Festivals and Revelry: a Study of Identity in the Cantons of Modern Switzerland

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To my family and friends
For their unwavering support
And to Launa Murray
For daring me to dream
ABSTRACT

The following paper seeks to address the question of whether or not Fribourg and the other Swiss cantons are able to maintain a cantonal identity in the increasingly globalized political system and what methods are used for this identity preservation. This “reproduction of identity” in the cantonal system (also referred to as “cultural reproduction”) will be the focus of my thesis. After looking at the literature on identity formation, familiarizing myself with the history of Switzerland, the cantonal system, and the canton of Fribourg, and finally collecting and analyzing data on identity formation practices in the guise of festivals, I believe it is safe to reach the conclusion that cantonal identity is still strong in Fribourg.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

“Can we double back for a minute? I want to pick up some of that specialty mustard from that cart at the entrance to the old town,” my roommate Cynthia called out. “Yeah it’s no problem. I wanted to pick up a little bit of that and one of those hand carved cow figurines,” I hastily replied. “Well that’s appropriate, all recent events considered,” she retorted back.

We headed to the cart where two women met our poor French and our Swiss francs with the requested goods--one orange-spotted cow figurine and two jars of Moutarde de Benichon, a local delicacy of chocolate spicy mustard made during the season of Benichon. A local festival in the canton of Fribourg, Benichon celebrates the season of autumn and the return of the cow farmers and their herds who have spent their summer in the cool mountains and are ready to return to their families in the valleys below the soaring Alps.

After attending two Benichon celebrations within the rural parts of the canton of Fribourg, the first in the Swiss-German town of Plaffein and the second in the French-speaking Charmey, the festival had finally moved to us in the capital city. Unlike the two prior celebrations that centered on the parade of the herds of cows, complete with flower headdresses and oversized bells, and their traditionally dressed owners, the festival in the city was more of a market of their wares. Local cheeses, local jams, local wines all overflowed in stalls in the heart of the old city. Mass was said in the cathedral where people stood when they could not find seats, listening as alphorns served as the accompaniment to the choir. Afterwards, the cathedral crowds pulled out into the square of the maison de ville (town hall) for a complimentary drink and taste of local snacks.
whist watching the alphorn players continue their traditional songs, accompanied with traditional flag throwers tossing the black-and-white-barred Fribourgian flag high into the air. The day finished at the top of the old town, with the traditional, grand Benichon meal being served in tents to generations upon generations of Fribourg residents who came and left as they perused the local fares in the streets surrounding.

It was on this shopping trip following our meal at the Benichon tent, at the tent of a local farmer when I caught the glimpse of something altogether surprising. A patch in the uppermost left corner of the tent that read: “Produits de terroir du pays de Fribourg” (products of the territory of Fribourg). Normally, I would not have caught sight of such an insignificant detail in an otherwise packed day and if I had, I would have ignored it. But as it happened, I snapped a picture (Picture A) and moved on at the urging of my very full and tired roommate.

Picture A (Photo: Courtney G. Taylor)
However, I couldn’t stop thinking about the little patch on the small tent in the small city I was living in. The French word used to describe the canton was not “canton,” itself a French word meaning corner or region, nor was it the French word for state, “l’état,” which would be the American equivalent to a Swiss canton. Instead, the creators of the little patch used the word “pays” (country). Fribourg described as a country? Yes, the Swiss cantons have always been extremely independent, operating mostly as city-states prior to the Constitution of 1848, but understandably becoming more tightly bound as defense necessitated it during the world wars. What was it then to label the canton of Fribourg as a “country”? And if it was a “pays,” then did it have citizens that identified themselves as such, particularly in an increasingly globalized world?

This is the question I continuously asked myself as I saw the patches creep up again and again, usually at community festivals, holidays, and gatherings. The following paper seeks to address the question of whether or not Fribourg and the other Swiss cantons are able to maintain a cantonal identity in the increasingly globalized political system and what methods are used for this identity preservation. This “reproduction of identity” in the cantonal system (also referred to as “cultural reproduction”) will be the focus of my thesis. In this introduction I will briefly lay out the different components of the paper for the development of my inquiry and final argument.

First is a chapter devoted to discussing the literature on identity formation, particularly political identity formation. In order to understand whether or not citizens of Fribourg identify predominantly or significantly with their canton, it is necessary to analyze how people form their identities. This includes what is meant by identity, its forms, and how it is created. My working definition of identity is simply “people’s source
of meaning and experience” (Castells pg. 6). Thus, it follows that identity seeps into people’s lives when they begin to assign meanings to occupations, habits, and more importantly, relationships. Building on this definition of identity, I utilize a related and simple definition of identity formation and construction as “a cultural attribute, or related set of cultural attributes, that is given priority over other sets of meanings” (Castells p. 6). Thus, identities are formed when a person or collective group chooses to highlight one set of customs or traits above others. For example, choosing to attribute national symbols, characteristics, and traditions over those of a local nature or vice versa. Thus, identity formation and construction plays the biggest role later in my argument.

This discussion of identity will be extremely important in relation to the three types of identity formation. Additionally, identities are based around three different forms that create three different types of societies. The first is a legitimizing identity, in which institutions reach into the lives of social actors and play upon their identity to further legitimize their power (Castells pg. 8). The second is a resistance identity, in which actors who are devalued by other actors or institutions create their identity on retaliation to those opposing forces (Castells pg. 8). The final identity is project identity, in which social actors themselves push their identity outwards by building a “new identity that redefines their position in society, and by doing so, seek the transformation of overall societal structure” (Castells pg. 8). For the purposes of my argument I will concentrate on the first two instances of identity formation. The first, or legitimizing identity can be used to explain how the cantonal governments in Switzerland built a unique cultural structure that rested on the autonomous history of the individual cantons from one another. The second identity formation, the resistance identity, can be seen as the method for
identifying with the community as the Swiss state slowly took over cantonal government procedures. This method is inherently different from other European cultures such as the French or German nationalist movements as Swiss nationalism encourages resistance rather than conformation and adherence to a supreme body.

In addition, the chapter will spend a brief time explaining nationalism, or the creation of a “nation” of individuals, related intimately with the first, legitimizing, form of identity formation. If Fribourg markets itself as a “pays” then it follows a nation, or coherent identity group is in place. Thus, I will view the creation of a “Fribourgian” nation in light of the two major theories on nationalism. Primordialism emerges as the first theory on nationalism, albeit an abstract one. It proposes nations are inherently ancient as they emerge as the result of ethnic communities with similar beliefs and language (Geertz 1973, 259). It stems from the works of Charles Darwin and is identified with Anthony Smith. The opposing theory is constructivism or the “modernist” school of nationalism. Identified with Ernest Gellner, it states that nations are modern phenomena created as a way for groups to organize politically (Gellner 2009, 6). This can be done through the use of national symbols such as flags, songs, and “founding fathers” or a common history (Gellner 2009, 6). Other authors who propagate this theory include Benedict Anderson, Donald Horowitz, Charles King, and Eric Hobsbawm. Of the two arguments, I will be focusing on the latter, as I believe nationalism is not inherent but must be channeled by nationalist movements.

Secondly, I will relate the history of Switzerland, analyzing the nationalist movements within Switzerland through the creation and propagation of national myth and monument to forge ties between the different ethnies and cantons. It is this creation
of national identity from a multilingual, multireligious group that challenges primordialist arguments. Second amongst these factors will be the movements to organize into a union of allied territories within the geographic unit of the Alps that eventually becomes the Swiss Confederation. By looking at the geography and history of Switzerland, I hope to unravel why some cantons allied with others who differed in language, religion, or both. By uncovering the factors that brought the cantons together, I can then determine how nationalist movements sought to highlight this history in order to create a “Swiss” identity.

In this second chapter I will similarly define the case of Fribourg. Discussing the geographic, linguistic, cultural, and economic history of the canton will allow me to have a better understanding on how its leaders can shape its citizens’ identities and vice versa. I will pay attention to what distinguished the canton of Fribourg from its fellow cantons, particularly its bilingual nature, religion, and place in the Sonderbund insurrection in Fribourg in 1847.

Third, I will discuss my research into one of the methods of identity building: community festivals. Festivals can build a common identity and allow the community to hold a discourse about what is important to them as a whole. For a festival to be successful, it needs approval and/or organization from the community leaders. Beyond leadership, festivals also require community members to participate and interact with their leaders and one another. If turnout is low or involvement minimal, the festival fizzes out and is unable to support itself. However, successful festivals allow for the creation of traditions and more community output. Thus, I will focus on these vehicles for identity formation in collecting data.
In studying community festivals, I will be using newspaper articles to determine the number of festivals per year, the attendance at these festivals, and the impression the community has of these festivals. While festivals can often be successful, I am looking particularly at youth involvement in these festivals. As the younger generation has been brought up in a globalizing time, the ability of community leaders to elicit involvement will determine whether or not the communal or “national” identity of Fribourg increases, survives, or declines in the future.

In conclusion, the communal identity or “nationalism” of Fribourg is under review to determine whether or not cantonal identity, historically an important piece in Swiss identity, is still relevant in the current generation or whether globalization has eroded its importance. Are the young people raised in the canton Fribourghian? Swiss? Or simply citizens of the world? Through studying the historical and current methods to create a Swiss identity, particular the use of community festivals, I hope to uncover that the “pays” is still alive and well in Fribourg, Switzerland.
Chapter 2: Identity Formation and Mobilization:

Theories and Arguments

Who am I? A simple question with multiple answers and arguments, identity is at the core of all human thought and interactions. We define ourselves by our talents, traits, and relationships. However, as we define ourselves, others also identify us. Perceptions play a role in identity formation. In addition, our identity can be shaped by outside forces. These forces assist in the identity formation process and bring it to a head through mobilization. Specifically, group mobilization in the form of governmental or social change and authority. A study of identity and its formation by these processes is required to understanding how Swiss cantonal governments and societies form and maintain collective identity.

Similarly, along with identity formation is the understanding of politicized social groups often called ethnic or national groups. While neither Fribourg nor any other canton is a “nation” in the sense of a modern nation-state, the principles of defining a nation and a group identity are inextricably linked. Thus, a discussion of a nation and nationalism could be beneficial for comparison with the cantonal identity. I begin by defining nationalism itself and the concept of a nation, two very difficult terms which scholars have debated upon since the middle of the nineteenth century. After discussing definitions I will move to discuss how the two main schools each define these terms differently and can be seen in light of Swiss cantons.
Identity: Definitions and Types

To begin the study of identity, one first must understand what is meant by identity, its forms, and how it is created. My working definition of identity is simply “people’s source of meaning and experience” (Castells p. 6). Thus, it follows that identity seeps into people’s lives when they begin to assign meanings to occupations, habits, and more importantly, relationships. Building on this definition of identity, I utilize a related and simplistic definition of identity formation and construction as “a cultural attribute, or related set of cultural attributes, that is given priority over other sets of meanings” (Castells p. 6). Thus, identities are formed when a person or collective group chooses to highlight one set of customs or traits above others. For example, choosing to attribute national symbols, characteristics, and traditions over those of a local nature or vice versa. Thus, identity formation and construction plays the biggest role later in my argument.

Identity is often tied to the concept of roles. A role is organized by and with society through norms and customs, for example the role of a mother to nurture and care for her children (Castells p. 7). Often, a person will identify himself or herself through roles such as student, worker, leader, conservative, liberal, etc. However identities differ from roles in the placement of meaning. Identities are the meaning, whilst roles are the functions or actions (Castells p. 7). Meaning is/are the symbolic identifications made by the subject regarding the purpose or goal of their actions (Castells p. 7).

With meaning “making” the identity, sociologists reach their main problem: Since humans assign meaning to more than one object, role, or tradition, where does that leave identity? The issue is that every actor has multiple identities at any given point in time. Manuel Castells has a solution for this problem: in the network society, most social actors
have a primary identity to base meaning around and thus frame their other identities with through time and space (Castells p. 7).

Additionally, identities are based around three different forms that create three different types of societies. The first is a legitimizing identity, in which institutions reach into the lives of social actors and play upon their identity to further legitimate their power (Castells p. 8). This type of identity formation speaks to the nationalist arguments made by both Anderson and Gellner and leads to a civil society. The second is a resistance identity were actors who are devalued by other actors or institutions create their identity in retaliation to those opposing forces (Castells p. 8). This is the argument espoused by Craig Calhoun in his argument concerning the emergence of identity politics as the emergence of self-sufficient groups of outsiders mobilizing in relation to the dominant group (Calhoun p. 12). This type of identity formation leads to the formation of identifiable communities within a territory. For example, religious fundamentalism can be construed as the highlighting of differences from an already marginalized societal group in the Middle East. The final identity is project identity whereby social actors themselves push their identity outwards by building a “new identity that redefines their position in society, and by doing so, seek the transformation of overall societal structure” (Castells p. 8). This identity formation creates subjects, or people who actively create their own identity as it relates to societal norms (Tajfel 1987, p. 17).

For the purposes of my argument I will concentrate on the first two instances of identity formation. The first, or legitimizing identity can be used to explain how the cantonal governments in Switzerland built a unique cultural structure that rested on the autonomous history of the individual cantons from one another. Fribourg was once on its
own, save few military obligations, thus the customs of the state reflected the traditional identity structure of the canton. It was independent before, thus identity is considered independent afterwards. The second identity formation, the resistance identity, can be seen as the method for identifying with the community as the Swiss state slowly took over cantonal government procedures. The identification as being inherently different from other, more powerful people can be seen most especially with the Sonderbund case which will be discussed in a later chapter. First, I move to discuss the theories relevant to the first, legitimizing identity.

**Nationalism and the Formation of Political Identity**

To begin a discussion of nationalism and nationalist movements, one must first detail the root of these two concepts: the nation. The definition of nation, however, depends on the observer. Charles Tilly once described the difficulty of pinning down a definition for the term by describing it as “one of the most puzzling and tendentious items in the political lexicon” (Tilly 1975, 6). Two mechanisms for understanding the “nation” and nationalism can be termed primordial and constructivist definitions of nationalism (Smith 2010, 11). The primordialist definition of nationalism stresses objective factors such as a common language, religion, customs, territory, and institutions (Smith 2010, 11). Constructivist definitions of a nation rely more on the concept of a community of will and are best described in Benedict Anderson’s “imagined communities” approach (Anderson, 1983, p. 6). A nation here is defined as “an imagined political community-and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson, 1983, p. 6). While there are problems with both approaches I want to approach the question of a “nation” as a constructivist and use its approach in describing the “nation-building” process while
seeing the first definition of a nation in the context of mobilizing people during this process (i.e. using an already-established language group to create a nationalist movement). Note that while using this second, primordial definition of nation I am not suggesting that political movements to create a nation or nationalism must be based on a “primordial” history. Additionally, these potential-national groups that do share a “primordial” history may be absorbed into other states and even “nations” using there the constructivist definition.

With nations thus understood to be mobilized groups who are organized politically, often sharing common language, customs, boundaries, and institutions, one must turn to the concept of nationalism. Nationalism is not everything done in relation to the nation but is rather the sociological and political manifestation of it. Today this is often seen in the form of states as the concept of nation-states developed in the 19th and 20th centuries. The difference between nation and nationalism is a certain degree of self-awareness within the national group. Nationalism seizes upon this sentiment and is the beginning stage of channeling it into nationalist movements that seek a political entity representative of the nation (such as their own nation-state) or further regional autonomy. It hinges on the concept that a community should be recognized as different from “other” communities and that it has a right to self-government. These communities may have already existed, or nations may be “created” as a result of these nationalist movements. Nationalism can thus be introduced as the political and social channeling of a nation and that is self-identified as such.

The first of the two major schools of thought on nationalism is the primordialist school. According to the primordialists and their chief scholar, nationalism follows a
working definition of “An ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential ‘nation’” (Smith, 2010, p. 9). Here, Anthony Smith presupposes that whoever uses his definition of nationalism also uses the definition of nation that he utilizes as a basis for his work— the definition of the primordialists. This he gives as “a named human community residing in a perceived homeland, and having common myths and a shared history, a distinct public culture, and common laws and customs for all members” (Smith, 2010, p. 13). This differs from ethnic communities in that they live in a defined homeland and are connected by customs and laws more than a perceived united elite (Smith, 2010, p. 14). However this definition does little to distinguish between the two as there are notable exceptions of ethnic communities that are also “nations” despite Smith’s supposed distinctions, and Smith often uses the two interchangeably.

The troubles and contestations of the primordialist argument reside in the argument’s distinctions between ethnic and national communities. Primordialist thought hails from Darwinian expectations of isolated groups of creatures and a perceived difference between groups of similar organisms according to Alexander Motyl in his *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*. This leads to the perceptions that certain “nations” are inherently different from one another and that this “nationhood” is intrinsic and dates back to the beginning of time (thus it is “primordial”). Smith articulates this as “nations are ‘primordial’; they exist in the first order of time and lie at the root of subsequent processes and developments” (Smith, 2010, p. 55). This presupposing of nations and nationalism loses credibility in the face of “nationalism” being a relatively recent
concept—it first appears in the English language in 1836 and is a theological rather than political term (Smith, 2010, p. 5). In addition, the primordialist views have been seen as a way to mobilize ethnic groups against one another in the name of nationalism such with the German Third Reich (supposed Aryan nation) and nationalist leaders in Bosnia. The primordialist argument and its critiques will be further developed in the next section of this chapter.

The modernist school of nationalism, also labeled constructivists, opposes the primordialists. These modernists believe nations are modern and thus cannot be tied to intrinsic ethnic identities, though they may be channeled on these lines (Hobsbawm, 1991, p. 18). Nations are thus defined by constructivist Benedict Anderson as “an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson, 1983, p. 15). The nation can thus be imagined by individuals and created through nationalist movements. They are limited by their notion that no member of a nation will ever know every other member of the nation even though they identify with them and they are sovereign in their attempts to be recognized as a form of organization (the state being the culmination of this) (Anderson, 1983, p. 15). From that definition of nation, modernists move to define nationalism as “not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations were they do not exist” (Gellner, 1965, p. 169). Nationalism is thus the mobilization of imagined communities by political leaders for the creation of autonomous units or states.

While the modernist school of nationalism is given more traction in scholarly circles, there are flaws in this argument as well. Nations as created entities should not be intrinsic according to their definition. However, primordialists argue that if nations and
nationalism are new constructs then there should be no historical record of anything that resembles their definition, and that this fails in many instances including the Greek city-states. Anthony Smith finds his rivals “strong on theory, but rather weak on history” (Smith, 2010, p. 64).

Having thus discussed identity and nation building, I moved to where the two intersect to create identity and, more importantly, preserve it through the use of communal rites. The communal rite I focus on in this study is that of the festival—a communal celebration of art, person, or even an event for the purpose of uniting a group of people. Emile Durkheim’s theory of collective effervescence discusses the importance of such gatherings as the ritually induced passion or ecstasy that cements social bonds (Durkheim p. 12). Expounding upon this, Barbara Ehrenreich’s study in Dancing in the Streets details how anthropologists moved in the twentieth century from condemnation of local festivals as primitive to a necessary social function (Ehrenreich p. 10). Rituals such as festivals became a “way of renewing the bonds that held a community together” (Ehrenreich p. 10). It is this renewal of community bonds, the strengthening of ties, that I hold a sacrosanct for the preservation of identity, communal and, in Switzerland, cantonal. The specific festivals of Fribourg and their influence in identity preservation will be discussed later in Chapter 4.

Following this discussion of nationalism, nation-building, and cultural preservation, I now move to discuss how these broad topics apply to the unique case of the Swiss state. How did a group of independent-minded, rural cantons move from city-states to a nation-state? And how did the Swiss state retain cantonal authority to reflect its
multiculturalist approach to democracy? These are questions I address in the following chapter.
Chapter 3: What is “Switzerland”? : A Brief History of the Helvetic Republic and Canton Fribourg

In order to understand the political and social forces of Switzerland, it is necessary to define where the country is and its origin. Thus follows a brief overview of Swiss history, from its tribal origins prior to the Roman conquest to modern times with a particular focus on the political structure of the modern country and the social evolution of a “Swiss” identity. Following this brief history, I will detail the history and particularity of one of the now Twenty-Six cantons of Switzerland, Fribourg. With attention to its particular case in the Swiss republic I will detail the canton’s history before delving into observations of its place in studying the importance of the canton in modern Switzerland.

Switzerland: Three Languages, Two Religions, and One Heritage

In the continuing description and historical analysis of Switzerland I begin with a look at four time periods in Swiss history. The first, which I refer to as the “early settlement” phase, will be brief yet outline some developing social contexts that contribute later on to a “Swiss” identity. Second, and in more detail than the first, is the “proto-Confederation”-- the beginnings of affiliation between today’s modern cantons and the rise of their military and economic power. Third, I detail as the “coalescence” phase of Swiss history a series of conflicts, both internal and external, which force the cantons into a tighter alignment and the writing of constitutions (including the one in use today) to reflect such a system. And finally, I focus on the Swiss state in the modern era, which will focus primarily on the current functions of the federal apparatus and its forms.
Early Settlement: The Helvetii

There are but three groups who warrant a place at the table when discussing the early Swiss territory: the first two being tribes to be conquered and the third being their conquerors. The first substantial group who affected Switzerland, at least etymologically are the Helvetii, a Gallic tribe who inhabited a large portion of the Jura- the greatest portion of modern Switzerland. Knowledge of the Helvetii (to whom the Swiss owe their official name: Confoederatio Helvetica) comes from their subjugation by the Romans in 58 BCE (McCrackan, 1892, p.23). Already a fringe group, having been located closest to Italy, they were subjugated in Julius Caesar’s conquest of Gaul and are completely absorbed as a client kingdom by the following year in 57 BCE (Julius Caesar allowed the tribe some autonomy as he found the Gallic tribe preferable to the Germanic tribes sure to move into the area should the Helvetii leave) (McCrackan, 1892, p.22-4). The second group was called the Raeti, a tribe described as Etruscan in origin, therefore more like the Italians whom the Romans were familiar (McCrackan, 1892, p. 20). Holding out longer than the Helvetii, the Raeti lost their battle for independence at the hands of the future emperor Tiberius and his brother Drusus in 15 BCE (McCrackan, 1892, p. 23). Thus the two major Swiss tribes came under Roman influence.

Finally having conquered the area and thus creating a buffer zone between the Italian peninsula and the wily Germanic tribes, the Romans divided their new conquest into provinces. The ways in which the regions and tribes were divided are incredibly important for understanding the linguistic differences in Switzerland as the Raeti were put in the province of Raetia and the Helvetii were placed in Gaul (Wilson, 1832, p.8). Thus, the two regions became extremely Romanized, adopting the Latin alphabet and
language. These regions of modern Switzerland would later become the French-speaking regions (Helvetii), which were closely related to the tribes of Gaul, and the Italian-speaking regions (Raetia), which were more closely related to Italic culture. The Germanic-speakers to the north were the result of an invasion of the Germanic tribes sometime after 150 AD (Wilson, 1832, p.8).

Proto-Confederation: Mutual Defense and Feudal Lords

I utilized this next phase of Swiss history to relate the story that the Swiss people point to as their “creation,” the events leading up to such, and the existence of the Confederation until the Treaty of Westphalia. The principal moment of “unification” or “founding” occurred in August of 1291 when three future cantons, the communities of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden into an Eternal Alliance (also called the League of the Three Forest Cantons), met on a hill near Lake Luzern and pledged their mutual defense and unity in issues of jurisdiction in the Federal Charter (Steinberg, 1996, p. 20). I will relate the history of the Swiss empirical domination followed by their mutual security pact that led, hundreds of years later, to the creation of the Swiss state.

The cantons of Switzerland were not free from foreign rule after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. The Germanic tribes, particularly the Burgundians and the Alemanni, quickly filled the power vacuum (McCrackan, 1892, p. 31). Both tribes eventually were absorbed into the empire of the Franks and the rule of the Carolingian monarchs (McCrackan, 1892, p. 37). However, the Treaty of Verdun separated the Swiss into two settlements: Lotharinga, which was to be controlled by the Burgundians in the current Western half of the country, and Almannia, which was eventually controlled by
the Holy Roman Empire in the Eastern half of the country (McCrackan, 1892, p. 47). This marks the separation in the halves of the country and is the origin of the country’s linguistic differences. After over three hundred years apart, the Burgundian section was lost with the death of the Burgundian king Berchtold V in 1218 and its cities became reichsfrei (autonomous, loosely allied to the Holy Roman Empire) (McCrackan, 1892, pg. 58). Afterwards, the cities were completely absorbed into the Holy Roman Empire until the death of its leader Rudolf I of Hapsburg in 1291 (McCracken, 1892, pg. 64).

Seeing a chance to organize mostly for economic reasons upon the death of their protector Rudolf I, the leaders in the cantons of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden pledged themselves into an Eternal Alliance in 1291 (Steinberg, 1996, p. 20). Originally a loose group of communities, the original three cantons (called the Eidgenossen) were joined by five others by 1353—those of Glarus, Zug, Lucerne, Zurich, and Bern (Steinberg, 1996, p. 20). This group, referred to as the “Old Confederacy” for purposes of differentiation from later groups, survived intact through the end of the fifteenth century. Through the Confederation, the Swiss were able to mark historic victories over their more powerful neighbors. Victories over the Hapsburgs at Morgarten and Sempach in 1386 and Charles the Bold of Burgundy in the 1470s led to increasing Swiss independence from its former imperial leaders and the creation of a Swiss sense of military identity (McCrakan, 1892, p. 126, 167, 171, 231). This culminated in a victory over the Swabian League in 1499, leading to even more independence within the Holy Roman Empire. With the employment of the Swiss Guard by Pope Julius II in 1506, an acceptance of Swiss military dominance was established and the guard remains a tradition in the Vatican to this day (McCrakan, 1892, pg. 238, 241).
The final phase of the “proto-confederation” began with the Reformation and the religious division of the sixteenth century and the resulting religious conflict. Switzerland played a leading part in the Protestant Reformation with two major protestant thinkers emerging from one of its largest cites, Zurich, and a future part of the Confederation, Geneva. Though John Calvin in Geneva had the larger impact on Protestantism, Geneva was not a part of the Confederation at the time of his preaching (it was controlled by the House of Savoy, in Italy) (McCrakan, 1892, p. 251). Thus, Huldrych Zwingli in Zurich played a larger role in the development of Protestantism within Switzerland beginning in 1523 (McCrakan, 1892, p. 255). Soon, under his lead, Berne, Basel, and Schaffhausen adopted the Protestant religion (McCrakan, 1892, p. 165). However, Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Zug, Fribourg, and Solothurn all remained Catholic and two cantons, Glarus and Appenzell, were split between the two faiths (McCrakan, 1892, p. 265). This led to several small inter-cantonal wars and there were even two diets within the Confederation, the Protestants in Aarau and the Catholics in Lucerne. Despite this, the Confederation survived and the Swiss cantons found themselves relatively unscathed through the Thirty-Years War (Steinberg, 1996, p. 33). Most of their powerful neighbors used the Swiss for mercenary hires and were all too happy to leave the territory alone militarily, using only their influence to sway the cantons (Steinberg, 1996, p.33). Though confessional tensions remained in the confederacy, it remained united and reaffirmed its unification with the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. The Treaty states:

And as His Imperial Majesty, upon Complaints made in the name of the City of Basle, and of all Switzerland… have, by a Decree of the 14th of May of the last Year, declared the said City of Basle, and the other Swiss-Cantons, to be as it
were in possession of their full Liberty and Exemption of the Empire; so that they are no ways subject to the Judicatures, or Judgments of the Empire, and it was thought convenient to insert the same in this Treaty of Peace, and confirm it (Avalon-Treaty of Westphalia, 1648, Article 63).

This confirmed the Swiss cantons as being their own, independent entity, free of involvement from the Holy Roman Empire. The Swiss religious conflict that emerged subsequent to these holy wars in Europe will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

*Coalescence: Switzerland in the Age of Nationalism*

Although the Swiss Confederation was firmly established as free from any control after the Treaty of Westphalia, it had yet to form into the Switzerland of today. Several cantons did not join the confederation until after the treaty, and the idea of a “Swiss” identity was far from realization in the cantons themselves. This next section details the Swiss Confederation and its passage through the “Age of Nationalism” and the creation of modern France, Germany, and Italy. What enables these cantons to join with one another, their motivations for statehood, and their organization, are extremely relevant for understanding why Switzerland presents a unique case for the study of nationalism and the federal system.

The Swiss way of life saw little change in the period between the Treaty of Westphalia and the late eighteenth century, when Napoleon took control of the state. While there was a peasant revolt in the mid-fifteenth century and the Protestant-Catholic divide occasionally came to a head, the Swiss state and its people received their first challenge in the form of French emperor Napoleon. After invading Switzerland in 1798
during the French Wars of Revolution, Napoleon reorganized the cantons into an allied state named the “Helvetic Republic” after their pre-Roman ancestors (McCrakan, 1892, p. 297). By acknowledging their ancestors, the founding French acknowledged a primordialist view of nationalism, calling on the Swiss to remember a supposed shared identity during the period of Roman conquering and rule. The republic was modeled on Napoleon’s own configuration in France and created a unitary state in the place of the loose alliance of the Confederation (McCrakan, 1892, p. 300). The cantons lost most of their power in this system, with most cantons being forced to merge with others, a national capital located in Aarau (then moved to Lucerne), and a national congress and executive being put in place (Steinberg, 1996, p.9). This state was to exist through to 1803.

The magistrate Peter Ochs from Basel heavily influenced the constitution of the Helvetic Republic, along with the French constitution (McCrakan, 1892, p. 297). The legislature had two chambers: the upper was called the Grand Council and the lower house the Senate (McCrakan, 1892, p. 302). Cantons were allotted eight representatives to the Grand Council and four to the Senate (McCrakan, 1892, pg. 302). The executive was composed of a five-member council called the Directory (not unlike France’s prior to the Napoleonic takeover) (McCrakan, 1892, p. 302). Furthermore, consolidations were taken on the national level, with a definitive Swiss nationality being recognized, rather than cantonal citizenship (McCrakan, 1892, p. 302). In addition, the regime cracked down on religion in the state (McCrakan, 1892, p. 303). However, all of these actions led to hatred for the new government in the masses. The state had multiple constitutions within the five-year period it existed and multiple revolts, notably the uprising led by
Alois von Reding in 1798 and the joining of locals with the armies of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Imperial forces to fight the French forces in 1799 and later (McCrank, 1892, p. 303-305). These events led to the Act of Mediation and the restoration of the cantonal authorities and the loose Swiss Confederation and the addition of the Swiss cantons of Aargau, Thurgau, Graubünden, St.Gallen, Vaud, and Ticino (McCrank, 1892, p. 317). The Napoleonic Wars’ conclusion gave the small state even more territory with the additions of Valais, Neuchatel, and Geneva, bringing it to its current borders as seen in figure 1 and reestablishing its independence (Steinberg, 1996, p. 42). But most importantly the Congress of Vienna established the basis of Swiss neutrality- forbidding foreign troop movements within its territory unless approved by the cantons themselves, which has, thus far, never been granted (Final Act of the Congress of Vienna, 1815).

Figure 1: Cantons of Switzerland with their coats of arms (Swiss Cantons)
Although the Helvetic Republic ultimately failed, it provided the first glimpse into Swiss reorganization and a more centralized government. The need for a greater coalescence, in part to counter their imperialistic neighbors and in part to settle matters of trade such as a standard currency and weights and measures, led to the Swiss Federal Constitution of 1848. This Constitution provided the framework for the modern Swiss state, going through complete revisions in 1874, and the modern revision in 1999. The republic’s many failures helped guide the writers of the constitutions as to what would and would not work for the state; for example, cantons had to be respected and allotted their due power, however the executive could be run effectively as a board (the current Swiss executive- The Federal Council- is set up much like the Directory but with seven members rather than five). The trigger for the writing of this constitution was the Swiss Civil War, to be discussed further when I move to the historical significance of the canton Fribourg.

*After the Federal State: Creation of “Swiss” Identity and Maintenance in the World Wars*

After the Constitution of 1848, the remainder of Swiss history reads as the expansion of rights and the development of a national identity. Like most countries at the time, Switzerland experienced the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century, leading to the expansion of wealth and industry and the introduction of women into the workplace. As more people had wealth and influence they sought to voice their opinions politically and the state and cantonal governments went through reforms such as the revision of the Swiss constitution in 1874. In addition, Swiss identity built up on the
ideals of the prior “coalescence” phase such as neutrality. Switzerland remained neutral through both of the world wars despite linguistic and cultural ties to both sides of both wars (France and Germany). Interestingly enough, the ties which did bind the Swiss to other peoples became a way for people to highlight their Swiss identity: for example, usage of high German was discouraged during World War II, with the Swiss German community placing a stress on local dialects- moving the language even further away from their German kin to the north.

Furthermore, the Swiss nationalists of the seventeenth century resurrected old folk heroes to play into a “national” mythology. Using the supposed oath of the Old Swiss Confederacy as a backdrop, the nationalists highlighted men who embodied Swiss ideals to unite the people into a “Swiss” identity. The three oath-takers of the Eidgenossen were among the first, but the most renowned is that of marksman William Tell (German: Wilhelm Tell; French: Guillaume Tell; Italian: Guglielmo Tell; Romansh: Guglielm Tell). Mentioned in a chronicle of the late fifteenth century, Tell assassinated a tyrannical governor of the Hapsburgs in Switzerland. He is thus seen as a liberator to the Swiss people and opposition in the face of outside rule. While the legend of Tell was alive for centuries, it was not until the rest of Europe saw him as a hero to rally nationalist causes that he was fully exploited. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, in the middle of the Age of Nationalism, Tell saw a resurgence in popularity with the play written by Schiller in 1803-04, a work heavily influenced by the French and American revolutions, and the opera by Rossini in 1829. Such attention to a legend provided a rallying point for Swiss identity, both international and domestic.
With these principles, the Swiss moved into a new era, which continues to play out to this day. There is a reason that the Swiss did not join the United Nations until 2002 and the neutrality set forth in the nineteenth century played an important part in it—Swiss traditions continue to play out from this period. From these “Swiss” identity points I move to a discussion on the canton of Fribourg, how it is itself a microcosm of the Swiss identity, especially in the realm of multiculturalism, and how it provides an interesting case to base further studies of Swiss multicultural identity formation.

**Fribourg: Where Two Worlds Collide**

The canton of Fribourg/Freiburg (the French and German names respectively) is located in the Western half of Switzerland, yet in the Eastern most region of “Suisse Romande” or French-speaking Switzerland and can be seen as the yellow region West of Bern in Figure 1 (along with its coat of arms with bars of black and white). Its capitol, Fribourg, is located on the River Sarine and is 17 miles Southwest of the Swiss capital Bern. It is bounded by Lake Neuchatel and the canton Neuchatel on its Western side, by the Canton Vaud on its Western and Southern sides, and by the canton of Bern on its Eastern side. The Canton itself is then further broken down into seven districts: Broye, Glâne, Gruyère, Sarine (home to the capital Fribourg), See, Sense, and Veveyse as seen in Figure 2. The best known of the seven is Sarine due to its position as the capital and center of cantonal life, and Gruyère, home to some of the richest agricultural production in Switzerland and birthplace of the famous cheese. Agriculture is extremely important in the canton with an emphasis on cattle breeding and dairy farming leading to its greatest
production in cheese and chocolate (cheese centered in Gruyère).

Figure 2: Regions of Fribourg (Wikipedia Commons)

With a population of 291,395 at the 2012 census, Fribourg is hardly the largest canton in Switzerland (Statistik Schweiz). Nor does it have one of the important Swiss economic centers such as Geneva or Zurich. Nor does it hold the state’s capital city such as Bern or play host to major international business, politics, or humanitarian efforts, such as Geneva. However, Fribourg is uniquely placed within the country—the middle.
Not necessarily the geographic middle as it is within the Western half of the country, but rather the linguistic and cultural middle where Suisse Romande meets the home of the Schweizerdeutsch and the French and Swiss Germans collide. The canton is known for its unique bilingual status and is home to Switzerland’s only bilingual university. Even the names of its districts are reflective of its bilingual status- Broye, Glâne, Gruyère, Sarine, and Veveyse utilize their French names whilst See and Sense are the German names for the regions. As a canton made up of two linguistic groups, Fribourg provides an interesting study for the ways in which the Swiss identify themselves, particularly across language barriers.

While the languages of Fribourg in and of themselves make an interesting case, the history of the canton provides an even better backdrop to Swiss identity—why have a canton with two language groups? The answer to the question lies in the other great Swiss divide—religion. Fribourg, unlike its neighboring cantons Bern and Neuchatel, is predominantly Roman Catholic with seventy percent of residents self-identifying as such (Statistik Schweiz). This shows the importance religion has and had on the formation of social and political bonds, stretching beyond the language barrier to unite the people of Fribourg (Steinberg, 1996, p. 52). Further evidence lies in the canton’s greatest claim to fame: the Civil War of 1847.

The Civil War was the culmination of hundreds of years of built up religious tension and fear stemming from persecutions of Protestants in neighbor France and retaliations against Catholics and Protestants alike in the German kingdoms. Fribourg, along with its Catholic allies Lucerne, Valais, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, and Zug, formed one side of the fraction named the Sonderbund (Steinberg, 1996, pg. 43). The
“Confederation,” states with predominant protestant members, formed the other (Weaver, 2012, pg. xxii). Said to have broken out as a result of the expulsion of Jesuits from the country as the result of a vote of the majority of the Confederation’s protestant members, the war was the result of two competing ideas for division of power (Steinberg, 1996, p. 51). Not unlike the American Civil War, one side, the Sonderbund, preferred a decentralized system, in which power remained in the hands of the local aristocracy, whereas the other, the Confederacy, looked for a more centralized state to address political affairs (Weaver, 2012, p. 15). Unlike the American war however, the Swiss Civil War or Sonderbundskrieg lasted less than a month and resulted in fewer than one hundred casualties (Weaver, 2012, p. 50).

In the war, Fribourg was both a center for leadership and an Achilles heel for the Sonderbund alliance. Many leaders in Fribourg contributed to the war effort, including the leader of its defense Francois Philippe de Maillardoz, who managed to raise over 23,000 troops for the defense of the canton (Weaver, 2012, p. 28). However, as the canton was separated from its allies, it was an easy target for Dufour, the Confederate commander, who sought to detach the canton from its allies and neutralize the extreme base from assisting in any major takeover (Weaver, 2012, p. 30). In this Dufour succeeded, capturing the city in a four-day siege complete with a theatrical fake-invasion from canton Bern and the troop movements from the canton Vaud (Esseiva, 1882, p.66). The Sonderbund was to fall shortly thereafter and the drafting of the Constitution of 1848 led the Swiss into their modern federal state, in line with what the Confederate faction wanted.
 Nonetheless, Fribourg was and remains an interesting study for the combinations of Swiss identity. Is it political? Is it religious? Is it linguistic? Logic dictates that it is not the later as German is spoken as freely in the canton as is French. The Swiss, however, jokingly refer to the canton as the home of the Röstigraben. Rösti is a traditional Swiss-German dish of potatoes and cheese and graben means “rift” or often just referred to as the ditch—so a rift/ditch between the languages of Suisse Romande and German Switzerland (similarly it is referred to as the “Rideau de Rösti” in French—the Rösti curtain). Is it political motivation perhaps? Unlikely as the canton was founded under the control of an aristocratic house rather than the like-minded ideals of peoples in a democracy. That leaves us with one option: religion, a concept supported by Fribourg’s participation in the Sonderbund War—a political and militaristic mobilization in response to religious conflict.

**Conclusion**

The Swiss have a history rich in detail that is required to understand their differences in language and religion. These differences that may seem small have been hindrances to the creation of the Swiss nation but provide an important backdrop to the realization of a Swiss nation-state. The separation and origins of different tribes, administrative districts, and finally empires led to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of the cantons. Similarly, the presence of charismatic protestant reformers influenced many cantons to convert while others, untouched by their words and loyal to the Roman Catholic system of governance and patronage, did not. The examples of both of these rifts and a solution to them lie within the canton of Fribourg, home of the great linguistic and
ethnic “ditch” of Switzerland. Understanding Fribourg may provide a key for understanding the Swiss state and the use of cantons in Switzerland.

Fribourg is unique in that it is the only Swiss canton that is almost an exact split between native French and native Swiss German speakers. In addition, it is a religious minority to the country with a majority Catholic population. How does a canton with this makeup retain its identity? Especially with its population language barrier as same-language countries devolve into smaller parts (here I refer to the upcoming Scottish independence vote from the United Kingdom). Through studying one method of identity preservation, community festivals, I will uncover in the next chapter whether such an identity exists, if so, how it is preserved, and what this says to the Swiss cantonal system, and therefore, Swiss identity.
Chapter 4: Oh Happy (Festival) Day: Festivals and Identity Formation in Fribourg

After reviewing Swiss history, some troubling problems emerge. Whether or not they have been solved or are currently being solved is within this chapter. For example, what role do cantons retain where there appear conflicts in national and local policy? How can identity be formed across ethnic “ditches”, particularly when language, a method of communication, differs? I discuss these topics within this chapter through one facet of identity creation and retention: the festival.

After reviewing the literature on identity formation and the history of the canton of Fribourg, I now move on to the discussion of one identity manifestation: the festival. Long celebrated traditions, these festivals often hold clues to understanding what makes a Fribourgian a Fribourgian, whether it is a local take on an international or national festival or an altogether unique experience of the canton. By analyzing the festivals to see what traditions they pass down to future generations of the canton and by looking at the participation of these younger generations, one can make reliable observations about the health of the cantonal identity.

I begin this chapter with a discussion of how festivals can act as an incubator for identity formation. This is best demonstrated through a small discussion on Fribourgian festivals. Here, I have chosen three smaller festivals within the canton to show how even they can contribute to a sense of community and thus affect a “national” identity in Fribourg. This manifests itself particularly with the canton’s ties to religious creed, with an emphasis on traditionally Roman-Catholic holidays being celebrated with festivals.
From there I move on to the discussion of two of the largest festivals/seasons in the canton of Fribourg: that of Benichon and the Fête de St. Nikolas. Using data on attendance, coverage, and eyewitness accounts, I will use the two festivals to see whether there is any correlation between such events and a shared sense of communal identity.

Festivals, Festivals, All Around but Let Us Stop to Think (How They Affect the Community)

What is a festival? And how can festivals contribute to identity formation? For the purpose of this research, I define a festival as any communal event with multiple actors contributing to the celebration of an event, art form, or person. When multiple actors come together, they contribute to a dialogue regarding their subject material. The emphasis placed on certain festivals both by the actors who plan and actively participate in the festival and those who attend the event point to what the community deems important for discussion and celebration. Thus, festivals provide an insight into communal identification. Contributing to my analysis, I separate festivals into three categories based on the center of their celebration—event, art, or person. What follows in this section is a description of all of the festivals in Fribourg and a small number of generalizations made about the nature of the festivals.

To understand festivals in Fribourg there must first be a comprehensive list to draw upon and use for the separation of the festivals into categories. In Table 2, found in the appendix, I list the appropriate festivals/festival seasons in Fribourg along with their date for the 2014 calendar year and a brief description of the festival. These festivals were chosen for their renown and a perceived importance to the community, as they are
all important enough to be mentioned on the official Fribourg tourism site. I then move to separating the festivals into the three categories of festivals as described earlier. This information can be found in the summary chart (Table 1) below.

Table 1: Fribourgian Festivals by Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Festival Type</th>
<th>Art and Crafts</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Personal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Festivals</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Separating these festivals into the three groups, there seem to be a disproportionately large number of events centered on the artistic category. The second largest concentration of festivals celebrates specific events important to Fribourg. Finally, only one person is celebrated with a Fribourgian festival—the Fête de St. Nicholas. Each of these categories serves specific purposes: the art festivals support a cultured society of Fribourg, with specific festivals making sure to highlight specific Fribourgian crafts and businesses such as the Festival of the Traditional Breweries and the Fribourg Trade Fair. The festivals celebrating events and persons demonstrate what the people of Fribourg find important in their definitions of community. One of these is the national festival or National Day in August. However, that festival is the only event or personal festival which celebrates something beyond Fribourg. The town hall, normally decked in its white and black Fribourgian flags, momentarily takes up the Swiss red and white as the community celebrates the Confederation.
Having thus looked a bit at the categories of festivals, one sees that certain patterns begin to emerge across the three categories, particularly one facet: the religious background or tradition of the festivals. For example, the sole festival celebrating a person does not celebrate a founder of the canton or a celebrated political leader but rather the patron saint of the canton, St. Nicholas. Similarly, all of the celebrations centered on an event, with the exception of National Day, have their roots in religious rites. Carnival is a common tradition in Roman Catholic dominated societies to celebrate before the onset of Lent; Corpus Christi is a religious event which all Catholics must participate in; and Bénichon has its roots in religious celebrations of the harvest. Even the art category, though full of often internationally accepted events such as film festivals and concerts, contains its fair share of religious-heavy festivals with events such as the Festival of Sacred Music and International Festival of Organ Music Fribourg. As previously discussed in the history of Fribourg, the dominant religion in the region and the main reason for the unification of the bilingual canton was the religious hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church. An integrated identity was created through this religious tie that the canton even went to war with fellow cantons in the Sonderbund War.

Having pegged religion as an entry point for identity formation and mobilization, I move to specific case studies of two such festivals. Throwing out the festivals centered around art and its various forms due to its broader appeal to non-Fribourgian tourists, I choose one from each of the other two categories: the Bénichon from the events category and the Fête de St. Nicholas from the person category. Having attended both festivals, I was made aware by the locals that these were potentially the two most important festivals
for identity formation within the canton for their historical legacy, attendance, and perceived communal importance.

**Bénichon and the Fête de St. Nicholas: Fribourgian Festivals and the Importance of Emphasis**

I begin this section with a brief description of the events of Bénichon. Arguably the grandest of all of Fribourg’s festivals, Benichon is celebrated with small festivals in 54 cities or communes in the canton (Dates des Bénichon). With only 165 municipalities in the canton this means that close to one third of all communes participate directly in Bénichon. What this participation entails centers on a meal of local specialties, the most important being the moutarde de Bénichon, a chocolate mustard spread served with bread at the beginning of the meal, some form of soup, the entrée of meat with local vegetables, special Botzi pears and Gruyère cheeses prior to dessert, a dessert of meringues with cream, and finally small cakes and pastries (Menu). A lengthy meal, it is often served in public either in grand tents or in restaurants across the town. Coinciding with the meal are open-air markets filled with stalls of local craftsmen selling their wares, including elements of the Bénichon menu such as the mustard, meringues, and cheeses.

In addition to the universal Bénichon meal, communes in the rural areas of the canton celebrate Bénichon with the return of the cowherds and their owners with parades, music, and dance. The cows are often decorated with elaborate headdresses and oversized bells denoting their owner and cantonal flag for their march through the center of town with their herders wearing traditional garb to match. Such examples are those in the towns of Charmey and Plaffeien. Flag thrower toss Swiss and Fribourgian flags into the air whilst listening to the sound of alphorns.
The events and symbols of Bénichon consistently highlight the importance of Fribourgian ties. Traditional clothes are worn, the flag of Fribourg is draped over balconies, the flag appears on the necks of local cows and is tossed in the air during the parades; traditional Fribourgian food is produced, purchased, and eaten. However, none of the symbolism matters unless participation is high. According to the local Fribourgian paper La Liberté, attendance at the grand event in the capital numbered around 15,000 participants (Ellena). This was the total estimated attendance for just one of the 54 events of Bénichon. Of the events at the smaller sites, one way to count the crowds is the numbers who attend the meal (which is lower than the number of actual spectators). Charmey’s meal saw some 900 people attend the communal Bénichon meal even though the population of the town is less than 1900, indicating at least half of the citizens attend the meal, with spectators probably reaching close to the same level as the population (Murith).

The Fête of St. Nicholas, whilst serving in the same identity forming function as Bénichon, differs from it in many ways. Unlike the previous festival, the Fête de St. Nicholas is celebrated only on one day rather than the months of individual Bénichon festivities. December 6, the holy day of the patron Saint of Fribourg, is the day the community gathers to celebrate the giving of gifts and the saint’s importance to the community. Another contrast to the Bénichon festival is that the Fête de St. Nicholas is celebrated only in the capital of the canton, Fribourg. However, the festival itself shows many similarities to Bénichon. There is a parade of the Saint through the old town not unlike the parade of the herds. Similarly, a market is set up in the old town with locals selling their wares from the surrounding region. The statements of politicians and music
and dance of Bénichon are replaced with an annual address by the Saint to the crowds of citizens below his point on the balcony of the cathedral.

The Fête de St. Nicholas elicits more attention in the press as evidenced in my analysis of the website of La Liberté. Perhaps because of the time of year, the articles and pictures are more readily available on this festival. The official estimates for attendance at the festival by the publishers was set at a record 30,000 spectators in 2013, an estimated 10,000 more than the audience in 2012 (Wicht). In addition to photos of the parade, address, and market stalls, the press published the entirety of St. Nicholas’ speech to the crowd (Wicht). In the speech, St. Nicholas (a community leader) extolled the virtues of the Fribourgnian people and thanked them for their attendance that day (Wicht).

Overall, the two festivals inundate their audience with a controlled dose of Fribourgnian pride. Through the use of Fribourgnian symbols (the flag, etc.), playing on the root of Fribourgnian cantonal construction (religious homogeny), and reinforcing behavior by extolling participation, the authorities of the canton of Fribourg and its community leaders are able to reinforce a distinct Fribourgnian identity. Through these, Fribourg can continue to create generations of citizens attached to its territory, policies, and culture, thereby preserving their political unit and powers.
Chapter 5: Conclusion: The Future of the Cantonal System

In conclusion, I sought to find the answer to the question of whether or not the preservation of cantonal identity was still alive in well in Fribourg Switzerland, particularly in light of an increasingly globalized world. After looking at the literature on identity formation, familiarizing myself with the history of Switzerland, the cantonal system, and the canton of Fribourg, and finally collecting and analyzing data on identity formation practices in the guise of festivals, I believe it is safe to reach the conclusion that cantonal identity is still strong in Fribourg.

My first chapter was devoted to discussing the literature on identity formation. In order to understand whether or not citizens of Fribourg identify predominantly or significantly with their canton, it is necessary to analyze how people form their identities. This includes what is meant by identity, its forms, and how it is created. My working definition of identity was simply “people’s source of meaning and experience” (Castells p. 6). Thus, it follows that identity seeps into people’s lives when they begin to assign meanings to occupations, habits, and more importantly, relationships. Building on this definition of identity, I utilized the related definition of identity formation and construction as “a cultural attribute, or related set of cultural attributes, that is given priority over other sets of meanings” (Castells p. 6). Thus, identities are formed when a person or collective group chooses to highlight one set of customs or traits above others. For example, choosing to attribute national symbols, characteristics, and traditions over
those of a local nature or vice versa. Thus, identity formation and construction plays the biggest role in my argument.

Second, I related the history of Switzerland, analyzing the nationalist movements within Switzerland through the creation and propagation of national myth and monument to forge ties amongst the different ethnicities and cantons. Second amongst these factors were the movements to organize into a union of allied territories within the geographic unit of the Alps that eventually became the Swiss Confederation. This look at geography and history unraveled factors other than ethno-linguistic ones that contributed to cantonal identity, intercantonal alliances, and the creation of a Swiss state. This nationalist movement is simultaneous with the movement of any “nationalism” in the cantons themselves.

In this second part of the chapter I similarly defined Fribourg as a perfect case study for Swiss cantonal identity preservation. Touching on the geographic, linguistic, cultural, and economic history of the canton allowed for a better understanding on how its leaders can shape its citizens’ identities and vice versa. In particular I pay attention to what distinguished the canton of Fribourg from its fellow cantons, particularly its bilingual nature, religion, and place in the Sonderbund insurrection.

Third, I discussed my research into one method of identity building—community festivals. Festivals build a common identity and allow the community to hold a discourse about what is important to them as a whole. Additionally, festivals require community members to participate and interact with their leaders and one another. If turnout is low or involvement minimal, the festival fizzles out and is unable to support itself. However,
successful festivals allow for the creation of traditions and more community output. Thus, I focused on these vehicles for identity formation in collecting data.

In studying these community festivals, I utilized newspaper articles and cantonal tourist propaganda to determine the number of festivals per year, the attendance at these festivals, and the impression the community has of these festivals. While festivals can often be successful, I focused particularly in youth involvement in these festivals. As the younger generation has been brought up in a globalizing time, the ability of community leaders to elicit involvement will determine whether or not the communal or “national” identity of Fribourg increases, stays the same, or declines in the future.

In conclusion, the communal identity or “nationalism” of Fribourg uncovered that the “pays” is still alive and well in Fribourg, Switzerland. Cantonal identity, historically an important piece in Swiss identity, is still relevant in the current generation of Fribourg and globalization has not supplanted it. Through studying the historical and current methods to create a Swiss identity, particular the use of community festivals, I uncovered that Swiss festivals are important tools in identity formation utilized by cantonal leaders and have been successful in maintaining cantonal identity with the youth of its territory.

In addition, the maintenance of cantonal identity suggests that cantonal identity is not inherited, but rather must be created and then nurtured. This finding supports the constructivist argument that identity and nationalist movements have to be channeled and created by outside forces while simultaneously refuting the idea that by virtue of birth into a canton, a person is inherently identified as such. Rather, a person must choose their identity and such a choice can be influenced by outside actors, here the festival
organizers, community leaders, and festival attendees themselves. Thus, my research fits with the primordialist-constructivist narrative in favor of a constructivist theory.

Whilst my intentions in studying cantonal identity have been pure, I faced many challenges in writing this study. First and foremost was the difficulty in obtaining Internal Review Board approval for a supplemental survey for my project within the deadline of this thesis. Such a survey would have focused on the effectiveness of festivals by tracking whether or not the young people in the canton of Fribourg remained attached to their community after attending these festivals. For example, how many attended university within the canton, how many intended on staying in the canton after graduating from university, and how strongly did they identity with Fribourg rather than Swiss identity or European identity. Such a study would have reinforced my conclusion that cantonal identity is alive and well in Fribourg.

While this study has found cantonal identity quite strong within Fribourg, there are plenty of opportunities to expand on it. Research within other cantons may provide more support for the cantonal system as well as new ways of identity preservation other than the festivals I explored here. In addition, the use of festivals as a method for identity formation may be expounded upon to include all of Switzerland and the maintenance of Swiss identity. The Swiss national day and the tradition of Christmas markets may provide a starting point for other scholars to expound upon my simple research into one canton’s identity preservation.


**Table 2: Festivals of Fribourg** ([http://www.fribourgtourisme.ch/en/NewsEvents/major-events.html](http://www.fribourgtourisme.ch/en/NewsEvents/major-events.html))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Festival Date (2014)</th>
<th>Festival Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 28-March 4</td>
<td>Carnaval des Bolzes</td>
<td>A traditional carnival celebration/parade for the season preceding lent with Fribourgian elements: Bolzes is the name for the German-heavy speaking population in the capital city and the parade culminates with the burning of the Grand Rababou (unique to Fribourg, a large man similar to Guy Fawkes in England, but fictional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 22-23</td>
<td>Oldtimer &amp; Teilemarkt</td>
<td>An annual car show to celebrate the industry of automobile design. Annual attendance is around 20,000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 29-April 5</td>
<td>Fribourg International Film Festival</td>
<td>Annual film festival for the promotion of “cinematic and cultural diversity” through exposing Swiss citizens to different world/cinematic views from around the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 13-14</td>
<td>Fête de Pérolles</td>
<td>Annual street market festival on one of the largest streets in Fribourg. It is known for its featuring of local craftsmen and gastronomy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 19</td>
<td>Corpus Christi</td>
<td>A religious festival and Roman Catholic Holy Day of Obligation, Corpus Christi is celebrated by setting up several dozens of alters across the city and countryside. The Bishop, citizens, and political leaders parade from the Cathedral to all of the alters celebrating the sacrament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 21</td>
<td>Annual Music Festival</td>
<td>A summer music festival including famous performers and local groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 26-28</td>
<td>Festival and clearance sale of Rue de Romont</td>
<td>An annual street festival and shopping opportunity on one of the commercial streets in Fribourg.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| June 26-July 5       | Belluard Bollwerk International | A multifaceted arts festival celebrating music, dance, theatre,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 5-13</td>
<td>International Festival of Sacred Music of Fribourg</td>
<td>An annual event and one of the most important classical music festivals in Switzerland. It highlights religious music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>National Day</td>
<td>Celebration of the Swiss national holiday with barbeques and bonfires and speeches by local politicians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 19-24</td>
<td>International Folklore Festival</td>
<td>International Festival celebrating folklore and folkdance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 6</td>
<td>Festival of the Traditional Breweries</td>
<td>A celebration of the canton’s brewers with tours and samples of their wares.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>International Festival of Organ Music Fribourg</td>
<td>A look into the world of organ music and celebration of the city’s historical organs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 13-14</td>
<td>European Heritage Days Festival</td>
<td>A celebration of Fribourg’s cultural inheritance through its food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 13-Late October (Depending on the commune)</td>
<td>Bénichon</td>
<td>A Fribourg tradition, it began as a festival and religious ceremony where the gods were thanked for the harvest. The tradition remains and local dishes and celebrations, especially the welcoming of the cowherds back from summer in the mountains, are celebrated across the canton annually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 3-12</td>
<td>Fribourg Trade Fair</td>
<td>A celebration of local businesses and their interactions with political institutions, with sales of over 200 businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 6</td>
<td>Fête de St. Nicholas</td>
<td>A festival celebrating the festival day of St. Nicholas, the patron saint of Fribourg. Events include a parade, an annual address by the Saint to the public on the top of Fribourg’s Cathedral, and a Christmas Market.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY:


"Major Events."


"Menu."


10 Feb. 2014.


