The Politics of Nationalist Mobilization in Contemporary Catalonia

Thomas Jeffrey Miley
Department of Political Science
Yale University

Introduction

In this paper, I will analyze the politics of nationalist mobilization in contemporary Catalonia. In brief, I will argue that the nationalist movement in the region neither emerged spontaneously (nor from the grass roots, nor from the bottom-up); nor does the movement represent the collective aspirations and interests of the society as a whole. Rather, I will insist, the movement's success can largely be explained as a top-down product of the particular *mobilizational strategies* pursued by and *ideological commitments* of political counter-élites in the decisive and critical juncture of the period immediately preceding and throughout the course of the transition to democracy. Moreover, I will also examine the forces at work to gradually undermine the transition-era equilibrium; and I will explain the waxing and waning of ethno-linguistic tensions from within that equilibrium. Throughout, I will contend that the movement has consistently catered to the aspirations and interests of specific and dominant strata within Catalan society.

Section One: Situating Catalonia's Ethno-Linguistic Cleavage within a Broader Constellation of Material and Social Power Relations

The politics of nationalist mobilization in post-transition Catalonia can only be comprehended after taking into account several significant sociological and demographic characteristics of Catalan society.

A first noteworthy characteristic has to do with the high percentage of its population that hails from other regions in Spain. From the middle of the nineteenth-century, when Castilian-speaking immigrants from the rest of the country first flocked to Barcelona to work in the textile factories there, the Catalan working class has always included more than its fair share of non-natives among its ranks. But between 1955 and 1973, a period in which the Catalan economy underwent unprecedented expansion, the number of immigrant laborers who came to Catalonia would skyrocket. So much so that by the time of the transition, Castilian-speaking immigrants from the rest of Spain had come to constitute clear majorities in most of the municipalities in the industrial belt surrounding Barcelona, and significant minorities throughout all of Catalonia.[1] This demographic characteristic is particularly

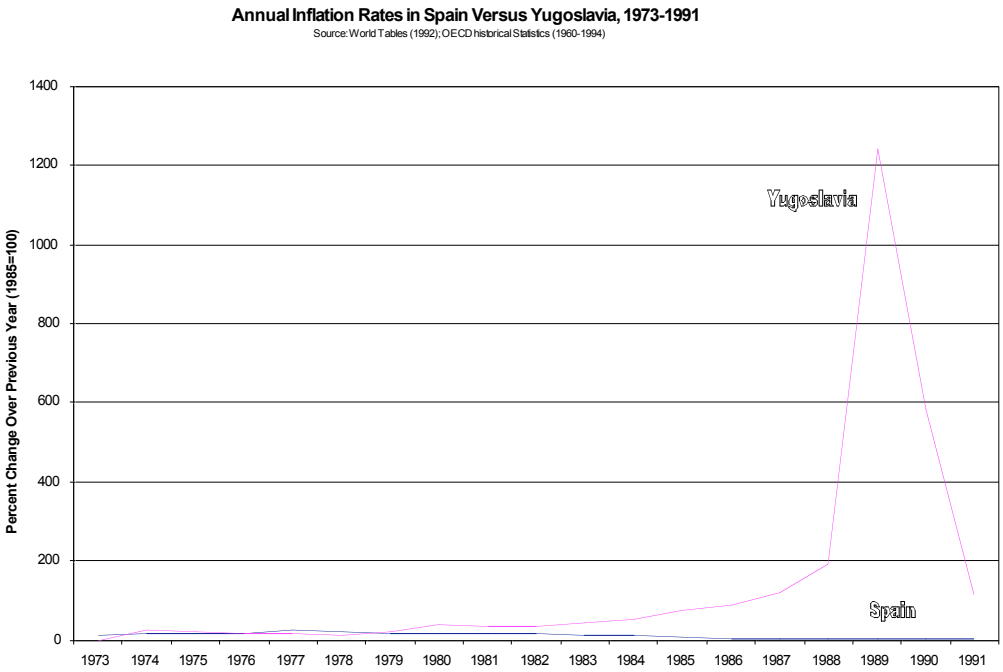
[1] For a cursory overview of the history of the phenomenon of immigration in Catalonia, written from a decidedly nationalist perspective, see Josep Termes, *La immigració a Catalunya i altres estudis d'història del nacionalisme català* (Barcelona: Editorial Empúries, 1984). The most important sociological treatment of the impact of the phenomenon remains Esteban Pinilla de las Heras, *Estudios sobre cambio social y estructuras socials en Cataluña* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1979). For other important sociological and anthropological contributions, see Carlota Solé, *La integración sociocultural de los inmigrantes en Catalunya* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1981); Claudio Esteva Fabregat, *Estado, etnicidad*

Another preliminary point that is worth noting has to do not with ethno-linguistic *demography*, per ser, but rather, with the *distribution* of "ethno-linguistic" *capacities*. The point is this: Catalonia is a region that is "bilingual" not only in the sense that there are two languages that significant portions of the population speak as their "native tongue." Instead, Catalonia is "bilingual" in another sense as well – namely, in that virtually all residents of the region, natives and immigrants alike, are able to speak Castilian, one of the world's dominant languages. What's more, an increasing portion of immigrants and children of immigrants can speak Catalan, too, due in large part to the policies of linguistic normalization that have been pursued since the transition to democracy. This is another basic feature that distinguishes Catalonia from other "multi-lingual" and "multi-national" contexts. Once again, the comparison with Quebec proves fruitful. For as recently as 2001, fully 53.8% of the population in Quebec claimed to be monolingual French-speakers.[6] By contrast, almost nobody in Catalonia claims to be a monolingual Catalan-speaker, which in turn means that the language policies that have been pursued by the regional government since the transition to democracy in Catalonia have less to do with instrumental issues related to ensuring communication alone, and more to do with symbolic issues related to ensuring communication in some people's preferred languages.

It is important to stress that most of these basic demographic features can themselves be best explained as by-products of the fact that Catalonia has historically been a comparatively over-developed region within Spain. For indeed, such comparative wealth is what originally attracted so many Andaluz peasants to abandon their lives in the southern countryside in favor of work on the floor of a Catalan factory. Even though, over the past twenty years, with the help of massive subsidies from the European Union, the comparatively backward regions of the country have made leaps and bounds in catching up, to this day the Catalan economy remains one of the most important components of the overall Spanish economy, and Catalonia itself remains one of the richest regions in Spain. To be precise, as recently as 2001, the region, which made up 15.4% of Spain's total population, was responsible for 19.4% of its overall GDP; and its per capita GDP stood at 123% in comparison with the per capita GDP for the entire country. By contrast, the per capita GDP of Flanders stood at 101% of the per capita GDP for all of Belgium, and the per capita GDP in Quebec stood at 93% of the per capita GDP for all of Canada (see figure three).

Moreover, not only does Catalonia constitute a comparatively wealthy region in Spain, but native Catalan-speakers constitute a comparatively-advantaged group within Catalan society itself (see figure four).

[6] Quebec 2001 Census, ibid.



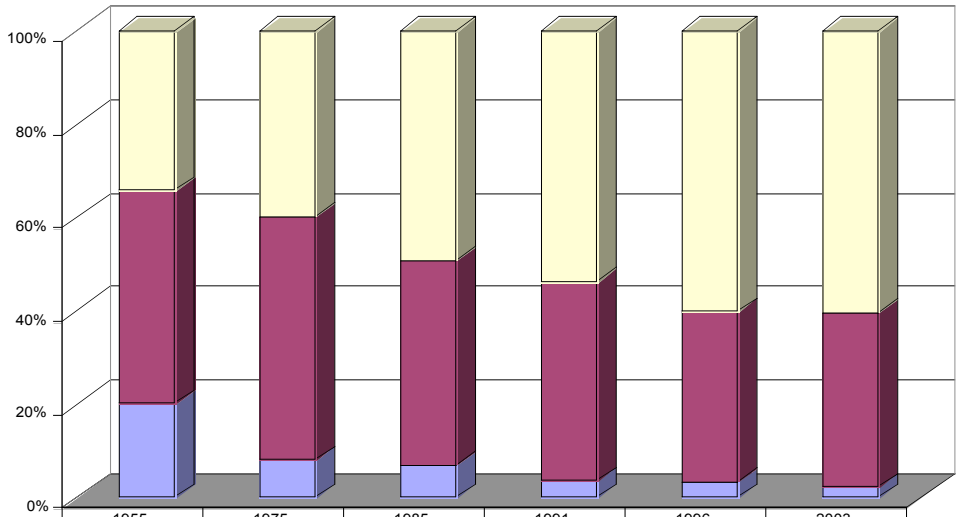
Second, Catalonia is a region that over the past two decades has experienced extremely high comparative rates of unemployment, albeit somewhat less than the rest of Spain.[9] This means, quite simply, that competition in labor markets can and has been quite fierce. Third, much like other regions in the advanced capitalist world, the service sector has become an increasingly important part of the economy there. Indeed, between 1975 and 2003, the proportion of people employed in that sector increased dramatically, from 39.7% to 60.2%, and the proportion of people employed in the public sphere has increased significantly, too (see figure seven).[10]

[9] Between 1987 and 1996, for example, unemployment rates in Catalonia fluctuated between 12% and 22%. See David Moreno, Clàudia Vallvé and Maria Caprile, *Dades bàsiques del mercat de treball a Catalunya (1987-1996): resultants de l'explotació de l EPA* (Barcelona: Fundació CIREM, 1996).

[10] Joan Eugeni Sánchez, "L'estructura empresarial i productiva de Catalunya," in Giner, ed., *La societat catalana* (op.cit.), pp.535-552.

The Evolution of the Social Structure in Catalonia: The Proportion of People Employed in Different Sectors of the Economy

Source: Giner (2001)



	1955	1975	1985	1991	1996	2003
Services	34.2	39.7	49.2	53.8	60.1	60.2
Industry and Construction	45.6	52.1	43.8	42.6	36.4	37.3
Agriculture	20.2	8.2	7	3.7	3.4	2.3

Finally, the region's still-important industrial sector is nearly completely dominated by small and medium-sized firms (see figure eight).

Figure Eight: *Size of Firms in the Secondary Sector in Catalonia*

Activity	***Number of firms***	***Number of employees***	***Mean number of employees per firm***	***% of firms with more than 100 employees***
Oil and energy	333	15,400	46	6
Food, Drinks, and Tobacco	4,405	74,500	17	2.4
Textiles, Clothing, Leather, and Shoes	7,264	99,200	14	2.1
Lumber and Cork	2,472	15,200	6	0.3
Paper, Editing, and Graphic Arts	4,154	52,600	13	1.5
Chemical Industry	1,190	61,100	51	11.8
Rubber and Plastic Materials	1,656	30,000	18	2.8
Other Non-Metallic Mineral Products	1,531	23,700	15	1.8
Metallurgy and Metallic Products	6,676	64,700	10	0.7
Mechanical Equipment	3,030	42,000	14	1.5
Office Materials	466	8,700	19	2.8
Transport Materials	676	44,000	65	9.9
Other Manufacturing Industries	2,908	26,100	9	0.8
Total Industry	38,021	589,900	16	2.2

Source: Joan-Eugeni Sanchez, "L'estructura empresarial i productiva de Catalunya," in Giner, *La Societat Catalana* (op. cit.).

These four points about the evolution of material conditions in Catalonia as well as of the structure of employment opportunities in the Catalan economy all lend credence to the following "structural" argument: namely, that the massive wave of immigration that accompanied the unprecedented expansion of the Catalan economy between the years 1955 and 1973 was one of the driving forces behind an ethno-linguistic awakening among the region's middle and lower-middle strata that began in the mid-to-late 1960's – after their "native" attributes had come to help distinguish them from their immigrant counterparts, and thus facilitated their upward social mobility. Even so, it is plausible to contend, tensions

between "insiders" and "outsiders" remained relatively minimal during the period nonetheless, in large part because of rising living standards for all. With the onset of the economic crisis in the mid-seventies, however, the "ethno-linguistic awakening" would be further reinforced – since after this point, the "native" attributes of the middle and lower-middle strata, rather than merely facilitating their upward social mobility, began to help them fend off downward social mobility as well. Indeed, to this day, much of the overwhelming support for nationalist policies of linguistic normalization among the region's native middle and lower-middle strata can be explained as a strategy: (1) for monopolizing bureaucratic posts in the public sphere[11]; (2) for gaining direct advantage, via linguistic capacities, in fiercely competitive labor market competition for posts in the increasingly-important service sector; and (3) for gaining indirect advantage, via rising "ethnic capital," in fiercely competitive labor market competition for posts in dominant small and medium-sized firms in the industrial sector.[12]

Section Two: The Historical Backdrop to Contemporary Nationalist Mobilization

Having thus specified the particular demographic, material, and social constellation of power relations within which nationalist mobilization in Catalonia has been so successful, let us now turn to situate the movement within the historical context from which it originally emerged and has subsequently evolved.[13]

---

[11] In the period since the transition, the expansion of the number of posts in the public sector has been nothing short of spectacular. Indeed, according to Josep Maria Fradera, the regional administration of the Generalitat currently employs 138,305 people. Another 85,441 people are employed in posts in the local administration; 31,070 people are employed in administrative organs of the central government located in the region; and 7,018 people are employed in the administrations of public universities. See Fradera, "La tradició en entredit" (unpublished, 2006).

[12] For a classic statement on "ethnic capital," see Susan Olzak, *The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and Conflict* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992). Evidence in support of this thesis is relatively easy to come by. For example, in the 1990's, Jordi Matas found that fully 90% of the high-level bureaucrats working for the *Generalitat* had been born in Catalonia (compared with only 67.5% of the population). See Matas, *Las elites políticas de la administración: Los altos cargos de la Generalitat de Cataluña* Barcelona: Cedecs Editorial, 1996), p.92. Likewise, in randomly-selected and stratified interviews that I conducted with 168 primary and secondary school teachers in Catalonia between 1999 and 2001, I found that fully 73.3% had been born in Catalonia. This proportion contrasts sharply with what Esteban Pinilla de las Heras found in his 1975 study (immediately preceding the transition to democracy), when only 49% of teachers had been born in the "region." See my dissertation, *The Politics of Language and nation: the Case of the Catalans* (Unpublished Manuscript: Yale University, 2004); and Pinilla de las Heras, *Estudios sobre cambio social y estructuras socials en Cataluña* (op. cit.), p.160.

[13] An indispensable synthetic account of the main successive episodes whose consequences together constitute the foundational components of the *longue durée* of the Catalan context can be found in Juan J. Linz, "Early State-Building and Late Peripheral Nationalisms Against the State: The Case of Spain," in S. Eisenstadt and S. Rokkan, eds, *Building States and Nations* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1973), p.51. Needless to say, my interpretation of the significance of these episodes relies heavily on Linz's account. In turn, Linz himself was heavily influenced by the work of Jaume Vicens Vives, particularly *Els catalans en el segle XIX. (Industrials i politics)* (Barcelona: Tide), first published in 1958. The classic interpretation of nineteenth century Catalan politics found therein has undoubtedly framed the horizons from within which the vast majority of the contemporary historiographical literature on the development of "regionalist" and later "nationalist" consciousness in Catalonia continues to operate. Indeed, the French Marxist Pierre Vilar was so indebted to Vicens that he felt obliged to declare himself a mere disciple of the then-recently deceased "*maestro*" in the preface to his own magisterial three-volume *Cataluña en la España Moderna* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1978), p.33. Likewise, Vilar's own direct disciples, the economic historians Jordi Nadal and Josep Fontana continued to advance Vicens' basic interpretive framework in their highly respected respective works, including most notably Fontana's *La quiebra de la monarquía absoluta, 1814-1920* Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 1971) and Nadal's *El fracaso de la Revolución industrial en España, 1814-1913* (Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 1975). In turn, Vilar and Fontana were both

The story goes at least back to the fifteenth century, but for the sake of brevity, we will begin with the first Carlist uprisings in the 1820's, after a bout of yellow fever and bad crops triggered a crisis in the Catalan countryside.[14] Against this backdrop, reactionary royalists, aligned with the clergy, were able to arouse significant portions of the Catalan peasantry in favor of a return to a purified form of traditional monarchical rule.[15] Their manifestos referred to the ancient "Fueros" or privileges that had been abrogated or ignored by liberal constitutionalists. It was at this point that the Catalan language first became a political instrument. Throughout the ensuing period of so-called Carlist insurrection, the Church, in order to defend its conservative positions and its property and to reach the masses, turned to pamphlets and sermons *in Catalan* against the dangers of Liberalism.[16]

The defeat of the Carlists in Catalonia in 1840 ushered in a period of peace and prosperity, allowing for the emergence of a new generation that, without questioning the Spanish state, began to develop a reformist consciousness, "often linking with historical

---

directly involved in editing and otherwise helping to prepare the Catalan Communist PSUC's 1961 booklet on "El problema nacional català," which later became extremely influential in opposition circles. And indeed, virtually all important historiographical contributions to the subject in the last two decades have remained firmly within the interpretive horizons first established by Vicens (even if they have undoubtedly added important nuances to it), Josep Termes' revisionist efforts to emphasize the "*arrels populars del catalanisme*" notwithstanding. For the most signifianct of these newer contributions, see Josep Maria Fradera, *Cultura nacional en una societat dividida* (Barcelona: Curial, 1992); Joan-Lluís Marfany, *La cultura del catalanisme* (Barcelona: Editorial Empúries, 1996); Stephen Jacobson, *Professionalism, Corporatism, and Catalanism: The Legal Profession in Nineteenth-Century Barcelona* (Unpublished Dissertation: Tufts University, 1998); and Enric Ucelay da Cal, *El imperialismo catalán* (Barcelona: Edhasa, 2003). For a somewhat outdated but still informative overview of Vicens's impact on the course of Catalan historiography, see Josep M. Colomer's *Cataluña como cuestión de Estado: la idea de nación en el pensamiento politico catalán (1939-1979)* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1986), pp.126-141. For two fairly recent and useful bibliographic reviews of the abundant historiographical and social scientific literature on the subject of Catalan nationalism, see Xosé M. Nuñez, *Historiographical Approaches to Nationalism in Spain* (Saarbrücken: Verlag breitenbach Publishers, 1993), and Antoni Estradé, "El tractament del nacionalisme català en les ciències social: una avaluació de la producció escrita 1976-1996," in *Nacionalisme i ciències socials* (Barcelona: Editorial Mediterrània, 1997).

[14] Like the historiographical literature on the origins of Catalan nationalism, the literature on Carlism is extensive as well. For a recent treatment of the subject that includes a very useful bibliographical appendix, see Jordi Canal, *El carlismo: dos siglos de contrarevolución en España* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2000). For a summary overview of its significance, and particularly its relation to the subsequent development of "regional" and "national" consciousness in both the Basque Country and Catalonia, see Linz, "Early State-Building and Late Peripheral Nationalisms Against the State: The Case of Spain," ibid., p.51. Jesús Pabón's meticulous two-volume biography of Francesc Cambó, *Cambó 1876-1947* (Barcelona: Editorial Alpha, 1962) also includes several relevant passages in this regard. On the role of the Church in fostering and organizing reaction in the countryside from the 1820's forward, see William Callahan, *Church, Politics, and Society in Spain, 1770-1874* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984). For a general overview of the course of the immediate events in the Catalan countryside during the 1820s, see Jaume Vicens Vives, *Los catalanes en el Siglo XIX* (Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1986), pp.27-36 and 191-193. Also see Josep Fontana, *La fi de l'Antic Règim i la industrialització (1787-1868)* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1998), pp.209-243.

[15] Raymond Carr, *Spain 1808-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p.150. On the radicalization of extreme royalists in the last decade of Ferdinand's reign, see Miguel Artola, *La España de Fernando VII* (Madrid: Escasa Calpe, 1992). See also Vicens Vives, ibid., p.194.

[16] For classic summary overviews of the long and complicated process of "linguistic awakening" over the course of the nineteenth century, see Jaume Vicens Vives, *Los catalanes en el siglo XIX* , ibid., pp.165-180; Josep Fontana, *La fi de l'Antic Règim i la industrialització (1787-1868)* (Barcelona: Edicions Termes, 1998), pp.409-448; and Josep Termes, *De la Revolució de Setembre a la fi de la Guerra Civil (1868-1939)* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1987), pp.130-137. Also of much interest is the more recent historiographical debate between Pere Anguera and Joan-Lluís Marfany, sparked initially by Anguera's critique, in his *El català al segle XIX: de llengua del poble a llengua nacional* (Barcelona: Empúries, 1997) of the ubiquity of anachronism in works such as Francesc Ferrer's *La persecució política de la llengua catalana* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1985). In turn, Joan-Lluís Marfany has critiqued Anguera for relying on anachronisms of his own. See Marfany's *La llengua maltractada* (Barcelona: Empúries, 2001).

tradition on a Catholic basis, often trying to integrate the former Carlists into the liberal monarchy."[17] It was this generation that first came to articulate a pre- or proto-regionalist position, critical of rationalist centralism in particular, and of the Spanish state, its politicians, and bureaucracy more generally – among other reasons, for their corruption and for their neglect of the economic interests of Catalan manufacturers. Such growing discontent coincided with and facilitated the beginnings of a cultural revival under the sign of romanticism, characterized by the celebration of poetry competitions, the emergence of a revitalized vernacular press, and the proliferation of choral societies aimed at luring the workers away from drinking. "A complex process of social and cultural mobilization" of romantic intellectuals and the petty bourgeoisie in favor of the local culture was thus initiated, though it seems doubtful that these tendencies could not have been absorbed into a general renewal movement had the Spanish state managed to be more successful in its efforts to overcome its relative economic, educational, and political stagnation.[18]

Nevertheless, nothing of the sort happened. Instead, between the middle of the nineteenth and the turn of the twentieth centuries, the Catalan upper bourgeoisie, followed by broad swathes of the Catalan middle classes, increasingly frustrated in their efforts to gain power in Madrid, began to think that a more effective solution to their problems could be found by going their own way – that is, through some form of regional autonomy or self-government. The Catalan manufacturers' fight for tariff protection against the 1869 liberal tariff policy, their opposition to the 1885 planned commercial treaty with England, and their despair over the 1898 loss of the important protected colonial market of Cuba, would all serve as particularly effective catalysts in the mobilization of the middle classes in favor of the turn to nationalism.[19]

Even so, for the Catalan bourgeoisie to have succeeded in advancing its nationalist agenda would have required the forging of a relatively solid alliance not only with broad swathes of the middle classes, but with broad swathes of the lower classes as well. However, by this relatively advanced stage of capitalist development, the Catalan proletariat had already begun to acquire sufficient strength to act as an independent force in its own right, thus rendering extremely difficult the bourgeoisie's attempts to forge a stable alliance with it against pre-industrial oligarchic interests hegemonic in the rest of Spain and largely in control of the state. In other words, the proletariat's emergence on the scene as a major independent political protagonist ruled out any relatively permanent alliance between the lower classes and

[17] Linz, "Early State Building and Late Peripheral Nationalism," op. cit., p.54.

[18] Linz, "Early State Building," op. cit., p.55. This last point deserves much emphasis. To refer to the work of Verdaguer and his fellow *Renaixentistes* as embodying a form of "proto-nationalism" (to use Eric Hobsbawm's terminology), as many historians have done, is overly-teleological and therefore somewhat misleading – since the tendencies expressed within the *renaixentista* movement could have easily been absorbed into a broader revivalist project for all of Spain, if only the state and the party system had been more successful in defending Catalan industrial interests and in overcoming the economic, educational, and political underdevelopment that continued to affect the rest of the country. In this vein, as Fradera (op. cit.) has pointed out, a look at the themes of the poems that would win prizes at the *Jocs Florals* over the first five years after the competition's 1859 inauguration proves extremely revealing: for though the most recurrent kind of award-winning poems were historical ones set in medieval times, followed by verses dedicated to religious devotion and love poems, in addition to these, there can be found an important presence of compositions that sought to articulate the patriotic *Spanish* sentiment provoked by Prim's military incursion in Morocco.

[19] See Raymond Carr's discussion of these developments in his monumental *Spain: 1808-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 547-557. See also Sebastian Balfour's more recent valuable contribution, *End of the Spanish Empire, 1898-1923* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1997).

the bourgeoisie on the basis of a nationalist community of sentiment, like that developed by many nationalist movements elsewhere.[20]

Furthermore, in the twentieth century, with the onset of massive migration of Castilian-speaking workers to Barcelona and with the subsequent intensification of class conflict within Catalan society itself, the possibility for bourgeois nationalist mobilization in alliance with the working class would become even more remote.[21] Instead, throughout the period, despite their important and continuing differences, class interests linked the Catalan bourgeoisie to the owning and conservative strata of the rest of Spain; and when threatened by the lower classes, that coincidence could and did in fact become effective.

Not only did the Catalan manufacturers fail to mobilize the working classes in favor of their agenda; over time, they would lose influence over the intellectuals and the petty bourgeoisie as well. Indeed, after the First World War, these middle strata increasingly turned away from the leadership of the *Lliga Regionalista*, the main political instrument of the Catalan bourgeoisie, and eventually threw their lot in with the left-republican and anticlerical *Esquerra Republicana* instead – a federation of parties led by the radical nationalist *Estat Català*, which would dominate Catalan politics throughout the Republican period, thanks in large part to the abstentionism of the anarcho-syndicalists, who for the most part remained fervently anti-nationalist, and who had by then become the hegemonic force among the region's industrial proletariat.[22]

After the Civil War, the victorious Franco dictatorship would rigorously repress Catalan nationalism. The regional vernacular would be entirely excluded from the public sphere, and limited expressions of culture in it would only become possible – save very few exceptions – in the 1960s.[23] Even so, under the dictatorship, especially after 1955, Catalonia would experience unprecedented economic expansion.[24] And for over two decades, a

---

[20] On other, more successful nationalist movements, see Miroslav Hroch, *The Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: a Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

[21] On the antipathy between the anarchists in particular and the labor movement more generally, on the one hand, and the nationalists, on the other, see José Álvarez Junco, *La ideología política del anarquismo español (1868-1910)* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1976), pp..333-335; Joan Connelly Ullman, *The Tragic Week: A Study of Anticlericalism in Spain*, *1875-1912* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968), p.15.and Joan-Lluís Marfany, *La cultura del catalanisme* (op. cit.), pp.137-189. Even so, some Catalanist historians, such as Albert Balcells (under the influence of Josep Termes) have recently begun to argue that there was in fact an affinity between the position of the nationalists and those of the anarchists, i.e. that "the apolitical attitude of Catalan anarchists was not just a reflection of Bakunin's well-known influence in Spain but an expression of their lack of trust in the Spanish state, which they saw as removed from the workers' real concerns" and that therefore "anarchism … was but a workers' variant of Catalan particularism" (Quoted by Shafir, op. cit., p.59). Needless to say, however, such revisionist judgments seem based on a serious distortion of the historical record. A more common (but fallacious) argument cut in the opposite direction – namely, to attribute the anarchist influence on the Catalan labor movement to workers from Andalusia who had emigrated to Barcelona. For the definitive refutation of such arguments, see Ullman (op cit), p.19.

[22] The best overall account of the rise of Esquerra Republicana remains Enric Ucelay da Cal, *La Catalunya populista: Imatge, cultura i política en l'etapa republicana (1931-1939)* (Barcelona: Edicions La Malgrana, 1982).

[23] The policies of linguistic and cultural repression of the Franco regime have been well-documented. See, in particular, the work of Josep Benet, especially his classic, *Catalunya sota el règim franquista* (Barcelona: Blume, 1978), but also, his more recent and more polemical, *L'intent franquista de genocidi cultural contra Catalunya* (Barcelona: Abadia de Montserrat, 1995). On Franquist repression in Catalonia more generally, see the detailed empirical documentation in Josep M. Solé i Sabaté's impressive *La repression franquista a Catalunya 1938-1953* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 2003).

[24] On the impressive expansion of the Catalan economy from the mid-fifties up through the early seventies, see Borja de Riquer and Joan B. Culla, *El franquisme i la transició democràtica (1939-1988)* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, [1989] 2000), pp.325-347.

combination of repression and cooptation would effectively limit the extent of nationalist mobilization in the region. Only in the 1960's would it begin to wax once more.[25]

Section Three: Accounting for Nationalist Hegemony in the Contemporary Period

Let us now turn to analyze the concrete historical circumstances within which the region's *contemporary* nationalist movement came to achieve political hegemony. At the outset, it is worth recalling two parallel "structural" points about the impact of the successive waves of immigration to Catalonia on internal dynamics within the region. First, I have already *implicitly* alluded to the demographic as well as the political impact of the early wave of immigration to Catalonia that occurred in the first decades of the twentieth century – namely, by suggesting that the ethnic composition of the working class rendered more remote the possibility for bourgeois nationalist mobilization to successfully forge an alliance with that working class against the Spanish state, and also that it arguably contributed to the intensification of class conflict *within* Catalan society. In fact, the most convincing extant interpretation of Catalan politics in the pre-Civil War period attributes to that initial wave of immigration a causally significant role in the diffusion of "radical nationalist consciousness" among the native middle and lower-middle strata at the time.[26]

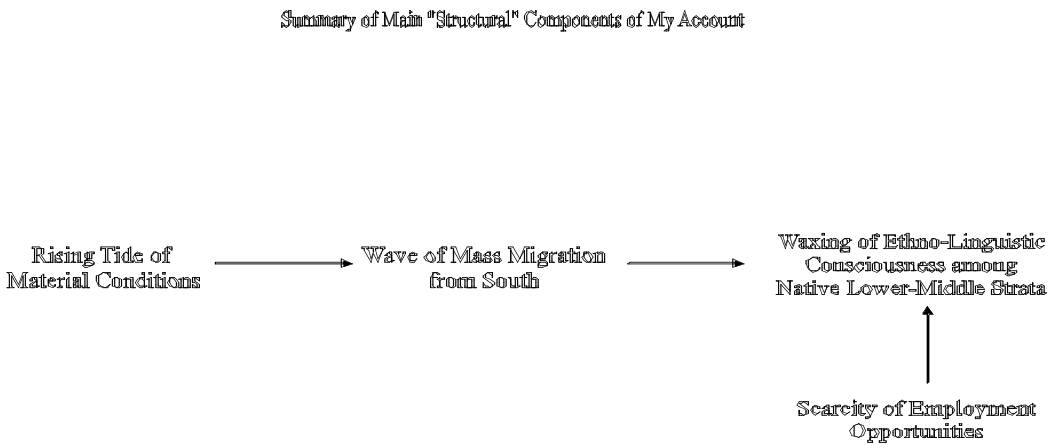
Second, I have *explicitly* argued that the wave of immigration that took place between the mid-fifties and the early seventies *again* sparked an "ethno-linguistic" awakening of sorts among the region's native middle and lower-middle strata – since their "native" attributes came to help them distinguish themselves from their immigrant counterparts, and thus facilitated their upward social mobility.

In sum, the wave of massive immigration, itself triggered by a period of unprecedented economic expansion, constitutes one of the most important features of the "structural" context within which the contemporary struggle to achieve political hegemony took place (see figure nine).

---

[25] It is worth stressing the relatively high degree of effectiveness of the combination of repression and cooptation from the end of the Civil War until the 1960's. The element of cooptation involved should not be denied; for to do so would effectively require ignoring the extent to which the "agents" of Franquism in Catalonia were themselves largely "ethnic" Catalans. Indeed, from a sociological perspective, Franquism in Catalonia should be regarded as a phenomenon that was organically implanted within Catalan society itself, and not merely imposed on it from without. Standard historical and political-scientific treatments of Catalonia under Francoism systematically underestimate the extent of legitimacy (in the Weberian sense) enjoyed by the Franquist regime across many segments of the society in Catalonia throughout most of its existence; conversely, they tend to overestimate the extent of grass-roots activism in the nationalist opposition. For useful correctives to this dominant tendency, see portions of Gary W. McDonough's *Good Families of Barcelona* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986); as well as Ignasi Riera, *Los catalanes de Franco* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés Editores S.A., 1997); and the eloquent memoir of one of the *Comisiones Obreras*' "historic" leaders in the region Antonio López Bulla, *Cuando hice las maletas: Un paseo por el ayer* (Barcelona: Península, 1997). Also informative in this regard are the polemical account of the period by the journalists Oriol Malló and Alfons Martí, *En tierra de fariseos* (Madrid: Espasa, 2000); as well as Miquel Macià's summary treatment of Franquism in the emblematic rural town of Vic, especially the chapter, "Entre el franquisme i el vigatanisme," in *La Catalunya catalana. Vic i el seu entorn: Política, cultura i negocis* (Barcelona: Flor del Vent Edicions S.A., 1998). On the reluctant support for the regime by the conservative nationalist leader Francesc Cambó (characteristic of the attitude of many of the one-time supporters of the *Lliga* among Catalan businessmen), see Borja de Riquer, *L'últim Cambó (1939-1947): La dreta catalanista davant la guerra civil i el primer franquisme* (Barcelona: Eumo Editorial, 1996).

[26] Enric Ucelay da Cal, *La Catalunya populista: Imatge, cultura i política en l'etapa republicana (1931-1939)* (op. cit.), p.48.



However, though this "structural" context *conditioned* the outcome of the contemporary struggle for political hegemony, it did not alone determine it. Instead, the outcome of the struggle was decisively tipped by a host of relatively "contingent" factors – including, perhaps most prominently, the *mobilizational strategies* that were pursued by activists in the opposition throughout the period immediately preceding, as well as during the course of, the transition to democracy.

That period represents a *critical juncture*, during which the discursive repertoires of the main parties that soon came to dominate the region's political scene first became effectively institutionalized.[27] By institutionalized, what I mean is that the repertoires that

[27] This so-called "critical juncture" approach has been gaining an increasing number of advocates working within a variety of intellectual traditions in the disciplines of political science and sociology, especially in the comparative literature on party systems and on democratization. Perhaps most prominently, it has recently been defended and applied by David and Ruth Collier, in their monumental tome, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). Other influential examples include Maurice Zeitlin and Tim Scully, both of whom have also defended and applied this approach quite ably in their respective works on Chile. See Scully, *Rethinking the Center: Party Politics in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Chile* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); and Zeitlin, *The Civil Wars in Chile, or the Bourgeois Revolutions that Never Were* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984). In a nutshell, this approach is based on the distinction between "critical junctures" and "incremental changes." Among modern social theorists, the approach can be traced back to Max Weber, particularly his "analysis of the cyclical interplay between periods of continuity and sharp disjunctures – inspired by charismatic leadership – that reshape established social relations" (Collier and Collier, op. cit., p.28, summarizing *Economy and Society*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968, pp.1111-1133). The term "critical juncture" itself was coined by Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, in their classic introduction to "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments," in Lipset and Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: Free Press, 1968), p.37. More recently, Juan Linz has elaborated on the indispensability of such an approach for understanding the dynamics of regime breakdowns and transitions. See, for example, his essay, "Time and Regime Change" in Houchang Chehabi, ed., *Robert Michels, Political Sociology, and the Future of Democracy* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2005). In addition, this approach has frequently been referred to as the main theoretical foundation for the so-called "new institutionalism" so prevalent within the burgeoning field of "American Political Development." Moreover, in the field of comparative politics, many of the scholars who have employed this approach are explicitly indebted to the intellectual legacy of Antonio Gramsci – which helps explain why the distinction between "critical junctures" and "incremental changes" displays such a strong affinity with Gramsci's own distinction between "wars of maneuver" and "wars of position." The virtue of such distinctions is, as Marcus Kurtz has pointed out, that they "suggest a type of causal model more consonant with the punctuated equilibria that seem to characterize real-world political outcomes" ("Social Origins of Central American Democracy," in the *Journal of*

were first formulated during this critical juncture have continued to frame the ideological horizons within which "normal" politics have largely operated in the post-transition setting.[28]

The strategy pursued by the Catalan communist PSUC would prove particularly consequential in this regard. The anarchists had been the hegemonic force among the working class in Catalonia before the outbreak of the Civil War; but they had been utterly wiped out in its aftermath. The communist PSUC was the organization that, among the manifold clandestine organizations operating in the opposition, eventually emerged to fill the void.[29] From the party's origins, its base of militants had always included several explicitly nationalist elements – since, after all, the party had been born out of a fusion of several small groups, including some radical nationalist ones.[30] However, this nationalist component had been significantly reinforced in the 1950's, after the party in Catalonia (in accordance with the communist strategy for all of Spain) had come to officially espouse a policy of "national reconciliation," in its effort to forge an *historic bloc* capable of overthrowing the regime. From that point forward, waving the "Catalanist flag," so to speak, came to be seen as a tactically-savvy technique for attracting potential activists from the native middle and lower middle strata into opposition to the regime. In other words, it came to be seen as a tactically-savvy technique for forging an "historic bloc."[31]

In accordance with this end, the party would be extremely persistent in its efforts to condition activist working-class attitudes to be sensitive to the so-called "national question." That such sensitivity did not surface spontaneously – that indeed, with different leadership and under different economic circumstances, very different attitudes might have prevailed among the organized working class – can be inferred from certain documents circulated within the clandestine syndical organization, the *Comisiones Obreras*, in the period before the communist party had managed to establish its hegemony over the labor movement.[32] For example, in 1967, the organizers for the metallurgical *Comisión de Metal*, would issue a document in which it would censure the communist party for "trying to become more nationalist than the bourgeoisie themselves;" and it would warn that by pursuing such a strategy, the communist party was running the risk of relegating the workers' movement to

---

Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, Vol. 41, No.1, Spring 1999), pp.87-96. For a valuable effort to "emancipate" this Gramscian distinction (as well as the concept of "organic crises" that underlies it) from the meta-theoretical framework of historical materialism within which it was first formulated, see Ian Lustick, *Unsettled States, Disputed Territories: Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and the West Bank-Gaza* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993). In turn, Lustick's work is inspired in large part by Ernest Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's pioneering post-Marxist manifesto, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (New York: Verso, 2001). In sum, then, the diverse research agendas that have been converging on this "critical juncture" approach are both manifold and formidable.

[28] On this point, I have been influenced by Lustick's treatment of "institutional thresholds" in his *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands* (op. cit.), and by Bruce Ackerman's framework for analyzing "constitutional moments" in particular, as well as his theory of "dualist democracy" more generally, as laid out in the first two volumes of his as-yet unfinished trilogy on the history of American Constitutional law, *We the People* (Cambridge: Belknap Harvard, 1991 and 1998).

[29] For a brief but accurate depiction of the PSUC's centrality in the opposition, see Borja de Riquer, "La societat catalana al final del règim franquista," in Pere Ysàs i Solanes, ed., *La transició a Catalunya i Espanya* (Barcelona: Fundació Doctor Lluís Vila d'Abadal, 1997).

[30] See Josep Lluís Martín i Ramos, *Els orígens del Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya* (Barcelona: Curial, 1977).

[31] On the party strategy of "national reconciliation" generally, see Guy Hermet, *The Communists in Spain: Study of an Underground Political Movement* (London: Saxon House, 1971); and Eusebio Mujal-León, *Communism and Political Change in Spain* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983). On the impact of this strategy in the PSUC in particular, see Sebastian Balfour, *La dictadura, los trabajadores y la ciudad* (Valencia: Edicions Alfons el Magnànim, 1994). For a recent synthetic history of the party that focuses extensively on its approach to the so-called "national question," see Carme Cebrián, *Estimat PSUC* (Barcelona: Empúries, 1997).

[32] See Sebastian Balfour, *La dictadura, los trabajadores y la ciudad* (ibid); and Carme Molinera and Pere Ysàs, *CCOO de Catalunya, 1964-1989*, (Barcelona: Empuries, 1989), especially pp.60-65.

the status of "an appendix of bourgeois movements." Indeed, the contrast between the "revolutionary" and "anti-nationalist" sensibilities evident in this document and the "reformist," "philo-nationalist" position of the labor movement in the period after the communist party managed to establish hegemony over it is so stark that the 1967 document itself deserves an extended quote. It reads:

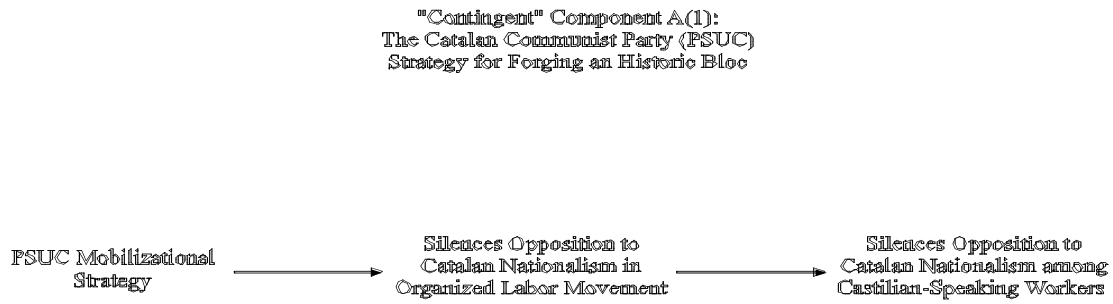
> "To the working people of Catalonia, to all people who, in addition to economic exploitation also suffer the oppression of their language, their culture, and their just traditions, we must say to them: 'Do not trust once again capitalists and bankers who want to deceive you by appealing to a *national community*, a community between you and them. Your Catalonia cannot be the Catalonia of the capitalists; for they will always run to Madrid in search of protection when you raise your voice in defense of your rights. Your Catalonia will be the Catalonia of workers, without exploiters or the bourgoisie; if not, it will only be yet another trick of the bourgoisie to keep you submissive and conformist …
>
> "To follow the capitalists, to fall into the trap of the 'higher interests of Catalonia', is to deny the working class, to deny its interests, and those of all working peoples … Let them, the bourgeoisie, worry about their Catalonia of bankers and big business capitalists. *Comisiones Obreras* should keep its sights on the social struggle, on the strengthening of the positions of the working class, on raising class consciousness, on extending working class organization. We should not run after the objectives of the bourgeoisie; we must make sure that our objectives contradict theirs."[33]

Needless to say, nothing even close in tone to such a document would ever again be circulated once the communist party had managed to establish hegemony within the organized labor movement.[34]

The fact that such "oppositional" positions were not articulated during the *critical juncture* of the period immediately preceding and throughout the course of the transition by the main organization representing the working class has had far-reaching repercussions – for at that critical juncture, the communist PSUC managed to frame the horizons in which the contemporary Catalan labor movement continues to operate. In so doing, the party's leadership effectively silenced what otherwise very well might have emerged as a forceful internal source for contestation – indeed, one that very well might have blocked the ascendance of nationalist hegemony in the region altogether (see figure ten).

[33] The pamphlet is reproduced in the original Spanish (in its entirety) in José Antonio Díaz's *Luchas internas en CCOO. Barcelona, 1964-70* (Barcelona, 1977), pp.185-187.

[34] On the CONC's decidedly philo-nationalist orientation after the PSUC managed to gain hegemony within the movement, see Carmen Molinero, Javier Tebar, and Pere Ysàs, "CCOO de Catalunya: De movimiento sociopolítico a confederación sindical," in David Ruiz, ed., *Historia de CCOO* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1993); and Jacint Jordana and Klaus-Jürgen Nagel, "Trade Unionism in Catalonia: Have Unions Joined Nationalism," in Patrick Pasture and Johan Verberckmoes, eds., *Working-Class Internationalism and the Appeal of National Identity* (New York: Berg, 1998). It needs to be noted that Jordana and Nagel's account seriously underestimates the extent of contestation over the "national question" within the *Comisiones Obreras* in the period before the PSUC had established hegemony. For a discussion of polemic over the national question related to the creation of the CONC, see J. Sanz Oller, *Entre el fraude y la esperanza* (Paris: Ruedo Ibérico, 1972).



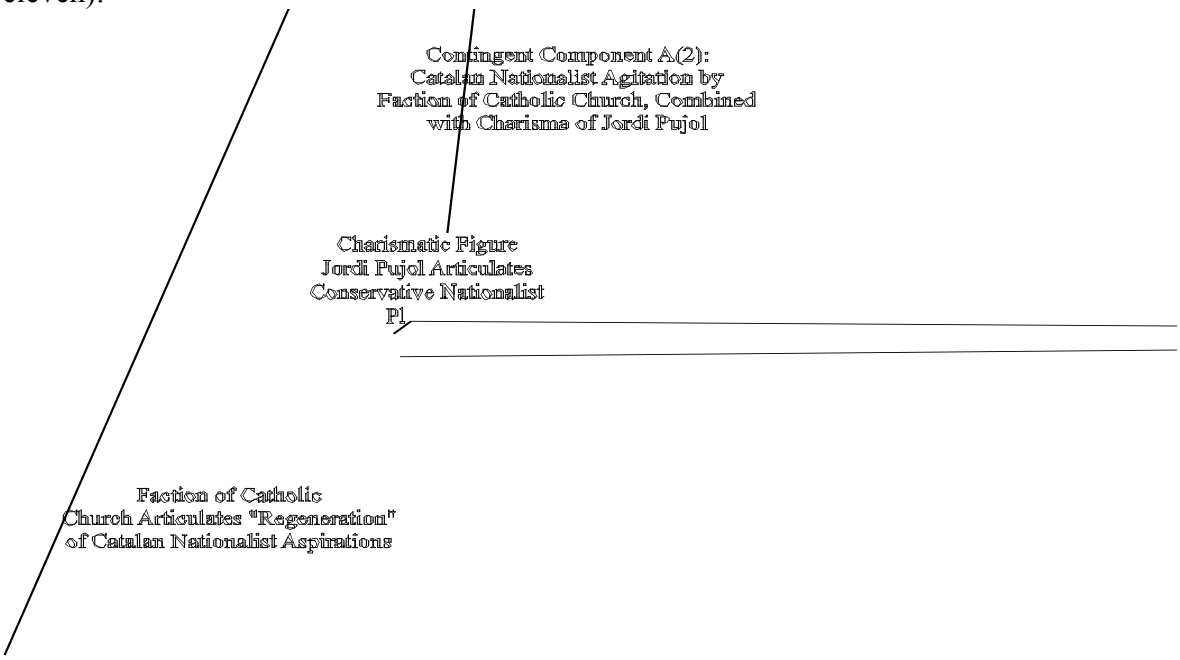
Such a turn of events, however, did not come to pass; but neither did the communist party's plan for forging an *historic bloc* that would *first* win the battle for "bourgeois" democracy, and *later* the battle for socialism. Instead, once the battle for democracy had been won, the *bloc* that came to dominate the Catalan political scene was a center-right coalition whose core of support was "bourgeois" combined with "petty-bourgeois" in nature, and whose indisputable leader was the nationalist Jordi Pujol.

While the communists had been busy educating immigrant working-class activists on the left to be sensitive to the so-called "national question," Pujol, a young doctor-turned-banker, had been simultaneously hard at work attracting many elements of the native middle and lower-middle strata into latent, though for the most part not mobilized, opposition to the regime.[35] His influence had been especially significant among Catholic circles, and it had been greatly increased by his imprisonment in 1960, after which he became a myth of resistance and, indeed, a symbol of the "nation."[36] Eventually, many on the right of the political spectrum, including the bulk of the Catalan business community, as well as broad swathes of the region's rural population, both of which would continue to at least tacitly support the Franco regime until the very end, came to be converted by Pujol, who with his unquestionable charismatic authority, managed to convince them of the virtues of his own conservative brand of Catalan nationalism. Such a trend was already evident by the first regional election, celebrated in the spring of 1980; but it would become especially clear after

[35] For a sympathetic journalistic biography of Jordi Pujol, see Siscu Baiges and Jaume Reixach, *Jordi Pujol: Historia de una obsession* (Madrid: Ediciones de Temas de Hoy, 1991). For accounts of the formation of Pujol's intellectual horizons and of his immediate social networks, see Joan Marcet, *Convergència Democràtica de Cataluña* (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, SA, 1987); Astrid Barrio López, "Les arrels de Convergència Democrática de Catalunya," in Joan B. Culla i Clarà, ed., *El pal de paller: Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya, 1974-2000* (Barcelona: Pòrtic, 2001), 17-39; and the interesting memoir by Xavier Muñóz, *De dreta a esquerra: Memòries polítiques* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1990). For two highly informative socio-theoretical account of the origins and bases of support for "*pujolisme*," see Jaume Lorés's classic, "Aproximació al pujolisme," in *Taula de Canvi* #23-24 (Barcelona, 1980); as well as the more recent contribution by Laurentino Vélez-Pelligrini, *El estilo populista: Orígenes, auge y declivo del Pujolisme* (Barcelona: El Viejo Topo, 2003).

[36] For a summary overview of the intimate relation between the Catalan Catholic Church and the Catalan nationalist movement, see Jordi Figuerola, "Iglesia y Catalanismo," in *El País: Memoria del 98*; for a somewhat dated but nevertheless more comprehensive account, see Josep Massot i Muntaner, *l'Església catalana al segle XX* (Barcelona: Curial, 1975).

the collapse of the Spanish center-right *Unión del Centro Democrático* in 1982 (see figure eleven).



As for the socialist party, its organizational, not to mention electoral, influence in Catalonia had been minimal before the Civil War; and indeed, throughout virtually the entire period of opposition to the Franco regime, its presence would remain little more than testimonial.[37] Nevertheless, in a very short period of time, during the course of the transition and especially after the collapse of the communist PSUC in 1981, the Catalan branch of Felipe González's socialist PSOE would quickly be transformed from a marginal political player into the main representative for the region's largely Castilian-speaking working class.[38] However, it must be noted that, of the handful of dissidents who had been associated with "socialism" of one brand or another during the period of opposition to the Franco regime, the vast majority were intellectuals who hailed from middle class, nationalist backgrounds.[39] In the medium run, this organizational legacy (or lack thereof) would prove extremely significant, for it would be these native, middle class, Catalanist intellectuals who would be the ones who came to monopolize posts in the regional party hierarchy during its rapid conversion from the margins to the center of Catalan political life, with the support of Felipe González himself, who, for the most part, proved uninterested in alienating Catalanist sentiment (as evidenced in his unflinching support for the Catalanist elements within the Catalan federal branch of the PSOE in internal party disputes).[40] This is, in short, how a

[37] See Antoni Jutglar, "Estudio preliminar," in Manuel Serra Moret, *Introducción al Manifiesto del Partido Comunista y otros escritos* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1984), p.13.

[38] On Felipe González's rise to prominence in particular and on the "renovation" of the PSOE at the end of the Franquist period more generally, see Richard Gillespie, *The Spanish Socialist Party: A History of Factionalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Santos Juliá, *Los socialistas en la política española, 1879-1982* (Madrid: Taurus, 1996).

[39] On the formation of the PSC, see Gabriel Colomé, *El Partit Socialista de Catalunya* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1989); Josep Luís Martín Ramos, "Fragmentació i unitat del socialisme català durant la dictadura franquista (1939-1978)," *L'Avenç* #228, Sept. 1998, pp.20-24; and Luis Mauri, "La difícil unidad del socialismo," in *El País: Memoria de Catalunya* (get exact cite).

[40] On the PSOE's relative sympathy with "peripheral nationalist" aspirations throughout the period of the transiton, see Andrés de Blas, "El problema nacional-regional español en la transición," in A. de Blas, R. Cotarelo, and J.F. Tezanos, eds., *La transición española* (Madrid: Fundación Sistema, 1989). For socialist interventions on the "national question" in the course of the constituynt debates, see Luis Ortega, ed., *Los socialistas y la constitución* (Madrid: Editorial Pablo Iglesias, 1999). On the PSOE's support for the

> nor Salamanca. It is Spain that has brought me here. I consider myself not a deputy for Castile … nor even a Deputy for the republic, but a Deputy for Spain."[43]

Likewise, the historian Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, who was a close political ally of the future Republican Prime Minister and, later President, Manuel Azaña, and who himself would be forced into exile after the Civil War and, indeed, would serve as President of the Republic-in-exile between 1962 and 1970, and who would only return to Spain in 1976 after Franco's death, would insist:

> "The unity of Spain comes from something substantial – despite what some of my Catalan friends sitting across the aisle have claimed, there is a geographical, racial, and cultural unity, as well as a unity of temperament and of destiny, which ties us together for perpetuity."[44]

Nor would the socialist left on the whole prove any less hostile to the regional-nationalist agenda. Witness Antonio Fabra Rivas, an intimate collaborator of the socialist minister of labor, Largo Caballero, who in 1931 would write:

> "With respect to teaching not only of Castilian but also in Castilian the Republic cannot make the slightest concession lest it fail in one of the most sacred duties, especially in relation to workers.
>
> "The upper middle classes of the Basque provinces, Catalonia and Galicia will always learn out of self-interest Castilian but on account of their interest, the will try very probably that the working classes should know only the vernacular. In that case, the workers of those three regions would find themselves, so to say, confined in their own country or at least with great difficulty to move to other regions or to go to any of the Hispano-American countries and above all to establish connections and exercise collectively their solidarity with their comrades in the rest of Spain."[45]

By contrast, to the generation of Spaniards on the center and left that grew up under Franco, and especially to the liberal intellectuals as well as the middle-class politicians who eventually came to represent them and who would protagonize the transition to democracy, such unabashed and unapologetic expressions of Spanish nationalism were simply off-limits. For, in a word, to them, such expressions had come to sound too much like something upon which the Franquists had repeatedly insisted; that is, to them, such expressions had come to sound *fascistic*.[46]

The impact of this generational shift of symbolic associations and sensibilities in the Spanish center and on the left must not be underestimated. The shift rendered the new generation of intellectuals and political leaders reluctant to mobilize Spanish nationalist sentiments, and it thus concomitantly facilitated their openness towards making concessions to peripheral nationalist aspirations when they did in fact arise (see figure fourteen).

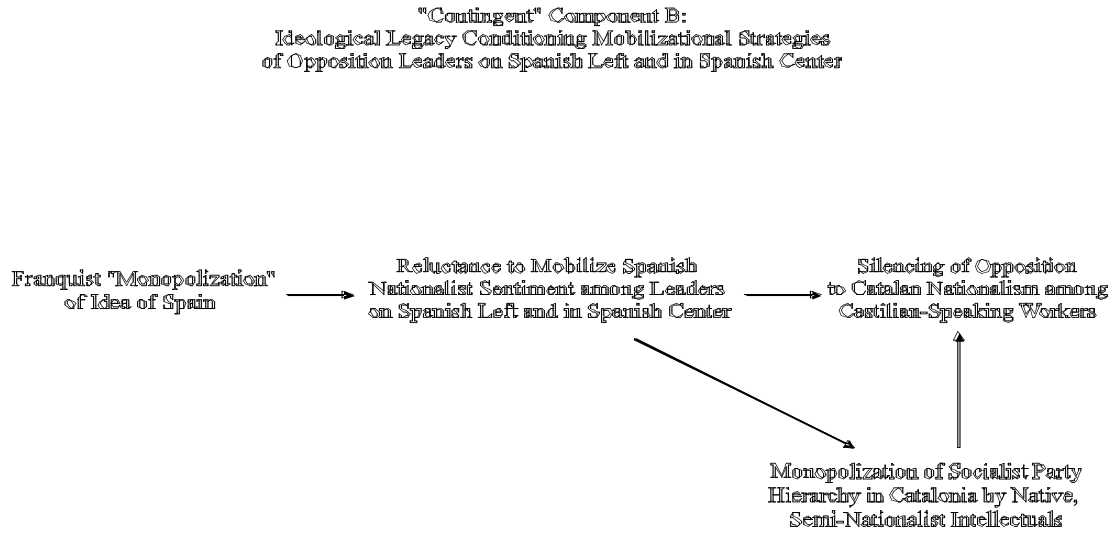
---

[43] For Unamuno's intervention, see *Cortes Constituyentes #45* (Sept. 25, 1931), pp.4-8. Also relevant in this regard are the 1932 debates in the *Cortes* over the Catalan Statute of Autonomy. For a useful overview of those debates, see Allison Peers, "The Catalan Statute and the Cortes," in the *Bulletin of Spanish Studies: A Record and Review of Their Progress* Vol. IX, No. 36, Oct. 1932: 1999-208..

[44] For Sánchez Albornóz's intervention, see *Cortes Constituyents #61* (Oct. 22, 1931), pp.8-11.

[45] Antonio Fabra Ribas, "La enseñanza y los obreros," *Crisol*, Nov. 5, 1931, quoted in Gonzalo Redondo, *Las empresas políticas de Ortega y Gassett*, vol. 2 (Madrid: Rialp, 1970), p.374; also quoted in Juan Linz, "Politics in a multilingual society with a dominant world language." In *Les états multilingues: Problèmes et Solutions. Multilingual States: Problems and Solutions*, edited by Jean-Guy Savard and Richard Vigneault (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1975), p.397.

[46] See Álvarez Junco *Mater Dolorosa* (op. cit), p.601.



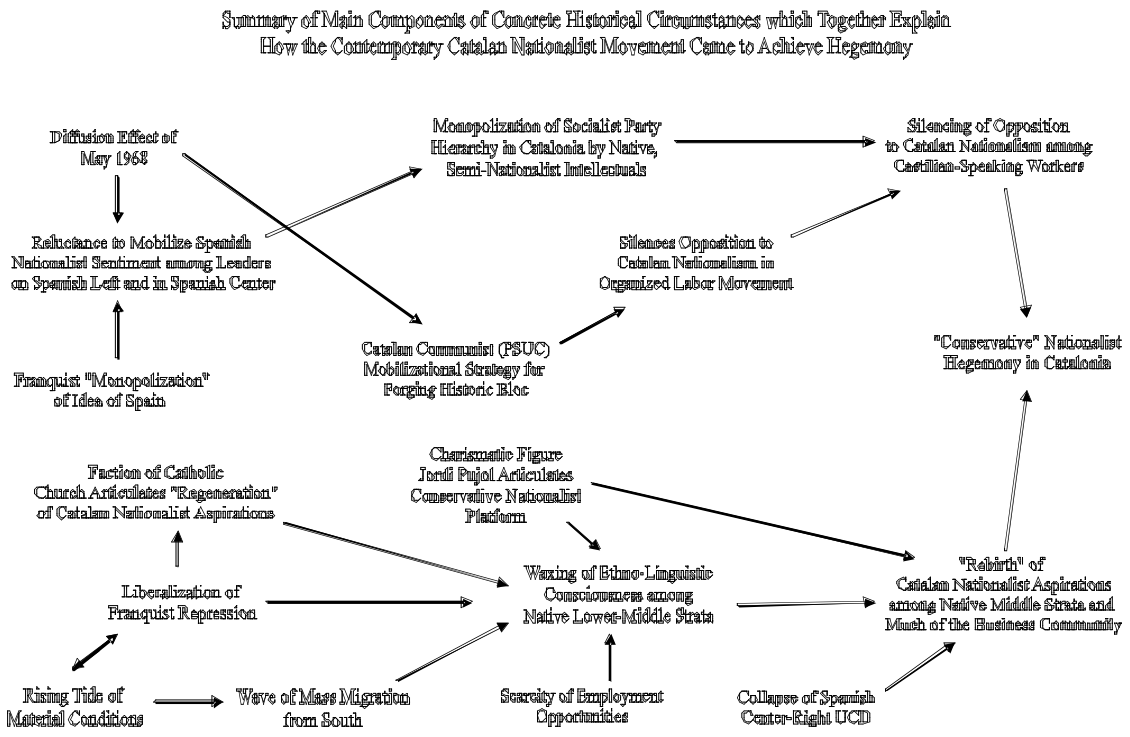
To return to Felipe González and, by extension, the socialist PSOE, such a shift in sensibilities was extremely evident within his party's hierarchy after he assumed the post of Secretary General in 1974. Indeed, the shift could hardly have been starker. For, while under the direction of Rodolfo Llopis, the party's leadership in exile had always perceived nationalism in both Catalonia and the Basque Country as "hurtful and inappropriate."[47]

However, after González had captured the party leadership at the Congress of Suresnes in October of 1974, the PSOE immediately and for the first time went so far as to pass a resolution in which it defended an alleged right to self-determination, defined as "the capacity for each nationality to choose freely its relations with the rest of the peoples who compose the Spanish State."[48] Remarkably enough, this resolution would remain on the books, as part of the official party platform, up until after the completion of the 1978 Constitution.

In sum, this undeniable shift in ideological sensibilities in the Spanish center and on the Spanish left conditioned the mobilizational strategies pursued by the socialist PSOE during the critical juncture immediately preceding and throughout the course of the transition to democracy; and by extension, it has also conditioned the willingness of the main political players in both the Spanish center and on the Spanish left to grant concessions to peripheral nationalist aspirations as they have in fact evolved (see figure fifteen).

[47] Richard Gillespie, *Historia del Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1992), p.200.

[48] See Andrés de Blas, "El problema nacional-regional español en los programas del PSOE y el PCE," *Revista de Estudios Políticos* (Madrid, 1978). For a more complete statement of the official party position (as later formulated at the PSOE's XXVII Congress in December 1976), see the chapter on "Socialismo y Nacionalidades," in Bustelo, , Peces-Barba, et al, *PSOE* (Madrid: Editorial Avance, 1978), pp.83-89. For a more general overview, see Santos Juliá, *Los socialistas en la política española* (op. cit.), pp.397-430.



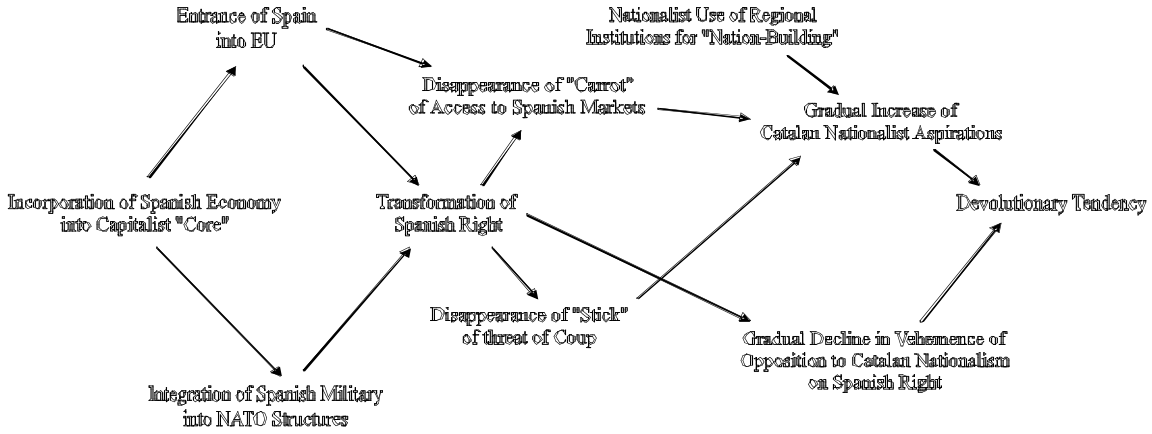
Section Four: The Forces at Work Gradually Undermining the Transition-Era Equilibrium

By this point, I have completed my account of the concrete circumstances in which the political hegemony of contemporary Catalan nationalism was achieved during the critical juncture of the transition to democracy. Let me now turn to explain the "incremental changes" through which the equilibrium established during that critical juncture is been gradually transformed. To do so requires specifying how the mobilizational strategies pursued by the main parties in the region have been in turn embedded in and conditioned by the broader *Spanish*, not to mention international, context. That on the Spanish left, Felipe González always seemed to perceive it not to be in his party's broader interests to alienate middle-class, Catalanist sentiment is one important point to which we have already alluded and which is directly relevant in this regard. More important still, however, is a point that has to do with a fundamental transformation that has taken place in the period since the transition to democracy not in the Spanish center nor on the Spanish left, but rather, on the Spanish right. This transformation is characterized by the total disappearance of the "involutionist threat" to democracy from the so-called Franquist "bunker." The disappearance of this threat was itself largely determined by the integration of the Spanish military into NATO structures, as well as the definitive incorporation of the Spanish economy into the capitalist core, consolidated by Spain's 1986 entry into the EU.[49] In turn, these developments have

[49] On the impact of incorporation of the European Union on "center-periphery" relations within Spain, Michael Keating has been the most prominent theorist. See Keating, *Nations against the State* (London: MacMillan Press LTD, 1996). See also Montserrat Guibernau, *Nations without States: Political Communities in a Global Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), pp.149-175; Kenneth McRoberts *Catalonia: Nation Building Without a State* (New York: Oxford University Press), pp.91-114; Luis Moreno *The Federalization of Spain* London: Frank Cass, 2001), pp.144-149; and the recently NSF-funded (and therefore hopefully forthcoming) project

significantly altered the balance of forces within Spain, as well as between Spain and Catalonia; and therefore, they have significantly altered the calculus of political compromise that facilitated the pragmatic behavior of the Catalan nationalists throughout the course of the transition – specifically, both by erasing the *stick* associated with the threat of a military coup, and by diminishing the *carrot* associated with access to Spanish markets (see figure sixteen).[50]

The Main Components Working to Gradually Undermine the Parameters for "Normal" Politics Established During the Transition



Section Five: Explaining the Waxing and Waning of Ethno-Linguistic Tensions in Catalonia from within the Transition-Era Equilibrium

Such a fundamental transformation of the Spanish right notwithstanding, it must be noted that the intensity of its opposition to nationalist aspirations in Catalonia has not simply declined over time in a linear fashion. Rather, the rhetorical belligerence of the Spanish right has waxed and waned, too – in accordance with specific political, and particularly, *electoral conjunctures*. For example, between 1993 and 1996, after the socialists had come to depend upon the support of Pujol's nationalist coalition to maintain their majority in the *Congreso de Diputados* in Madrid, the conservative PP would consistently attack González's government on the grounds that it had been too weak in its defense of Spain's cultural and territorial integrity.[51] Notably, such attacks were far from universally scorned by the Catalan electorate

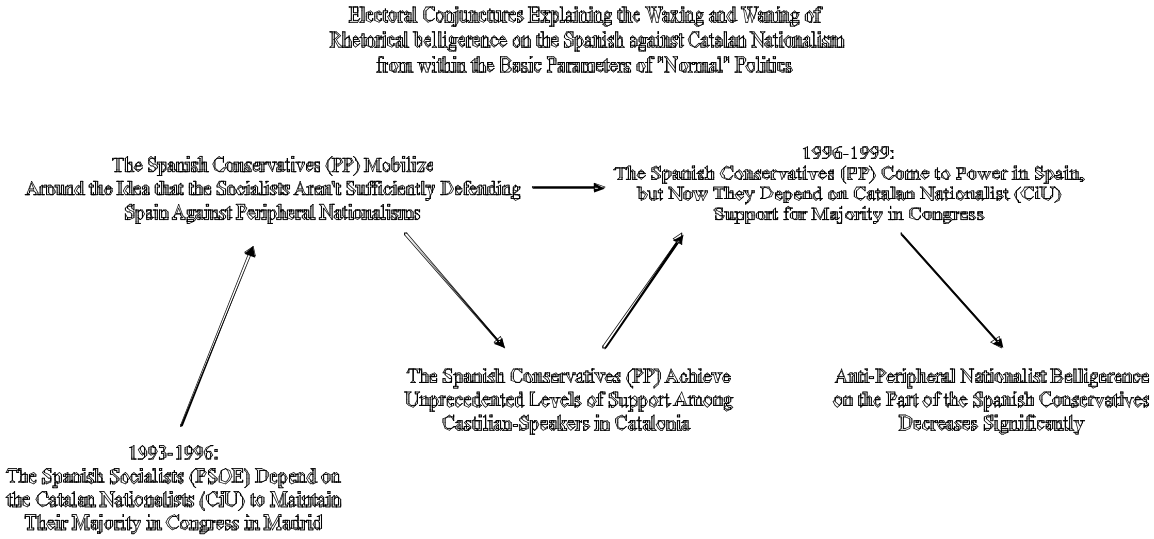
---

proposal by Kathleen Schwartzman and Michelle Bata (University of Arizona), *Globalization and the Transformation of Nationalism – Spain in the European Union, 1977-2000*.

[50] On the transformation of the military and the concomitant disappearance of the "Franquist bunker," see Julio Busquets, *Militares y demócratas* (Barcelona: Plaza Janés, 1999); Stanley Payne, "Modernization of the Armed Forces," in Payne, ed., *The Politics of Democratic Spain* (Chicago: Council on Foreign Relations, 1986); Juan Díez Nicolás, "La transición política y la opinión pública española ante los problemas de defense y hacia las Fuerzas Armadas," *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, No. 36, 1986); and Charles Powell, *España en democracia 1975-2000* (Madrid: Plaza Janés, 2001), pp.373-381.

[51] Perhaps the best synthetic and general account of this period can be found in the chapter titled "La legislature de crispación," in Charles Powell, *España en democracia 1975-2000* (op. cit.), pp.519-568. See also Víctor Pérez-Díaz, *España puesta a prueba 1976-1996* (Madrid: Alianze Editorial, 1996); and Josep Maria Reniu Vilamala, *La formación de gobiernos minoritarios en España 1977-1996* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 2002); as well as the excellent journalistic account provided by Antonio Santamaría and Eduard

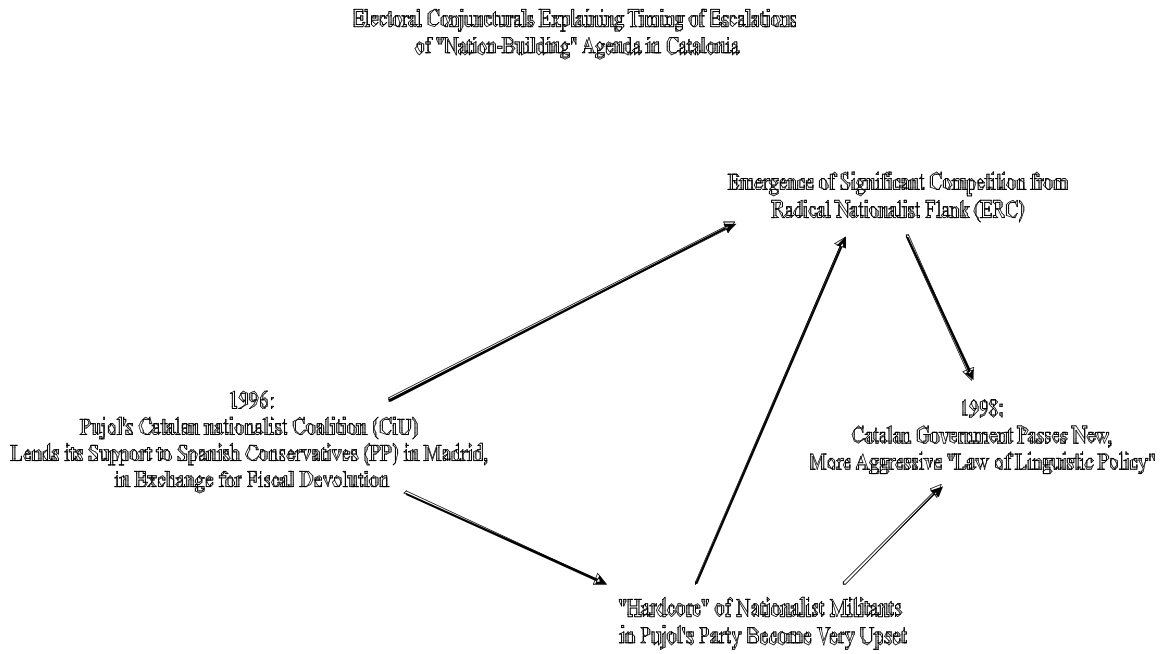
itself; to the contrary, with a man by the name of Vidal Quadras leading the anti-nationalist charge in Catalonia, the PP's belligerent stance against Catalan nationalism seemed to pay off in that context, too, both in the 1995 regional election as well as the 1996 general one, when levels of support for it reached unprecedented proportions in Catalonia, particularly among working-class Castilian-speakers in Barcelona's industrial belt. Needless to say, in 1996, after the PP had come to power – but now *it* depended upon nationalist support to maintain its majority in the *Congreso de Diputados* – the extent of its anti-nationalist belligerence would dramatically decrease (see figure seventeen).



Likewise, the pace of "nation-building" within Catalonia has not remained constant either; nor has the expansion of "nationalist aspirations" simply increased in a linear fashion. Rather, the evolution of nationalist aspirations has corresponded to specific political and, particularly, electoral conjunctures as well. To name but one important instance: it was in 1997, after Pujol's coalition had decided to lend its support to Aznar's conservative government in Madrid, that the Catalan government decided to forge ahead with its plan to pass a new, more expansive law of linguistic "normalization."[52] The timing of the move was not a coincidence; instead, it was widely interpreted as an attempt to appease part of Pujol's militant base – specifically, the nationalist core that was extremely uneasy about the coalition's support for the PP in Madrid (see figure eighteen).

Voltas, in their respective books, *Foro Babel: El nacionalismo y las lenguas de Cataluña* (Barcelona: Ediciones Áltera, 1999), pp.58-63; and *La guerra de la llengua* (Barcelona: Empúries, 1996), especially pp.194-207.

[52] See Jordi Argelaguet, *El process d'elaboració de la llei de política lingüística* (Barcelona: Editorial Mediterrània, 1998; as well as the chapter on "The Questionable Constitutionality of Current Language Policy," in my dissertation, *The Politics of Language and Nation: The Case of the Catalans in Contemporary Spain* (Unpublished dissertation: Yale University, Department of Political Science, 2004).



Conclusion

In this paper, I have situated the nationalist movement in Catalonia within a broader constellation of demographic, material, and social power relations; I have situated it in historical context as well; and I have analyzed the concrete circumstances within which the contemporary nationalist movement came to achieve political hegemony, while sources of contestation to its agenda came to be effectively silenced. In accounting for the success of the contemporary nationalist movement, I have emphasized the role of the particular ideological commitments of political counter-elites combined with the mobilizational strategies they pursued in the decisive juncture of the period immediately preceding and during the course of the transition to democracy. In addition, I have illuminated the "structural" forces at work to gradually undermine the transition-era equilibrium. Finally, I have explained the waxing and waning of ethno-linguistic tensions from within that equilibrium, again stressing the decisive influence of mobilizational strategies pursued by political elites.