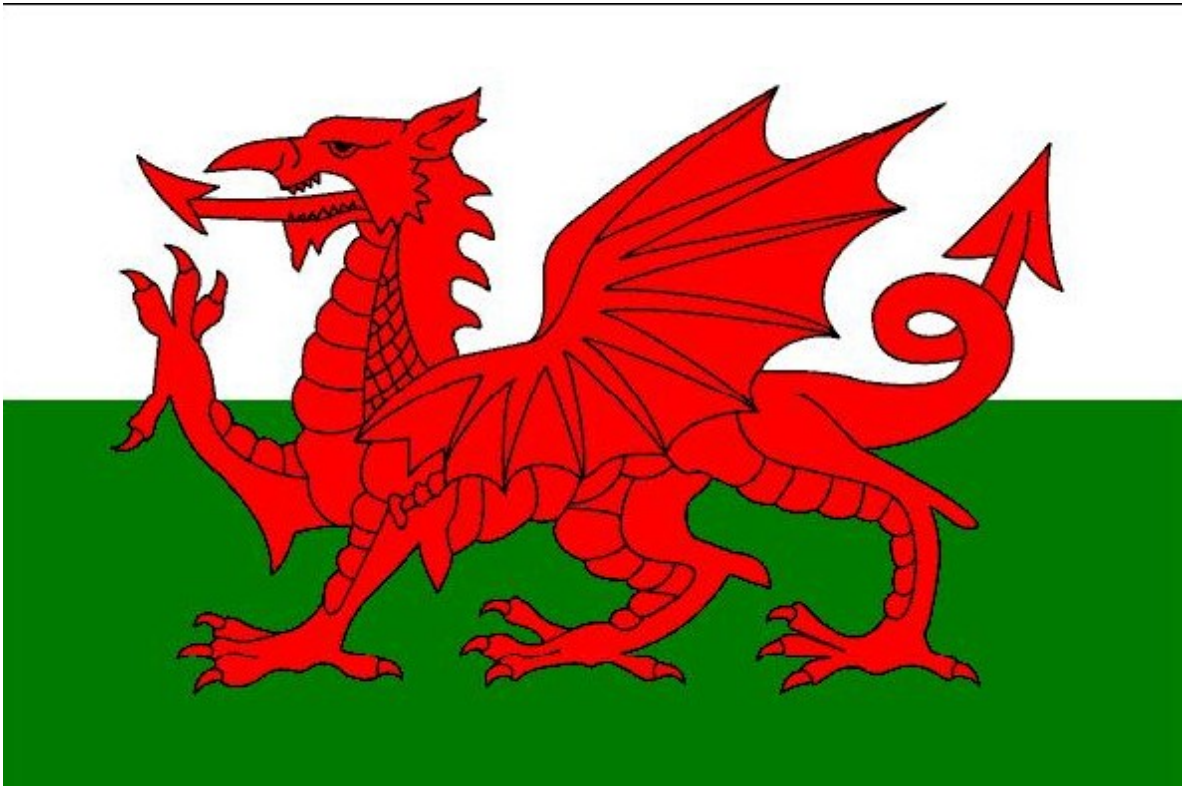


# Dissertation

## Devolution and European Integration: How has it Affected the Welsh Identity?



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## **Executive Summary**

This dissertation examines how European integration and Welsh devolution have affected the Welsh identity. Devolution and European integration are the most important institutional process to have affected Wales in the last 40 years. These political processes have caused shifts of power leading a re-thinking on the Welsh identity. The dissertation seeks not to analyse the identity of the Welsh, which is the sum of several identities, but the Welsh national dimension of identity.

The research draws on various sources consulted in Cardiff. Among others, books and reports available from Cardiff University and the Cardiff European Documentation Centre are used. Reports and articles from the Institute of Welsh Affairs will are also referred to and personal communication with the director of the Cardiff European Documentation Centre, Ian Thomson, is included in this dissertation.

The first part of the dissertation looks at the history of the Welsh identity and its diversity. It will be established that there is not one Welsh national identity but two. The language based identity holds that the Welsh language is the prime definer of identity. For the institution based identity, the relation to distinct Welsh institutions lies at the core of the national identity.

The second part of the dissertation discusses the impact of European integration on Wales. The European Union has been of importance to Wales, especially due to the funds it provides. Nevertheless, European integration has only marginally affected the Welsh identity. Overall, the Welsh “elite” have warm feelings for Europe because of the funds it provides and because it reduces dependence on “London”.

The third part of the dissertation will look at Welsh devolution. The reason for the failure of the 1979 referendum is analysed, and how changes in the way the Welsh viewed their identity ultimately led to a significant increase in support for devolution, leading to the victory of the “Yes vote” in the 1997 and 2011 referenda.

Devolution lead to creation of a Welsh political space and gave the identity debate in Wales a new impulse. Devolution has especially been of significance for the institution based identity.

The third part of the dissertation looks at other factors that affected the Welsh identity such as the evolving role of the Welsh language in Welsh and the emergence of Plaid Cymru as a potent political force.

It is concluded that devolution has a strong impact on the institution based identity. As devolution is a process, the direction it will take in the coming years will have a direct impact on the institution based identity. European integration, so far, only has a marginal impact on the Welsh identity. It has contributed to Wales in other ways, most notably through the funds it provides. The position of the Welsh language has also been strengthened, and this is of significance for the language based identity.

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## **Introduction**

This dissertation seeks to analyse if and how European integration and Welsh devolution have affected the Welsh identity. It is written with the understanding that political processes can and do affect national identities. Devolution and European Integration are the most significant political processes which have affected Wales in the last 40 years. For Wales, both have their roots in the 1970's and have become stronger forces ever since. The time frame of this essay will encompass the years between the United Kingdom becoming a member state of the European Community in 1973 and the first Welsh referendum in 1979, and the current day.

The dissertation will not seek to analyse the identity of the inhabitants of Wales. The identity of the inhabitants of Wales is the sum of various components: national identity, religious identity, social identity etc. However, this dissertation will seek to understand how the Welsh dimension of identity has been affected.

This dissertation endeavours to investigate the effect of European integration and devolution has the Welsh identity because it is a topic relevant to both Wales and Europe. Devolution has caused a re-thinking of the Welsh identity and an understanding of these changes will lead to a better comprehension of Wales and its future. An analysis of the effect of European integration will help understand whether and how European integration alters or reshapes (sub)national identities and whether it does have any effect. As the issue of stateless nations has resurfaced in recent years, understanding the effect of these shifts of power in Wales may help our understanding of what their effects might be on other stateless nations or regions.

Wales is anything but a homogeneous nation. Former Welsh first minister Rhodri Morgan once said that the reason he was “endlessly fascinated by Wales was because it was so fractured and complex

(Morgan, 2001 as cited in Osmond, 2001b, para.2). The first part of the dissertation will explore the diversity and history of the Welsh identity. It is important to have a sound understanding of the diverse Welsh identities as political events will not have the same impact or importance on the various identities.

The second part of the dissertation will address the role of European Integration in Wales. Although Wales is not formally a member state, the European Union does have an impact on Welsh society. The different attitudes to Europe shall be analysed. In an age where European identity is becoming an increasingly relevant topic of discussion, it is interesting to see what resonance it finds in Wales.

The third part of the dissertation will seek to understand how Welsh identity has been affected by the Welsh devolution process. Devolution shall be looked at, not as an event, but as an ongoing process. This section will look at the failure of the 1979 referendum and the changes that took place in the years since, leading to the establishment of the Welsh Assembly following the 1997 referendum and the expansion of its powers following the 2011 referendum.

Devolution and European Integration might very well have been the most significant institutional developments to have taken place in Wales in the recent years, other relevant developments or events have occurred the same years in Wales. The last part of the dissertation will address these events and developments and reflect on how they have impacted national identity.

The research is largely conducted through the use of books and reports available at Cardiff University and its libraries. In addition, reports and documentation available at the European Documentation Centre in Cardiff will be of great use for the section on European Integration. Furthermore personal communication with the director of the Cardiff European Documentation Centre, Ian Thomson will also be used. Information will also be drawn from reports and articles from the Institute of Welsh

Affairs and its news analysis magazine “Click on Wales”. The largest part of the research shall be conducted in Cardiff, which, being the capital of Wales, provides myriad sources of information.

## **Part 1: The Welsh Identity**

### **1.1 History and the Welsh identity**

To understand and analyse the recent developments in Wales and its effects upon the Welsh identity, it is essential to have an understanding of the Welsh history and the developments that shaped and affected the Welsh identity.

If one is to consult history books, one will not find a general consensus as to when the Welsh identity became an identity distinct of other British identities. The British Celts are the ancestors of the Welsh (Young, 2010, p. 167). This Celtic civilization inhabited the British Isles prior to a series of invasions. Over the course of history the British Isles have been invaded several times. This has altered the culture and identity of the island: the Roman invasion, the Saxons, the Vikings and finally the Normans. Each of these invasions had an impact on the British Isles, but not in equal measure: for example, it is believed that the Roman presence had less of an impact in Wales than it had in England. During the Dark Ages in order to protect themselves from raiding Britons, the Saxons built a dyke known as the Offa's dyke.. This dyke separated the (later to be Welsh) Britons from the Saxon physically but “psychologically it defined two peoples: to the east were the people beyond the dyke, whilst to the west, the Britons were the people behind it” (Gower, 2012, p. 64). Gwynfor Evans writes that “Wales was a nation more than a thousand years before Great Britain came into existence.. it was in the sixth century that the Welshman began to call himself a *Cymro* (fellow country man”) (Evans, 2000, p. 17).

A turning point in Welsh history is the revolt against the English led by Owain Glyndwr launched in 1400. Owain Glyndwr ultimately failed, yet “left a legacy of an icon to be associated with identity and independence” (Carter, 2010, p. 49). This was followed by the conquest of Wales by Henry IV which was followed by the Act of Union of 1536 passed by Henry VIII. This act in effect absorbed Wales into



England and “was manifestly directed at the total elimination not only of the Welsh laws.. but also of all those customs and traditions which were distinctively Welsh, that is to destroy the culture and ethnic identity of the Welsh.. ” (Carter, 2010, p. 50).

As all institutions, law, customs and culture were being swept away “there was but one thing, and one only, to affirm and sustain Welsh identity and that was the language” (Carter, 2010, p. 55). It is religion that “saved” the language as in 1588 the Bible was translated to Welsh: “the year in which the linguistic and cultural integrity of Wales was saved by Morgan's Bible (Carter, 2010, p. 56). Religious figures in the 17<sup>th</sup> would travel around the country and teach the people to read the Bible in Welsh. Although it was done primarily to reinforce the presence of religion among the Welsh it also helped save Welsh language and it did make the Welsh a literate people in their own language. Around this time, Welsh intellectual societies were founded and Welsh history books written. According to Carter “together they had rescued Welshmen's from the nadir of the period following the Act of the Union'. (Carter, 2010, p. 58)

The 19th century marked a weakening of Welsh self belief. This is linked to several greater changes that affected society as a whole leading to the: “the virtual exclusion of Welsh from the new and developing domain of technology and indeed from the whole spheres of science and business” (Carter, 2010, p. 61), as the largest part of the owners and entrepreneurs in the new industries came from outside Wales. The change in industry in turn led to a redrawing of the class system. In Wales there was no Welsh speaking bourgeoisie and the new higher classes were heavily anglicized. The widespread belief was thus that Welsh was for the lower classes and one that English was the language of success.

In 1847, what became known as the “Treason of the Blue Books” occurred. This refers to a government report written following research conducted by three English commissioners investigating the condition of education in Wales. Among others, this report stated that “the Welsh language is a vast drawback to Wales, and a manifold barrier to the moral progress and commercial prospects of its

people.. it dissevers the people from intercourse which would help advance their civilization”. (Gower, 2012, p. 187), it furthermore to portrayed “the Welsh, especially women, as a deeply immoral people” (Gower, 2012, p. 187) These report “plunged people into a deep morass of shame” (Gower, 2012, p. 187) and “many in Wales nudged ever closer to the way the commissioners thought, believing that in order to to be a country of progress, the people should learn English and embrace English Ways” (Gower, 2012, p. 188). These reports did not leave the Welsh indifferent, some agitated against it and sought to repudiate and debunk it, others “accepted at least at some level, its message about themselves.. for them it constituted a devastating cultural blow. Which blasted them into submission by telling them with all the power of its authority that the distinctive features which gave themselves.. a separate identity were irredeemably inferior, backward and barbaric and should be discarded as objects of shame and guilt” (Roberts, 1998 as cited in Carter, 2010, p. 62). This had an profound effect on the Welsh language, whereas then 90% of the population spoke Welsh (Macreth, 2010, para. 7) it “soon declined as people perceived the English language as the key to “getting on in the world” (Machreth, 2010, para. 7)

The 19<sup>th</sup> century also marked a period of inland migration in Wales. Many Welsh speakers moved to cities. According to Carter this is when “the language was in fact saved by becoming an urban language spoken by the population en masse rather than a rural survival, in which environment it might well have decayed” (Carter, 2010, p. 63). The Welsh language also found new areas of expression, most notable music. In 1860 *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau*, the Welsh national anthem was written. It is also the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that saw the creation of separate Welsh institutions among which the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth, the National Museum of Wales, the National Library of Wales, the Football Association of Wales and the Welsh Rugby Union which “illustrates the strongly flowing tide towards creation of a Welsh identity, the affirmation of separateness, at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries” (Carter, 2010, p. 65).

We see that towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Wales both managed to keep its language and to create institutions of its own. However, due to the collapse of the Welsh economy following the First World

War, there was a strong decline in the use of the Welsh language: 'in the twentieth century, economic and demographic contraction, the decline of Nonconformity, severe unemployment and emigration.. have been a curse to the language" (Thomas, 1987 as cited in Carter, 2010, p. 66). The economic hardships that followed the First World War led to a decline in Welsh self confidence. Emigration both outwards and inwards were the consequence of the economic decline. Whereas there seemed to be a renewed confidence by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as the 20<sup>th</sup> century went on this confidence declined. Between 1901 and 1951 the amount of Welsh speakers was halved. Harold Carter writes "that bright confidence which is at the heart of self belief had been lost. Much of the heart of identity was, if not lost, at least compromised but as always there was a resilience"(Carter, 2010, p. 66).

## **1.2 Diversity of the Welsh identity: a 'fractured identity'**

Wales is a diverse nation. In his essay "The Welsh Case: Cultural Diversity of a Nation with Devolved Powers " John Loughlin describes Welsh identity with the expression: "fractured nationhood". This is to indicate that there are many cleavages running through Welsh society. Loughlin identifies three main cleavages affecting the identity of the Welsh: 'Economic-Geographic Cleavages, Ethno-Linguistic Cleavages, Political Cleavages.'(Loughlin, 2007, p. 45). Furthermore Loughlin researches the differences between the Welsh "elite" (policy making, business, trade union etc.) and the "man on the street", thereby recognizing that there are differences in the views and experiences of these two groups. As this dissertation seeks to get a better understanding of the Welsh component of the identity the "ethno linguistic" cleavage is the most relevant. However to get a better understanding of the diversity within Wales it is of importance to look at the other cleavages dividing Wales.

The "economic-geographic cleavage" opposes the 'Welsh speaking rural Wales to the English-speaking industrial South Wales'. (Loughlin, 2007, p. 45). Loughlin notes that this cleavage has undergone modification since the collapse of the 'heavy industry in the 1980's, rural depopulation and growing numbers of English-speaking 'incomers in the Welsh mainland'. (Loughlin, 2007, p. 45). Loughlin furthermore writes that today "the main cleavage in economic terms is an east and west one.. the

western sea-board and central areas suffering from serious economic depreciation along with former coal-mining valleys.. only the region Cardiff and to a lesser north-east could be described as dynamic economic regions”. (Loughlin, 2007, p. 45).

Politically, Wales has always been on the left/progressive side on the political spectrum: initially the Liberal Party dominated Welsh politics but this changed with the emergence of Labour in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ever since Labour has remained the dominating political force in Wales. Today, Labour remains the biggest political party, followed by Plaid Cymru, the leftist nationalist party of Wales which has been on the rise since the 1960's. The cleavage within the Labour party is an important political cleavage: it opposes an “old labour” hostile to devolution, Welsh nationalism and European integration, as opposed to “New” labour more favourable to devolution and European integration.

The ethno-linguistic cleavage is a major cleavage within the Welsh society. In 1985 Denis Balsom put forth the “three Wales” model. This model divided Wales in three: “The Welsh-speaking, Welsh identifying group is perhaps most distinctive and largely centred upon the north and west of Wales. This area is designated *Y Fro Gymraeg*. The Welsh-identifying, non-Welsh-speaking group is most prevalent in the traditional south Wales area and labelled **Welsh Wales**. The British identifying non-Welsh speaking group dominates the remainder of Wales, described therefore as **British Wales**.” (Denis Balsom, 1985 as cited in University of Wales, 2012, para. 3).

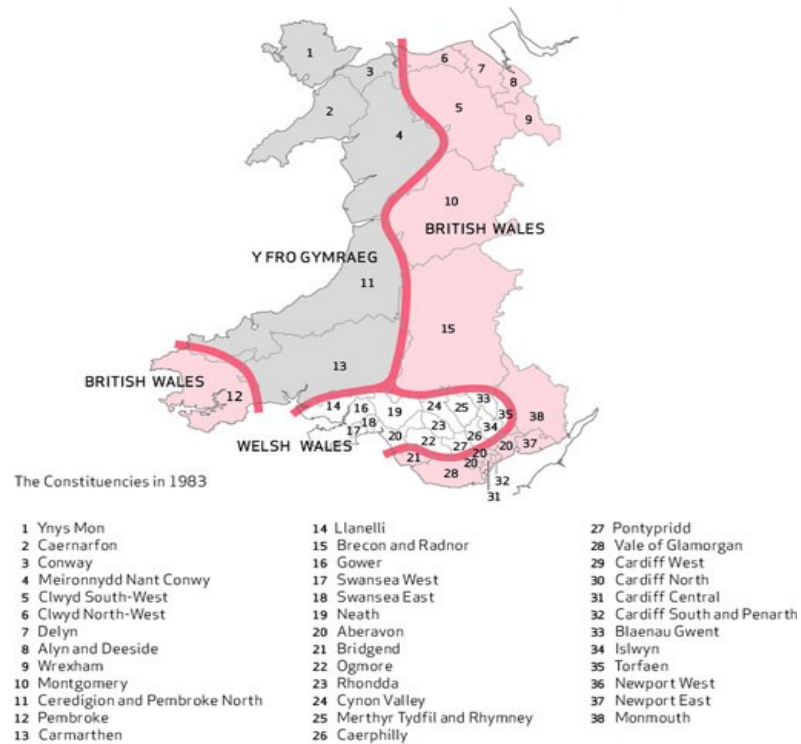


Figure 1 (Open University, 2012)

This diversity is also reflected in the responses given to a questionnaire on national identity where the respondents were asked “which of the following best describes how you see yourself?” (see figure 2)

Table 9.2 National Identity in Wales. Responses to the Moreno identity scale (after Andersen)	
Welsh not British	17.9
More Welsh than British	20.2
Equally Welsh and British	39.0
More British than Welsh	8.3
British not Welsh	14.6

Figure 2 (Osmond, 2010)

As has been described above, the language and the culture associated with it, was the main distinctive Welsh marker of identity that survived after the Act of the Union ,yet, according to Carter “instead of becoming both the cement and symbol of unity, it became a source of difference, separating the Welsh from the Welsh” (Carter, 2010, p. 90).

Indeed for some there are those who speak Welsh and those who do not. For within these two groups there are various attitudes towards the Welsh language: “Welsh speakers well versed in the literary and cultural traditions of the country... who maintain that language is the prime definer of ethnic identity, and that the only true Welshman or woman is a Welsh speaker” (Carter, 2010, p. 139). However, it would be an oversimplification to state that this would give a clear view of the relation of the Welsh language to the Welsh identity.

The Welsh language is an important dividing factor within Welsh society. According to the 2001 Census 582.00 people in Wales claim to be able to speak Wales, representing, 20.8% of the Welsh population (P.T. Thomas, 2007 cited in Loughlin, 2007, p. 49). The Balsom model, although very useful, does not provide us the full picture of how the people of Wales relate to the language.

According to research carried out by Loughlin, 89% of the Welsh (both English and Welsh speakers) believe that the “language is important for the Welsh culture” and 94% agreed that there should more bi-lingual education (Loughlin, 2007, p. 46) . Loughlin notes that the elites were unanimous in their support for the Welsh language. For Welsh speakers “Welsh national identity and language are usually are blended together, strong part of the national and cultural identity” (Loughlin, 2007, p. 47) and “for this group Welsh language and culture are an essential element of their identity and it is important for the to live in a Welsh –language community” (Loughlin, 2007, p. 46).

The English speaking Welsh had “on the whole a positive attitude towards the Welsh language” (Loughlin 2007, p. 47) however there are reservations within the community as to accessibility of jobs, as more and more jobs require Welsh speakers, especially following the introduction of the Welsh

language Act. The English speaking Welsh “do not necessarily see a link between Welsh national identity and language” but they “express a positive attitude towards the language and especially towards bilingualism.. indeed some had children in the Welsh language schools”(Loughlin , 2007, p.49).

It is of interest to see that both the native Welsh speakers and the non native Welsh speakers have an overwhelmingly positive attitude towards the language. This is an indication that the language issue has been “de-politicized”: “ language politics are less emotive than they were a generation ago and language activists have declared that the age of language politics has passed in Wales” (Loughlin, 2007, p. 47). This is a result of the increasing presence of Welsh speakers in positions of influences and agenda setting. According to Carter, “the Welsh speaking bourgeoisie..played a significant role in the decision-making echelons of the media and was consistently able to insert the language into the agenda of matters of public importance and to keep it there” (Carter 2010, p. 92). The fears in the non Welsh speaking communities that devolution in Wales would lead to Welsh society being dominated by Welsh speakers also proved to be unfounded. The language has been an issue strongly debated between the 1979 and 1997 referendum. Since then, according to Lord Elis Thomas the “age of language politics ahas passed, that there is now a form of settled consensus” (Thomas cited in Loughlin, 2007, p. 47).

Both native Welsh speakers and non native Welsh speakers recognize the importance of the Welsh language in relation to the Welsh identity: a consensus which has not always been present in Welsh history. Nevertheless, as we shall see, for some it remains the prime vector of the Welsh identity .

### 1.3 Welsh Identities

As we have seen above Welsh society is diverse. Consequently there are various ways in which the Welsh relate to their Welshness. Harold Carter summarises this diversity of identities by writing that “clearly the qualification for identity ranges from, a total association with language and its associated culture to one which is primarily locational”. (Carter, 2010, p. 140)

Broadly speaking there are three “national identities” co-existing in Wales. Yet, there are two Welsh national identities: the language based identity and the institution based identity. The third identity distinguishes itself by the lack of Welshness and a dominating role for the British identity.

The first Welsh identity holds that the main component of the Welsh identity is the Welsh language. The second Welsh identity is an identity that is based on an association with the location itself and institutions specific to Wales. This identity could be labelled institutional Welshness or civic Welshness.

Harold Carter discusses a third identity present in Wales which distinguishes itself by the minor role of Welshness within this identity. For this group being Welsh usually means to have been born in Wales but apart from that there is little association with things specifically Welsh. Carter writes that “they are tactically Welsh for they can claim to association, but avoid declaring embracing that identity. Their way out is to declare themselves British” (Carter, 2010, p. 141).

Understanding how different political events and processes affected the Welsh identity demand an awareness of the different Welsh identities. This is because these events might have a different impact of the various segments of the population, depending on what “to be Welsh” means to be them. Institutional changes are likely to have more impact and meaning to those whose relation with these institutions create their sense of Welshness, rather than for those who derive their identity from their ability to speak Welsh. For example, the creation of specifically Welsh institutions strengthen the



institution base identity but have less direct effect on the language based identity. However, to those adherent to a language based identity language politics will find greater resonance.

### A linguistic identity

On a “founding father” of modern Welsh nationalism, D.J Davies, former Plaid Cymru president Gwynfor Evans, wrote that “ D.J Davies was fully in accord with the consensus view of Plaid Cymru that the future of the Welsh nation dependent on the future of the Welsh language, which therefore had to be given a place of priority among the party policies” ( Evans, 2000, p. 142). The above quotation accurately reflects a prevalent belief and specificity that exists in Wales. The importance of the language for the national identity is also reflected in an article written by the Chair of Cymdeithas yr Iat h (The Welsh Language Society), Menna Machreth, when writes that “the Welsh language, as the native language of Wales was in danger of perishing and with it our identity, would suffer irreparable loss (Macreth, 2010, para. 3).

It is of importance to note that the role of language as a vector of national identity in Wales, is different that the role language plays in Ireland and Scotland. Harold Carter writes that “whereas language was an element of difference in both Scotland and Ireland it never played the crucial and role which it did in Wales” (Carter, 2010, p. 55). When comparing Plaid Cymru with the Scottish National Party we see that throughout the years Plaid Cymru puts heavier emphasis language policies than the Scottish National Party has. As noted previously following the act of the Union “there was but one thing, and one only, to affirm and sustain Wesh identity and that was the language”(Carter, 2010, p. 55). It important to remember that for many years the Welsh language was the only thing that preserved the distinctiveness of the Welsh which explains why for many it is the prime definer of identity.

Although this sense of identity exists primarily among the Welsh speakers it is not shared by all the Welsh speakers: there are Welsh speakers who regard the language as an unnecessary qualifier of the

Welsh identity and, indeed, one that is by its "exclusive character sadly depletes the inclusive character of the Welsh people" (Carter, 2010, p. 140).

The Welsh born English speakers "do not necessarily see the link between national identity and the language" (Loughlin, 2007, p. 49). As we have seen above, within this group the attitude towards the language has improved over the years.

### Institution Based Identity

The second Welsh identity "has been an intangible association with location, though more recently built around the range of civil or national institutions which have been developed in Wales over the past 100 years" (Carter, 2010, p. 140). Thus this position implies that one can be perfectly Welsh without speaking Welsh. It is an identity that can be equally shared by Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers alike. According to Merfyn Jones "The Welsh are in the process of being defined.., by reference to the institutions that they inhabit, influence and react to.. this identity may lack the ethical and political imperatives that characterised the Welsh life for two centuries, but it increasingly looks like the only identity available". (Jones, 1992 cited in Carter, 2010, p. 140).

As we have previously seen, starting at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there has been a steady development of institutions which differentiated Wales from the rest of the United Kingdom. For this identity these developments are important as it reinforces their sense of identity: Carter writes that a "new and powerful nucleus has been given to that "new identity" by the creation of the Welsh Assembly, for the range of policies which the Assembly has developed emphasise difference and promote separation" (Carter, 2010, p.140). As we shall see below, this identity is not yet clearly defined as it evolves alongside devolution which is an ongoing process in itself.

The relations to the Welsh language within this group varies as well, from dismissing it as unnecessary and archaic divider to admiration and warm affection for it and the culture it embodies. This demonstrates that just as the language based identity, it is not an identity shared by a group in homogeneous manner.

## **Part 2 : Europe and the Welsh Identity**

### **2.1 The European Union and Wales**

Wales is not a member state of the European Union: on the European level it is represented through the membership of the United Kingdom. This however does not mean that Wales does not play a role on a European level. Following devolution, the Welsh Government participates in the UK's European Union policy through its membership of the Joint Ministerial committee on Europe and is present at “other meetings at ministerial and official level” (Welsh Government, 2012a, p. 26). The Welsh Government is represented in Brussels by Welsh Government's EU office and has “has access to all EU institutions” (Welsh Government, 2012a, p. 26). The Welsh government works closely with the Welsh Members of the European Parliament.

Because Wales is not a member state of the European Union, on a European level it is considered a region. This means that Wales is a member of various inter-regional bodies such as the Committee of Regions, where it has two seats, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions and the European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong learning. The Welsh Government states in its Welsh Government's EU Strategy that “Wales will look to build on the progress being made by engaging with other EU regions to maximise our interests and raise our international profile” (Welsh Government, 2012a, p. 31).

Initially, the common market and the European Common agricultural Policy “proved to be a blessing for Welsh agriculture” (Davies, 2007, p. 647) which in turn led to an increase support for the Conservative Party by Welsh farmers who viewed the Conservatives as “the architects of entry in Europe”(Davies,2007,p.647).

It is also, according to John Davies, Margaret Thatcher who pushed for "increasing integration into the European Community, or the European Union.. in 1985 she was among the most vigorous promoters of the Single European Act and in 1990 she was persuaded by the argument that Britain would gain from membership of the Exchange Rate Mechanism" (Davies, 2007, p. 662).

European Integration, prior to devolution, led to two developments in Welsh politics. Previously, recognition of Wales had "not existed outside of sport" (Davies, 2007) . European integration was to change this as the European Regional Policy created linkages between Wales and other European Regions. These linkages would give birth to the "beginnings of Welsh foreign policy" (Davies, 2007). Secondly, the European Union has also showed an interest in regional and minority languages through programs as Mercator and Euromosaic. Since 2008 Welsh has been a co-official language of the European Union and which led to an increase in the use of Welsh in European Institutions. European Integration raised the profile and distinctiveness of Wales abroad.

Due to the European Regional policy, Wales became a member of the committee of regions upon its foundation in 1991. In 1992 the Wales European Centre was opened in Brussels. The European regional policy lead to a rethinking of the political institutions that could be summarized by the question "what political unit was suitable to deal with what political unit?" (Davies, 2007, p. 669). Furthermore the shift of power of the United Kingdom itself, the belief that "the United Kingdom was too small to deal with some issues and too large to deal with others" (Davies, 2007, p. 669) gave an impulse to the idea of subsidiarity. This idea was naturally appealing to Plaid Cymru but other political parties also began to reflect on the position of the British Nations: Ferdinand Mount, one time head of Margaret Thatcher's think tank wrote that "If not this government, then the next will find itself both willing and able to [introduce devolution for] the encircling European girdle makes the United Kingdom safe [for such development] (Mount, 1992, cited in Davies, 2007, p. 670). This attitude was not shared by all as John Redwood, Secretary of State for Wales between 1992 and 1995 was staunchly opposed to any increasing powers of the European Union and "saw no virtue in regional policies "(Davies, 2007, p. 666). Nevertheless it can be argued that European integration affected the debate on

the reshaping of regional politics and gave further impulse to the already ongoing debate on devolution in Wales.

The first term of the Welsh assembly was dominated by the need to secure the Objective 1 funding for Wales. This was seen as particularly urgent as it was understood that securing these funds would be more difficult after further European Union enlargement. This was of extreme importance and the first months of the National Assembly were dominated "by the readiness or otherwise of the British government to pay its share of the cost of implementing objective one" (Davies, 2007, p. 679). Former Plaid Cymru president called this "by far the most important issue facing the Assembly" (Evans, 2000, p. 175)

## **2.2 Welsh Attitudes to the European Union**

In chapter 1.2 of this dissertation, the differences between "elite" and "man on the street" attitudes towards identity have been mentioned. This sociological differentiation is especially relevant when analysing the Welsh attitudes to the European Union. This is acknowledged by Loughlin stating that "in this field there was a strong contrast between the attitudes of the elites and those of the focus groups [of segments of the Welsh population]" (Loughlin, 2007, p.57).

The current Welsh Government seems to have a favourable opinion of the European Union, as expressed by the current First Minister, Carwyn Jones: "I have always been clear about the benefits to Wales, of membership of the European Union. European money supports economic development in our lagging areas as well as helping maintain our rural economy.. I want Wales to gain maximum advantage from Europe in every way we can. We have much to gain and, I believe, something to offer to the Wider European experience." (Welsh Government, 2012, p. 1) The larger part of the "Wales and the European Union, Welsh Government's EU strategy" published in 2012 indicates how the Welsh government aims to obtain the funds and maximize their benefits for Wales.

Plaid Cymru, the second biggest party of Wales, has a positive attitude towards the European Union: “Plaid Cymru had for years emphasised the importance of a strong Welsh representation in the European Union whose decentralised regionalism it found most attractive” (Evans, 2000, p. 167). In this book, Gwynfor Evans states that “Plaid's ultimate goal was full Welsh membership in the EU” (Evans, 2010, p. 167). To argue his case, Gwynfor Evans describes how much EU membership has benefited Ireland, which had been able to get the Objective 1 status: “In 1987 Irelands' net receipts from the European Union were 1.7 pounds... in face of such facts the contentions of the opponents of the membership of the European Union are laughable” (Evans, 2000, p. 168). The importance of European integration for nationalist parties in the United Kingdom is highlighted by Wellings who writes that it has been adopted “as a key policy for attainment of independence by secessionist parties in Scotland and Wales” (Wellings, 2012) and that “secessionist parties had dropped their opposition to European Integration and instead viewed Europe as a necessary context for viable independence.” (Wellings, 2012) In an article, Plaid Cymru MEP, Jill Evans writes that in the European context the Welsh national interest is “by a long chalk.. not the same as the British one” (Evans, 2011a, para. 1). She pleads for Wales to become a member state in its own right where “Wales would be at “summits” always defending the Welsh national interest, but also in spirit of European solidarity” (Evans, 2011a., para. 1). This would happen through, “internal enlargement.. when existing member-states.. reconstitute themselves as more than one state and their new component apply to (re-) join the EU (Evans, 2011b, para 11) or in short “Independence in Europe”.

Positive attitudes are also found in a research conducted by Loughlin in 1997 ( prior to devolution) among the “Welsh” regional policy actors (business interests, trade union, parties, public administration” etc. This research reports on the “ the positive attitude held by most of our respondents toward “Europe.... of course “Europe” is primarily seen as a source of funds and, in a United Kingdom which has endured 17 years of Thatcherite policies cutting public sector funding, the relatively small amounts of funding coming from Brussels might be very significant for a local authority” (Loughlin, 1997)

The affection the “Welsh elite” have for the European Union is rooted more in pragmatic motives rather than grand European convictions. The European Union is perceived as “increasingly important for Wales, and therefore a distinctively Welsh approach to Europe was necessary”. (Davies, 2010, p. 669) There is a strong identification with Ireland, as it is perceived to be a nation similar to Wales. Loughlin also indicated that some believed that the successes of Ireland was due to Ireland “having an own government and was member state rather than just a region” which is “not necessarily an argument in favour of Welsh independence but rather for a stronger form of devolved government.” (Loughlin, 2007, p. 56).

The second main motivation of a 'pro-European' policies and attitudes, among a segment of the policy making elite, is that closer co-operation with the European Union can reduce the independence on 'London'. This is a prevalent attitude within Plaid Cymru, as described above, but it is not limited to Plaid Cymru.

It is generally acknowledged that for the “man on the street” in Wales, the European Union is not of immense importance. According to Loughlin “ordinary citizens are very cynical about Europe.” (Loughlin, 2007, p. 63). The lack of interest for European matters is obviously not something unique to Wales. The causes for this are many. In an article by Syd Morgan and Alan Sandry of the Welsh Nationalism Foundation, the blame is put on the media: “part of the reason for ignorance about Wales' relationship with the rest of Europe, we contend, is the almost failure of “Welsh”journalism” (Morgan & Sandry, 2011, para. 6). The article cites, as an example, BBC Wales having “all those hacks in Cardiff Bay and in the imperial city yet none in Brussels were we have a great objective interest” (Morgan & Sandry, 2011, para. 6) It may be argued that this is not an exclusively or specifically Welsh phenomenon and that these same attitudes exists in throughout the entire United Kingdom and in the other EU members states. Benjamin Hawkins, argues that “perhaps the clearest articulation of eurosceptic sentiment is to be found within the British print media and the right-wing press in



particular.” (Hawkins,2012, para 2) As British print media is widely read in Wales this also has an effect on the Welsh public.

### **2.3 The Effect of European Integration on Welsh Identity**

Among policy makers the positive attitude towards Europe is mainly motivated by the funds that Europe can provide Wales. Furthermore, Europe is seen as a mean by which dependence on London can be reduced. European Integration has also partially rendered Welsh devolution possible which, as we shall see, reinforced the “institutional” Welsh identity . It can also be argued that because “Welsh policy-making elites are aware they are part of a multi level governance... they are becoming increasingly aware that they are primarily part of the Welsh nation.” (Loughlin, 2007, p. 57)

Previously authors had written about the prospect of a “Welsh-European” identity most notably John Osmond. He argued that “since the 1950s history has been driving Welsh people away from Britishness and towards a new duality in which belonging to Wales is felt more and more in conjunction with a sense of belonging to Europe. We are becoming Welsh Europeans” (Osmond, 1995). He further argues that this will be happening as a “Europe of Region” is coming about. It is of interest that Osmond does note that the “structure of feeling engaged in this formulation had entered the mainstream consciousness of the Welsh intellectual Left.” (Osmond, 1995) Thus in due time Osmond foresees that the “European-Welsh” dual identity will replace the “British-Welsh” duality although that instead of a split there will be a “potential for a creative integration” (Osmond, 1995).

It can be noted that in the case of both stances, the “pragmatic interest” based European of the Welsh “elite” and the “European-Welsh identity” of Osmond, a common driving factor is that European integration provides an alternative, either cultural or financial from “London”.

Ian Thomson, director of the European Documentation Centre in Cardiff says that the debate on European matters exists “among a very small group of people, a very small elite and is not affecting a broad mass of the population” (I.Thomson, personal communication, 13 July, 2012), . He does recognize that a “Europe of Regions has a resonance to certain groups and certain elites which share the concept of Europe of the region within a developing European Union to allow for Wales to develop its own identity” ( I.Thomson, personal communication, 13 July, 2012) however this concept “had reached its pinnacle, a as powerful force two years ago, and to a certain extent it has slightly declined” (I.Thomson, personal communication, 13 July, 2012 ). Ian Thomson states that European integration has only affected “language politics” to a very marginal degree, there are examples.. the developments that have taken place are irrespective of Europe” (I.Thomson, personal communication, 13 July, 2012 ). Thus the linguistic Welsh identity has been affected but only marginally or indirectly. European Integration has however, as seen above, contributed to the increased visibility of the language, especially abroad.

Ian Thomson concludes that “overall I'd say the European Integration has not had a major impact upon the development of Welsh identity” (I.Thomson, personal communication, 13 July, 2012 ).

The little impact European integration has had on the identity and the identity debate does not trivialise the important impact European integration has had on Welsh economic life, in large part due to the funds provided by the European Unions. This is recognized by the Welsh elite, and to a lesser degree to segments of the general population, such as farmers who rely on these aspects of European integration.

## **Part 3 Welsh Devolution**

### **3.1 The devolution process**

Welsh politician Ron Davies famously stated that “devolution is a process and not an event” (The Davies, R. cited in Assembly of Wales, 2012, para. 2). This phrase is frequently used to indicate that the establishment of the Welsh Assembly in 1997 marks not the final stage of devolution but that devolution is an ongoing process. The overwhelming victory of the “Yes vote” at the following, 2011 referendum, which gave the National Assembly of Wales additional legislative powers further indicates that devolution is indeed a continuous process.

Devolution has been a topic of discussion in Wales long before the 1997 referendum. As an idea it emerged in the mid sixties. The first time it was put to the people of Wales, in 1979, the proposition was defeated when “a total of 58.3 per cent of the electors of Wales cast their votes in the referendum, 243, 048 of them in favour of the assembly and 956.330 against (Yes: 20.26%, No:79.74%)” (Davies, 2007, 651). 18 years later, on 18 September 1997 , . the assembly attracted 559,419 positive votes and 552, 689 negative ones (Yes:50.3%, No 49.7% ” (Davies, 2007, 674). Although the “Yes vote” only won by a small margin in 1997, the progress it has made since 1997 is impressive (from 20.26 to 50.3%) and the increase adherence as demonstrated by the 2011 referendum since, are an indication that major changes have taken place in Welsh society since 1979.

To understand the manner in which devolution has affected Welsh identity it is important to understand the road to devolution: the reasons for the failure of the 1979 campaign and what has changed in the 18 years since, which allowed for the “yes” vote to win.

There are various reasons given why the referendum of 1979 failed to bring about a National Assembly.

Gwynfor Evans writes about the political dis-unity that affected the 1979 campaign where “Labour councillors stayed at home near the fire, Plaid Cymru members trudged through the snow to deliver Labour leaflets, giving the impression the it was a Plaid stunt”. (Evans, 2000, p.157)

Politically, devolution was opposed by “virtually all conservatives” (Davies, 2007, p. 650), however they worked “hand in hand with a group of Labour MP's, most of whom belonged to the Left Wing of the Party” (Davies, 2007, p. 650). Added to this, local Labour politicians from all areas stated their opposition to devolution. This reflects that although the Welsh Labour party was formally in favour of devolution, within the party there was a division between those who “that have been hostile to anything redolent of nationalism and those in favour of devolution” (Loughlin, 2007, p. 51). As it was mainly Plaid Cymru doing the campaigning in favour of devolution, the public came to associate the proposed devolution with nationalist politics, as stated by Gwynfor Evans previously a “Plaid stunt”.

Another political circumstances unfavourable to devolution was the timing, as “in the three months leading up to the referendum Britain suffered some of the worst industrial unrest it its history... the idea of devolution appeared highly irrelevant” (Davies, 2007, p. 650). Furthermore, there seemed to be little formal support given by the British government.

The main themes put forth by the opponents of devolution were: “the unity of Britain, and the belief that it might endanger the interests of non-Welsh speakers” (Davies, 2007, p. 650). Especially the language issue came to the forefront and was used by various opponents of devolution. Loughlin also states that during the 1979 campaign “language politics” was still a politicized and emotive issue as “there was a great fear in the English speaking communities that “Welshies” would dominate a devolved Assembly”. (Loughlin, 2007, p.47) According to Andrew and Bradbury this division of Y fro Cymraeg (Welsh speaking Wales) and Welsh (English speaking Wales) coupled with the visible politicizing of the identity caused the victory of the No vote. (Andrews and Bradbury, 2009, p. 6)

The defeat was a hard blow to the “devolutionists”, but “it was also interpreted as a defeat for Welshness, as a declaration that the notion of Welsh nationality was unacceptable to the majority of the Welsh” or, as written Hywel Teidi Edwards “the campaign of the negativists was essentially a campaign against the identity of Wales” (Edwards cited in Davies, 2007, p. 652)

Yet the assembly was established after the “Yes” vote won in the 1997. This signifies that changes have occurred in the years that passed. Snicker states that “Wales experienced an identity transformation following the first devolution referendum (Snicker, 1998 cited in Andrews and Bradbury, 2009, p. 6).

The historical context that led to those changes was the Conservative Rule in the 1980's and 1990's. Saunderson Lewis, the famous Welsh nationalist author wrote in 1979 that “the first task of the Westminster Parliament will be to reduce and master inflation. In Wales there are coal mines that work at a loss; there are steelworks that are judged to be superfluous; there are valleys convenient for submersion. And there will be no Welsh defence” (Lewis, 1979 cited in Davies, 2007, p. 652).

In the immediate years following the 1979 referendum, there was “determination of a small group of devolutionists to ensure that the issue remained on the political agenda” (Davies, 2007, p. 655) as at the same time Plaid Cymru sought to somehow redefine itself after the referendum by adopting more strongly pronounced leftist ideology.

The Thatcher and Major years did indeed prove to be years which greatly changed Wales. According to Gwynfor Evans “The Thatcherite government.. was antagonistic to Wales; unemployment was rising steeply and in-migration was increasing by scores of thousands a year, anglicising a host of Welsh-speaking communities and weakening national consciousness all over the land”. (Evans, 2000, p. 160). The effects on employment were also felt: between 1979 and 1981 there “was a decrease of over a hundred thousand in the number employed in Wales” (Davies, 2007, p.657). Welsh miners also did

participate 1984-1985 UK miner's strike. Great solidarity existed in Welsh society with the miners and it was later claimed by Labour politician that “the strike created a consciousness Welsh identity that transcended geographical barriers” (Davies, 2007, p.660). The fact that a Welshman, Neil Kinnock, was the leader of the Labour party at the time had little impact on the identity question and did not further evolution: Neil Kinnock was strongly opposed to devolution and believed that “the promotion of 'regional' allegiances was a blow to the unity of the British working class” (Davies, 2007, p. 650). Nevertheless it is believed that his Welshness did contribute to his unpopularity in England; according to Davies “it appeared that his conduct, appearance, accent and rhetoric were unacceptable to them [the English]; it seemed, in fact, that they were not prepared to be led by a Welshman, an attitude which chimed in with the frequent derogatory remarks about the Welsh made by a number of prominent English people” (Davies, 2007, p. 664).

Thus, throughout the 1980's the attitudes towards Welsh devolution also changed as Welsh society changed. Andrews and Bradbury attribute this to “the politicising consequences of being Welsh or living in Wales during the period between the two referendums.. the political implications of being a citizen of Wales under Conservative rule... also played a significant role in increasing the political salience of living in Wales.” (Andrews and Bradbury, 2009, p. 6). Furthermore they explain that “the de-industrialisation and unemployment that followed Thatcherism which gave greatest impetus to a re-awakening of sub-state national identities” (Andrews and Bradbury, 2009, p. 6). Thus many in Wales perceived that they had little say over the changes that happened in Wales during those years and were left “at the mercy of their more right-leaning English counterparts (Andrews and Bradbury, 2009, p. 6). This reinforced a sense of distinctiveness among the people of Wales,. As the, especially the case of John Redwood, unpopular Secretary of State for Wales were not elected by the Welsh people (or not Welsh), “there was substance for concern about the democratic deficit” (Davies, 2007, p. 667).

The above, awakened the sense of need for, as Saunders Lewis wrote, a “Welsh defence”, a Welsh political space, which would not need to depend upon English voters. Following Tony Blair's victory

in 1997, another referendum on devolution was organized. The “Yes vote” narrowly won” although compared with the results of 1979, support in favour had dramatically increased.

Several reasons for the victory of the “Yes vote” are of importance. The political landscape had changed, and the anti-devolutionist voice within Labour had lost in prominence, thus leading to stronger political unity for the Yes campaign. The successor of Labour leader, Neil Kinnock, was strong supporter of devolution and according to Davies “a warm-hearted Scottish patriot, who declared that he would have preferred to have had a political career in Edinburgh rather than in London” (Davies, 2007)

Consequently devolution was not seen as merely a nationalist issue, as it has been in 1979 because “Welsh identity had become increasingly associated with support for constitutional change” (Davies, 2007, p. 672). John Davies (2007, p. 672) wrote that this realization that there was no “Welsh defence” was central to the change of attitude towards devolution. This is of interest because it was the division between Welsh speaking Wales and English speaking Wales that was one of the causes the failure of the “Yes vote” in 1979, this division has been overcome, as the approach to national identity changed in the years that followed.

An issue that lost validity was the argument that an assembly would add an extra layer of bureaucracy: as the the Secretary of State for Wales had expanded its powers, this layer was already present, and devolution would not add another one. The Assembly, once established, would take over the tasks of the Secretary of State for Wales.

Another difference between 1979 and 1997 is that there were 600 000 people who could vote in 1997 but were too young to vote in 1979. According to John Osmond they “were less British.. for them the Second World War was history and the disputes over the Welsh language was a thing of the past” (Osmond, 2011c, para. 6)

Merfyn Jones said that in 1997 “the Welsh had become far more conformable with their identity” (Jones, 1997 cited in Davies, 2007, p.673). Parallel to that we can observe that national identity becomes politicized but in a different way: that national identity is associated with political change.

In 2011 an additional referendum was organized to extend the law making powers of the Assembly in 30 policy areas. The “Yes” vote won by 63.49%. It is relevant to note that the “Yes vote” won in all local authorities but but Monmouthshire and even there by a slim majority. John Osmond writes that people finally understood the need for Saunders Lewis' Welsh defence: “we would not have had such a decisive majority in this week's referendum if there had been no Tory led government in Westminster wielding an axe to our public services” (Osmond, 2011a, para. 4)

Politically the Wales seemed to be more united then ever. The process of devolution is still ongoing and though one can only speculate about the future, Osmond writes that at least two things are clear: “the pace is accelerating and the direction is in favour of more powers” (Osmond, 2011b, para 17)

### **3.2 Identity Politics since Devolution**

Although the assembly government “was responsible for a number of popular policies, in particular relating to the costs of medical prescriptions, school pupil tests and student fees” John Davies writes that “its activities were in the main confined to peripheral matters” (Davies, 2007, p. 680). Although the Welsh Assembly does seek to promote the Welsh language according to Chair of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Menna, Machreth, it has “yet to deliver a vision for regenerating the Welsh language and its communities” (Machreth, 2010, para. 8). As we have seen above an issue high on the list of the Assembly Government was to secure funds from the European Union.



Education one of the policy areas devolved to the Welsh Assembly and is thus consequently by agencies such as Education and Learning in Wales and the Higher Education Funding Council of Wales which allowed for furthering the development of a distinctive Welsh education system.

Devolution has “Welshified” politics. The creation of an explicitly Welsh political space, gave rise to a Welshified discourse from the political parties. As we have seen devolution had become more than “a Nationalist hobby” and thus this new discourse by the political parties is “not specically nationalist in intent” (Andrews and Bradburry, 2009, p. 7). Furthermore this “new political discourse” has led to a greater celebration and recognition of the various aspects of the Welsh identity: the “Y fro Cymraeg” identity but also increasingly the “civic Welsh identity”. All the political parties have had to re-adapt their discourse to these new realities. This holds truth especially for the Conservatives and Plaid. The Conservatives have traditionally been a minor force in Wales, relying on British Wales for their votes and have been historically hostile to devolution. However since devolution the Conservatives have tried to broaden their support by adapting their discourse so that it would appeal beyond “British Wales”. Inversely Plaid Cymru has sought to appeal to voters beyond Y Fro Cymraeg by placing a heavier emphasis on nation wide social issues. Labour and the Liberal Democrats have sought to appeal to Welsh voters on matters specially Welsh.

According to Andrews and Bradburry the public discourse has “focussed upon revitalising and reconfiguring conceptions of Welshness, promoting historic Welsh values as distinctive values as those of the “Anglo-British” state “ (Andrews and Bradbury, 2009, p. 7). A manifestation of this, is seen when the then Welsh First Minister, Rhodri Morgan declared that that there will be “clear red water” (Morgan cited in Andrews and Bradbury, 2009, p. 7) between the Assembly and Westminster. Celebration or promotion of Britishness is limited since devolution.

### 3.3 Effects of Devolution on Identity

We have thus seen that devolution has led to the “Welshification” of the political discourse as a explicitly Welsh political arena was created. Former First Minister, Rhodri Morgan said that the “Welsh needed devolution to give them the confidence and self-belief to make their own decisions” (Morgan, 2009 cited in Osmond, 2009 para. 6)

On a grass roots level there seems to be a continuity in the identity loyalties. Looking at the indications given by the Moreno survey shows a continuity in the identification of the Welsh between 1997 and 2007. Thus the majority of the society has a strong Welsh sense of identity, equally Britishness has not disappeared or weakened.

**TABLE 6: NATIONAL IDENTITIES (%) IN WALES, 1997-2003**

<i>National Identity</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2003</i>
Welsh, Not British	17.2	17.7	24.6	22.7
More Welsh than British	25.7	20.7	23.5	28.1
Equally Welsh and British	34.3	38.3	29.4	30.2
More British than Welsh	10.4	7.8	11.2	8.9
British, Not Welsh	12.4	15.5	11.3	10.0

*Figure 3: (Jones & Scully, 2003, p. 4)*

Politically, surveys conducted between 1997-2007 do show changes. Although there is little change in the numbers of people wanting to Wales to be independent or want an Assembly with limited . There is a great increase in numbers of people who want “Wales to remain in the UK with a parliament which has some law making and taxation powers” and a strong decrease of people who want to do away with the assembly altogether(Jones & Scully, 2004, p. 2). Furthermore research indicate that if given the

possibility “65% of those (who voted Yes in March in 2011) would have opted for more powers and 15 per cent independence if they had been presented with the choice” (Osmond, 2011b, para. 9). These numbers suggest that there is a large base of support for the Assembly and the idea of devolution. Whereas the Welsh were often seen as lacking confidence, the “Welsh had “needed devolution to give the confidence and self-belief to make their own decisions” (Osmond, 2009, para. 6).

On the other hand the Welsh are quite sceptical over the influence. The same attitude is present in research done by Loughlin, he write that “the ordinary citizens.. are very cynical about.. the National Assembly for Wales (not strong enough)” (Loughlin, 2007). The same is reflected in figure .3

It is however important to note that these expressions come from research done prior to the 2011 referendum. They do not seem to indicate cynicism concerning the existence of the National Assembly but that its powers are too limited. Figure 5 shows that in the years following devolution opposition to devolution has very much diminished. This was reflected in the large victory of the “Yes” vote in the 2011 referendum.

TABLE 6: MOST INFLUENCE OVER ‘THE WAY WALES IS RUN’

<i>Response</i>	<i>Does Influence</i>	<i>Ought to Influence</i>
National Assembly	17.0%	56.2%
UK Government	64.4%	26.3%
Local Councils	15.5%	16.5%
European Union	3.2%	1.0%
<i>Weighted N</i>	<i>1033</i>	<i>1047</i>

Source: WELT

*Figure 4: (Jones & Scully, 2003, p. 6)*

**TABLE 8: OPPOSITION TO DEVOLUTION, 2003 (%)**

<i>National Identity</i>	1997	1999	2001	2003
Welsh/More Welsh	25.2	13.2	14.9	13.6
Equal Welsh/British	44.3	27.3	30.4	28.8
British/More British	57.4	38.1	36.4	30.1

*Figure 5: (Jones & Scully, 2003, para. 5)*

It would be prudent not to dismiss Britishness as a factor in Wales. Although expressions of Britishness have become quieter it is still an dimension of identity to which a lot of people relate. This is in part due to the proximity of a large part of the population to the English border which increases the contact the Welsh have with their neighbours. According to Andrews and Bradbury the traces of “banal Britishness” remain strong in Wales: “whether it is reflected in the conversation of people in Wales who routinely move between Wales and England.. or who recount the travails of English premiership football teams and the stories of English-made television and radio entertainment as part of their own cultural world.” (Andrews and Bradbury, 2010, p. 8) Andrews and Bradbury write that “whilst Welsh identity is stronger than British identity in Wales, and it has come to dominate the public discourses in Wales since devolution, the everyday presence of quiet Britishness cannot be denied”. ( Andrews and Bradbury, 2010, p. 8)

When analysing the effect of devolution upon identity Bradbury and Andrews write that “on the one hand, on the basis of public attitudes data, there is no consistent trend towards and rise in Welsh identity loyalties or decline in British identity loyalties. On the other hand, the framing of Welsh public life, whether by politicians or by the media, has appeared for a decade like a non-stop journey to discover Welshness”. ( Andrews and Bradbury, 2010, p. 8)

The path towards devolution and devolution as a process has not numerically affected Welsh identity. However it has forced the people of Wales and the political actors to rethink the way they perceive Welshness and has led them to realise their distinctiveness.

According to Welsh playwright Tim Price “devolution changed everything. Before devolution Wales was an imagined land. Now you've got 60 politicians discussing what is to be Welsh” (Price, 2012 cited in Jolley, 2012, para. 8). Although it has not drastically affected the language based identity it has been important to the “institutional identity” as the Assembly is a major institutional advance, perhaps, at the moment more symbolically than politically. John Osmond writes that whereas previously identity was mostly debated in terms of language, which divided people according to their ability to speak it, the “civic identity is something people share equally..devolution has provided an arena in which people share a new Welsh consciousness” (Osmond, 2012, para. 16). Devolution being a process the institutional Welsh identity evolves as the process evolves: to illustrate this Osmond wrote in 1998 “when it first meets the National Assembly will not be representative of [Welsh] civil society. But it will be the essential instrument to ensure that in the coming decades, a Welsh democracy and a Welsh civil society will exist.. a Welsh civil society rather than a civil society that happens to be in Wales” (Osmond 1998 cited in Osmond, 2010, para. 8). This gives underlines two elements: that the institutional identity is an identity which is “under construction” and the importance of the Welsh Assembly for this identity.

Furthermore the whole process has led to a growth of unity in Wales, as the divides between Y Fro Cymraeg, Welsh Wales and British Wales have lessened or as Jon Gower writes: using the mechanism of democracy, Wales has edged toward the sort of political unity sought by the Welsh princes” (Gower, 2012, p. 324)

#### **Part 4 Other events and processes that have affected the Welsh identity**

Besides European Integration and Welsh devolution other developments have taken place in Welsh in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which have impacted identity at least to a degree.

Carter writes about two events which greatly affected the way Welsh public opinion reacted to identity. The first one is the drowning of the Capel Celyn and the Tryweryn valley. This was done as to improve the water supply to Liverpool. The drowning of these areas was greatly resented by the vast majority of the Welsh and the Welsh politicians. Fishlock writes that “for many men and women it was an awakening, the first indication that the values of Wales were in danger and were meaning less to the authorities in England (Fishlock, 1972 cited in Carter, 2010, p. 93).

The second event occurred when Thatcher backtracked on her promise to introduce a Welsh language Television Channel. This was met by a wave of protests, as demonstrations were organized, people refused to pay their TV licenses, TV masts were sabotaged and various Welsh public persons expressed support. Then, Plaid Cymru president Gwynfor Evans threatened to go on hunger strike as to force the British government to do as it promised. The attention given to this issue went beyond Wales as it was given coverage in London newspapers and on overseas TV. In the end the government did yield and this resulted in “18 hours a day are now broadcast in the Welsh language on S4C by an independent Welsh institution evincing the Welsh talent for organisation and increasing the people's self-confidence and strengthening the hold of the national language” (Evans, 2002, p. 159). The importance of this struggle is not to be underestimated. It gave a focal point for Welsh (linguistic and/or nationalist) struggle and after the aforementioned Tryweryn affair and the defeat in the referendum it was a victory for Wales over the English establishment, with the language the ultimate victor.” (Carter, 2010, p. 94)

Historically Wales has always attracted immigrants: in 2001 24.6 of the inhabitants were born outside of Wales, mostly in England (Davies, 2007, p.689). As they arrived in great numbers throughout the

years this impacted the linguistic landscape of Wales. This occurred most notably in areas where traditionally Welsh was the most used language. Davies writes that “in the Welsh speaking areas there were a host of communities where everyone spoke Welsh in the 1950's and the great majority in the 1970's but which were, by the early twenty-first century, wholly dominated by people whose origins were in England” (Davies, 2007, p. 689). As immigration occurred in such large numbers, assimilation was rendered practically impossible.

Immigration became a major concern for the inhabitants of the Welsh speaking areas: this was reflected in a series of arsons directed towards second homes earned by English between 1979 and 1987 or when Plaid Cymru politicians Seimon Glyn called for “monitoring of the influx of from England” (Glyn cited in Davies, 2007, p. 689).

The situation of the Welsh language has also altered throughout the years. We have seen that since the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there has been a decline in the number of Welsh speakers or people having possessing some knowledge of the language. By start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century “these were processes which seemed not only to have ceased but to have been reversed” (Davies, 2007, p. 699). However Davies notes that although there was an increase of Welsh speakers in 14 counties and a decline in eight, “the eight included those counties considered to be the heartlands of the language” (Davies, 2010, p.702). Between 1991 and 2001 the number of communities where Welsh is spoken by more than 70% of the population went from 92 to 54( Macreth, 2010, para. 9) : where previously it was the language was spoken by the a large majority of the population it was now in decline.

In areas were previously few people spoke Welsh there seemed to be an increase. This is generally attributed to the growth of Welsh medium schools or to the increasing presence of Welsh in English medium schools.

Although the first Welsh language school had been established in Aberystwyth in 1939 (Carter, 2010, p. 95) they have significantly increased in numbers since then. As noted previously these schools are partially responsible for the increase of Welsh speakers in areas where traditionally there had been few. It is also of interest to note that a “high proportion of the children attending these schools are from non Welsh speaking homes.” (Carter, 2010, p. 95). Gwynfor Evans writes that this is “an amazing consequence of the national awakening that has taken place (since the 1970's) (Evans, 2000, p. 163)

Carter holds that “Welsh language schools, as well as facilities for adult learning have become the real basis of a Welsh language renaissance” as the family and the chapel have ceased to be the main progenitors of the language”(Carter, 2010, p. 95) .This thus affects the composition and homogeneity of the Welsh speaking Welsh population. Where previously they were geographically concentrated they are now dispersed throughout the country, even in places where Welsh was not spoken previously.

Another reason for the re-emergence of the language debate is given by Carter. By the late 50's a “new bourgeoisie that was partly Welsh-speaking was created” (Carter, 2010, p.92). This together with the changing nature of the economy allowed Welsh speakers to reach positions of influence within society. The role of the media is not to be neglected: Carter writes that this same new Welsh speaking bourgeoisie “played a significant role in the decision-making echelons of the media and was consistently able to insert the language into the agenda of matters of public importance and to keep it there” (Carter, 2010, p. 92).

As we have previously seen that Thatcher years have, indirectly impacted the way in which the Welsh have related to their identity. We have looked at how the socio-economical conditions have ignited the desire for a “Welsh defence”. However several cultural-linguistic evolutions also occurred during those years which are of importance.



During the Conservative years the role of the Welsh Office was expanded and among other the Welsh Language Board was set up. Furthermore in these years the *Cyrricwlwm Cymreig* was introduced by the Curriculum Council for Wales, in Welsh school allowing for a school curriculum with a stronger focus on the Welsh language and history. These efforts allowed pupils from different backgrounds to have the occasion to discover more of their national history and language at a younger age, thus, for example, introducing non Welsh speaking pupils to the language and history. In 1988 Welsh language classes were included in the national school curriculum: this includes the curriculum for English language schools.

The visibility of the Welsh language has also strongly increased in the last 40 years. An important development for the Welsh language was Welsh Language Act of 1993 which gave Welsh the same status as English and established the Welsh Language Board. This Act also stipulated that public and increasingly private institutions should give English and Welsh the same status.

Starting in the 1970's there has also been a increase in the visibility of Welsh language most notably on road signs which is a “highly effective means of of defining the national territory” (Davies, 2007, p. 703)

The preservation and documentation of a nation's history is often perceived as being of importance for nation building. In recent years there has been an increasing number of publications dealing with various eras of Welsh History which have been well received. Gwynfor Evans notes that “during the last generation the rise of a splendid school of historians had made a signally important continuation by awaking the nation's memory” (Evans, 2010, p. 163). The (re)discovery of the past gives people inspiration, legitimization and reinforces the sense of collective identity rooted in common history.

Finally, the important role in Welsh politics of Plaid Cymru cannot be denied. Since its electoral breakthrough in the 1966's Plaid Cymru has grown to be the second political force of Wales. As a nationalist party it has been at the forefront role in all campaigns which had to do with issues related

identity and language. Former Plaid Cymru president writes that “success in the basic political fight for national freedom depends to a very high degree on awakening a sense of national identity. To strengthen this has been a fundamental aim of the party throughout its existence” (Evans, 2000, p. 162)

Plaid Cymru increasing importance in Welsh politics has certainly helped to give the identity issue an important space in the public debate.

## **Conclusion**

There is no single Welsh identity but several Welsh identities. The language based identity places the Welsh language at the core of the Welsh identity and the institutional based identity which places distinctively Welsh institutions at its core. Understanding the myriad complexities and the diversity of Welsh society is essential to acquire an understanding of the impact of political processes and events upon what it means to be Welsh.

European integration has only marginally affected the Welsh identity debate. Although some, mainly within an intellectual elite, believed the European Welsh identity to be an alternative to the British-Welsh duality this feeling does not appear to be shared by the larger part of the Welsh population. Politically Europe is viewed in a favourable light by the Welsh policy makers, often not for grand ideological reasons, but the pragmatic reasons. The European Union is viewed as an opportunity for economic progress. Especially following the Thatcher years, the funds provided by the European Union were perceived as a welcome alternative for dependence on “London”. To the Welsh nationalists the “Europe of Regions” ideas is very appealing and is seen as an alternative for dominance by London. Nevertheless, European integration has allowed Wales to have a greater visibility abroad both as a nation and a linguistic community. Although the importance of the European Union in Wales is not to be trivialized, it has had only a limited, indirect and marginal impact on the identity question.

The devolution process is in all its aspects of the highest political significance for Wales. Not since Owain Glyndwr did the Welsh have this degree of self determination. There has been an immense growth of support for devolution between its rejection in the 1979 referendum and the extension of powers of the Welsh Assembly following the 2011 referendum. This growing adherence for devolution illustrates profound changes in Welsh society and in Welsh consciousness. The growth in support also reflects the great confidence of the Welsh and their eagerness to take matters in their own hand. Devolution also caused the political parties to “Welshify” their discourse thus creating a distinctively Welsh political space and giving an impulse to Welsh civil society. Another consequence of devolution is the increased focus on identity question as Welsh politicians and society seek to find new answers to what it means to be Welsh.

Other developments have also altered Welsh society. The struggles for Welsh language broadcasting, the increasing presence of Welsh in schools, both in Welsh and English taught schools and the Welsh language Act have reinforced the position of the Welsh language. This has also affected the “linguistic landscape” throughout Wales and especially in areas where traditionally the language was little spoken. Inversely migration has altered the areas where Welsh was traditionally spoken by the vast majority of the population and where now it is less spoken.

Devolution is of great importance for the institution based identity. The Welsh Assembly has become the core of this identity. This identity is not yet set in stone and is likely to evolve according to the direction devolution takes. It is an identity that has a great potential for unity as it can be equally shared both by Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers. The devolution based identity is more “dependent” and linked with political or institutional developments than the language based identity. Nevertheless, for this identity the status of the Welsh language is important. The Welsh speaking community is no longer confined to one specific area and the mechanisms for the transmission of the language have altered. The division between Welsh speakers and non Welsh speakers has also faded away as both hold that the Welsh language is important for Wales and the Welsh identity.

To conclude devolution has played an important role in the advance of the institution based Welsh identity. European integration has contributed to Wales yet has had little impact on identity matters.

The institution based identity has been more affected and shaped by the political events of the last forty years than the language based identity. As both are ongoing processes, and affect each other, it is clear that as far as identity is concerned the Welsh identity is not set in stone and shall change as Welsh society changes.

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