7 Ethnoterritorial concurrence in multinational societies: the Spanish *comunidades autónomas*

Luis Moreno

Introduction: conceptual assumptions

Functionalist theories have persistently conveyed the idea that internal territorial differences within nation states would disappear with the extension of liberal democracy and industrial capitalism. As communication of political, economic and cultural matters increased, the peoples of different regions would develop a new common identity, which would transcend their differences (Deutsch 1966).[1] The centre–periphery dichotomy was to decline in importance as society became modernized by means of elite-initiated policies aimed at achieving social standardization (e.g. a common language and citizenship). Likewise, the cultural identities of ethnic groups and minorities would be replaced by a set of class-oriented conflicts, or conflicts among interest groups. Thus, modernization was thought to have brought about an all-embracing nation-state identity rooted in both cultural and civic bases. History, however, has repeatedly falsified such analyses.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, I think we ought to reconsider both the premises and implications of all-embracing identities, for they are increasingly untenable. While being corroded by the forces of globalization, these identities are also subject to fragmentation, competition and overlap with numerous other senses of belonging. The discontinuity and dislocation of social arrangements allow different identities, particularly those of a territorial nature, to relate to each other in quite an unpredictable manner. In fact, identities are shared to various degrees by individuals and are constantly subject to internaliza-

[1] For William Safran, one of the prominent characteristics of American social science in general, and the behaviourist–functionalist school of political science in particular, is its ahistoricist bias. 'History is rejected on two grounds: First . . . as a succession of events that . . . do not lend themselves to comparison and generalization . . . Second . . . because it is associated with pre-modern (primitive) societies' (1987, p. 13). Mainstream Marxists have traditionally taken a functional approach to the analysis of political integration and modernization (cf. Connor 1984).

tion by group members in different ways (Melucci 1989; Giddens 1991; Smith 1991; Greenfeld 1992; Castells 1997).

A considerable problem arises in establishing the boundaries and intensities of the various elements of citizens' self-identification, and in interpreting the causes for political mobilization related to territorial identities. If a strengthening of 'meso-level' identities is noticeable, the consolidation of supranational levels of civic attachment is also important, as evinced most notably by the ongoing process of European integration. This process of convergence in Europe can in fact reconcile supranational, state and local identities which appear to be in conflict.[2]

This chapter deals primarily with the concept of ethnoterritoriality, which refers to a dimension of identity in which conflicts and political mobilization develop and have as their chief social actors those ethnic groups which possess a geographical underpinning. Such a spatial reference is identifiable within the boundaries of a polity, usually one of a compound or multinational composition (Moreno 1988; Rudolph and Thompson 1989; Coakley 1992).

In multinational societies, individuals are tied to several cultural reference groups which might be in competition with each other (Barth 1969). This results in a multiplicity of dynamic and often shared socio-political identities, which are not necessarily explicitly expressed. Identity markers are thus malleable and the intensity of their manifestation depends greatly upon contingent circumstances (Anderson 1983; Cohen 1985; Hobsbawm 1990; Brass 1991).

The revival of ethnoterritorial political movements in the western world has coincided with a renewed challenge to the centralist model of the unitary state (Keating 1988, 1996a). In the case of Spain, as in other pluriethnic states, regional devolution and federalization aim to articulate an institutional response to the stimuli of a plural society comprising cultural/ethnic groups with differences of language, history or traditions. This diversity can also be reflected in the party system (Moreno 1997a,b).

Despite its secular ethnic conflicts, Spain is an entity clearly identifiable as having a historical unity. This unity goes beyond the simple aggregation of territories and peoples with no other affinity than their coexistence under the rule of one common monarch or political power.

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[2] According to Pérez-Agote, the fact that two identities can be referred to a larger entity does not preclude the possible incompatibility of their relationship (1994, p. 311). That would be the case, for example, with exclusive forms of both Basque and Spanish self-identification. However, the subsuming of the those identities under the European confines implies a nexus (even though it is not explicitly sought) of congruence between both exclusive forms of self-identification.

However, the social and cultural cohesion uniting Spain has not eliminated its internal tensions.

Both processes of state formation and nation building in modern Spain explain to a large extent how citizens express their territorial identities and institutional allegiances. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Spanish Liberals and Reformists carried out a large-scale programme of state national uniformity. But the profound attachment of Spaniards to their nationalities and regions remained firm and, in some cases, underwent a cultural revival (e.g. Catalonia *Reinaxença*).

At present, the persistence of a dual identity or compound nationality in Spain reveals the ambivalent nature of its internal ethnoterritorial relations:

Spain . . . is a state for all Spaniards, a nation-state for a large part of the Spanish population, and only a state but not a nation for important minorities. (Linz 1975: 423)

Consequently, Spanish citizens incorporate in variable proportions both local/ethnoterritorial and state/national identities. The degree of internal consent and dissent in decentralized Spain has found in the concept of dual identity a useful methodological tool for sociopolitical interpretations.[3]

Indeed, the quest for self-government by meso-level communities is in full accordance with the variable nature of such duality in citizens' self-identification: the more the primordial ethnoterritorial identity prevails upon the modern state identity, the higher the demands for political autonomy will tend to be. Conversely, the more pronounced the state-national identity is, the less likely it will be for ethnoterritorial conflicts to appear. At the extreme, the complete absence of one of the two elements of dual identity would lead to a sociopolitical fracture in the multinational state, and demands for self-government would probably take the form of full independence. In other words, when citizens in a substate community adopt an exclusive identity, the institutional outcome will tend to reflect this and will also be exclusive.

It has been argued that the accommodation necessary to secure

[3] In all seventeen Spanish *comunidades autónomas* there is a high proportion of citizens who claim some form of dual identity. The question addressed to them in the successive polls is as follows: 'In general, would you say that you feel (1) Only Andalusian, Basque, Catalan, etc.; (2) More Andalusian, Basque, Catalan, etc. than Spanish; (3) As much Andalusian, Basque, Catalan as Spanish; (4) More Spanish than Andalusian, Basque, Catalan, etc.; or (5) Only Spanish?'. In the period October 1990 to June 1995 a degree of duality was expressed by around 70 per cent of the total Spanish population (i.e. categories 2, 3 and 4). Approximately 30 per cent of all Spaniards expressed a single identity ('Only Spanish', or 'Only Andalusian, Basque, Catalan, etc.'). For an analysis of the case of Catalonia see Moreno and Arriba (1996) and Moreno, Arriba and Serrano (1998).

political and institutional stability in multinational societies is almost impossible to achieve. Furthermore, attempts made to achieve such a goal are bound to result in either the break-up of the state or the consolidation of a type of hegemonic authoritarianism to maintain the state's unity (Dahl 1971; Horowitz 1985).[4] Contemporary liberal thinkers have greatly revitalized the debate regarding individual and collective rights. Many of them can be labelled liberal nationalists (Tamir 1993); some have also persuasively argued the case for multiculturalism and the politics of recognition for minorities. However, several of these normative analyses insist upon the unfeasibility of accommodating ethnonational groups within federations, as the case of Quebec and Canada would illustrate.[5]

This chapter upholds the view that ethnoterritorial cooperation and agreement can overcome not only conflicts and divergence within multinational polities, but may also foster a deepening of democracy by means of favouring citizen participation at all levels of institutional life and political decision making.

In the following section a succinct review and interpretation of some of the main developments in Spain's recent history will pave the way for subsequent discussion of the Spanish model of multitiered ethnoterritorial concurrence. The concluding section focuses on the growing role played by those meso-communities in Europe which have been able to make the particular compatible with general. This phenomenon can be labelled as new *cosmopolitan localism*.

Unity and diversity in contemporary Spain

Spain is a multinational state made up of nationalities and regions.[6] Its territorial unity has been put under strain for several reasons, including

[4] Robert Dahl's position is in line with the views of Ernest Baker who also regarded political secessionism or authoritarianism as the two viable options in ethnocultural polyarchies. See Connor (1994, p. 124), and Linz (1973, pp. 103–4).

[5] For Will Kymlicka, ethnoterritorial accommodation would not constitute a stable political solution but a previous step to secession (1996b, p. 45). However, subsequent works (notably Kymlicka 1998a) show that it would be a misrepresentation to characterize him as being pessimistic about the viability of multinational federations. Linz's views are that federalism can consolidate liberal democracy in multinational states (1997b). On multiculturalism cf. Kymlicka (1995), Taylor (1992a) and Walzer (1997). On Quebec and the Canadian Federation, cf. Burgess (1990), Gagnon (1993b), and McRoberts (1997a).

[6] 'Nationalities' and 'regions' are the constituent territories of Spain according to the 1978 constitution. It is not easy to distinguish conceptually the term 'nation' from that of 'nationality'. Such a terminological distinction was to a great extent a consequence of the dichotomy between 'nation-state' and 'state of the nationalities' as regards the cases of the Austria–Hungary and Ottoman Empires at the beginning of the twentieth

the centrifugal effect of its ethnoterritorial and linguistic diversity,[7] as well as the tendency of its central state institutions to be either weak or excessively and violently centralized. Moreover, there has traditionally been a lack of congruence between regional political and economic power. This non-congruence[8] has further nourished the centrifugal tendencies evident in recent Spanish history, tendencies that have found expression in a number of armed conflicts.

Centre and periphery in postcolonial Spain

With the Restoration of the monarchy (1876–1923), and the centralizing dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923–30) which ensued, a new, centrally led attempt to impose uniformity on the country manifested itself. This effort ended in failure for several reasons.

The establishment of universal male suffrage in 1890 had the notable effect of placing incipient Catalan nationalism, or *Catalanisme*, squarely in the Spanish political scene. The disparity between Catalonia's social structure and that of an impoverished rural Spain was an important factor in the rise of Catalan nationalism (Giner 1980). Differences in socioeconomic composition between Spain's two major cities, Madrid and Barcelona, also became increasingly evident.[9] These elements fuelled a sense of hopelessness amongst members of

century. In broad terms, nationality can be referred to as a minority nation which has acceded to a degree of institutional autonomy or independence within a multinational state and which competes or coexists with a majority nation and/or other ethnoterritorial groups. Cf. Krejcí and Velímsky (1981, pp. 32–43).

[7] Castilian, or Spanish as it is usually referred to elsewhere, is the official language of the Kingdom of Spain. Approximately a quarter the Spanish total population of 40 million is bilingual. Their vernacular languages are also official in their respective territories: Catalan (spoken by 4.2 million in Catalonia; 2.1 million in Valencia; 0.2 million in the Balearic Islands, and 0.05 million in Aragon); Basque (0.7 million in the Basque Country, and 0.05 million in Navarre); Galician (2.3 million). Other official languages, as declared in their regional Statues of Autonomy, are Bable (spoken by 0.4 million in Asturias) and Aranese (0.004 million in Catalonia) (data collected from Sanmartí Roset 1996, p. 67). There are also a number of dialects of the aforementioned languages widely spoken in other regions (Andalusia, Canary Islands, Extremadura, Murcia).

[8] The traditional political and economic non-congruence in Spain has been shown in a permanent rivalry between centre and periphery. This dichotomy has historically translated into two main alternative models of state organization: centralist-authoritarian and federalist-democratic. Cf. Gourevitch (1979) for the types of economic and political non-congruence.

[9] Between 1877 and 1920, the proportion of Madrid workers in the industrial sector grew considerably from 18.4 to 42.5 per cent of the workforce, but remained behind Barcelona in this respect, with 37.1 per cent in 1877 to 54 per cent in 1920. Perhaps it was more significant that the proportion of 'unproductive' middle classes in Madrid, consisting of civil servants, members of the armed forces and domestic staff (23.6 per cent in 1877 and 15.3 per cent in 1920), was greater than that of Barcelona (5.9 per cent in 1877 and 5 per cent in 1920) (data taken from Linz 1967: 209).

the Catalan elite, who put their electoral support behind home-rule parties. The most important of these was the Lliga Catalana (later known as the Lliga Regionalista) which was founded in 1901 and subsequently came to enjoy significant influence under the leadership of Francesc Cambó.

The Basque Nationalist Party, founded by Sabino de Arana Goiri in 1895, was less successful than the Catalanist Lliga in obtaining support across class lines, partly because of its religious emphasis and ethnocentric claims. Early Basque nationalism stressed traditional community values in opposition to bourgeois industrial society, the effects of which included a considerable influx of migrants from the rest of Spain into the Basque Country. A racially based Basque essentialism was the ideological foundation of early Basque nationalism, which combined with a powerful populism and religious exclusivism to produce a discourse quite distinct from that of Catalan nationalism. The latter ideology was more intellectual and less based on 'folklore' from the outset, and has always been less secessionist in character.

Catalan nationalism seems to have provoked greater resistance than Basque nationalism precisely because it offered an alternative view of Spain, something Basque nationalism more frequently turned its back on. Both nationalisms, however, could be seen as political manifestations of a vigorous and prosperous periphery, which contrasted sharply with the often-parasitic centralism of the Spanish state to which it was subordinated.

Regionalism came in different forms in other Spanish territories, reflecting the ethnoterritorial diversity of a plural Spain and, in many cases, inspired by the action of the Catalan and Basque movements. Partly as a consequence of the federal experience of the First Republic (1873), there were clamours for recognition in Galicia, Valencia, Andalusia and Asturias. Chronologically, the appearance of explicit claims for regional autonomy in contemporary Spanish politics occurred in the years around the turn of the nineteenth century.

The Second Republic, the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship

In spite of its short existence, the Second Republic (1931–9) contributed greatly to the resolution of ethnoterritorial conflict in Spain. One of the most notable improvements was the adoption of a regionally sensitive constitution, establishing a state structure somewhere between unitary and federal models. This design conceded statutes of autonomy to

Catalonia,[10] the Basque Country[11] and Galicia.[12] However, the regional autonomy question also played a fundamental part in the political polarization leading up to the Civil War (1936–9). Even within the republican forces the devolution issue created a great deal of turmoil.

Although the autonomist movement was still young, it was spreading throughout Spain by the time the Civil War broke out. With the victory of General Franco's forces, a long period of political centralization ensued, aiming once again to create a uniform Spain.

Two of the great obsessions of the Franco dictatorship (1939–75) were anti-communism and anti-separatism. The 'sacred unity of the homeland' was regarded as an indispensable unifying element and as the very *raison d'être* of General Franco's despotic regime. To a large extent, Francoism justified itself through its ability to suppress and extirpate all forms of home rule,[13] regionalism and substate nationalism. Any form of federalism or wish for autonomy was understood by the Franco regime as 'separatism'.

The Francoist conception of national unity degenerated into an obsessive dogma which brooked no cultural or ethnic variety among the people of Spain. Franco's linguistic and cultural oppression, however, actually ended up stimulating regionalism and peripheral nationalism in Spain. From the 1960s onward, demands for regional autonomy became significantly more intense. During the final years of the regime's existence, the opposition forces developed a programme including the institution of democratic rights and the political decentralization of the Spanish state. In the so-called 'historical nationalities' in particular (Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia), the forces opposed to Francoism were able to articulate a political discourse denouncing the absence

[10] On 14 April 1931 the Spanish Second Republic was proclaimed. On the same day the Catalan nationalist leader, Francesc Macià, declared the creation of the Republic of Catalonia within the framework of a Spanish confederation. After negotiations with representatives of the central government, the Generalitat was reestablished. The Generalitat is Catalonia's government, of medieval origin.

[11] Three days after the proclamation of the Second Republic, an assembly of Basque mayors gathered by José Antonio Aguirre, leader of the Basque Nationalist Party, claimed their right to autonomy within a Spanish federal republic, by the historic Oak of Guernica. Nevertheless, parliamentary approval of the proposal was thornier than the Catalan statute.

[12] In Galicia, the Organización Regional Gallega Autónoma (ORGA, Autonomous Regional Organization of Galicia), led by Santiago Casares Quiroga, had instigated the drafting of a proposal for autonomy. On 28 June 1936, a referendum was held and around 70 per cent of the Galician electorate voted. The final result was 991,476 votes for and 6,805 against.

[13] With the partial exception of Alava and Navarre. These two *foral* territories were able to keep their fiscal privileges as a 'reward' for the participation of many *Carlistas* from those provinces who joined Franco's forces during the Civil War (Giner and Moreno 1990).

of democracy and the continuous official attacks on their identities. In these communities, democratic and ethnoterritorial claims became inseparable. In this way the ideology of autonomism and political decentralization made its way into Spanish democratic political consciousness.

The 1978 constitution and the decentralization of power

After Franco's death in 1975, the transitional process to democracy began in earnest. If there was general agreement among the democratic parties that decentralization was essential, however, the specific model to be adopted was unclear. A majority wanted home rule for all Spanish nationalities and regions. The constitutional expression of such a strong platform would constitute a major political challenge, for recent Spanish history had witnessed many tragic failures where ethnicity and the territorial sharing of power were concerned.

In the end, the broad political consensus which made the drafting of the 1978 constitution possible also brought with it an element of ambiguity in the territorial organization of Spain. In fact, two different conceptions which had traditionally confronted each other were both given expression in the Spanish *magna carta*: on the one hand, the idea of an indivisible Spanish nation-state, and on the other, the notion that Spain was an ensemble of diverse peoples, historic nationalities and regions. A middle way between these two visions of Spain would thus have to be subsequently negotiated and explicitly recognized in the constitution.

The starting point for this process lay in the provisions of the 1978 constitution itself. In the first instance, this document set the bases for any number of the *comunidades autónomas* to be self-governing, depending on the will expressed by either the inhabitants of each nationality or region, or their political representatives. The constitution also made it possible for the degree of self-government to be wide or restricted, according to the wishes of each nationality or region. Based on these two principles, Conservatives, Centrists, Nationalists, Socialists and Communists ended up hammering out an agreement for the implementation of the federalizing *estado de las autonomías*. The accepted solution took the form of an unwritten pledge to extend the procedures of political dialogue and consociationalism into the future.

This open model of asymmetrical federalization did not, however, specify the ways in which the different spatial entities would ultimately be articulated. Thus, an implicit desire was expressed by the drafters of the 1978 constitution to provide a broad outline of the procedures and degrees of self-government to be pursued by the nationalities and

regions, while allowing them a high degree of flexibility concerning their implementation. The formulation of a clear division of powers based upon 'conventional' federal techniques was, however, avoided.

The construction of the *estado de las autonomías* had to follow a 'top-down' process of decentralization. But it should be noted that this way of doing things is just one of the options available in the development of federal systems. The apparent result of this process twenty years later is not much more than a series of federal-type practices amongst several politically competitive units. Even so, the full development of multi-lateral decision making, or the genuinely common exercise of a three-tiered system of governance (at central, regional and local levels simultaneously), remains to be seen.

The decentralization process embodied in the 1978 Spanish constitution has undergone a long period of consolidation. The degree of autonomy for the Spanish nationalities and regions is considerable. This is illustrated by the evolution of the distribution of public expenditure in the three-tiered system of government that is reproduced in table 1:

Table 1 Territorial distribution of public expenditure in Spain (%)

	1981[1]	1984	1987	1990	1992	1997	1999[2]
Central	87.3	75.6	72.6	66.2	63.0	59.5	54
Regional	3.0	12.2	14.6	20.5	23.2	26.9	33
Local	9.7	12.1	12.8	13.3	13.8	13.6	13

[1] Beginning of the process of devolution
[2] Government's estimates
Source: Spanish Ministry of Public Administrations (MAP 1997)

Apart from the Basque and Catalan communities, support for autonomy has been particularly strong in Andalusia and some other regions (the Canary Islands, Galicia and Valencia).[14] It is undeniable that some regions have also been 'encouraged' to seek greater autonomy by their most prominent political parties. In this manner, areas with no self-governing tradition whatsoever have thus suddenly been inspired to claim home-rule rights. This category included communities lacking ethnoterritorial specificity, although some of them claimed to have distinct origins, like Cantabria, La Rioja and even the province of Madrid. In some cases, the decentralization process has also entailed a

[14] After fifteen years of decentralization, the Spaniards assessed the process as 'totally positive' (11 per cent), 'more positive than negative' (49 per cent), 'more negative than positive' (21 per cent), and 'totally negative' (10 per cent). The remaining 9 per cent corresponded to 'Don't Knows' (*El País*, 19 November 1995).

splitting of the ethnoterritorial base of certain provinces. One of the consequences of this tendency has been the creation of such hybrids as Castille–La Mancha or Castille and Leon.

The cases of Navarre and the Catalan Countries (*Països Catalans*)[15] exemplify the difficulty of setting clear boundaries in certain regions. Although they include Valencia and the Balearic Islands, for instance, the Catalan Countries are often thought of as a unified whole with a composite identity and as thus deserving political treatment as one unit. This interpretation is popular not just amongst pan-Catalanist parties, but it has even been preferred by the usually more cautious President of the Catalan Government, Jordi Pujol, in his 'federalist' understanding of Spain.[16] For some Basque nationalists, Navarre is similarly seen as an integral part of their country that can never be given up. This has been the claim made by both Herri Batasuna/Euskal Herritarrok, the political branch of the ETA (the Basque terrorist separatists), and the ETA itself. However, it is quite clear that a majority of the people of Navarre believe that the old kingdom should have the right to its own constitution.

As far as popular legitimation is concerned, the decentralization process has now been internalized by most Spaniards. This fact further legitimates continued political decentralization. But although far from over, the decentralization process now arguably needs to adapt to new forms of intergovernmental relations, especially those at the level of institutional collaboration.[17] The articulation of institutional relations involving shared powers and responsibilities lies at the very base of the federal-like ethnoterritorial relations in Spain.

Multiple ethnoterritorial concurrence and the Spanish *comunidades autónomas*

The gradual establishment of the *estado de las autonomías* in Spain has generated a complex set of relations which can be explained in terms of *multiple ethnoterritorial concurrence* (Moreno 1995). This model incorporates in a dynamic manner social, economic and political elements

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[15] This expression is used by some to denote the Principate of Catalonia, the Kingdom of Valencia and the Balearic Islands. Frequently included is Rosselló (Roussillon), in southern France, where Catalan is spoken.

[16] 'In the specific case of Spain I could conceivably be a federalist, if the federation was based on genuine and authentic nationalities of the state, viz. Euskadi [Basque Country], Galicia, the whole of Castille, and the Catalan Countries (or just Catalonia, if Valencia and the Islands . . . rejected being associated with the Principate)' (Pujol 1980, p. 26).

[17] In 1990 most Spaniards were of the opinion that relations between regional governments and central government should be 'collaborative' (80.7 per cent) and involving shared responsibilities (58.2 per cent) (García Ferrando et al 1994, p. 113).

which are constitutive of the Spanish case of federalization. 'Concurrence' should be understood in this context as the simultaneous occurrence of political events at state and substate levels, within the framework of a multinational society. The term should not simply be thought of as the equivalent of ethnoterritorial 'competition'. In a situation of ethnoterritorial concurrence there are competitive actions between state and substate nationalisms or regionalisms, or between the latter. However, there is no compulsion to eliminate other competing actors. Modern competition, instead, implies the aim of achieving the monopoly by means of eliminating other competitors.[18]

Since the transition to democracy in Spain, agreements and conflicts have taken place in a multiplicity of cases and circumstances. Eventual cooperation and mutual recognition of differences have often been reached between centre and periphery. But these pacts should not be regarded as mechanical outcomes in a lineal political process. Different kinds of innovative solutions have been found to articulate centre–periphery relations. Thus, asymmetry, heterogeneity and plurality remain as chiefly elements of ethnoterritorial concurrence in Spain (Moreno 1997a, b, Requejo 1996).

To further explain the development of the Spanish *comunidades autónomas*, I will use a sequential framework. First, the two 'axioms' of the Spanish context, which are also shared by most decentralized or federal systems, will be outlined: conflicting intergovernmental relations, and the politicization of ethnoterritorial institutions. Second, two 'premises'[19] of the pre-*estado de las autonomías* era will be analysed: the differential fact, and the centralist inertia. Thirdly, I will look at the three pillars or 'principles' upon which the organizational rationale of the 1978 constitution rests, implicitly or explicitly: democratic decentralization, comparative grievance and inter-territorial solidarity. And finally, three 'rules' will be shown to play a most important role in the social and political structuring of the decentralization process in Spain: centrifugal pressure, ethnoterritorial mimesis, and the inductive allocation of powers. These constituent elements, which characterize the model of multiple ethnoterritorial concurrence in Spain, are succinctly reviewed as follows:

[18] According to Karl Popper (1976) a situation of concurrence can and ought to be explained as an unintentional consequence (usually unavoidable) of the human actions (conscious and planned) of the competitors. These assume competition as a transitional exercise. Their ultimate 'rational' aim is that of achieving a position of monopoly without further competition.

[19] Axioms, premises, principles and rules should not be regarded as the constituent parts of a philosophical syllogism or as propositions in some logical proof.

(A) The axiom of 'conflicting inter-governmental relations' is associated with the political leanings and partisan affiliations present at all levels of government and other institutions representing territorial interests. Conflict and agreement are present in intergovernmental relations in Spain as in any other federal state. In many respects, these relations also provide a testing ground for Spain's democracy. A climate of permanent political bargaining among local, regional and central governments is bound to remain as the most characteristic feature of the Spanish process of federalization.

Criticism of the degree of dispersion and fragmentation of political life has been voiced in Spain. Some have proposed new forms of centralization as 'solutions' to what is considered to be an unbearable situation. Such criticism comes from those who feel that Spain's stability is threatened by the changing nature of intergovernmental relations and the sense of uncertainty this development implies. But these perceptions are not in tune with Spain's constitutional precepts and their implications, which have thus far fostered a decentralized form of government.

(B) The 'politicization of ethnoterritorial institutions' suggests the desire evident at all three levels of government to maximize their political image and performance. This exercise of meso-governmental patronage is not only carried out for domestic purposes, but also as a means of attracting interest and investment from abroad, given the process of European convergence and the increasing interdependence of the world economy. This accretion of subnational level power is commensurate with the growing capacity of regional elites for negotiation. Their practices are legitimized by the constitutional order and are grounded in the increasing budgetary manoeuvrability of the governments of the *comunidades autónomas*.

In any case, the European vocation of all of the Spanish nationalities and regions and their enthusiasm for further integration is remarkable. In fact, some of the most powerful minority nationalisms in Spain (Basque and Catalan) regard the consolidation of the European Union as highly significant in reducing the powers of central governments and in putting the very idea of the nation-state into retreat. This European outlook is also symptomatic of a general desire to leave behind the long stagnation of the Franco era, during which Spain remained isolated from the process of European integration.

(C) The premise of 'differential fact' refers to a feature, or rather a combination of features, that characterize an ethnic group or commun-

ity in comparison to others. It is, therefore, a concept deriving much of its meaning from a rather subjective perspective rooted in the ethnicity or ethnic identity of a given people. It seems clear that the mobilization patterns of the 'historical nationalities' have been premised on this 'differential fact' since the earliest stages of the decentralization process in Spain. The idea seems to have particularly resonance in the Basque, Catalan and Galician cases, all notable for their non-Castilian languages, their own cultures, and their specific histories. However, the last two of these elements are also shared by the other *comunidades autónomas*.

Most significantly, the 'differential fact' also manifests itself in the form of powerful nationalist parties and political coalitions in the 'historical nationalities'. This is a key element in the articulation of a popular feeling of being distinct from the rest of the Spanish peoples. Encouraging greater awareness of their own difference has thus become a permanent incentive for many actors in the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia to maintain their institutional peculiarities with relation to the other Spanish regions. However, it is worth remembering the sociopolitical mobilization in Andalusia which led to the referendum of 28 February 1980. This expression of popular will allowed Andalusia to achieve the same type of home rule as the 'historical nationalities'. This political development broke the model implicitly accepted by the Basque and Catalan nationalist parties which envisaged only a limited degree of administrative de-concentration for the other Spanish regions. Since then, the premise of the 'differential fact' has been closely linked to the principle of 'comparative grievance' analysed below.

(D) The premise of the 'centralist inertia' is rooted in a long-standing perception that the central administration (erroneously identified with the state as whole[20]) has supremacy over regional and local tiers of governments. This perception is the result not only of a tradition of dictatorial rule, including Franco's dictatorship most recently

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[20] The very term 'state' is ambiguously employed in the text of the constitution. In some articles (1, 56, 137, and, significantly, in the very title of Title VIII), the intention is for the term to denote the entire organization of the Spanish legal–political system. Thus, the term covers the regional administrations as well as the other agencies and autonomous bodies that make up the state. In other constitutional articles (3.1, 149 and 150), the state is considered to be synonymous with the institutions of the central administration, together with their peripheral administrations, which may on occasions clash with autonomous administrations. The Constitutional Court's judgement of 28 July 1981 clarified the semantic conflict by asserting that the state must be regarded as a composite whole which includes all the institutions of central, regional and local governments.

(1939–75), but also of the Jacobin view imported from France and embraced by Spanish liberals during the nineteenth century.

Thus, at the beginning of the decentralization process a significant number of politicians and state officials disregarded the demands, needs, and expectations of both regional and local administrations. They tried to discredit aspirations for home rule. But the decision of the Constitutional Court against the main provisions of the centralizing *LOAPA* (constitutional law passed in Parliament in 1982 with the support of the two main parties in 1982, but fiercely opposed by the nationalists[21]) was a decisive setback for the attempt to recentralize. Nonetheless, the subsequent tendency towards greater regional autonomy has been hampered by bureaucratic friction and interference, a result of the ingrained centralist mentality which is still widespread among members of the central bodies and institutions in Spain.

(E) Paradoxically, Francoism was the main factor responsible for the development of the principle of 'democratic decentralization'. Under Franco, a unitary concept of Spain was imposed through a defence of Spanish nationalism; this, in turn, was intimately related with the totalitarian ideas and values of some of those who had won the Civil War. Throughout the Franco era, 'Spanish' nationalism had tried to hide the plural reality of Spain. In the eyes of many of those who had lost the war, however, all things 'Spanish' came to be tainted with Franco's cultural genocide, political repression and reinvention of history. As a consequence, many of the democratic forces were suspicious of the 'Spanish' nationalism.

In the early 1970s, the democratic opposition forces to Franco's regime articulated a solid strategy of political action amalgamating the struggle for the recovery of democratic liberties with a desire for greater decentralization of power. Thus the quest for democracy and territorial home rule went hand in hand.

In this sense, the development of peripheral nationalism, regionalism and autonomism can be regarded as an unintended effect of hyper-centralization imposed by Francoism. The rise of regional self-government during the 1970s and 1980s was thus largely due to a desire to

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[21] After the attempted military coup of 23 February 1981, influential sectors of the centre-right UCD and the socialist PSOE (then government and main opposition parties, respectively) tried to 'harmonize' the decentralization process in the style of German federalism. The mistake was to believe that this could be achieved from the all-encompassing vision of the central state administration. The Constitutional Court annulled most of the provisions of the *LOAPA*, and upheld the principle of regional autonomy. This reinforced the legitimacy of the Court, which was to become a pivotal institution in the consolidation of democracy in Spain.

establish democratic institutions which would bring decision making closer to the people. Since then, the flourishing of democracy and freedom in Spain has been inextricably linked to the protection of decentralized power and the autonomy of Spain's nationalities and regions.

(F) The principle of 'comparative grievance' determines to a large degree the mobilization patterns of the Spanish *comunidades autónomas*. According to this, the right to home rule and the subsequent political mobilization is the result of an ethnoterritorial race in search of equal access to the institutions of self-government. This 'principle' conflicts with the 'premise of the differential fact' claimed by the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia. Popular perceptions like those related to the 'comparative grievance' and the 'differential fact' do not translate easily into positive legislation. They reflect social realities which are not necessarily quantifiable in, for example, the degree of fiscal autonomy or the type of home-rule institutions.

In Catalonia, for instance, which is a relatively rich community, perceived fiscal grievances have traditionally manifested themselves in strong arguments supporting political *Catalanisme*. The grievance here is based on the idea that Catalans receive much less from the central administration than their total contribution to the Spanish treasury. This feeling of financial discrimination has been perceived as an obstacle to the further development of Catalonia. More significantly, this perceived unfairness has also often been interpreted as a result of the negligence of an inefficient state apparatus which also fails to promote the growth of other less developed regions in Spain.[22]

Localism in Spain, linked to a strong sense of ethnoterritorial pride, has continued to nourish both expectations and concerns of the *comunidades autónomas*. In particular, it has fuelled formal and informal monitoring efforts by the regions to avoid being discriminated against. None of the Spanish nationalities and regions wants to be left behind.

(G) The principle of 'interterritorial solidarity' is not only a constitu-

[22] Curiously, Madrid paid up more in taxes than any other community in 1989. Madrid 'has five million inhabitants, compared with Catalonia's six, but in 1989, the takings for Madrid reached 3.3 billion pesetas, higher than Catalonia's 1.87 billion. In the same year, Andalusia, with seven million inhabitants, paid 0.61 billion, while Valencia, with only four million inhabitants, approached this figure, with 0.54 billion . . . In the collection of all major taxes, the first place corresponds to Madrid, in spite of having one million inhabitants less than Catalonia and a similar income. The difference is striking in the case of the IRPF [personal income tax]: in 1989, 1.01 billion pesetas (Madrid) compared to 0.7 billion (Catalonia)' (Platón 1994, p. 210).

tional precept but also the formal expression of a more prosaic reality: the transfer of financial resources from the wealthier to the poorer regions of Spain. This transfer aims at achieving a common basic level in the provision of social services, so that the standard of living of all Spaniards can be brought to roughly the same level. Furthermore, the 1978 constitution observes that the Spanish state must establish a just and adequate economic balance between the different areas of Spain (article 138).

With the gradual development of the 'home-rule-all-round' process in Spain, nationalities and regions regarded territorial autonomy as providing the means for bringing institutional decision making closer to citizens. *Comunidades autónomas*, particularly the economically poorer territories, also laid emphasis on the constitutional principle of inter-regional solidarity. A financial instrument was created for this purpose, the *Fondo de Compensación Interterritorial* (Interterritorial Compensation Fund), although the aim of redistributing funds has largely been neglected due to the absence of any clear criteria to justify positive discrimination in favour of the poorer *comunidades autónomas*. Differences in management capacity, however, have brought about an incentive for the less-developed regional administrations to catch up with those more advanced in new policy design and provision. A 'demonstration effect' regarding the implementation of policies by the *comunidades autónomas* is noticeable.[23]

(H) The political pressure exerted upon central power by both Basque and Catalan nationalisms contributed decisively in 1978 to a constitutional accommodation, which implicitly recognized the multinational nature of Spanish society. Since then the rule of 'centrifugal pressure' has been repeatedly instrumentalized by the most vigorous ethnoterritorial elites: Basque, Catalan, and Galician nationalists in the first instance, and regionalists in Andalusia, Navarre, Valencia and the Canary Islands at a later stage. In recent times, a similar pattern is observable with respect to other regional parties and formations in Aragon, Cantabria or Extremadura.[24] Note that centrifugal pressure is

[23] An illustration of this is provided by the Family Minimum Income Programme. This was introduced in the Basque Country in March 1998 to combat poverty and situations of social exclusion, and constituted a precedent in the subsequent programmes of minimum income benefits implemented in all seventeen *comunidades autónomas*. Although showing a degree of diversity in policy design and coverage, programmes of 'minimum income' developed by the Spanish 'historical nationalities' and regions aim at combining cash benefits with policies of social insertion (employment promotion and vocational training schemes, primarily).

[24] Among the local parties that have obtained parliamentary representation in Madrid, or in their regional parliaments, the following may be mentioned: Chunta, Coalición

meant to be used not only as a vehicle for negotiation, but also to dissuade certain politicians and civil servants of the central administration from reverting to centralizing tendencies.

The continuous and active presence of representatives of the Catalan and Basque nationalist parties in the Spanish parliament has been crucial. This nationalist input has contributed greatly to the consolidation of an autonomist vision of the state with respect to the political relations of the three levels of government. What is more, the increasing relative power of regional and federated organizations associated with national coalitions and parties has also contributed decisively to the federalization of politics in Spain.[25]

The centrifugal effects of political negotiation on a territorial level in Spain tend to be multiplied by the bilateral relations between central and regional administrations. The practice of bilateralism, combined with comparative grievance, entails major difficulties for the *estado de las autonomías*, given that the seventeen *comunidades autónomas* will be tempted to exert increasing centrifugal pressures of every kind in questions of common interest.[26]

(I) According to the rule of 'ethnoterritorial mimesis', the 'historical nationalities' (Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia) were the first to aspire to rights and powers comparable to those of the central government such as having their own police force, external signs and ornamental emblems, official visits abroad, exclusive rights established by regional parliaments, public policies in the fields of health, education and social welfare, and so on. Subsequently, a second group of *comunidades autónomas* wanted to imitate 'mimetically' the same powers as the 'historical nationalities' (such as Andalusia in 1981, followed by Valencia and the Canary Islands).[27] Finally, these same communities became

Canaria, Convergencia de Demócratas Navarra, Extremadura Unida, Partido Andalucista, Partido Aragonés, Partido Regionalista de Cantabria, Partido Riojano, Partido Socialista de Mallorca, Partiu Asturianista, Unión Alavesa, Unión Mallorquina, Unión para el Progreso de Cantabria, Unión del Pueblo Leonés, and Unión Valenciana.

25 The Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE, Socialists and Social Democrats) and Izquierda Unida (IU, Communists, Radical Socialists and Independent Leftists) have an organic federal composition. The Partido Popular (PP, Conservatives and Christian Democrats) has become increasingly regionalized. The crucial importance of the spatial element in Spanish politics has been reinforced by the electoral successes of new regional formations.

26 Intergovernmental cooperation of considerable political value has been initiated by conferences involving the central government and the *comunidades autónomas*. Even at the level of consultation, these conferences are vital to the articulation of policies discussed, agreed by consensus, or only partially agreed.

27 Already in 1984, Joan Lerma (former President of the Valencian government) considered that there were not three 'historical nationalities'. He then stated: 'The legal

models for 'latecomer' regions, which have tried to 'imitate' the institutional outlook of the early-rising nationalities and regions.

In line with the concept of ethnoterritorial mimesis, it could be argued that Basque nationalism, especially in its secessionist forms, has gone the furthest in proposing the idea of setting up an independent state for the Basque Country. Given the peculiar confederation of its historical territories, such a state would paradoxically have to be structured very much like plural Spain at present. *Catalanisme*, for its part, wants an independent fiscal system rather like the one operating in the Basque Country, if not simply a greater degree of financial and political autonomy. Galicia would probably follow Catalonia in having more powers transferred from central state institutions. It should be noted, however, that one cannot think of the mimetic process in mechanistic terms. The unfolding of this process will remain closely tied: (a) to the extent to which a majority of citizens of the Basque Country continue to identify themselves, at least partially, as 'Spanish'; and (b) how *Catalanisme* maintains its tradition of being an inclusive nationalism seeking to reform Spain as well as Catalonia. The strength of radical nationalism in Galicia, meanwhile, does not seem to indicate the collapse of a popular desire to belong to Spain as a whole.[28]

(J) The rule of the 'inductive allocation of powers' in the Spanish process of decentralization acknowledges the absence of a clear-cut constitutional division of powers in the three-tier system of government. This rule, which is implicit in the provisions of Title VIII of the 1978 constitution, draws attention to the fact that the Spanish decentralization process has followed an open model of territorial structuring, which only the passing of time has gradually defined and will continue to do.

The 1978 constitution allows for great flexibility of interpretation where the possibility of self-government is concerned. The terms adopted will largely depend on the political will of each nationality or region. Furthermore, the constitutional allocation of specific powers for the *comunidades autónomas*, which does not go so far as to establish a clear and comprehensive division of rights and powers, was the only feasible way to initiate a political decentralization process. It must be

treatment for Catalonia and the Basque Country is the same as that for Galicia, but also for Andalusia, the Canaries and for ourselves [the Valencians]' (*La Vanguardia*, 16 April 1984).

[28] Nationalists in the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia have insisted on the idea of a 'shared sovereignty' within the Spanish state. On 16 July 1998 the Declaration of Barcelona was signed by the Basque Partido Nacionalista Vasco, the Catalan Convergència i Unió, and the Galician Bloque Nacionalista Galego. They claimed the establishment of a confederal model of political accommodation in Spain.

remembered that during the transition to democracy this was one of the thorniest issues to reach agreement upon, and therefore required complete consensus.

Once the seventeen *comunidades autónomas* had been established, a further delegation of powers was effected. Its degree of heterogeneity has levelled out over time, although the process is far from over. In contrast to the traditional philosophy upon which other federal systems such as those of Germany, Australia, the USA or Switzerland have been modelled and built, the federalization in Spain can only be regarded as complete once a period of intergovernmental familiarity has elapsed. At the same time, the process of European convergence will exercise considerable influence in the future distribution of regional powers and responsibilities.

Meso-communities and the new cosmopolitan localism in Europe

In Spain, the process of home-rule-all-round has contributed significantly to the extension of a new *cosmopolitan localism*. This phenomenon is reflected in societal interests aimed at both developing a sense of local community and at participating actively in international spheres. There is, thus, a growing congruence between the particular and the general. Note that all Spanish meso-governments have made explicit their European vocation. They all share the desire of a majority of Spaniards to see an EU that would be not only the main economic institutional *locus* in the medium-term future, but whose legitimacy would also provide a foundation upon which to build a future European citizenship.

In Europe, one of the visible effects brought about by financial globalization is the relative obsolescence of the nation-state. The latter has constituted the central arena of the economic life for the past two centuries. Increasingly, however, the nation-state seems to be adopting the role of mere spectator to worldwide virtual financial transactions. The once powerful economic policies established at the national level are now severely restricted by those decisions taken by international trusts, pensions funds and the 'laundered' capital of transnational organized crime. Furthermore, globalization also affects other factors of production, such as the components of industrial goods made in third countries, as well as increasing legions of stateless workers (Strange 1995).

Given this context of internationalization, meso-governments are acquiring a newly found relevance and playing important roles in most aspects of contemporary life. A renewal of community life at the meso-

level derives mainly from the synthesis of two main factors: (a) the growing rejection of centralization in unitary states, coupled with a strengthening of supranational politics, and (b) the reinforcement of local identities and societal cultures with a territorial underpinning. This European communitarianism[29] affects not only minority nations (Catalonia, Flanders, Scotland), or new nation-states (Czech Republic, Slovenia), but also regions and metropolitan areas (Brussels region, Greater London, Milan-Lombardy, Paris–Île de France). The latter seem to follow a pattern of recreating those 'medium-size' political communities that flourished in the age prior to the New World discoveries (Italian city-states, the Hanseatic League, principalities). But in contrast with the Renaissance period, there now exists a common institutional tie due to the process of Europeanization.

Meso-governments are no longer dependent on those programmes of rationalization carried out during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by central bureaucracies and elites. Their own entrepreneurs, social leaders and local intelligentsia have taken up many of the initiatives and roles once reserved for the 'enlightened' actors holding positions of power at the centre of their nation states. Positions of political influence are now more evenly distributed between central, meso-level and local institutions. And the cooption of regional elites to central institutions of government is no longer the sole route available to a 'successful' political career.

In the EU context, the reinforcement of substate territorial identities is deeply associated with powerful material and symbolic referents of the past including culture, history, and territory. Innovative interpretations of these referents have been promoted to seek to overcome the denaturalizing effects of global hypermodernity.[30] However, it is important to point out that the new versions of these old symbols are not based on a reactive parochialism. The very idea of a 'fortress Europe' is not seen as a plausible option for the future. It also appears to be in contradiction with the very cosmopolitan nature of local, national and supranational values in Europe. Immigration from non-EU countries has certainly had a role to play in the renewed strength of xenophobic sentiments in Europe. Nevertheless, immigrants willing to take on the values of civic pluralism and tolerance tend to find no major difficulties integrating

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[29] This concept is quite distinct from the standard North American interpretation of communitarianism (Etzioni 1993). Many of the incipient communitarian experiences in the United States may be regarded as reactions to specific social cleavages (criminalization of social deviance), as instrumental means of socialization (overcoming suburban constraints), or as alternative lifestyles to dominant values (possessive individualism).

[30] Denaturalizing is used here as meaning the deprivation of the rights of citizenship within an established democratic polity.

themselves into the economic and social life of their first 'port of entry', i.e. local and meso-communities.

According to the influential functionalist school of social sciences, political justice and institutional stability have been regarded as incompatible and unsuitable goals for polyarchies. Attempts to conciliate both goals have been argued to result in the break-up of the state or the consolidation of authoritarianism. The case of multinational Spain offers an example of how multiple identities and political loyalties can be accommodated, thus facilitating ethnoterritorial co-operation and agreement among constituent nationalities and regions. As the case of Spanish *comunidades autónomas* illustrates, multiple concurrence of territorial interests can not only overcome conflicts but can also provide a deepening of democracy by means of bringing political decision-making closer to civil society.[31]