Identity and Nation in 21st Century Catalonia
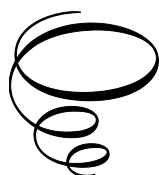
Identity and Nation in 21st Century Catalonia:

El Procés

Edited by

Steven Byrne

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section One: Catalonia and Secessionism: Understanding Ongoing Cultural, Social and Political Debates

Section Two: Deconstructing Linguistic Claims and Political Conflicts

Section Three: Media, Politics, Language and Identity Representation

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF IMAGES

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Mario Álvarez Fuentes is a lecturer in communication studies in the School of Journalism at *Universidad Alberto Hurtado* (Chile). He holds a PhD in Communication Studies and a MA in Political Communication both obtained from the University of Leeds (England). His research interests are in political communication, personal performance and representation. He also has extensive experience as a journalist in Chilean media, where he has reported on political and economic issues.

Sergi Auladell Fauchs holds a PhD from the University of St Andrews (Scotland) (2019), where he has taught across several disciplines and schools, including Modern Languages, Philosophy, Management, and International Relations. Informed by poststructuralist political discourse theory, his research interests revolve around the fragmentation and re-articulation of all forms of collective identity during processes of organic crisis, the legitimacy-building mechanisms of the nation-state, and the difficulties that liberal democracies have in adapting to new social demands and new forms of collective mobilisation. Questions of nationalism, ethnicity, devolution, and secession are also part of his research agenda. He has written and presented at several conferences on Catalan and Spanish politics, with a focus on the recent bid for Catalan independence.

Guillem Belmar Viernes is a PhD student in the Department of Linguistics at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He holds a BA in Translation and Interpreting from the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona*, an MA in Hispanic Linguistics and Language Science from the *Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia*, and an MA in Multilingualism from the University of Groningen, where he worked as a lecturer in the Department of Minorities. He focuses his work on minoritised languages, a field he studies from different perspectives. He is particularly interested in processes of language revitalisation and how these developments around the world contribute to collective healing and empower communities. He has explored the effects of glocalization on minoritised languages, especially through the study of virtual communities and the use of social media. He is currently working with the Mixtec diaspora community in California, but he is always

in touch with his own community, namely, Catalonia and the broader Catalan-speaking regions.

Aleida Bertran is a doctoral student at the Latvian Academy of Culture. She holds a BA in Translation and Interpreting Studies from the Autonomous University of Barcelona and an MSc in Cultural Resource Management from Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh. This multidisciplinary background has led to an interest in cultural anthropology and political ethnography of ethnic minorities. Her research focuses on the comparative study of Baltic and Catalan international folk festivals and their respective role in the formation of national identity. Beyond the scope of her research, she has lectured on the course "Social Movements and Culture" at the Latvian Academy of Culture as well as being a former coordinator of the Catalan National Assembly (ANC) in the Baltic States.

Ruan Bouwer is an undergraduate student studying Political Science at MacEwan University in Edmonton (Canada). His main areas of study include international politics (with a special focus on the European Union and Africa), developmental economics, and colonial/postcolonial history. He is currently writing his undergraduate thesis on political and economic development in post-apartheid South Africa, where he also spent his early childhood. He began working with Dr Andrea Wagner in 2018 to analyse media coverage of the Catalan independence movement in the wake of the 2017 referendum. In this role, he assisted in the development of the coding scheme as well as the data collection for the project.

Steven Byrne currently holds a postdoctoral position in the Department of Psychology at the University of Limerick (UL) (Ireland). He completed his BA in Economics and Sociology, MA in Sociology and PhD in Sociolinguistics (all UL). He has previously taught in the Department of Sociology, the School of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics, the Department of Politics and Public Administration and the Centre for Teaching and Learning at UL. He is currently a senior researcher in the Research Group on Intercultural Spaces, Languages and Identities (GREILI) at *Universitat Pompeu Fabra*. His research interests include sub-state nationalism, social movements, the Catalan secessionist movement, minority languages and multiculturalism. He has published his work in the *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *Ethnopolitics*, *Torture: Journal on Rehabilitation of Torture Victims and Prevention of Torture* and the *International Journal for Iberian Studies*.

Liesl Drew is an anthropologist and independent researcher based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Originally from Florida, she lived her formative years in Sweden after which she developed a keen interest in identity and belonging. She received her BA(Hons) in Anthropology and Pre-Medical sciences from the University of Florida (USA) and her MA in Cultural Anthropology from Uppsala University (Sweden). Drew's research interests lie in socio-cultural identity formation, including processes of attachment to identities and the ideological ambiguities of ethnic borders. Her previous research has focused on Catalan and Spanish identity formation at the intersection of language, nationalism and identity politics in Barcelona. She investigates the problematic nature of ethnic categorisations as represented by the state, institutional, media and governing bodies vis-à-vis lived experiences of national, social and cultural belonging. As an editorial consultant, Drew is a frequent contributor to academic publications in Asia, Europe, Australia and the Americas.

Carles Ferreira is an assistant lecturer and PhD candidate at the University of Kent. His field of study is comparative politics, with a particular interest in nationalism, territorial politics and political parties. His recent peer-reviewed publications include: "Entrapped in a failing course of action: explaining the territorial crisis in 2017 Catalonia" in *Regional and Federal Studies* (2021), "Vox as representative of the radical right in Spain: a study of its ideology" in *Revista Española de Ciencia Política* (2019) and "Challenging majority nationalism: the renaming of streets in Catalonia" in *Revista d'Estudis Autonòmics i Federals-Journal of Self-Government* (2019).

Kim Hoeks obtained an MSc in Human Geography in 2016, in which she specialised in "Conflicts, Territories and Identities". This MSc was a joint project between the Centre for International Conflict-Analysis and Management (CICAM) and the Human Geography Department of the Nijmegen School of Management, both part of Radboud University. When researching for her MA in 2015, she lived in Barcelona for five months. Here, she held an internship at the *Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona* and conducted fieldwork among the Catalan student population. After her studies, Hoeks was employed as a strategic advisor for the municipality of Nijmegen, where she works mainly on two topics: enhancing cross-border cooperation along the Dutch-German border and fostering the strategic relations between the city and its universities. Her daily activities focus on advising the mayor and city council on these topics, building a local network where academia and civil servants share both theories and practice as well

as developing projects in which students can directly contribute to policymaking.

Mandie Iveson is an independent researcher and writer. Prior to this, she was a senior lecturer in English Language and Linguistics at the University of Brighton. Her research focuses on gender, gendered discourses of nationalism, language attitudes and ideologies, and gendered constructions in the digital space. Her latest book *Language Attitudes, National Identity and Migration in Catalonia: What the Women have to Say* (Sussex Academic Press, 2020) was awarded the *Premi Crítica Serra d'Or 2020* in the Catalan studies section.

Dorian Kroqi completed his PhD in political science at Carleton University (Canada). His research interests lie at the intersection of comparative politics, public policy and political theory. In particular, he focuses on democratisation and grassroots participation at the European and national levels of governance.

Tilman Lanz is a European Anthropologist who researches local and global identities in contemporary Europe with a focus on national and immigrant minorities in different contexts in Western Europe. He is primarily interested in understanding processes of integration within local settings, where questions of linguistic, religious, and ethnic identity formation are of particular interest. His past projects include: the role of Islam in the migration of Muslims to Europe; migration and European minority movements (Catalonia, Friesland, South Tyrol, Swabia, Landes); the impact of migration on left- and right-wing populist movements; health, migration, and integration processes. Presently Dr Lanz conducts ethnographic research, which comparatively investigates retrenchment from globalisation in four different Western European settings: Catalonia, Cevennes (France), Groningen (Netherlands), and Swabia (Germany).

Martin Lepič is a research assistant and lecturer in political geography and spatial statistics at the Department of Social Geography, Charles University in Prague and the Department of Geography, University of West Bohemia in Pilsen. In his research, he focuses on state (dis)integration, regional nationalisms and inter-ethnic relations in contemporary Europe. He is particularly interested in understanding the determinants of time-space differentiation in affiliations to European secessionist movements, such as in Catalonia. His article on the geography of Catalan nationalism was

published in *Political Geography*. Beyond Catalonia, he has researched inter-ethnic relations and electoral geography in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Jianna Marin is a PhD student at the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health. She received her BA from MacEwan University in Political Science and an MA from McGill University in Political Science. For her bachelor's thesis, she conducted field research in Spain, interviewing professors, politicians and journalists about populist attitudes and separatism. Her MA thesis compared Canada and the United Kingdom's approaches to regulating new disruptive technologies that might affect public health. Her current research examines the efficacy of advocacy groups on policy outcomes. She is interested in how the collective action of communities and organisations can influence political actors and impact change.

Marcos Martínez-Solanilla graduated with a BA in Journalism from the University of Zaragoza (Spain) (2016). He currently holds a MA in International Communication from Jönköping University (Sweden) (2019) and is in the process of completing a second MA in Political Science (University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)). After working as a content editor for Spanish digital and print press, he now resides in London, where he currently works in the production of social media content, mainly, for YouTube and Netflix. He began to work independently in academia in 2019 after his first academic article was published "Communicating Nationalism in a Changing Europe: The Media Coverage of Catalan's Attempt at Independence" in *Studies in Communication Sciences (SComS)*.

Juan Alberto Ruiz Casado is a PhD candidate at the Institute for Social Research and Cultural Studies at the National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University (Taiwan). He received his MA degree in Culture of Peace, Conflict, Education and Human Rights from the University of Malaga (2016). His area of expertise is contemporary political theory from a discourse-theoretical approach, with an emphasis on populism and nationalism. He currently researches secessionist movements with a focus on the political developments in Catalonia, Taiwan, Xinjiang and Hong Kong, topics on which he has contributed articles to several journals. Previously, he has been a visiting researcher at the *Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala* and worked as a Junior Security Analyst for the United Nations' Threat and Risk Assessment Service (TRS) for Latin America and the Caribbean. He currently holds a Taiwan Ministry of Science and Technology scholarship for his PhD research.

Anna Tudela-Isanta is a visiting lecturer at *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*. She holds a PhD in Sociolinguistics from *Universitat Pompeu Fabra* and has worked in higher education institutions in Europe and Asia. Her field of study is multilingualism, language contact and Catalan as an L2. Her recent peer-reviewed publications include "Característiques de l'alumnat de català L2 for a del domini linguistic" in *Treballs de Sociolingüística Catalana* (2020), and "Primary and secondary factors in language maintenance in a medium-sized community language: Catalan in Spain" in the *International Journal of Bilingualism* (2019).

Andrea Wagner is an Assistant Professor in Political Science and Jean Monnet Chair (*The Future of the EU post Brexit*) at MacEwan University in Edmonton (Canada). Her research focuses on corruption and rent-seeking in the European Union, and specifically on the importance of anti-corruption agencies in Central and Eastern Europe. The recent return of the spectre of populism motivated her to focus on the intricate relationship between populism and Euroscepticism. She is curious to see and test whether the EU citizen holds simultaneously both populist and Eurosceptic attitudes or whether the former is still amicable to the EU integration process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

STEVEN BYRNE
(UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK)

Since the turn of the 21st century, Europe has been immersed in a situation of political and social upheaval marked by processes such as Brexit, the growth of new left- and right-wing populist parties and the strengthening of sub-state nationalism across the continent. These developments have seen scenarios of polarisation and a deep crisis of political legitimation across Europe, where sociolinguistic and socio-cultural issues are frequently a point of contention in territorial disputes. Understanding the dynamics of sub-state nationalist movements and continuing political upheaval as the European Union continues its process of supranational integration is of critical importance. This volume has been written to reflect both societal changes and the latest research in 21st century Catalonia.

El Procés: Language, Identity and Nation in 21st Century Catalonia examines the main sociolinguistic, socio-political and socio-cultural processes that are taking place in Catalonia today. Located in the northeast of Spain, the autonomous community (AC) has a population of approximately 7.5 million people and is a key political and economic region of Europe. It is one of the most affluent areas in Spain and a region where a republic has been unilaterally declared under different formulae on five occasions (1641, 1873, 1931, 1934 and 2017). However, these attempts at independence have always been ephemeral. Catalonia came to the full attention of the international media at the beginning of October 2017 when the region attempted to stage a referendum on its independence from Spain. The referendum was declared unconstitutional by central state authorities and the Spanish Constitutional Court. This ongoing issue represents Spain's worst political crisis in 40 years and the effects of the 2017 referendum still loom over the political and social milieu in both Catalonia and Spain today, generating the deepest social fractures among Catalans for generations. Several Catalan leaders both in and out of government have been imprisoned on charges of sedition and misuse of public funds while others have fled into exile. The current context is one of the most interesting if not

perilous periods in the region's recent history. In 2020, pro-independence leaders and MEPs, Carles Puigdemont and Toni Comin called on the perplexed EU authorities to take a position on the Catalan issue. For these reasons, it is now timely to examine the situation in contemporary Catalonia. As such, this volume will offer a series of empirically robust and innovative studies that examine the situation in 21st century Catalonia from a range of academic disciplines.

This book offers an interdisciplinary analysis of the ongoing situation between Spain and Catalonia. There is little doubt that the events of October 2017 were of paramount importance in the relationship between the two parties. Thus, it is against this backdrop that this volume is set. However, the analyses offered in this edited volume also focuses on the events prior to and after the controversial referendum. As such, this volume brings together new and emerging research on the situation in Catalonia from an international range of established academics as well as early career and independent researchers who are drawn from a wide range of universities and institutions. The contributors to this volume come from Canada, Chile, Latvia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States. Thus, the multifaceted nature and complexity of the political conflict between Spanish and Catalan institutions is represented by the richly eclectic and diverse range of contributions.

The volume has been divided into three sections of six, four and four chapters respectively. Together the chapters in this book represent a thorough investigation of many of the most important issues of the Catalan conflict: nationalism and populism, sovereignty, language, media representation, popular discourse and political activism. The first of these sections gathers contributions dealing with the independence movement in the region, its growth and the consequences of the 2017 referendum for the political situation in Spain in general. In the first chapter, Marcos Martínez-Solanilla and Steven Byrne open the collection and set the scene for a wider analysis of the situation in Catalonia. This chapter examines key historical aspects that have contributed to the growth of Catalan nationalism from its origins toward the opening decades of the 21st century, explaining how it is rooted in multiple historical, political and territorial crises. Tilman Lanz adds to this first chapter, discussing the transformation of political actors, dynamics and discourses within the context of the venturous bid for the independence of Catalonia over the past decade. In doing so, he excellently examines how contemporary political movements flexibly adapt to rapidly changing circumstances when pursuing their aims. In the third chapter, Juan Alberto Ruiz Casado considers the role of populist discourse in the Catalan

independence movement between 2010 and 2017. In particular, he unpacks
the processes by which the independence movement constructed an
underdog discourse in the face of a common enemy, namely, the Spanish
state. As Ruiz Casado describes, this approach has permitted the independence
movement to increase its support base, overcoming various national
ethnocultural identifications, socio-economic disparity and various other
ideological leanings. In her unique contribution, Aleida Bertran shifts the
focus to Northern Catalonia, a region in the southeast of France. In a post-
referendum era, she outlines the historical and contemporary importance of
the territory as a symbolic boundary and dynamic site of political activism
for those who claim Catalan identity. Carles Ferreira brings together a
similar interest in wider socio-political discourse and Spanish-Catalan
relations. The focus in his contribution are the respective nation-building
dynamics in both Spain and Catalonia as outlined in the manifestos of
political parties. In addition, Ferreira analyses the normative grounds upon
which nation-building claims are constructed, which he argues are framed
by the notion of neutrality. This section is concluded by Martin Lepič who,
in his study on nationalist support and its ethnolinguistic determinants,
provides a detailed insight into salient internal differences across Catalan
society.

   The second section of this volume focuses on the ethnolinguistic
dimension of the push for secession in Catalonia. In the first chapter of part
two, Anna Tudela-Isanta employs a questionnaire and matched guise test
(MGT) to evaluate the attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish among
undergraduate students enrolled in public universities in Barcelona. Here
Tudela-Isanta expertly outlines the contemporary sociolinguistic context of
Catalonia as well as providing the reader with a depth of knowledge on
language attitude research in the region. Kim Hoeks' contribution continues
to pay attention to university students but shifts the focus to collective
identity and political engagement. Through employing a quantitative
approach, she analyses the extent to which the two aforementioned factors
explain secessionist claims among young and highly educated individuals.
Hoeks maintains that her sample views an independent Catalonia as a means
to achieving a sustainable future for themselves as well as future generations.
Liesl Drew brings together a similar view on identity construction in her
ethnographic research on the Catalan and Spanish lived experience in
Barcelona. In particular, Drew provides a detailed insight into how her
respondents construct and transform their identities between Spanish and
Catalan cultures, where language and political allegiance are prominent
factors. Drawing on data from Catalan media outlets as well as qualitative
interviews, Mandie Iveson takes up the examination of modern identity

politics and language debates in Catalonia. In particular, she explores theories of language ideologies and linguistic authority, relating these to the present situation in the territory.

The third and final section takes as its theme wider political and media discourse, investigating how the Catalan independence movement is constructed in the region itself as well as from an international perspective. This section opens with Sergi Auladell Fauchs' work on pro-independence and unionist discourse in Spain and Catalonia since the mid-2000s. In his work, he maintains that while the pro-independence camp call for inclusive collective rights, freedom, democracy, and peaceful civil disobedience the unionist side has mainly managed to galvanise its support through the co-optation of a once marginal discourse that prompts the establishment of a social rupture on identitarian and sectarian grounds. In his work, Guillem Belmar Viernes returns our focus to the linguistic dimension of the Catalan conflict once again and as such, echoes some of the focus found in the second section of this book. In his contribution, he explores the impact of glocalisation on the de-territorialisation and de-ethnicisation of the Catalan language and identity formation. In addition, Belmar Viernes notes that there is a need to embrace a form of sustainable multilingualism and perhaps more importantly challenge the "markedness" of the Catalan language in minority media. In their contribution, Andrea Wagner, Dorian Kroqi, Jianna Marin and Ruan Bouwer continue to unpack media representations of the Catalan situation but with a focus on four newspapers (Catalan News, *La Vanguardia*, *El País*, and the New York Times), aiming to reveal how foreign, Catalan and Spanish media frame the Catalan-Spanish standoff. Interestingly, in their work, they also make use of in-depth interviews with academics, journalists and politicians in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia to examine the perception of the media's role in amplifying or controlling the Catalan conflict. The final chapter of this section also investigates how the political debate in Catalonia is represented in the media. However, in his work, Mario Álvarez Fuentes shifts the focus slightly and examines how politicians' individuality plays a role in politics. In this intriguing piece of work, Álvarez Fuentes notes that *Polònia* (a political impersonation television programme in Catalonia) acts as an enriching case to further our understanding of politicians' ability to construct and reinforce collective identities against the backdrop of the Catalan secessionist movement.

In conclusion, this volume provides a rich and detailed overview of the interdisciplinary research being conducted on the current situation in Catalonia today. In the wake of the controversial referendum in October 2017 and the subsequent unilateral declaration of independence, the issue of Catalonia becoming an independent state to that of Spain came to the fore

internationally. With this, the authority of the Spanish state and legislation was called into question. While the path to independence for Catalonia remains unclear, whatever happens, the region will remain an important object for study in the field of secessionist movements, international relations and minority language studies. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Spain, it seems that the focus may have shifted away from the issue of Catalan independence. However, it is safe to say that the effects of the 2017 referendum and subsequent events continue to resonate in political and social life in Catalonia and Spain today. Moreover, recent research indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic may have provoked new tensions within the Spanish state, revealing that the conflict is far from resolved. In line with this, as calls for secession are likely to increase across the globe in the coming decades, the interdisciplinary contributions in this volume have relevance for regions where there are calls for varying degrees of independence or increased autonomy, such as in South Tyrol, the Basque Country or Flanders.

The editor wishes to thank all the contributors for their collaboration, dedication and collegiality, all of which was done against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. The editor is also extremely grateful to all the staff in Cambridge Scholars Publishing for their patience and assistance in preparing this text.

SECTION ONE:

CATALONIA AND SECESSIONISM: UNDERSTANDING ONGOING CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DEBATES

CHAPTER ONE

A DIVIDED SPAIN?
THE EVOLUTION OF CATALAN NATIONALISM:
CONSEQUENCES AT THE REGIONAL
AND STATE LEVEL

MARCOS MARTÍNEZ-SOLANILLA
(UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA)
AND STEVEN BYRNE
(UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK)

Introduction

The Catalan independence referendum (1st October 2017) was a significant moment of internal territorial instability in Spain. However, rather than being an isolated event, this vote and the violent episodes that occurred during it are the result of complex socio-political processes that have taken place in Catalonia for centuries. Support for an independent Catalonia has risen dramatically since the early 2010s. On 10th July 2010, over one million people demonstrated on the streets of Barcelona against the Constitutional Court's decision to suppress parts of the 2006 Catalan Statute of Autonomy. At the time, this was the largest pro-independence demonstration that had taken place in the territory (Vilà 2014).

Although the political and economic situation in Spain fuelled the growth of nationalist sentiment in Catalonia in the 21st century, Crameri (2015) argues that the policies and discourse of the cultural and intellectual elites in the autonomous region are also a key factor in the growth of pro-secession sentiment. Adding to this, processes such as the linguistic immersion program and the establishment of regional media outlets have been particularly successful in re-establishing the Catalan language in the public sphere, making it the main institutional language and the principal medium of instruction in schools. Related to this, in a post-Franco era, the political

elite in Catalonia saw the Spanish transition to democracy as an opportunity to re-establish political Catalanism (Catalan nationalism). In line with this, Catalonia has traditionally pushed for national recognition and greater devolution of power in the form of autonomy. This is in contrast to today, where there has been a strong increase in calls for independence (Crameri 2014; de las Heras-Pedrosa *et al.* 2020).

This chapter reviews key historical aspects that have contributed to the growth of nationalist sentiment in Catalonia. It would be inappropriate to attempt to capture eleven centuries of Catalan history in this chapter. However, it does offer a review of some of the most important aspects of the socio-political history of the region. Consequently, the main aim here is to set out the context of the current situation and identify the most salient features in the Catalan case with the objective being to provide a backdrop against which current trends can be situated. As such, this chapter examines the history of Catalan nationalism from its origins up until the opening decades of the 21st century. The chapter will also focus on the recent spike in support for an independent Catalonia which, ultimately, led to the controversial referendum on 1st October 2017. In addition, this chapter focuses on the consequences of the independence movement not only in Catalonia but also throughout Spain, where, after the November 2019 general elections, the far right-wing party *VOX* became the third biggest political force in the Parliament (Wheeler 2020).

Catalan Nationalism: Origins

Esman (1994) contends that nationalism is the "ideology that proclaims the distinctiveness of a particular people and their right to self-rule in their homeland" (Esman 1994, 28). Considering this, modern Catalonia and the creation of nationalist sentiment in the region are the result of the conjunction of several large and complex sets of lasting historical phenomena. The origins of modern Catalonia can be traced to the 9th century, when the region comprised the territories that had split from the Carolingian Empire. These smaller regions, while initially independent from each other, gradually came closer between the 9th and 12th centuries; eventually forming the frontier between the Moorish south and the Frankish north (Sabaté 2017; Hawkey 2018). In the 12th century, Catalonia merged with the Crown of Aragon. During this period, the region enjoyed a high degree of autonomy. Ryder (2007) notes that the states of the Crown (which included Aragon, Catalonia, the Valencian Community and the Balearic Islands, among others throughout the Mediterranean) "retained its own administrative, judicial, and representative institutions, having nothing in common with its fellows

other than the sovereign monarch" (Ryder 2007, 5). With the marriage of Ferdinand II and Isabella I of Castile in 1469, Catalonia and Aragon were joined politically. This is considered by many scholars as the emergence of a unified Spain, although the Crowns of Castile and Aragon maintained distinct territories (Phillips and Philips 2016; Colomer 2019). While both regions still enjoyed a high degree of political autonomy, the balance of power did shift toward Castile. Given this, the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella marked a period of cultural decadence (*decadència*) for Catalonia. As such, Spanish, not Catalan, became the language of social advancement in the region (Hawkey 2018). While Castile experienced growth as a result of its American colonies, the Crown of Aragon had limited access to these resources (Colomer 2019). As a result, Castile became the largest economic and military force in the Iberian Peninsula.

Against the backdrop of Madrid's continued global expansion and gradual attempts to centralise power, the *Guerra dels Segadors* (Reapers' War) (1640–1652) took place in Catalonia. This uprising by Catalan peasants against the Kingdom of Spain is considered one of the most important moments in the history of Catalan nationalism. Guibernau (2004) notes that the rebellion occurred as a result of tax increases in Catalonia in an attempt by Madrid to redistribute more evenly the significant economic and military burden of the Spanish Empire, which until then had mainly been supported by the Crown of Castile. Scholars also point to two other factors for this conflict: the quartering of Catalan soldiers and the presence of Castilian troops in Catalonia during the Franco-Spanish War. This larger conflict took place between the Monarchy of Spain and the Kingdom of France as part of the Thirty Years War in Europe (1618–1648) (Stein and Stein 2000; Wilson 2008). Castañeda and Megens-Sedor (2020) add that:

> Catalonia favored France over Castile. The war required many men from Catalonia to fight against France, the locals did not support this cause, and they turned their anger towards Castile. A hymn developed during the Reapers war, *Els Segadors*, which was sung by the rebels, depicted the ongoing struggle between local peasants and imperial elites. (Castañeda and Megens-Sedor 2020, 212)

Although the revolt was crushed, it became a key element of wider Catalan nationalist discourse. In fact, *Els Segadors* (Song of the Reapers), became an anthem of the Catalan nationalist movement. Moreover, in 1993, the song became the national anthem of Catalonia and its importance was such that it was played at the start of the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Barcelona (Balcells 1996; Llobera 2004). Gies (1994) adds that these Games were one of the most important features in the creation of a strong

nationalist sentiment in Catalonia since the transition to democracy in Spain.

Shortly after the Reapers' War, Catalonia further affirmed its rejection of Castile with the *Revolta dels Barretines* (Revolt of the Barretines) (1687–1689).[1] This was another key moment in the development of nationalism in Catalonia (Castañeda and Megens-Sedor 2020). The causes for this uprising were similar to those of the Reapers' War. As Spain was preparing for another war with France, not only did it increase its military presence in Catalonia, but it also increased the taxes that the region had to pay to the centralised government. Both of these factors were compounded by the fact that food supplies in the region were low due to a poor harvest in 1687 (Davies 2011). Throughout the period 1687–1689, increasing numbers from across Catalonia marched in the streets to protest against the military presence and poor standard of living. This deep social unrest led to several nationalist episodes across the region (see e.g., Kamen 1977, 2005).

At the beginning of the 18th century, Catalonia once again came into conflict with Madrid. With the death of Charles II in 1700, the Hispanic empire was left heirless and the War of Spanish Succession began (1702–1714). Catalonia joined the war in 1705 on the side of the Habsburgs, fighting against Philip V of House Bourbon. Ultimately, Catalonia backed the losing side (the Habsburgs) in the war. On 11th of September 1714, Barcelona fell to the Bourbon forces after a yearlong siege and Catalonia faced severe consequences (Carr 1980; Kamen 2005). By defeating the Habsburgs, Philip V of House Bourbon occupied the territories of the Crown of Aragon. This had devastating economic, political and cultural consequences for Catalonia. Philip V abolished the political structures and dismantled the main organs of government in the occupied territories, essentially quashing the sovereignty of Catalonia and its very existence as a nation. This marked the submission of Catalonia to the Spanish Crown (Albareda 2010; Castells 2010). This defeat saw local intellectuals becoming "Castilianized" and further taxes were placed upon Catalan citizens. In Balcells' (1996) words, "the Spanish monarchy wiped out its financial deficit through the fiscal exploitation of the countries of the former Crown of Aragon" (Balcells 1996, 16). Furthermore, the 11th of September 1714 is often marked out as the end of Catalonia as a separate political entity. This date is also celebrated as the national holiday (*La Diada*) of Catalonia (Lanz 2016), when public support for Catalan independence is arguably most visible.

---

[1] *Revolta dels Barretines* or the "Revolt of the berets" refers to the traditional hat worn by Catalan peasants and sailors. It is similar in colour and shape to the Phrygian cap (Balcells 1996).

The Reinforcement of Catalan Identity

The various confrontations between Madrid and Catalonia in the 17th and 18th centuries are manifestations of the tensions that existed in broad sections of Catalan society toward the central government. Giner (1984) notes that the years after the War of Succession can rightly be seen as the lowest point in history for Catalans. As the use of the Catalan language was discouraged by an increasingly centralised state, it became progressively dialectalised and archaic, furthering the Castilianisation of Catalan society. This led to an attitude of resistance toward Spanish-imposed institutions which was to form the basis for the Catalan literary revival in the 19th century (Webber and Strubell-Trueta 1991). With this came the linguistic and cultural movements, the *Renaixença* and then the *Modernisme*, which would enable Catalan language and literature to claim a high cultural and cosmopolitan aspect (Conversi 2000; Vargas 2018). It was these movements that led to the development of Catalan nationalism and a desire for Catalan autonomy, first in the form of regionalism and later in demands for a federal state (Woolard 1989; Crameri 2000, 2015; Balfour and Quiroga 2007).

For example, the *Renaixença* refers to the Catalan linguistic and cultural revival that is cited as beginning in 1833, when Carles Aribau published his poem *Oda a la Pàtria* (Ode to the Homeland). Shortly after, in 1841, the first periodic publication in Catalan (*Lo Pare Arcàngel*) was founded. In 1879, *El Diari Català*, the first daily newspaper written exclusively in Catalan, was published, and, in 1907, the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* (Institute of Catalan Studies) was founded by the Catalanist Enric Prat de la Riba. The *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* consolidated Catalan's literacy standards and sought to standardise the language (Parès-Maicas 1985; Woolard 1989). In line with this, as early as 1911, the institution established a philology division that included, among others, the Catalan grammarian Pompeu Fabra (Camarasa and Roca-Rosell 2008).

Toward the end of the 19th century, increasing demographic and economic power fuelled the growth of regional nationalism in different areas of Spain. This phenomenon was particularly evident in Catalonia, the Basque Country and, to a lesser extent, Galicia. In the case of Catalonia, the rise of nationalism coincided with the emergence of *Modernisme* (1882–1906). This movement strived to replace "the nostalgic focus on Catalonia's traditional language and culture with a celebration of modernity, progress, and cosmopolitanism" (Edles 1999, 318). The *Renaixença*, and later *Modernisme*, shaped the regionalist movement in Catalonia which would form the basis for the political nationalism of the 20th century (Pradilla Car-

dona 2011). However, Catalan nationalism did not emerge as a unified phenomenon (Balcells 1996). At the turn of the 20th century, Catalan nationalism was supported by conservative and federal-republican sources. As Edles (1999) notes:

> [Catalan nationalism] emerged from two different sources. One was a conservative, Catholic tradition that looked back to the glories of medieval Catalonia, seeking to re-create a natural hierarchical state informed by the teachings of the Church. This brand of nationalism celebrated the traditional symbols at the heart of the *renaixenca* [...] A second strand of nationalism evolved out of Federal Republicanism and proposed a democratic and secular nationalism in which Catalonia would lead Spain. (Edles 1999, 319)

Despite the fact that at the turn of the 20th-century Catalan society was fractured along political lines, cultural nationalism still functioned as a unitary reference for all Catalanists beyond political allegiance (Casassas 2009; Balcells 2013). Furthermore, as one of the most economically developed regions in Spain, the Catalan economy of the early 20th century was a key element that contributed to the growth of nationalist sentiment throughout Catalonia. These factors assisted in the promotion and spread of shared cultural symbols and the progressive installation of autonomous political structures in Catalonia (Anguera 2008, 2009; Cattini 2015).

In 1901, the first political party of conservative Catalan nationalism, the *Lliga Regionalista* (Regionalist League), was founded. This is often considered to be the first fully-fledged Catalanist political party, and it dominated the political scene in Catalonia until the Second Spanish Republic in 1931 (Zabaltza 2019). In line with this, the *Mancomunitat de Catalunya* was established in 1914 (Forcadell-Esteller 2018). The *Mancomunitat* was the first self-governing Catalan body since the 18th century and it represented a degree of concession on the part of Madrid for Catalan autonomy. However, the *Mancomunitat* was abolished in 1925 during Miguel Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. On 14th of April 1931, following the fall of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, the Second Spanish Republic (1931–1939) was declared. This represented a period of greater political tolerance in Spain. The new constitution defined Spain as an "integral state" and it recognised the right to territorial autonomy for the regions that requested it (Giner 1984; Woolard 1989). During the Second Republic, Catalonia was granted a Statute of Autonomy (*Estatut d'Autonomia de Catalunya*) and the *Generalitat de Catalunya* was revived (Guibernau 2013a, b). These institutions gave substantial home control over administration, education and public services in Catalonia. However, against the backdrop of insurrections across the Spanish state, on 6th October 1934 the then president of the *Generalitat*, Lluís Companys,

unilaterally proclaimed Catalonia as a state within the Republic of Spain arguing that the Spanish government of the time was fascist (Vilar 1980; Hansen 2021). Companys' decision, which went against the Constitution of 1931 due to its federalist underpinnings, led to a failed rebellion in Catalonia that resulted in the death of 46 people: 38 civilians and 8 soldiers (Casanova 2007). His actions had a strong federalist component and were ultimately aimed at protecting the autonomy of the *Generalitat* from Madrid. Scholars note that Catalan nationalism's goal has traditionally not been the formation of a totally independent state, but the consolidation of an autonomy strong enough to gain an influence over Spanish policies (Díez 1995; Smith 1996). This is in comparison to today, where there has been a strong increase in calls for outright independence in Catalonia (Crameri 2014; Guibernau 2014a).

A Parenthesis of Four Decades: Civil War and Francoism

Francisco Franco came to power following the end of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), where at least 180,000 people died (Espinosa 2010). Once in power, Franco carried out a deep social, political and military restructuring in Spain and established a regime that had similarities with German Nazism and Italian Fascism. Franco quickly abolished both the Statute of Autonomy and the *Generalitat* (Woolard 1989; Guibernau 2004). As Ledesma (1994) states:

> Francoism shared some fundamental characteristics, especially in regard to its repressive attitudes, with the Italian and German regimes: among them, the abolition of representative institutions, the prohibition of any ideology that would threaten the official doctrine, press censorship and the control of mass media by the state, the suppression of socialist movements and intolerance toward any sign of dissent or opposition, and finally the subordination of the interests of the working class to the objectives of the state. (Ledesma 1994, 184; author's own translation)

The social consequences of Francoism (1939–1975) were reinforced by its longevity. It was the second-longest dictatorship in Western Europe during the 20th century, only surpassed by the 48 year-long Portuguese dictatorship, which took place between 1926 and 1974 (Birmingham 2003).

Although the repressive attitude of the regime moderated over time—especially after 1945, when the Axis powers were defeated in World War II—, the number of fatalities on all sides was substantial. In the first few months of the dictatorship, tens of thousands were imprisoned and hundreds faced execution on a daily basis. Reflecting this, Pujol-Casademont (2020)