbanded meaning that the political and economic centre for Wales became London. The Acts led to a growth of trade between England and Wales, which on one hand benefitted the Welsh, but it meant that a certain form of economy developed which danced to the economic rhythms of its larger neighbour (Williams, 1950). On one hand, the Acts of Union changed Wales from a geographical expression to a defined political unit, yet on the other hand the institutional trappings of nationhood which separated Wales from England were hollowed out, it was not until the 20th Century that some of these institutions were (re)introduced. The completion of Wales's economic and institutional reorientation towards England would mean that Wales would continue as a peripheral player and afterthought for English – and later British – policymakers. While this was not a malicious ploy on the part of the Tudors and later governments, it remains that it would have real and long-term effects. A cursory glance at Scotland seems to corroborate the findings that the form of incorporation is important for later economic development and the opportunities for the rising salience of political nationalism. Tom Nairn (2021, p. 104) argued that:

Scotland's real peculiarity ... lies in the manner of the fusion: there are many stateless nationalities in history, but only one Act of Union—a peculiarly patrician bargain between two ruling classes, which would have been unthinkable earlier, under absolute monarchy, and impossible later, when the age of democratic nationalism had arrived. And it lies in the results of the bargain: a nationality which resigned statehood but preserved an extraordinary amount of the institutional and psychological baggage normally associated with independence—a decapitated national state, as it were, rather than an ordinary 'assimilated' nationality.

I contend that the Act of Union between England (and Wales) and Scotland may have been peculiar in its form in the British Isles, but it is not peculiar in European history. It shows real similarity with the Catalan case analysed above. Nairn is however correct that there is a real material difference between an assimilated

nationality, like Wales on the one hand and a nationality that resigned statehood but preserved an extraordinary amount of institutional baggage on the other, as is the case in both Catalunya and Scotland. Scotland could maintain (some) of its laws, its education system, its own Church, and issue its own banknotes. In this regard, it maintained a separate superstructure from England while simultaneously maintaining the ability to implement some control over its economic base (Jones, 1978, pp. 42-43). In a sense, the Union of Scotland and England *created* Britain whereas Wales was absorbed into the English state. Similarly, Castilla and Aragón unified as equals, whereas Andalucía, for example, was absorbed and annexed into the Castilian state after the Treaty of Granada in 1491.

The Italian case study confirms the findings above, showing the effects of incorporation on both the dominant and subservient partners. The creation of Italy as a political unit was a product of unbalanced integration which was dominated by the Kingdom of Sardinia. This gave their bourgeoisie control over the state apparatus. The most commercially advanced part of the peninsula therefore used its economic strength to achieve larger markets by collapsing trade barriers that existed between political units (Duca & Duca, 2006) (Snowden, 1972). This thesis has argued that economic differences did exist between the North and the South before unification, yet the Mezzogiorno's comparative economic 'backwardness' had been overstated and that inequality between the North and South worsened after unification (Schneider, 2020, p. 38). One reason for this fact is that the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies followed a protectionist economic policy, meaning that its large agricultural sector was protected from the worst price fluctuations for its products. It was therefore the reduction of trade barriers between the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the rest of the Italian peninsula which worsened its economic position due to the immaturity of its industries and its inability to compete globally. The form of integration - specifically the unequal form of that integration - exacerbated the economic divergence that existed between north and south. The Italian case differs

from the other cases in form, though not in content. It differs in that the Risorgimento *legally* created a new political entity. In this regard, it is different to the Welsh case, whereby Wales was merely incorporated into an existing state. Furthermore, the Spanish case did not create a new political entity per se but instead merged two previously existing ones. However, by analysing the specificities of the case study it becomes apparent that the process that took place in the South is analogous to that which took place in Wales; its institutions were abolished, and it became absorbed into the new territory. Piedmont on the other hand created new institutions and built the state in their own image.

While some specificities exist between our case studies, there are general trends to be uncovered. The political strength of each constituent part affects its ability to adapt the state to its own interests and will. It may not be the form of incorporation per se that affects economic development. This argument would likely be too teleological in its assumptions. However, it seems that the strength or weakness of a region at the point of incorporation affects its ability to mould the state's economic interests in its own image. Catalunya was able to maintain its privileged economic position and maintain its separate economic base. Wales on the other hand would see its economy geared towards the needs of England. The Italian case shows clearly and without question the effect that the form of incorporation can have on the economic fortunes of its constituent parts.

The balance of power at the time of incorporation also seems to be a salient factor in analysing the form of political nationalism in our case studies. Catalunya was able to maintain a separate political culture (fascism notwithstanding) for Centuries, meaning that it is 'easier' to envisage Catalan statehood. Scotland seems to echo many of these sentiments. Wales on the other hand lost any semblance of a separate political culture, meaning that by its very definition political nationalism would have to be ethnic in content as it could not (with any relevance) refer to a Welsh Parliament, Welsh institutions, or Welsh law. It is possible to cautiously apply some

of these findings to the Italian case. *A priori* one would expect to see a strong nationalist movement in the Mezzogiorno, rather than in the North. It is culturally similar, differentiated from the North, has understandable grievances, and was at one point its own entity, separate from the North. Similarly, one may *a priori* expect Welsh nationalism to be stronger than Scottish nationalism, considering that the Welsh are more ethnically and linguistically distinct from both England and Scotland. It is possible to suggest that it is due to the relegation of Wales's and the Mezzogiorno's political institutions to the past that explains this fact. Wales could not refer to its civic identity and thus embraced cultural and linguistic differences. The Mezzogiorno could no longer point to the continuation between the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the present day and thus relegated its identity to a cultural, rather than political identity. This may be slowly changing in Wales (as is the growth of the independence movement) yet the continuation with the past is still absent. Padania, Catalunya, (and Scotland) on the other hand could refer to the historical continuity between their present position and their independent pasts. Unification or incorporation in their instances was a choice and is therefore one that can be remade. To conclude, the form of incorporation is salient in explaining both economic development and the content of nationalism in each case study.

Prisoners of Geography?

Geography is often seen as something apart from politics and the economy; it is, if anything, something to be conquered rather than something that shapes us and is in turn shaped by us. In keeping with the work of the Annales School, this thesis argues that geography cannot be decoupled from humanity. As Braudel (1993, pp. 9-10) argued:

To discuss civilization is to discuss space, land and its contours, climate, vegetation, animal species, and natural and other advantages. It is also to discuss what humanity has made of these basic conditions: agriculture, stockbreeding, food, shelter, clothing, communications, industry, and so on.

The aim, therefore, is to analyse how geography has shaped – and is shaping – the ‘civilisations’ of our case studies. In explaining why this form of analysis is of importance, Moore (2003, p. 432) argued the following:

At its best, Braudel’s contribution to environmental history — above all, to the emergent field of world environmental history — goes beyond a broad recognition that “nature matters.” Braudel’s greatest historical geographical insight is that world-economies and world-ecologies are dialectically bound, variously constraining, and enabling at different moments and on different scales. Sociophysical geographies are always at play in historical systems. Any reduction of these geographies to simple context treats nature “as if the flowers did not come back every spring, the flocks of sheep migrate every year, or the ships sail on a real sea that changes with the seasons”. This recognition of ecological dynamism is enriched and made distinctive by Braudel’s understanding that social agencies not only exist in but actively produce socio-ecological space.

In the case of Italy, two geographic considerations seem to be of central importance. The first is its topography and geology, and the second is its literal geographic position. The topography of Italy varies greatly between the North and South. The Apennine mountains run through central and southern Italy which makes inland travel between towns difficult and leads to more densely populated regions (Corti, et al., 2013). In the north of the country on the other hand (south of the Alps) exists the Po Valley which offered both fertile land and navigable plains, thus meaning that the north had the agricultural land at its disposal to maintain its various city-states. This navigation also helped to bind the North together economically (although not politically) while southern city-states remained fragmented and disjointed.

Therefore, the impulses of the mercantile economy which relied on cooperation, trade, and business relations and which made northern city-states rich, could not embed themselves very deeply in southern Italy (Epstein, 2000, p. 285). The second factor refers to Italy's position geographically and within the world-system. When the Mediterranean was at the centre of its own world-system, the Italian peninsula was in a perfect position to exploit this reality due to its geographic centrality. Its geographic position was therefore intimately linked with its economic strength. With the creation of the modern world-system and its orientation to the Atlantic, Italy's geography was now against it; its only options were to travel via the narrow strait of Gibraltar, while the natural barrier of the Alps to the north made overland trade even more cumbersome and expensive.

This same situation to some extent existed in Catalunya:

Nothing could have been more natural than Aragónese policy, with the weight of tradition behind it. Aragón was drawn towards the Mediterranean by her past and by her experience, intimately acquainted with its waters through her seaboard, her shipping, and her possessions (the Balearics, Sardinia, and Sicily) and not unnaturally attracted, like the rest of Europe and the Mediterranean, by the rich lands of Italy (Braudel, 1995, p. 671).

In some regards, therefore, the fate of Catalunya was linked with that of the Mediterranean. On the Iberian Peninsula, however, it was the interaction of geography with politics which was to have the greatest effect. Madrid was only made the capital of Spain in 1561 by Phillip II. Madrid was chosen due to its central location in the peninsula, and its lack of powerful urban oligarchy as existed in Toledo (Ringrose, 1973, p. 761). However, Madrid and its surrounding areas contained primitive farming techniques, thin soils, and scant rainfall. Most food would therefore have to be transported to Madrid from elsewhere, usually across an antiquated overland road system. Furthermore, due to its position and lack of

navigable watercourses, Madrid could not act as an entrepôt to goods arriving and leaving the capital:

Given the nature of Madrid's market and its lack of entrepôt or industrial capacity, these became one-way transfers that precluded the reciprocal exchanges essential to the economic equilibrium of the central place network of the sixteenth century. As Madrid grew, it used the power of the crown to organise a one-way flow of resources to supply its population in the face of high overland transport costs (Ringrose, 1989, pp. 68-69).

In a period of growing rivalry on both sides of the Atlantic, whereby new centres of power and industry were growing, Spain's gaze was turned inward due to a socio-geographical conundrum that it itself had created. This in no small part speaks to the inhibition of the Spanish state in the 17th and 18th Centuries. Madrid was not a motor of growth but was instead a black hole for resources. As Germá (2011, p. 692) argued, Spain's entire infrastructure was based on a "radial road map" with Madrid at its centre. The question of efficiency and productivity were shunned in favour of political and administrative objectives, and thus "a model was born that would become permanent in Spain".

Turning to Wales, its identity is fragmented, heterogeneous and 'fuzzy' (Cohen, 1995). This fragmentation mirrors its geographical and topographical realities. Social scientists have oft demarcated Wales into separate distinct regions which rely on geographic and linguistic markers; both of which are intimately intertwined. Alfred Zimmern (1921, pp. 5-10) referred to "Welsh Wales", "Industrial Wales" and "upper-class" or "English Wales". This is echoed by Dennis Balsom's (1985) characterisation of "Welsh Wales", "British Wales" and "Y Fro Gymraeg". Other scholars refer to "inner" and "outer" Wales, reflected by the mountain ranges that seem to split the country in half (Aitchison & Carter, 1985) (Bowen, 1965):

The first involves the north and west of the country and the second the south and east. This dualism is made possible because the valleys and lowlands that face the east and south are open to English influences while the country which faces north and west is protected from foreign influences by the highlands of Central Wales (Bowen, 1965, p. 7).

The notion of “inner” and “outer” Wales is mirrored in what Raymond Williams (2003, p. 59) calls the “two truths” of Wales:

Two truths are told, as alternative prologues to the action of modern Wales. The first draws on the continuity of Welsh language and literature: from the sixth Century it is said, and thus perhaps the oldest surviving poetic tradition in Europe. The second draws on the turbulent experience of industrial South Wales and its powerful political and communal formations.

Wales’s geography has therefore both shaped its people and its politico-economic reality. The more easily accessible south and east acted as frontier zones and a springboard for further conquest, but perhaps more importantly this area was more easily absorbed into the English economy and state apparatus. The natural endowments bestowed on Wales affected its economic structure with heavy rainfall, mountainous terrain, and poor soil meaning that animal husbandry was to be the main industry. Geography, therefore, affected Wales’s position within the world-system that was emerging after 1492. Its geography affected its economic base and social structure with both combining to make the flourishing of agricultural capitalism more difficult; its ecology is not conducive to large farming units, meaning that it could not emulate the processes of agricultural capitalism in England, even if it would have wanted to. Its geographic structure meant that it would specialise in animal husbandry, while the south-east of England would concentrate on grain and cereal production.

As well as the natural difference in size, England was able to support a larger comparative population as it had generally better soils. This fact meant there were more large towns in England, with some close to the England-Wales border. These English towns became hubs for Welsh products, yet these entrepôts were in England, and by extension Welsh capital helped foment English development. A comparison with Scotland is instructive here. The east of Wales is in a relative sense geographically close to the border towns and London. The economic gravity of these towns meant that Wales was not able to develop economic centres of its own. Almost paradoxically, on the other hand, it seems that Scotland's geographic peripherality meant that it was defended by the weight of this geographical pull. With the exception of Berwick-upon-Tweed, there were no major trading hubs along the Anglo-Scottish border, nor a large population on either side of it. This meant that Scotland could develop separate centres of commerce. During the 17th Century, Edinburgh was the second-largest town in Britain and had trade links with the Baltics, Scandinavia, and Germany. This hub had a considerable pull on the rest of the country and had therefore become its own core. In an example of Scotland's endogenous trade relations, it had developed over 200 market centres of its own between 1660 and 1707, with these exporting directly to the continent (Whatley, 1997, pp. 10-13)

Furthermore, Wales's geology has shaped it more than most countries. Its economy for the last two or three centuries has been intimately linked with its natural endowments, including coal, slate, and tin. It was coal – and its transformational potential – which moved Wales from a peasant country to an industrial nation, fusing it closely with the British state and the wider world-system. The growth of Wales's population is directly and intimately linked with this process. Furthermore, the last century of its development has been predicated on an inability to move beyond the opportunities coal once offered when demand slumped. In analysing the relationship between (south) Wales and its geography, Ben Curtis (2002) stated:

South Wales is built on coal, both geologically and historically. The booming coal industry of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the main reason behind the creation of modern South Wales. The coal miners, both individually and collectively, were central to the shaping of the economics, politics, and society of South Wales during the twentieth century. In addition to the Valleys towns and villages shaped by the industry, Cardiff, Barry, Newport and (to a lesser extent) Swansea all owe much of their modern-day size and status to the wealth that they accrued from the coal trade. The modern history and identity of the Valleys is still strongly influenced by its mining past, despite the physical disappearance of most of the old collieries. On one level this is due to continued external perceptions of south Wales as being synonymous with coal, a factor which is consciously reinforced by such tourist attractions as the Rhondda Heritage Park and the Big Pit Mining Museum. In a more subtle and pervasive way, too, coal mining – specifically, coal mining trade unionism – has been a formative influence on the ‘labourist’ mental outlook of south Wales, characterised by close-knit, working-class communities and – generally – voting for the Labour Party.

When analysing the salience of different factors, therefore, the truism that ‘geography matters’ is supported. However, we must not take this truism too far. Proponents of New (now old) Economic Geography (NEG) (Sachs, et al., 2001) (Collier, 2008) were correct in their assessments that geographical and ecological conditions were important for economic development, yet their arguments became overly deterministic and teleological. Both authors argued that tropical climates are *a priori* poorer than other regions of the world, while Paul Collier stated that Bolivia’s geography means that it was destined to be one of the world’s poorest regions. Since Collier wrote his book, Bolivia’s GDP has increased from roughly \$16.6 billion in 2008 to \$44 billion in 2022 (World Bank, 2024). Geography matters, but it does not singularly determine socio-economic outcomes. Another glaring omission in the work of NEG scholars is the role of history – especially colonial and imperial history

– in explaining differences in economic outcomes today (Acemoglu, et al., 2002). In analysing geography, therefore, it is important to remember that physical geography is not just a stage on which history plays out, but that geography and history weave to create distinctive social milieus (Kinser, 1981).

Geography in this context is no longer an end in itself but a means to an end. It helps us to rediscover the slow unfolding of structural realities, to see things in the perspective of the very long term. Geography, like history, can answer many questions. Here it helps us to discover the almost imperceptible movement of history, if only we are prepared to follow its lessons and accept its categories and divisions (Braudel, 1996, p. 23).

It is difficult, however, to create generalisable theories from our case studies in this regard. The geographies of each of our case studies shaped each one in their own ways. It is possible to state that mountainous terrain (generally) makes trade and development more difficult, that access to the sea is (generally) conducive to larger cities and better trade links and that land fertility is (generally) important in overcoming the Malthusian dynamic (and in the case of south-east England, fomenting the birth of capitalism). However, it is how geography interacts with - and shapes - society, which is the lesson to be gleaned, and each society in turn will interact – and shape – geography in its own way. For example, if it was *only* geography that was important - rather than its relation to economic and social phenomena - one might expect to see that Ireland and Wales would benefit *more* from Atlantic trade and the ‘discovery of the Americas’, considering that they have relatively better access, and less distance to travel compared to English ports (Cornwall notwithstanding). In attempting to not fall into the trap of the NEG, it is not possible to collapse geography nor its effects into a neat set of factors. Geography does matter, but it matters for different reasons across all case studies, which are not easily reducible. As Nolte (2003, p. 53) argued in the case of Madrid and Andalucía:

this region (Andalucía) definitely may not be considered geographically disfavoured above the Spanish centre around Madrid. On the contrary: the Spanish highlands are relatively barren, cold in wintertime, expensive for ground transport, and without access to cheap water transport, while Andalucía has rich agricultural possibilities, is close to the sea, and has access to cheap water transport not only by easy harbours but also (in early modern times) by water transport. It also has wonderful mountains and beautiful coasts for tourism and considerable possibilities for extracting industries. And yet Andalucía has long been characterized by a high percentage of joblessness, much emigration, and a lower standard of living than Madrid and also, for instance, Catalunya. The reasons may not be looked for in geography; they have to be found in history.

Colonies and Peripheries

There exists a vibrant pool of research which deals with the link between colonialism on the one hand, and economic (under)development on the other. It has been shown that regions of the world that have been colonised are generally poorer than those that did the colonising, the exceptions to this rule are those areas where settler colonialism was favoured (notwithstanding the effects on the local populations) (Engerman & Sokoloff, 2002) (Engerman & Sokoloff, 2005) (Acemoglu, et al., 2001) (Acemoglu, et al., 2002). The works referenced above show the effect that Spanish colonialism had on the colonised, but their analysis is less centred on the effects this had on the Spanish economy. Furthermore, scholars such as Engerman and Sokoloff spend a large amount of time discussing the empires of the Atlantic, rather than the Mediterranean (whilst they acknowledge that the Mediterranean powers grew more slowly in the colonial period). An analysis is therefore necessary to disentangle the relationships (if any) that exist between not only the colony and the metropole but

also the internal peripheries of the host country. This analysis will help uncover the differing processes and outcomes that each place experienced within this tripartite system.

Authors such as Oto-Peralías and Romero-Ávila (2016) argued that Spanish colonialism did not begin in the Americas, but instead, the Reconquista should be understood as a colonial enterprise, and one that would shape its future endeavours. The fall of the Emirate of Granada, its annexation to Castilla, and the 'discovery' of the Americas took place in the same year: 1492. The organisational structure of post-annexation resettlement in the south was fundamental to its subsequent (under)development as a region. Andalucía acted as a frontier zone for Spain, this "rapid advance of the Christian frontier made it difficult for the Crown to officially organize the repopulation on such a large scale and altered the balance of power toward the nobility and military orders, who were required for conducting an effective occupation and defence of the new lands" (Oto-Peralías & Romero-Ávila, 2017, p. 60).

In effect, the newly secured frontier was an area of low population density which now established an agricultural system based on large estates in the hands of the noble class, ensuring and maintaining the strength of pre-capitalist social relations based on extra-economic coercion (Cabrera-Munoz, 1989). This provided the economic base for a judicial and social superstructure whose balance of forces favoured the nobility at the expense of the peasantry and gentry. This took place at a time where the balance of forces was slowly beginning to change in England. In effect, at a period in which the social and economic structure was changing in the Atlantic, it was becoming crystallised in Spain. The crystallisation of the feudal class structure in Spain (or at least in central and southern Spain) hindered the emergence of a capitalist imperative, which affected long-term development. As Oto-Peralías and Romero-Ávila (2016, p. 441) argued:

In the case of Spain, particularly in large estate regions, the broad mass of the population was poor, and no strong bourgeoisie arose, as the entrenched nobility and the middle class preferred to devote their capital to buying large land lots. As a result of this, ... and unlike in other countries like Britain, the landed elite did not see its power curtailed and no significant shift in the balance of power occurred. In contrast, in those regions that had a more equal distribution of economic and political power, like the Basque Country and Catalonia, the arrival of the opportunity to industrialize clearly shifted the balance of power toward the emerging industrial bourgeoisie.

Due to the position of Catalunya far from the frontiers of the 15th Century reconquest, it did not need large estates or *latifundias* to protect – or expand - its frontiers against the Muslims. This meant that the trading and industrial towns of Aragón such as Barcelona and Zaragoza maintained not only their political institutions, but their relatively more egalitarian agrarian structure meant that a middle-class peasantry could arise, “in this way, the elites of Catalunya found their way to modernity ... and developed into an economic centre of Spain, although politics remained centred in Madrid” (Nolte, 2003, p. 54).

The Reconquista had two further effects on Spanish society; it firstly hindered the productivity of its agriculture and informed the Spanish state’s actions in the Americas after its ‘discovery’. Firstly, the state expelled Jews from Spain in 1492, followed by the Moors in 1502, and the Moriscos in 1609.⁷⁵ “The Moriscos numbered 300,000 and were mostly agricultural workers, disproportionately located in Valencia and Andalucía. The expulsion of the Moriscos tore at the internal social structure of Spain” (Wallerstein, 2011, p. 194). In 1893, Moses (pp. 520-521) argued that:

The depression of agriculture was further intensified, particularly in Southern Spain, by the overthrow of the Moriscos. ... After this event, the landowners of Andalucía

⁷⁵ Moriscos were former Muslims and their descendants that were forced to convert to Christianity or be exiled.

learned that their lands had become worthless since they were deprived of their industrious cultivators. ... Whatever hopes of prosperity for Spain - based on the skill and industry of the Moriscos - were destroyed by their expulsion in 1610. This loss was irreparable. ... With the Moriscos, the last of the productive workers disappeared from Spain, and in Southern Spain, which they had occupied, there remained only the memory of the once flourishing agriculture and industry. At a single blow, the industrial force of Granada was destroyed, the desolated land remained without cultivation, the Vega, celebrated as a paradise, was turned into a desert, so that the few colonists sent thither scarcely found means of support, and famine was not uncommon in the most favoured land of Europe. The roads built by the Moors went to ruin; the excellent system of irrigation dried up; and the splendid aqueducts which conducted the snow-water from the Sierras were broken and destroyed.

Andalucía therefore became peripheralized by the Spanish state, a position that continues to this day. This peripheralization later informed the actions of Spain within its external colonies. Fernández (2022, p. 435) refers to the Reconquest as a “prelude” to American expansion, whereby the forced conversion of the Moors to Christianity (or expulsion) mirrored the religious oppression wrought upon the indigenous peoples of the Americas. Furthermore, Spain’s economic policy was shaped by experiences in Andalucía. The policy of large estates – or *latifundias* – was spread to the Americas “as well as political power in the form of feudal rights ... was implemented in the New World (sic)” (Oto-Peralías & Romero-Ávila, 2016, p. 450). In essence, “the political subordination of the four kingdoms of Jaen, Cordoba, Seville, and Granada to the Crown of Castilla was a model for the formation of viceroyalty formation in the Americas” (Fernández, 2022, p. 435).

The solidification of these pre-capitalist social relations led to the use of *latifundias* in the Americas and a policy of chryshedonism.⁷⁶ This was the determining factor in

⁷⁶ The economic obsession with gold.

Spanish colonial policy (Fontanel, et al., 2008, p. 335). This induced inflation in Spain while ensuring that capital was not spent on productive investment, but instead used on lavish expenditures by the Crown (Perrotta, 1993). In analysing this reality, Lachmann (1989, p. 59) argued the following:

Where such a transition from feudalism to capitalism did not occur, as in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, one got ... an orientation to the profit opportunities obtained through political domination, predatory activity, and irregular transactions with political bodies. Those were the only sorts of profits the original core countries could make from exploiting slaves in Africa and in the Americas or by buying the products of serf labour in Eastern Europe.

British colonialism (and later US policy) in the Americas on the other hand differed due to the change in economic and social relations which had taken place in Britain. British colonialism worked in a capitalist direction. In examining the link between slavery and industry, Marx (1920, p. 121) stated that “without slavery, you have no cotton; without cotton you have no modern industry”. Slaveowners were under market pressures, having to buy both slaves and land from the market – usually on credit – meaning that slave owners were impelled to reduce costs, use the most productive techniques, and gear production towards the market. Slave owners in British America could not rely on subsistence farming, even if they would have liked to. As Clegg (2015, p. 286) argued:

Planters had the incentive and ability to increase productivity because of the unique opportunities and costs presented to them by the greater Atlantic economy. These consisted not only in the elastic demand of British manufacturers but also in the vagaries of the international slave trade. The outlawing of this trade restricted the supply of slave labour and put pressure on planters to economize on its use. Eli Whitney’s patented cotton gin was one of a flurry of labour-saving gins introduced during a period of rising slave prices.

Catalunya, which was unfettered by the economic and social relations imposed on the south meant that it “witnessed the rise of a powerful commercial agriculture” (Moreno Zacarés, 2018, p. 749) helped in no small part by the abolition of serfdom following the peasant revolt of 1486 (Freedman, 1993). Brenner (1976, p. 63) in the footnotes of his analysis of the agrarian class structure and economic development in pre-industrial Europe went as far as to argue that:

the only real alternative to the ‘classical English’ landlord-large tenant-wage labour form of capitalist agriculture seems to have been an equally capitalist system based on large-scale owner-cultivators also generally using wage labour. The latter was the structure which in fact emerged in Catalonia at the end of the fifteenth century out of the previous period of agrarian struggle.

While Brenner was perhaps overly generous with this claim - and it was one upon which he never expanded - it highlights the fact that Catalunya did have a separate agrarian system, which is likely to be a factor in explaining its later strong development compared to the Spanish south. As Julie Marfany (2016, pp. 25-32) argued, with the abolition of serfdom, peasants began to accumulate land via inheritance, purchase, and marriage and by 1700 these original peasants would employ sharecroppers to work the land while they became a new professional middle class. As in England, there now existed a tripartite system of landlords, a commercially oriented middle class, and landless labourers. This new middle class - attuned to the changing needs of the market - would alternate the production of certain products dependent on price. For example, they would insist on the growing of vines to turn into wine to make a larger profit (Moreno Zacarés, 2018, p. 756). Furthermore, these large farms in the hands of the new middle class led to a social dislocation in the countryside; newly landless peasants moved to the cities having to sell their labour power. The absorption of this ‘newly freed’ labour came mostly from the Catalan textile industry. Pertinent to this analysis is how the Catalan textile industry then interacted not only with the rest of Spain but also with its colonies

(Thomson, 2005) (Núñez, 2015). Spanish protectionism meant that the importation of Indian cloth was banned, leading to a rise in Catalan weaving, predicated on cotton from the Americas then, the manufactured cloth would be exported back to the colonies (Núñez, 2015, p. 202). This helped tie Catalunya not only closer to the Spanish state but also the Empire, whereby the benefits of colonialism reverberated through Aragón, as well as Castilla.

The above analysis raises two important points for discussion. Firstly, it shows how internal peripherality - while not mirroring that of external peripherality or imperialism - also hinders development. Furthermore, internal peripherality can also advise the policy of the metropole in its dealings with external peripheries, as shown in the case of Andalucía and the Americas. The relative autonomy of Catalunya on the other hand - and the lack of need to 'defend' it from Muslims - meant that its economic and social structures remained largely unaffected by those processes taking place in the South. This meant that it was better placed to develop along lines that were similar, but not analogous to those processes taking place in southern England. This relative autonomy meant that it could develop in a way more conducive to its own needs, an option not available to the internal peripheries of the South. This meant that when opportunities arose - such as Spain's protectionist policies - the newly emerging Catalan middle class was more able to exploit such opportunities, while their economic structure ensured a large mass of landless labourers necessary for the expansion of industries such as textile manufacturing. This process helps explain the divergence between Catalunya on one hand and the southern regions of Castilla on the other during the industrial turn on the Iberian Peninsula. To paraphrase Braudel, the economic divergence of today is composed simultaneously of the time of yesterday, of the day before yesterday, and of bygone days.

The situation on the Italian peninsula differed in some respects from that in Iberia. Italy was a latecomer and a weak player within the European theatre of Empire. Italy

had no colonial possessions in the Americas or Asia, whereas in Africa it colonised Eritrea in 1882, Somalia in 1905, Libya in 1912 and Ethiopia in 1936. “It was a weak player because she only managed to take leftovers of other colonial powers” (Bertazzini, 2019, p. 17). Italy’s comparative poverty compared to other European powers also affected how its Colonies’ economic and productive capacities could be ‘developed’. Their treatment of native populations was no less brutal than their Western European counterparts, yet “unlike France and Britain, the new Kingdom of Italy lacked the capital resources to sponsor and develop plantation colonies for economic exploitation” (Choate, 2003, p. 65). To this end, Italy’s weaker internal economy could not ensure the availability of resources or the markets for its colonial territories that Britain or France could. In an economic sense, Italy’s colonies were not central to its economic development, partly explained by the comparatively short length of time to which its colonies were subject to live under its yoke, partly due to the lateness of the Kingdom’s empire, and partly due to the comparative backwardness of the Kingdom compared to the European superpowers. In the case of Italy, the role of empire may have been more psychological:

The belief that Italy was the cradle of European civilization played a significant part in the nationalist ideology of modern Italy from unification to fascism. This ideology aimed to both create a national identity and defeat internal differences in a country which was socially and culturally diverse and emerging from centuries of foreign domination, and where discontent and unrest not to mention poverty were widespread (De Donno & Srivastava, 2006, p. 375).

The purpose of these colonies therefore was to elevate Italy to its rightful place within Europe and the world-system and to ‘make Italians’. In Europe, this meant an irredentism to bring Italian speakers under the wing of the Italian state, while abroad it meant creating links to the peninsula’s Roman past in *Mare Nostrum* while creating similarities and comparisons between itself, France, Great Britain, and Germany.

Why Italy did not develop its empire sooner merits some explanation. The fragmentation of Italy into smaller political units until relatively recently is one such reason. The larger size of the 'nation'-states of the Netherlands, Spain, Great Britain, and France, combined with their growing productive capacity meant that smaller city-states such as existed in northern Italy could no longer compete in the modern era. Furthermore, Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson (2005, p. 42) directly link Italy's stagnation from the 16th-19th Centuries to empire. They state that "our hypothesis suggests that Italy did not develop as rapidly as Britain and the Netherlands because Italian city-states did not take part in Atlantic trade and colonialism". This expressly shows the link between economic development and colonialism. The position of Italy was further weakened by its literal geographic position: to gain access to the Atlantic its ships would need to pass through the Strait of Gibraltar, which is 8 miles at its shortest, making it a geo-strategically vital region. Controlled by both the Spanish and the British at different times, these rival sea powers could make Italian access to the 'new' world exceedingly difficult.

Due to the comparative weakness of Italy's Empire, compared to the major European powers, the 'Other' to which *Italianness* was compared came from inside, specifically the South. Sociologically, this was espoused by Cesare Lombroso who argued in 'The Delinquent Man' that criminality came from 'abnormal' physical features. According to Lombroso, in the Mezzogiorno their skulls tended to have an abnormally small circumference, their cheekbones wide, a pronounced jawline, thick eyebrows and darting eyes (Mezzano, 2009, p. 39). These 'characteristics' signified criminality. The American sociologist William Ripley wrote 'The European Races' in 1899, whereby he argued that there were three European races; the Teutonic, Alpine, and Mediterranean. Lombroso's work, while attempting to be 'scientific' was also meant to ensure northern Italy's place within the 'Alpine race', separate from the Italian South. This Othering played a similar role to that of Al-Andalus; it gave a reference point to which 'true Italians' could be compared (Davis, 2012, p. 510).

This sociological ‘foundation’ regarding the differences between the North and the South gave credence to an economic policy which benefitted the North at the expense of the South. Not only did economic inequality between the North and South increase after the Risorgimento, but the North also expropriated a disproportionately large share of taxes from the South to fund investment in the North (D’Attoma, 2017, p. 80). The historical bloc between northern industrialists and southern landlords meant that antiquated and reactionary social relations in the South would be maintained, helped in part by northern industrialists, who in turn would have an agricultural south to feed its population and as a reserve army of labour when needed. Both Petruszewicz (2020) and Riall (2002) refer to the fact that the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies followed a protectionist policy before its incorporation into the Kingdom of Italy, which generally protected the southern Italian peasantry from the worst price fluctuations and volatility. The destruction of this protectionism post-Risorgimento adversely affected the economic potentialities of the South. In explaining this, it is worth turning to Samir Amin’s (1974, p. 72) work on unequal development and peripheral capitalism. He stated:

In the peripheral formations, it will be seen that the dominant capitalist mode subdues and transforms the others: it disfigures them, deprives them of their functionality and subjects them to its own, without however radically disintegrating and destroying them.

In essence, the capitalist north *transformed* the formation in the South in that it changed its protectionist policies and the destination of its agricultural products, yet it did not disintegrate or destroy the semi-feudal *latifundia* system but instead changed it to its own needs and ends. In this regard, “the pattern of transition to peripheral capitalism is fundamentally different from that of transition to central capitalism” (Amin, 1976, p. 200). The peripheral south therefore allowed for the concentration of primitive accumulation in the North, allowing it on one hand to

grow while simultaneously reinforcing the dominance of the North over the South. Amin (1976, p. 203) further explained that:

The mutilated nature of the national community in the periphery confers an apparent relative weight and special functions upon the local bureaucracy that are not the same as those of the bureaucratic and technocratic social groups at the centre. The contradictions typical of the development of underdevelopment, and the rise of petit-bourgeois strata reflecting these contradictions, explain the present tendency to state capitalism.

This explains the relationship between northern industrialists and southern landlords within the historical bloc. The bureaucratic function played by landlords was to maintain the traditional relations of production in the South, acting as a comprador class in an alliance with northern capitalist interests. As he later states (Amin, 1976, p. 362):

Capital, through its development at the centre itself, continually gives rise to unification and differentiation. The mechanisms of centralization for the benefit of the dominant capital also operate between the various regions of the centre: the development of capitalism everywhere means developing regional inequalities. Thus, each developed country has created within itself its own underdeveloped country: the southern half of Italy is one example. The resurgence of regionalist movements in our time would be difficult to understand without this analysis.

In the case of Wales, peripherality at home and coloniality abroad coalesced to create a peculiar economic position. Within the British Empire, Wales was a semi-peripheral power within the world-system. On one hand, Wales could ascend from its position of peripherality via its incorporation within the British state and by hanging on the coattails of the English. Wales, therefore, did not lead the process of colonialism, but it used its position as a member of the British Empire to improve its position. It was dependent on, and linked to, England. Yet, it no doubt used this

reality to exploit others across the globe. Welsh industrialists used the opportunities opened by the slave trade to develop their own economic base, attested by the link – and growth – between slavery and colonialism on one hand and the slate, copper, and iron industries on the other (Evans, 2015) (Jenkins & Moore, 2002).

The Long Eighteenth Century confirmed Wales's position within the world-system: it was deeply rooted within the political economy of England and the British Empire. Wales's peripherality was due to it moving to the contours of English demand with regards to food, labour, and natural resources, and was in this sense 'used' by England for its own aims. Yet, peripherality within a British context differed from global peripherality or colonialism. Wales and its resources were central to the wider British project, while membership in the British Empire alleviated Wales to a position it would not have achieved on its own.

The importance of the Empire to British economic development and growth still needs to be addressed. Wallerstein (2011c, p. 68) argued that Britain's edge in colonial trade was "precisely [what] supplied the income-elastic products that permitted Britain to expand trade ... with Europe in the period of expansion after the 1750s". With regards to specific foodstuffs and luxury products, in the 1830s 75% of Britain's coffee, 93% of its cotton, 95% of its sugar, and 97% of its tobacco was produced by slaves (Losurdo, 2014, pp. 13-14). There also existed a huge value transfer from the colonies to Britain. In the West Indies, between 1795 and 1804, 4.8million pounds of products were supplied to "England (sic)" free of charge (Habib, 2017, p. 10). In India, the British taxed Indians to pay for imports from India, meaning that there was a double-value transfer from the colony to Britain. This meant that Britain used its external colonies to develop its own internal development. As Mukherjee (2010, p. 76) argued:

The process of primitive accumulation in capitalism or the initial phase of industrialisation is a painful one as the initial capital for investment has to be raised on the backs of the working class or the peasantry. To the extent that Britain and

other metropolitan countries were able to draw surplus from the colonial people to that extent, they did not have to draw it from their own working class and peasantry.

In this regard, the Welsh benefitted from membership within the British state as some of the growing pains of industrial development were outsourced onto the colonies, meaning that both the working class and the bourgeoisie benefitted from the Empire, although to varying degrees.

The effects of Wales's peripheral position within the British state become more apparent after the height of the Industrial Revolution. With the decline of the coal industry from the interwar period onward, Wales's "integral but peripheral" role was illuminated. Wales did not possess the economic levers it needed to attempt to counteract the decline of the coal industry, whereas for Britain, coal could now be sourced cheaper and more efficiently from abroad, meaning that Welsh coal was no longer of necessity. In this regard, a cursory glance at the Basque Country may illuminate this fact. The Basque Country experienced similar levels of economic decline in the post-war period with the fall of its own heavy industries. However, due to its competency in industrial and economic strategy, the Basque Country was able to redefine its economic outputs and retrain its workers (Navarro, et al., 2014). Changes in the importance of technologies and industries is a central part of the capitalist system and its ability to redefine itself. However, how governments decide to deal with this change is not predetermined. Due to the peripherality of Wales - both economically and politically - in its relationship with the British state, a reorientation of the Welsh economy was not a priority. It is no guarantee that a Wales with the economic levers needed at its disposal would have been able to reorientate the Welsh economy as was necessary, but it would have made the outcome more likely.

Peripherality and colonialism, therefore, affected each of our case studies in turn. Yet, again, the inherent messiness of history means that this analysis must use a level of abstraction. It seems that peripherality within the state (let alone the world-

system) leads to worse economic outcomes. It seems clear that Wales, the Mezzogiorno, and Andalucía were not following their own economic imperatives, but those of their respective cores. In situations where there are competing economic preferences, the core tends to win. In the case of the Mezzogiorno and Andalucía, it seems that internal policy and colonial policy existed in a dialectical relationship whereby one affected the other. Internal policy in Andalucía affected policy developments in the colonies, whereby the weaker colonialism that existed in Italy informed the North's treatment of the South, creating an internal Other due to the lack of a unifying external Other. In the case of Wales, it is likely that Ireland originally played the role of the internal/external Other, meaning that Wales was in a middling position on the continuum between the English and Lowland Scots on one hand, and the Irish and other colonies on the other. Furthermore, colonialism enriched all three countries in their own ways and to varying degrees. However, colonialism – and the form which it took – interacted with the economic base of each society, creating different colonial relations in each place. That is, British colonialism differed from Spanish colonialism, and this differed due to the conditions existing within each state. This gives credence to the view that we should not treat the domestic and international as two spheres of production or economics, as the conditions existing within a certain place give rise to its foreign affairs, which in turn feed back to the domestic.

The Nation and the State

Each of our case studies is to be found in Europe: the cradle of the nation-state. The ideal-type formulation sees the fusing of 'nation' and 'state' whereby one is coterminous with the other. The strength of the nation-state rests on its apparent banality, temporal permanence, and naturalness (Billig, 2017). This led Ernest

Gellner (1983, p. 6) to state that “a man must have a nationality as he must have a nose and two ears”. A man may have a nationality, but it need not necessarily be fused with the state. National identity and state identity can be conceived of as two separate things. Furthermore, the strength, salience, and identification with a nationality or state can change over time. The strength of nationalism rests on its *perceived* banality, permanence, and naturalness rather than its actuality. An analysis of our case studies will bear out this fact.

In the case of Welshness and Britishness, we see a distinction between Welshness (generally) as an ethnic identity, and Britishness as a state – or civic – identity. This is in some ways like Risse’s (2013) assertion that identity can be nested, or act like concentric circles; my Cardiff identity may affect my Welsh identity which in turn affects my understanding of Britishness. However, this does not get to the meat of the argument. Each identity has a different function; Britishness is a political identity, while Welshness is something more ‘intrinsic’. Britishness as a modern political concept took root in the Long Sixteenth Century, with a form of governance that was less personal and dynastic and more ‘national’ in character. This process was solidified by the Union with Scotland which solidified a ‘national’ state on the island of Britain. A form of common British identity would have existed among the Welsh, Scottish and English in the 18th and 19th Centuries, but “for the Scots and Welsh there ... [was] a clear distinction between a (perhaps negotiable) political identification with Britain and an ethnic or national identification with Scotland or Wales” (Jacobson, 1997, pp. 184-185). The role of the Welsh and Scottish in creating this British identity should also be accepted; centripetal and centrifugal forces emanated between core and periphery with one shaping the other and this was linked to Britain’s core position in the world-system:

It was no coincidence at all that the period of British imperial take-off and success also witnessed the forging of an authentically British governing elite. Rich, landed, and talented males from Wales, Scotland, England, and to a lesser extent Ireland became

welded after the 1770s into a single ruling class that intermarried, shared the same outlook, and took to itself the business of governing, fighting for, and profiting from greater Britain (Colley, 1992, p. 325).

This helps to explain why the Welshness of the 18th and 19th Centuries was usually expressed in cultural or ethnic terms. The nation of Wales was therefore represented through cultural signifiers: the language, literature, music, the National Library, and the National Museum. Britain on the other hand represented Empire, 'modernity', Parliament, and the Crown. Access to the fruits of British imperialism and therefore a stronger world-system position was essential to Wales's (and Scotland's) continued political identification with Britain.

The period following the Second World War is when identification with Britain became more "negotiable" to the Welsh and Scots. This was a period of rapid relative economic and political decline with its world-system position moving from hegemonic at the end of the 19th Century to semi-peripheral by the middle of the 20th. Britishness as an identity was built on Empire, yet "once the history of the empire became a source of discomfort, shame, and perplexity, ... that unsettling history was diminished, denied, and then if possible, actively forgotten" (Gilroy, 2005, pp. 89-90). This historic myopia meant that a central pillar of Britishness was crumbling without having been replaced. This is also the period related to what Krishan Kumar terms "the moment of Englishness" (2003) in that imperial decline led to a self-consciousness for the English which was distinct from Britishness; an excavation into who and what the English were as a nation began.

Britain no longer has the economic supremacy it once enjoyed; and politically its loss of empire, its increasing military and economic dependence on the United States, and latterly its deepening incorporation within the European Union,⁷⁷ are all manifestations of its diminishing capacity to play a leading, independent role in world

⁷⁷ It is outside the scope of this thesis to discuss the English vote for Brexit, but it is sufficient to say that a postcolonial melancholia would have played a part for some voters.

affairs. The self-perceptions of the British, and particularly the dominant English, must be affected by the fact that in contrast to how things stood in the early twentieth century and even in 1945, by the 1980s Britain had become just an ordinary, moderately large power, not a Great Power (Jacobson, 1997, p. 185).

In the British case, therefore, the notions of “nation” and “state” never fused. Originally, this conceptual ‘fuzziness’ was part of the strength of Britishness; people in the periphery – and England for that matter – did not need to choose between what could be considered conflicting identities. On the island of Britain itself – if not in the British Isles in its entirety – Britishness for most of its existence as a political identity should be viewed for its astounding continuity, seemingly capable of overcoming most notions of national difference.⁷⁸ This acceptance of difference gave Britain its strength; ‘unity in diversity’ exemplified Britishness. This fuzziness however has meant that Britishness has less clay in which to craft its meaning. Without the crafting materials that a core world-system position gave Britishness, it remained incomplete. In effect, the “imagined community” (Anderson, 2006) of Britain was becoming harder to imagine. Figure 60 is an attempt to conceptually tease out the relationship between the identities of Britain, especially since the 1970s. It is possible that the contradiction between the “nation” and the “state” could be ‘resolved’ with an increasingly possible state rupture. We see this possibility developing in Wales, whereby independence is becoming more mainstream as a political concept, despite the lack of a clear policy direction.

⁷⁸ This is not to say that every identity was necessarily treated equally, but there existed space for them under the umbrella of Britishness.

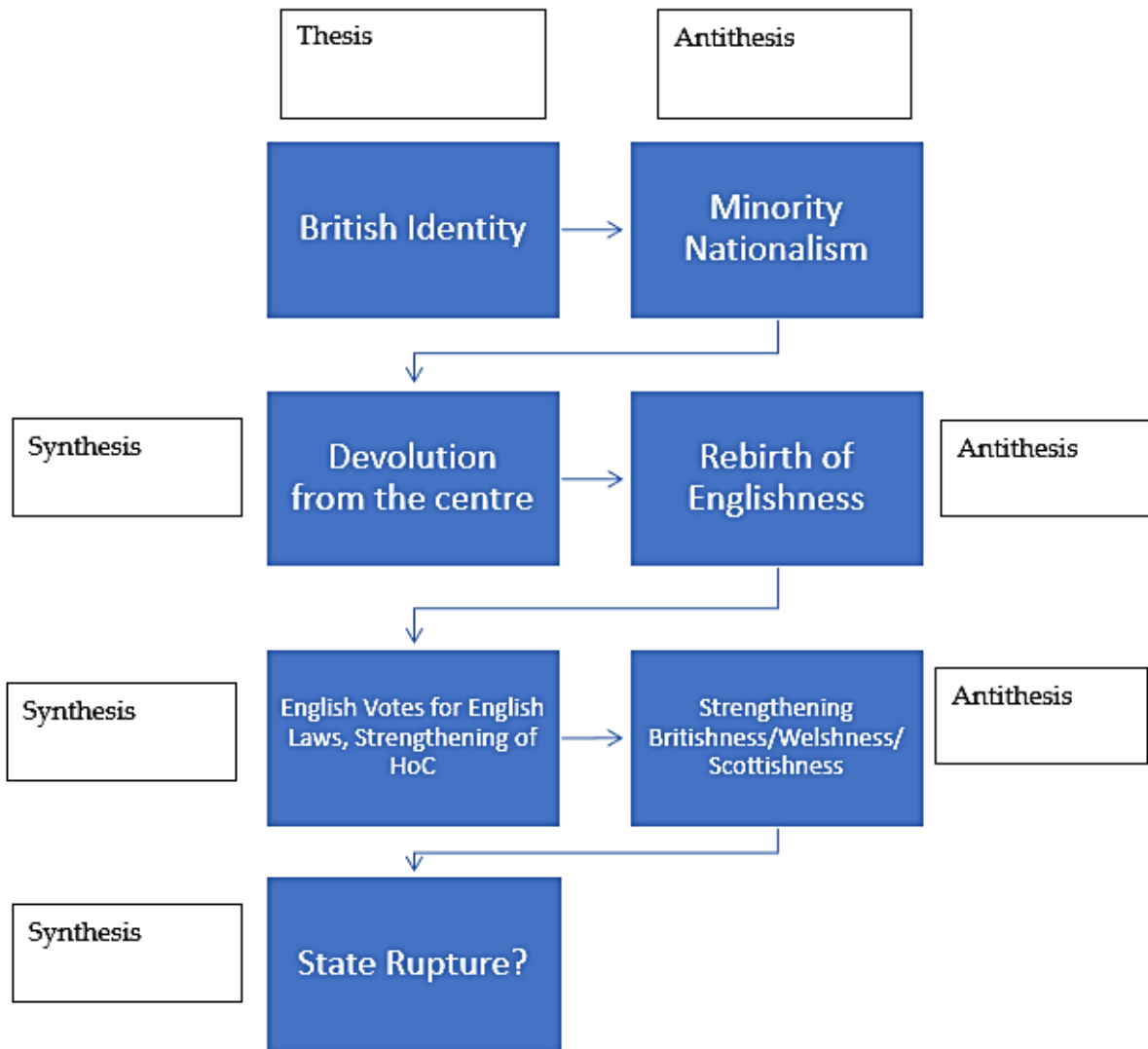


Figure 60: *The Dialectic Between Britishness and National Identities. Author's Own.*

The Spanish and British cases have more commonalities than may at first be apparent. This thesis has argued above that the “nation” and “state” did not fuse in Britain, and this is also true of Spain. Similarly, Empire was central to understandings of Spanishness:

The building of a broad Spanish empire, which expanded through Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa from the 16th century on, helped to create collaborative links among the several traditional kingdoms existing on the Iberian Peninsula: Castilla-Leon, Aragón-Catalonia, Navarre-Basconia and Portugal.

All these developments tended toward building a Spanish nation, prosperous and modern, based on an efficient Spanish state and an imperial ambition. But they did not imply culturally uniform patterns (Colomer, 2007, pp. 5-6).

As shown, neither was the British state “culturally uniform”, therefore this is not a specificity of Spanishness. Empire, however, buttressed a political Spanishness as it did Britishness. Catalan merchants and manufacturers were “the most vociferous defenders” of the Spanish Empire, arguing for its importance to “national integrity” (Schmidt-Nowara, 2004, p. 199). The world-system position of the Peninsula - solidified by the Spanish Empire - meant that the middle and upper classes of Catalunya and the Basque Country viewed membership of Spanishness through a lens of costs and benefits; a “negotiable political identification”, like Britishness. It was the loss of empire which led peripheral elites to reconsider this position. As Storm (2004, pp. 145-146) argued, “the loss of the last major colonies [had] a substantial impact ... concerning the national question”. Disillusionment with Spain and Spanishness had similar conditions to disillusionment with Britain and Britishness. The difference relates to the timing of decolonisation. As Spanish decolonisation happened sooner, revisionist mythmaking has attempted to ‘recreate’ Spanishness in a way we have yet to truly see in Britain. Spanishness would no longer be linked to empire, but instead to Catholicism, the Crown, and the Reconquista. Furthermore, this is when Spain became more intimately linked with the Castilian language and culture; moving away from an understanding of *Las Españas* (The Spains) and different articulations of Spanishness to one tied intimately to Castilla. Under Franco, the Castilian language, identity, and culture became the sole arbiter and lens through which to view *Spanishness* (Moreno, 1997, p. 75).

The notion of unity was central to the Francoist ideology. The Patria, according to Franco himself, was ‘spiritual unity, social unity, historic unity’. Catholicism was to be the ‘crucible of nationality’. In this pursuit of unity, the state was to be central. It was through organised power that the nation would be re-made, and the people

disciplined. This unity, imposed by the state, entailed an iron centralism which denied the existence of regional cultural differences (Richards, 2020, p. 150).

As imperial decline led to “the moment of Englishness” (Kumar, 2003), perhaps it also led to “the moment of *Castilianness*” which attempted to rearticulate what it meant to be Castilian, and therefore Spanish. This has led to tension whereby there are two conceptions of Spain: “on the one hand the idea of an indivisible Spanish nation-state, and on the other, the notion that plural Spain was an ensemble of diverse peoples, historic nationalities and regions” (Moreno, 1997, p. 69). It seems that Spanishness is more akin to a political identity for the peripheries, with their ethnic identities being more regional, while in Castilla, Spanishness is both the ethnic and political identity; a situation like Anglo-Britishness before the (re)emergence of Englishness as an ethnic identity. In both cases, therefore, the ambiguity surrounding the meaning and content of Britishness/Spanishness helped peripheral ethnicities feel included within the wider framework of Britishness/Spanishness. Yet, this identity did not replace the ethnic underpinnings of their regional/national identity.

Italy on the other hand has a much more recent past as both a unified nation and a state. Both Greece and Italy can be considered “cultural constructs”, and in some ways burdened by their classical pasts (Patriarca, 2005, p. 385). Before the 19th Century, Romans unified Italy, not ‘Italians’. This reality led John Breuilly (2009, p. 440) to argue that Italianness was therefore located in “non-national values” such as “Catholicism, monarchy and family”. The importance of non-national values helped give rise to *campanilismo*;⁷⁹ a word that denotes the strong ties people have for their specific town or community (Tak, 1988, p. 149). *Campanilismo* has its roots in Italy’s historic city-state system and North-South divide (Antonsich, 2016). This reality has created tension at the centre of what it means to be Italian. The South is seen as both

⁷⁹ The word derives from *campanile* which is the name given to the civic bell tower that is apparent in most Italian towns.

'European' and 'non-European', yet essential to the construction of Italy: "the South represented an 'older' Europe that had to be reincorporated to fulfil a European identity grounded in 'multiplicity'" (Agnew, 2017, p. 12). As Galtung (1971b) stated, they were "members of two worlds". The failure to address regional inequality between north and south continues to inhibit a shared sense of national identity. This is expressed via footballing rivalries between north and south:

When Napoli go north the opposing fans greet the arrivals with slogans that carry historical significance: 'Forza Vesuvio!'; 'Welcome to Italy'. The Neapolitan fans are fully in tune with this dialogue and respond in kind: 'Milan, Turin, Verona is this Italy? It's better being Africans!'; 'Better to win as country bumpkins than lose with Berlusconi'. The exchange is tribute to Italy's enduring questione meridionale (Southern Question) and the inter-related problematic of the 'Mediterranean' and its relationship to the concept of 'Europe' (Hazard & Gould, 2001).

Rusconi (1993, p. 313) argued that a duality exists in the social construction of 'the Mediterranean'. It exists on the margins, being both European and non-European. This is central to understanding Italian cultural identity in that the Otherness implied in the North-South divide helps create a unified cultural identity. In effect, Italians understand the context and content of the imagery created, and it is therefore for an internal, Italian audience. *Campanilismo* and the love of one's town against all others is, therefore, a *unifying*, Italian trait. Recently, however, the *Lega* and their supporters have attempted to move away from the Mediterranean as a signifier for the north, instead arguing that they come from Celtic – and therefore north European – descent. In this regard, the Mediterranean is central for some northerners to understand 'what they are not'.

Like the two other case studies, however, Italianness – and the position of the South within it – changes depending on the imperial situation. Fascist Italy attempted to recreate *Italia Irridenta* which included areas of present-day Slovenia, Croatia, and Switzerland, while also recreating *Mare Nostrum*:

intellectuals and political leaders came to construct a representation of a unitary national identity. Only then did the many complex elements that composed the Italian nation come together to affirm that identity, overriding and obliterating the rhetorical strategy of an Italy divided between North and South. In the international upheavals of the 1920s, when the nation-state of Italy was in fact quite fragile, the Fascists generated the collective dream, indeed delirium, of achieving superpower status, giving birth to a national identity that had been up to then paradoxical. North and South as enemies did not figure in the everyday discourse of fascist intellectuals. An image of Italy as a utopian project, a hazy veil that hid complex differences, grew to cover the entire national territory. The Southern Question gave way to the rhetorical figure of Italy defined as the direct descendant and inheritor of Imperial Rome. – (Pandolfi, 2020, p. 285)

It seems that the failure of Italy to bind its north and south together economically has led to cultural differences being exacerbated and weaponised. In all three case studies, nationalism is something that can be changed, reshaped, and blended with other identities dependent on context and world-system position. In analysing the Longue Durée of each state, the reality of political nationalism's modern invention becomes clear. Catalanness, Welshness, or Italianness may have existed in some form throughout this analysis, but the content and form of each have changed dependent upon the wider world-system.

Economic Development: *Cui Bono?*

This thesis began by discussing the conditions of development, arguing that according to modernisation theorists, the conditions of development are endogenous to a region and therefore dependent on the specific policies implemented in a region. On the scale of the world-system, *everything* is endogenous, and the entire system is

self-reproducing. Within the world-system, it is impossible to become completely decoupled from other societies and economic decision-makers, therefore endogeneity in the way used by modernisation theorists does not hold weight. From these case studies, two conditions seem important for economic development. The first is some form of strategic decision-making capacity within a given region. This does not necessarily entail state 'independence' or being at the political core of the state. It means that there exists within, for example, northern Italy a nucleus of economically important actors - whether private or public - which acts in a way that can steer Italian policy in its favour and maintain a regional basis of economic importance. The second important factor is international importance and the historical ability to shape the world-system in your own image. Sofia in Bulgaria or Yaoundé in Cameroon may have enough weight to move *national* economic policy in its direction, yet at the level of the world-system it is incredibly difficult for these places to act independently or shape the system in its own image. Development therefore becomes *exogenous* at the national level in these places (while still endogenous at the level of the world-system). California, for example, while not being the political locus of the United States holds such economic weight that at the level of the world-system it can shape the system in its own image, while also holding huge domestic weight. The ability for a place to have 'independent' strategic decision-making capabilities is therefore of large importance. By turning to the three case studies, it is possible to illuminate this fact.

In the case of Catalunya, Spain was at the core of the world-system throughout the 15th and 16th Centuries. While its position worsened afterwards, in a *global* context, Spain was still an important imperial economy. Catalunya enjoyed its own importance within the Spanish political economy. It had a different agricultural economy to the rest of the country in the 16th and 17th Centuries and was the first centre of Spanish industrial development in the early 19th Century. The position of Catalan merchants within the Spanish Empire meant that Catalunya's upper and

middle classes had relatively independent decision-making capabilities at the regional and international levels of the world-system. Comparatively, Catalan industrialists had economic might above the Castilian average and the global average. Despite the general fall in Spain's position in the world-system, Catalunya's relative position within the Spanish economy has not changed. This has remained true despite fascism, the accession of the EU, and the rise of neoliberalism. From 1860 to 1995 Catalunya stayed in the top three ranking positions for GDP per capita in Spain (Martínez-Galarraga et al, 2015, p. 512). In relative terms, therefore, Catalunya holds regional economic and political power, while not having the ability to truly shape the world-system in its own image, meaning that it resides on the cusp between the core and the semi-periphery. Catalunya's historic global importance, however, and its continued regional importance puts it in a strong position compared to most places within the world-system.

In the case of Italy, unification was pushed by the most commercially advanced region of the peninsula in Piedmont, in turn, this was one of the stronger city-states that existed previously. Regional power therefore meant that it could shape the political economy of the new state in northern industrial interests. The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies lost the ability to shape its own economic path, with its mercantilist and protectionist policies being unmade by the Kingdom of Italy in favour of the industrial north. This unequal economic integration continues to shape North-South relations today. Fascism and the war effort deepened this inequality, whereby public policy "inexorably steered public procurement toward enterprises in the so-called 'industrial triangle' (Lombardy, Piedmont, and Liguria). The north also benefitted from deflationary measures and an autarchic policy, which meant an intensification of industrial production in advanced sectors, most of which were located there" (Felice and Vecchi, 2015, p. 531). In the post-war period, although policy via the *Cassa* and Marshall Plan aid was meant to reduce inequality between North and

South, the South was not given the tools to direct its own internal political economy. Instead, the South was seen as an addendum to the industrial heart of the country:

the Plan's objective was to support the reconstruction of production systems in Italy and Europe, there was a distinct imbalance among imports that favoured northern industries. The largest imports were, in order of importance, fuel, cotton, cereals and machinery (Fauri, 2010, p. 168).

This led to a situation of growth without development and the creation of Palaces in the Desert. The Mezzogiorno, therefore, held no national or international economic weight, while the north was nationally important *and* internationally important (albeit not at the centre of the world-system). This however meant that it could more easily adapt policies and strategies conducive to not only economic growth but also development.

Wales mirrors many of these developments in the Mezzogiorno. Wessex – or the southeast of England – has been at the core of British political economy for close to a millennium, albeit not always at the heart of the world-system in its entirety. In the Welsh case, the most important period for this analysis begins from the 18th Century. Wales was an invaluable part of Britain's industrial development and within the Empire more generally, usually due to its supply of cheap labour, energy, and food. However, it is important to remember that strategic importance in this regard differs from politico-economic power. Wales was “integral but peripheral” (Williams, 1989, p. 17), yet it could not on a British level shape economic policy. Wales – like many places that are today peripheral – was incredibly important at the level of the world-system, yet it could not shape the system nor the internal British state in its own image. This meant that when Wales stopped being integral, it retained its characteristic of politico-economic dependence.

There must also be an acceptance here that being marginal in a European context is different to global marginality. For the time being at least, European states hold

more power within the world-system on a political level than would be assigned to them on economic metric alone; this is because the world-system was created and designed by colonial and imperial powers. That is, while the torch may have been passed from Spain to Britain, to the USA and so forth, each place, in relative terms, still enjoyed access to the capillaries of power at an international level as their interests (generally) coalesced. Regional/national power for places such as Catalunya and Padania is therefore important as their internal economies generally mirror that of those who shape the system. Wales, the Mezzogiorno, and places such as Andalucía on the other hand seem twice removed from decision-making processes. They are both removed from their national/regional decision-making processes and their interests more closely resemble those of globally semi-peripheral countries within the world-system. The economic policies taken by the core of the system, therefore, do not benefit them in the same way as it does Padania or Catalunya.

IX. Concluding Thoughts: The Past we Inherit, the Future we Build

This thesis has taken a journey through the weaving contours of history; through its ravines, its peaks, its blockages, and contradictions. It has analysed the punctual points of history, but always with the *Longue Durée* in mind. This work has been undertaken with what Braudel (1996, p. 16) referred to as the core problem of historical undertaking in mind:

Is it possible somehow to convey simultaneously both that conspicuous history which holds our attention by its continual and dramatic changes- and that other, submerged, history, almost silent and always discreet, virtually unsuspected either by its observers or its participants, which is little touched by the obstinate erosion of time?

In so doing, the thesis has analysed the apparent contradiction of continuity and change, stability and flux which is to be found in our histories. Geologies, climates, and soils – the seemingly unchanging – have shaped our histories via the paths available to our forebears, and the social milieux in which they lived. Yet, this seemingly silent, submerged history is not destiny. We are reminded of Karl Marx's (1972, p. 245) words that "men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past". While Marx is discussing how social and economic relations of the past affect the present, he touches on the reality that a 'longer' history is disseminated through from the past. Furthermore, this thesis has a specific understanding of the "men" that "make their own history". It is not the 'Great Man' that is found in biographies and our history books. The people to whom I refer will never be hallowed or acclaimed, they are the working people of yesterday and today who - through their social and economic relations – have made and remade our world-system each day.

The commoner is the motor of history, and it is through a history from below that we may touch and appreciate the complexity of our historic tapestry. That is why this thesis has concentrated on social movements and classes; enough has been and will continue to be written about the 'Great Men' of history. Instead, this work reaches out to the common man in solemn tribute.

This work, at its heart, is an attempt to understand societies of today but argues that to do so, we must properly analyse yesterday. It has shown how, for example, the Wales of 500 years ago continues to shape Wales today. It has *also* shown how the *world-system* of 500 years ago shapes Wales today. This work has created unity between the 'internal' and the 'external', whereby the domestic and the international are not separate spheres of social life or economic production but exist within the wider totality of the world-system. In 1624, John Donne wrote a poem regarding the unity of humanity:

*No man is an island,
Entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or of thine own were:
Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind,
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.*

No nation or state is a (hypothetical) island. Every nation is "a part of the main". We must do away with not only tired economic models regarding the endogeneity of

development but also move toward a deeper understanding of the interconnectivity that exists between us and the forces which abstract this reality.

But what about stateless nations, what can they expect from their lot within the world-system? Future research would be of benefit here. It would be valuable to undertake a more in-depth analysis of stateless nations such as Andalucía and Scotland to analyse which factors are state-specific (that is, Spanish or British) and which are more generalisable. Both case studies would also be the *inverse* of this analysis; Scotland is overdeveloped (unlike Wales) and Andalucía is underdeveloped (unlike Catalunya). Another particularly interesting case could be that of Belgium, which in geographic terms has a clear split between two ethnic groups, with Wallonia and Flanders having vastly different economic outcomes. It also gained independence from the Netherlands at a time this country was losing its hegemonic position in the world-system. The final stage would be to include case studies from outside Europe to more richly understand the effects that colonialism can have on national development, state development, and economic outcomes. The last consideration is whether instead of case studies, an analysis should be *thematic* with an analysis of different factors that explain development or the salience of nationalism, rather than a *histoire total* of each case study.

In turning to our case studies specifically, the reality seems clear: statelessness in abstraction does not decide world-system position. Catalunya and 'Padania' – if such a place exists – are overdeveloped in comparative – and global – terms. Wales and the Mezzogiorno on the other hand are underdeveloped in *comparative* terms. At the level of the world-system, Wales likely holds a semi-peripheral position, while the Mezzogiorno is closer to the global periphery. Catalunya and Padania therefore benefit from the current rules of the world-system. Their aim, therefore, is to have a larger piece of the cake, rather than changing the recipe. We therefore “need to point out that upward mobility and transformational action are not necessarily the same thing” (Chase-Dunn, 2018, p. 79). In this regard, the aims of the nationalist

movements in both regions are not 'revolutionary' at the level of the world-system. The EU and Eurozone have made secession easier for these places as they could maintain their currencies. More importantly, they could maintain their economic peripheries but *without* current redistributive policies.

The situation for Wales and the Mezzogiorno is on one hand bleaker but could also be more liberatory. As Ian Curtis - lead singer of Joy Division - sang: "existence, well, what does it matter? I exist on the best terms that I can. The past is now part of my future, the present is well out of hand". The goal for these places is to exist on the best terms they can, within the confines of their pasts and presents. This thesis has argued for the importance of decision-making capacity for economic development. It is unlikely that Wales or the Mezzogiorno will ever have this capacity within their current constitutional arrangements. 'Independence' for Padania – if such a policy was pursued – could, ironically, create the conditions for the Mezzogiorno to reclaim the capacity lost with the creation of the Kingdom of Italy. As referred to previously, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was economically behind the northern city-states, but this difference was smaller than it is now; it could at least follow protectionist policies that supported southern producers, for example. For Wales, the reality is that it is not a strategically important enough part of the state for it to be at the forefront of decision-making processes; this will always be London and the southeast. In this regard, Wales mirrors the northeast of England. However, Wales is 'lucky' in that it has its own national identity, which means that independence is a hypothetically viable option. Decision-making capacity could then at least move to Wales; the northeast of England seems to be in a particularly unenviable position; economically peripheral and viewed with derision.

It is important to note that independence for these two places would not act as a silver bullet and cure all ills. For one, we have seen that the devolution of some political power to Wales has led to the decoupling of Cardiff from the rest of the country in economic terms. There is a real possibility that Wales would recreate the

unequal economic situation that exists between London and 'the rest' or Dublin and beyond the Pale. Secondly - and perhaps more importantly - the functional position of places like Wales and the Mezzogiorno in the world-system would not change with political independence. Without any economic change, these places would continue in their roles as regions of surplus, cheap labour. As Charles Bettelheim (quoted in Emmanuel, 1972, p. 296) argued:

A dominated country, or a previously dominated one that does not alter its situation in the international capitalist division of labour, merely reproduces its unfavourable situation: the more it increases the production of the products that its "place" assigns it, the more does it participate in the worsening of its own unfavourable situation.

How, then, do places like Wales alter their situation in the international capitalist division of labour? Countries such as Japan, the Republic of Korea, Ireland, and China have managed to do so, but none of these models seem particularly easy to emulate.

Japan, for example, could develop independently as it was resource-poor, mountainous, and had a smaller market than other Asian states, making it unattractive to European colonialists (Muchhala, 2022, p. 124). As Paul Baran argued (1957, p. 158):

What was it that enabled Japan to take a course so radically different from that of all the other countries in the now underdeveloped world? ... Reduced to its core, it comes down to the fact that Japan is the only country in Asia (and in Africa or Latin America) that escaped being turned into a colony or dependency of Western European or American capitalism, which had a chance of independent national development.

Japan in the end emulated the West so well that it became an imperial power itself, shaping Korean development. 'Development' in the Republic came from "American occupation policy", anti-communism, and the remnants of Japan's colonial machine (Kim, 2020, p. 187):

As a result of oppression by the American Occupation Forces and the South Korean government, the working-class movement and popular opposition movement were nearly crushed. Only pro-governmental right-wing organizations could exist without the threat of death or imprisonment. Such a civil war, and the severe confrontation between them, transformed the external logic of the Cold War into an internalized 'consensual' one, which continued to regulate social and class relations (Hee-Yeon, 2000, p. 410).

These social and class relations meant that labour unions remained weak, meaning that 'development' policies need not care about the interests of workers. This linked with American anticommunism, making the Republic a bulwark against the communist north, and a region for the exportation of American finance capital.

Ireland's 'Celtic Tiger' model embodies some of the worst excesses of neoliberal capitalism and has created one of the most unequal countries in the Western world. Dublin, for example, accounts for 45% of all GVA in the country while having 28% of the population (McHenry, 2017). Unless Wales wished to become a tax haven and statelet, this is not a viable option.

The difficulty in emulating China on the other hand should be easily apparent. With over 1.4 billion people and 17% of the world's population, China is returning to its rightful place at the core of the world-system. Wales does not have the economic or political might to follow the Chinese model.

It seems that according to the 'rules of the game' of the capitalist world-economy, there will always be losers within that system. Perhaps the best course of action is therefore to transform the rules of that system, or at least understand the limitations of the system and attempt to diminish its effects. The core of the world-system claims that the world-economy that is built in their image is "non-ideological, pragmatic, and [an] economic 'truth'". Therefore, economic development is similarly "non-ideological (Muchhala, 2022, p. 124). Yet clearly:

ideas of development constellate around ideas adhering to policies that support the interests of big business, transnational corporations, and finance. It seeks not so much a free market, but rather a market free for powerful interests (Al-Kassimi, 2018, p. 3).

To paraphrase Baregu (1988, pp. 22-23), the capitalist world-system is the cause of the (semi)periphery's problems. It is also not about to provide a solution. I contend therefore that the solution for places such as Wales and the Mezzogiorno lies in what Samir Amin (1987, pp. 435-436) termed “– a delinking – that is to say, the refusal to submit national-development strategy to the imperatives of globalization”. This is not the same as autarky, which is increasingly impossible within the world-system, but a form of deliberative decision-making process “which has a national foundation and a popular content, independent of the criteria of economic rationality that emerges from the domination of the law of capitalist value that operates on a world scale” (Ibid).

Delinking was a political choice to change who made domestic decisions and how. It was to break with the rationality in which domestic policy choices were made with an eye towards what the capitalist global market valued. In its place, an internal ‘popular alliance’ would impose constraints and make choices according to its own law of value – based on the interests of workers and peasants. Because the capitalist law of value used relative prices as mechanisms of value extraction and to guide decision-making, breaking with them was needed to lock in value (Ajl, 2021, p. 85).

Delinking is not a panacea for the economic ills of places such as Wales and the Mezzogiorno, yet a cursory glance through this thesis should show the possible effects of such a policy. How different things could be if government policies and decisions were viewed through the lens of a national-popular will, rather than an adherence to their respective cores and the ‘non-ideological’, ‘pragmatic truth’ of the world-economy. If this was our reality, this piece of work may have looked very differently.

To conclude, if "Wales ... is a process, a process of continuous and dialectical historical development, in which human mind and human will interact with objective reality" (Williams, 1979, p. 23), perhaps it is time, once more, to will a new Wales into being. This is the most noble of causes. Finally, we may stop worrying the carcass of an old song.

X. References

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