

Multinational democracy and the consequences of compounded representation: the case of Spain

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Sonia Alonso

Multinational Democracy and the
Consequences of Compounded
Representation. The Case of Spain

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Abstract

Democracy is feasible in multinational states. Sub-state nationalism in Europe has grown stronger, not weaker, during the last decades. And this has taken place because of democracy and not in spite of it. The cohabitation of democracy and nationalism is guaranteed by the establishment of compounded representation. The political decentralization of the state produces a multiplication of the sources of representation. Territorial representation becomes as important as individual representation, and sub-state nationalists lose incentives to defend a type of political representation that is ethnically based in favour of one that is territorially based. As a result, membership in one nation ceases to exclude membership in another and dual national identities become the rule and not the exception. I shall use the case of Spain as an illustration of this process. Spain is a paradigmatic case of how to establish a stable democracy in a multinational state with deeply entrenched nationalist conflicts. Thus, it is the best possible illustration in order to defend the viability of democracy in multinational societies under constraining conditions (new democracy, the presence of secessionist terrorism, highly mobilized minority nationalisms, etc.). In fact, Spain in 1977 lacked most of the conditions established by Dahl (1971) as essential if a country with considerable subcultural pluralism was to maintain its conflicts at a low enough level to sustain polyarchy.

Kurzzusammenfassung

Demokratie in multinationalen Staaten ist möglich. In Europa hat der regionale Nationalismus in den letzten Jahrzehnten an Einfluss gewonnen und nicht verloren. Dies geschah wegen und nicht trotz der bestehenden Demokratien. Die Vereinbarkeit von Demokratie und Nationalismus wird durch die Einrichtung gemischter Formen von Repräsentation gewährleistet. Die politische Dezentralisierung des Staates führt zu einer Vervielfachung der Quellen von Repräsentation. Territoriale Repräsentation wird genauso wichtig wie individuelle Repräsentation, und regionale Nationalisten verlieren das Interesse, eine politische Repräsentation zu verfechten, die auf ethnischen Unterschieden basiert, sondern setzen auf eine territoriale politische Repräsentation. Das hat zur Folge, dass die Zugehörigkeit zu einer Nation die Zugehörigkeit zu einer anderen nicht länger ausschließt und eine doppelte nationale Identität nicht mehr die Ausnahme, sondern die Regel darstellt. Ich veranschauliche diesen Prozess am Fall Spaniens. Spanien stellt einen beispielhaften Fall dafür dar, wie eine stabile Demokratie in einem multinationalen Staat mit tief verwurzelten nationalistischen Konflikten etabliert werden kann. Spanien ist daher das beste Beispiel für die Siche-

rung der Überlebensfähigkeit von Demokratien in multinationalen Gesellschaften unter ungünstigen Bedingungen (neu etablierte Demokratie, das Bestehen von secessionistischem Terrorismus, starker Nationalismus von Minoritäten etc.) dar. Tatsächlich fehlten Spanien 1977 die meisten Bedingungen, die Dahl (1971) als entscheidende Voraussetzungen dafür ansah, dass ein Land mit ausgeprägtem regionalem Pluralismus Konflikte auf einem so niedrigen Niveau halten kann, dass eine Polyarchie von Bestand sein kann.

Sonia Alonso

Multinational Democracy and the Consequences of Compounded Representation. The Case of Spain

I Democracy and Nationalism: an Ambiguous Relationship

Is nationalism a threat for representative democracy? Is representative democracy in crisis as a result of the growth of nationalism? The literature on nationalism, at least since the influential dichotomy elaborated by Hans Kohn in *The Idea of Nationalism* (1944), has usually depicted it as a Janus-faced phenomenon: Sleeping Beauty versus Frankenstein (Hechter 2000: 6)¹; civic (or demotic) versus ethnic (or particularistic) nationalism; Western versus Eastern nationalism; liberal versus illiberal nationalism. These typologies rest on “thinly disguised normative criteria” (Hechter 2000: 6) about good and bad nationalism. Good nationalism is civic, liberal, rational, inclusive, and has developed mainly in the West, inextricably linked with the development of representative democracy. Bad nationalism is based on ethnicity and, therefore, ascriptive, exclusive, illiberal, irrational, with high potential for xenophobia and violent conflict, and has developed mainly in the East, endangering, and even preventing, the establishment and ulterior stability of democracies.

According to this Janus-face interpretation of nationalism, ethnic nationalism is a threat for democracy while civic nationalism is, in fact, a constitutive part of it. Building on Kohn’s dichotomy, Greenfeld explains how nationalism and democracy were initially connected: “the location of sovereignty within the people and the recognition of the fundamental equality among its various strata, which constitute the essence of the modern national idea, are at the same time the basic tenets of democracy” (1992: 10). Civic nationalism defines the nation in political terms; it refers to the idea of a sovereign people living in a particular territory, a community of laws and legal institutions. This nationalism is necessarily democratic (Ignatieff 1993: 6). Ethnic nationalism, on the contrary, rests on a vision of community which is rooted in perceptions of common ancestry and shared historic culture. The members of the nation “form a single cultural community living according to vernacular codes in a historic homeland” (Smith 2000: 7). When the nation is defined in

1 “It begins as Sleeping Beauty, an uplifting tale of the victory of the common people against the corrupt monarchical forces of the *ancien régime*. (...) By the twentieth century, however, nationalism transmogrifies into Frankenstein’s monster, animating a rogues’ gallery of xenophobic and even genocidal social movements” (Hechter 2000: 6).

ethnic terms, nationalism is likely to become a destructive phenomenon. Moreover, there is a connection between ethnic nationalism and authoritarianism: "... as nationalism spreads in different conditions and the idea of the nation moved from the sovereign character to the uniqueness of the people, the original equivalence between it and democratic principles was lost" (Greenfeld 1992: 10).

The idea that civic nationalism is a constitutive part of a democratic polity and that ethnic nationalism is a threat for representative democracy was already present, albeit differently formulated, among the early thinkers of representative democracy. A precondition for the successful establishment of democracy was thought to be the existence of one *demos*, one nation, one national character. John Stuart Mill, in his *Considerations on Representative Government*, argued that "it is in general a necessary condition of free institutions that the boundaries of government should coincide in the main with those of nationality" (as quoted by Connor 1967: 32). Mill was convinced that the existence of a multinational population would invite authoritarianism "by lending itself to a divide-and-rule technique" (Connor 1967: 32).

Writing some decades later, Ernest Barker supported Mill's considerations and contended that "... in a multinational State the government either pits each nation against the rest to secure its own absolutism, or allows itself to become the organ of one of the nations for the suppression or oppression of others" (as quoted by Connor 1967: 33). The result for democracy was that, in order to escape authoritarianism, it tended to dissolve into as many democracies as there were nationalities (Connor 1967: 34). This conclusion by Barker was similar to the one arrived at by Robert Dahl in his 1971 *Polyarchy* when he affirmed that "the price of polyarchy may be a breakup of the country. And the price of territorial unity may be a hegemonic regime" (121). Walker Connor, writing in the late 1960s, sympathized with this conclusion when he stated that "... postwar developments indicate a link between multinationalism and pressure for nondemocratic actions" (Connor 1967: 50).

Connor's argument was that European countries had failed to accommodate multinationalism within a single state (1967: 43). As evidence in favour, he suggested the endurance, even revival, of the cultural cleavage in democracies such as Canada, Belgium, and Switzerland (Connor 1967: 40–45). If it failed in Europe, why should we expect better anywhere else in the world, where democracies are more fragile? Dahl was of the same opinion. Dahl defended, with Mill, the existence of only one *demos* as a condition for democracy to increase its chances of success:

"Presumably because an ethnic or religious identity is incorporated so early and so deeply into one's personality, conflicts among ethnic or religious subcultures are specially fraught with danger, particularly if they are also tied to region. (...) That subcultural pluralism often places a dangerous strain on the tolerance and mutual security required for a system of public contestation seems hardly open to doubt. Polyarchy in particular is more frequently found in rela-

tively homogeneous countries than in countries with a great amount of subcultural pluralism” (Dahl 1971: 108).

At approximately the same time, Rabushka and Shepsle (1972), in their analysis of democratic instability in ethnically plural societies, concluded that there is a rational logic to the disintegration of multinational democracies and that, therefore, it is expectable that in most cases they will disintegrate.

The debate about the viability of democracy in multinational countries was reproduced, along the same lines, among scholars of transitions to democracy. Rustow, writing in 1970, warned that “the only precondition for the establishment of a democratic state is that the great majority of the citizens of the future democracy have no doubt or mental reservation about the political community to which they belong” (350). Following Dahl and Rustow, there has been wide agreement among transitologists that “the ethnification of politics in democratising states precludes a stable democratic outcome or ‘consolidation’” (Hughes and Sasse 2001: 221). More recently, analysts of the transitions to democracy in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have arrived to similar conclusions. According to Skalnik Leff (1999: 206), there is a “problematic interaction between democratization and the politics of national identity.” Philipp Roeder (1999), writing in the same year, contended that it is very unlikely for a liberal democracy to survive in an ethnically plural society. Scholars writing at the end of the 1990s about the collapse of the three communist federations (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union), concluded that nationalism posed too great a danger to the consolidation of democracy. Some went as far as to declare that “without the right of national self-determination, neither democracy nor the democratic peace is likely to flourish in this part of the world” (Roeder 1999: 854).

Contrary to this scholarly diagnosis, there is empirical evidence in favour of the thesis that democracy is viable in multinational countries. There are many examples of stable democracies in multinational societies (and they are not all located on the Northern hemisphere): Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, India, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. There is enough variation among these countries in terms of levels of economic development, longevity of the regime, geographical location and size, levels of ethnic heterogeneity, and political culture to render these variables non-determinant as explanatory factors. Moreover, three of these cases have suffered a long and bloody campaign by terrorist organizations that defend an ethno-nationalist ideology and their democracies are still in place.

The revival of minority nationalism in Western democracies is not to be denied; it has even accentuated since the time when Connor was writing, as he rightly predicted. Such revival, however, has not been accompanied by a threat to democracy. Concerning the democratizing states of post-communist Europe, there are several cases where the literature expected the emergence of a Frankenstein-style nationalism that would doom the estab-

lishment of democracy, but the prediction has not been fulfilled: “Despite the expectations of many scholars (and the model of ethnic nationalism), Latvia did not become authoritarian or experience violent ethnic conflict in the 1990s. Indeed, its post-communist transition represents a major success story” (Jubulis 2008: 20). The Baltic States are good examples of what Przeworski and his collaborators were already claiming in the mid-1990s: “it is wrong to assume that culturally or nationally heterogeneous societies are not viable candidates for successful democratization” (Przeworski et al. 1996: 33).

This paper will argue that democracy has survived, endured, and, in some cases, even consolidated in the multinational states of Europe. This is not to say that democracy can solve the conflicts associated with the presence of cultural minorities and sub-state nationalisms or that it can make national identities disappear or merge into one homogeneous civic identity. As a matter of fact, minority nationalism has been doing very well under democratic institutions. There is no surprise in this, since representative democracy is, after all, the only political system that is based on the management of conflict: “democratic society is built around conflict, not organic unity or harmony” (Urbinati 2006: 34). Democracy does not solve minority nationalism and nationalist conflict but manages it, transforms it into something “palatable,” and, while doing so, transforms itself. This paper shall provide evidence to support David Laitin’s contention:

“The denial of primordial theory allows us to overcome a liberal prejudice, perhaps associated with Dahl’s writings, that the national issue must be solved before normal democratic politics can take place. Identity politics under conditions of multiple identities can be as ‘normal’ (i.e., conflictual without revolutionary implications) as Przeworski and Wallerstein’s version of class politics (Laitin 1995: 31).

I shall use the case of Spain as an illustration of this process. Spain is a paradigmatic case of how to establish a stable democracy in a multinational state with deeply entrenched nationalist conflict. Thus, it is the best possible illustration to defend the viability of democracy in multinational societies under constraining conditions (new democracy, the presence of secessionist terrorism, highly mobilized minority nationalisms, etc.). In fact, Spain in 1977 lacked most of the conditions established by Dahl (1971) as essential if a country with considerable subcultural pluralism was to maintain its conflicts at a low enough level to sustain polyarchy.

II Representing Individuals and Territories: Compounded Representation

Following the French and American revolutions, much Western political thought “has been premised on the idea that the state should be (or become) a ‘nation-state,’ and that there is something ‘abnormal’ about the presence of nations within” (Kymlicka 2001: 39). Political

scientists have been defending, until recently, that cultural homogeneity is a pre-condition for the establishment, and the functioning, of representative democracy. Assimilating the internal national minorities has been a preferred strategy by Western democracies during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and, for a while, it seemed to work.

Progressively, however, assimilation stopped working. Against the prediction by modernization theorists such as Karl Deutsch, national minorities started to gain political influence and became more capable of resisting assimilation. In the face of this increasing assertiveness, accommodation into multinational state forms has substituted assimilation and homogenization as the response followed by most Western democracies (Kymlicka 2001: 42). All Western countries with national minorities have recognized the identities of the nations within and have designed institutional arrangements that provide these national groups with highly autonomous, even semi-independent governments.

Federalism and devolution have been the institutional techniques most widely used by existing democracies for dealing with geographically concentrated national minorities. As a matter of fact, a majority of the existing multinational democracies are, at the same time, federal states (Belgium, Canada, India, Spain, Switzerland, and South Africa) or have self-rule arrangements (Denmark, Finland, Italy, and the United Kingdom). The exceptions among multinational democracies are those cases where the national minorities are not clearly concentrated in one region but dispersed throughout the country (the Baltic States and some countries in Eastern Europe).

Federalism was not originally conceived as a way of dealing with national minorities' claims to territorial self-determination². However, it soon became evident that its potential for the accommodation of minority nationalism was high. Federalism allows national minorities to govern themselves while maintaining the territorial integrity of the multinational state. As Alfred Stepan rightly points out, India in late 1948, Belgium in 1969, and Spain in 1975 were countries with strong unitary features until their political leaders decided that "the best way—indeed the only way—to hold their countries together in a democracy would be to devolve power constitutionally and turn their threatened polities into federations" (Stepan 1999: 21). Stepan continues:

“... although such group-specific rights may not be consistent with some 19th century tenets of Anglo-Saxon liberal democracy or with the French idea of citizenship in a nation-state, they are consistent with a polity in which group rights do not violate individual rights, and they permit effective democratic citizenship and loyalty to be extended throughout the polity” (1999: 26).

2 The main goal of the U.S. model of federalism was the protection of individual rights “against encroachments on the part of the central government (or even against the ‘tyranny of the majority’) by a number of institutional devices, such as a bicameral legislature in which one house is elected on the basis of population, while in the other house the subunits are represented equally” (Stepan 1999: 20).

The basic principle behind *representative* democracy is that the sovereign people rule themselves through *representatives*. What are then the effects of federalism on representative democracy? Federalism compounds representation. In federal democracies, not only individuals are represented but also territories (and the groups living within them). Society is subdivided into territory based units and the representation of territories is constitutionally guaranteed. In multinational societies, this means that the states' national minorities have a chance to become regional majorities. Federal institutions offer voters numerous, overlapping, and sometimes competing arenas of representation (Hamann 1999). They endow individuals "with multiple group memberships" since these individuals are simultaneously citizens of the federal state and of its constituent units (Tuschhoff 1999: 18). Thus, federalism "provides a necessary, albeit not sufficient, condition for individuals to articulate more fully complex self-identification" (Lancaster 1999: 64). Federalism produces a multiplication of principal-agent relationships; it offers citizens a wider choice of agents (representatives) since party systems are multi-dimensional and territorialized; and it encourages the competition for authority among agents since different institutional levels are sovereign for different policy areas.

The most precious effect of federalism on multinational democracies is that it "allows and facilitates diversity" (Tuschhoff 1999: 25) by multiplying the forms of representation. There is, however, another side to it, a side that is not usually considered in the literature and whose negative or positive character is still to be determined: the institutionalization and proliferation of minority nationalisms. The recognition of several *demos* within the state not only facilitates the political representation of the pre-existing national identities of state citizens; it also encourages the formation of new regional and national identities that were not there before: "Federalism (...) may be harmful by creating an 'us' versus 'them' mentality" (Lancaster 1999: 77).

III Compounded Representation in the Spanish *Estado de las Autonomías*

Spain is the most multinational of all Western democracies³. A majority of the seventeen self-governing regions of Spain are home to nationalist and regionalist parties who claim their right to territorial self-determination. Eight of these regions have their own language or languages: Catalan in the Balearic Islands, Catalonia (where there is also a minority language, Aranese), and the Valencian Country; Basque in the Basque Country and Navarre; Gallego in Galicia; Catalan and Aragonese in Aragon; and Bable in Asturias. Basque, Catalan, and Gallego are constitutionally recognized as official languages within

3 Multinational does not mean the same as multicultural, or multiethnic, or multiracial. Multinational implies the organization of national minorities into political territorial units within the state.

their territories. In Aragon and Asturias, the vernacular languages are constitutionally recognized as requiring special protection by the regional authorities.

The 1978 Spanish constitution was an agreement between two different conceptions of Spain which had traditionally been in opposition to each other. On the one hand, there is the idea of an indivisible Spanish nation-state. On the other, there is the conviction that Spain is made up of a diversity of peoples and/or nations. The constitution represented a middle way between these two conceptions and, as such, it established an element of openness in the territorial organization of Spain. Spain is defined as one single nation. The constitution recognizes, simultaneously, the existence of several “historical nationalities” and “regions,” but does not mention any of them in particular. Thus the definition of which territories within Spain are to be considered “historical nationalities” and which are going to be considered “regions” was left open. This “incomplete articulation of a federal system” (Lancaster 1999: 65) is not untypical of federal or federalizing states, such as Belgium and Italy, however.

The constitution established two main types of regional autonomy. The highest level of autonomy was granted to the “historical nationalities”, i.e., those regions that had already enjoyed a Statute of Autonomy during the Second Republic (Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia). These regions were offered a “fast-track” to autonomy. The rest of the regions would have a comparatively lower level of autonomy, although the constitution offered the possibility that with time (at least five years should pass before the first reform) they could acquire increasing competencies and level up with the Basques, the Catalans, and the Galicians. These were the “slow-track” regions (Moreno 2001).

With the development of the *Estado de las Autonomías*, regional institutions (legislatures, governments, and administrations) have become a ubiquitous reality in Spain. They have their own symbols and their particular names. People are born into these political communities; they become familiarized with them and grow an identity with them.⁴ Furthermore, regional institutions actively try to produce regional identities, a process which, very often, is implemented by state-wide parties at the regional level.

The recognition of national minorities and the federalization of Spain have encouraged the formation of new regional and national identities that did not exist before, or were very weak and unmobilized. *Demos* have become nested and concurrent.⁵ A citizen of Catalonia belongs to the Catalanian *demos* but also to the Spanish one. A citizen of Andalusia does not belong to the Catalanian *demos* but she/he takes part in decisions that affect Catalanian

4 “What has given us a sense of unity as a people has been the conquest of our autonomy” (Caballero, *Izquierda Unida, Diario de Sesiones del Parlamento de Andalucía*, 16 February 2007: 4621).

5 This is probably the main difference between the multinational structures adopted by Spain (and, although less advanced and developed but in a similar direction, by the United Kingdom and Italy), on the one hand, and Belgium, on the other. Belgium is moving towards two separate impermeable nations that share a state. Spain, on the other hand, is moving towards nested nations.

citizens by virtue of her membership in the Spanish *demos*. Each *demos*, in turn, is internally heterogeneous; its citizens have different national identities, feel part of different *demos*. We may find Catalan citizens that feel Catalan AND Spanish; Catalan citizens that feel Catalan AND NOT Spanish; and, finally, Catalan citizens that feel Spanish AND NOT Catalan (see Table 2).

The recognition of national minorities and the federalization of Spain have also encouraged the emergence of new nationalist parties, which have mushroomed in the last 30 years. A non-exhaustive list includes 95 active parties (still participating in elections at the local, regional, or state level), 87 of which have been established after 1977.⁶ Undoubtedly, not all of them can claim to be representatives of the people in local, regional, or state parliaments. As a matter of fact, 37% have never obtained a representative at any electoral level. However, the number of nationalist parties with a relevant electoral presence is all but negligible (see Table 1).

The growth in the number of nationalist parties is also to be seen in other multinational democracies of Europe, particularly since the mid-1960s, when Western democracies were starting to implement policies of recognition of national minorities within the state, either through federalization or through political decentralization (see Figure 17).

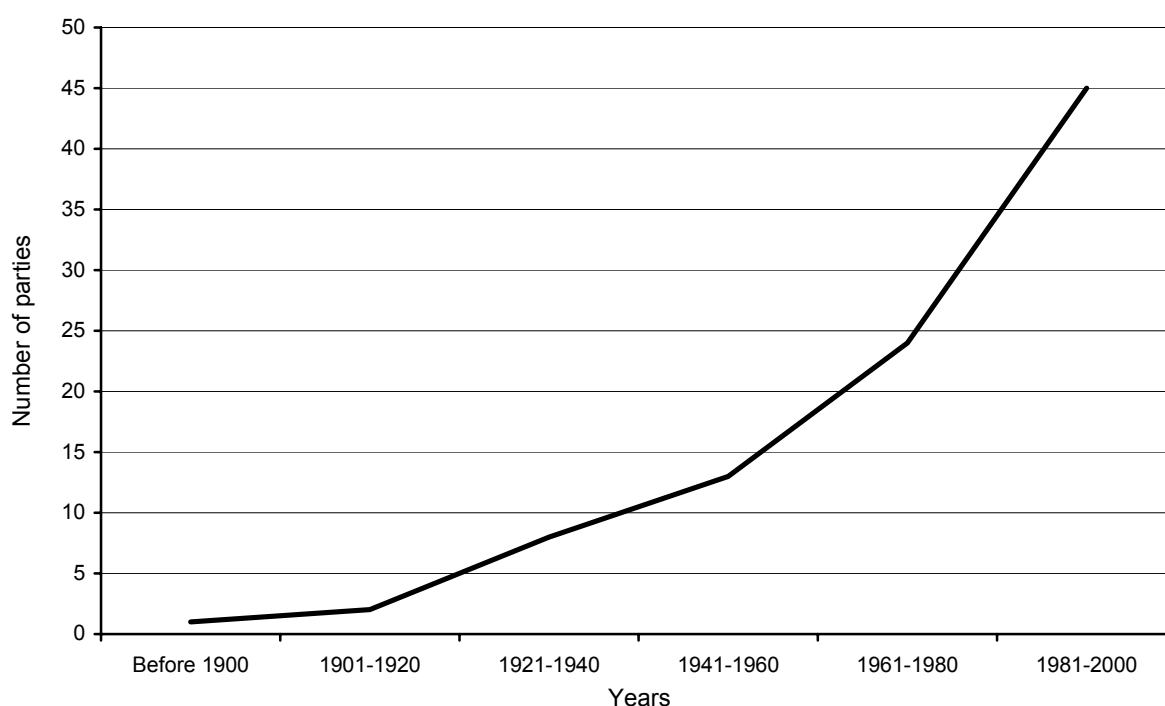
Table 1: Average percentage of votes for the most relevant nationalist and regionalist parties in Spain (1977–2007)

Party	Elections to Spanish parliament	Elections to regional parliaments	Local elections
Partido Andalucista	4.6	6.8	8.2
Chunta Aragonesista	6.0	6.8	5.9
Partido Aragonés Regionalista	9.4	17.4	16
Partíu Asturianista	1.1	2.3	1.7
Unió Mallorquina	2.1	6.6	7.2
PSM-Entesa Nacionalista	4.4	9.4	8.2
Partido Nacionalista Vasco	27.4	33.5	29.4
Herri Batasuna/Euskal Herritarrok	15	16	14.3
Eusko Alkartasuna	8.5	11.4	8.6
Coalición Canaria	26	31.4	28.1
Partido Regionalista de Cantabria	5.6	14.4	13.7
Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya	5.4	9.2	7.3
Convergència i Unió	26.3	38.3	28.5
Bloque Nacionalista Galego	7.5	16	13.6
Partido Nacionalista Vasco (Navarre)	2.9	4.2	1.9
Herri Batasuna (Navarre)	10.5	11.9	11.1
Convergencia de Demócratas de Navarra		9.5	4.6
Unió Valenciana	4.1	5.8	5.2
Bloc Nacionalista Valencià	1.6	4.6	3.8

6 The list can be found in Annex 1.

7 This graph has been elaborated with data from Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK. The data are available under request.

Figure 1: The birth of minority nationalist and regionalist parties that are still active in Western Europe (1900–2000)



Source: own data.

Table 2: National identities in Spain

	Spanish identity: “Only Spanish/more Spanish than [region]”		Dual identity: “As Spanish as [region]”		Regional identity: “Only [regional]/more [regional] than Spanish”	
	1996	2005	1996	2005	1996	2005
Andalucía	15	13	68	69	16	16
Aragón	19	13	63	71	18	13
Asturias	8	9	53	69	39	16
Baleares	23	17	51	52	24	24
Canarias	8	4	46	57	45	37
Cantabria	21	17	68	68	12	10
Castilla-M	46	31	51	63	2	3
Castilla-L	50	38	43	55	5	2
Cataluña	24	17	37	45	37	38
C.Valenciana	34	33	54	56	11	9
Extremadura	27	7	60	81	13	10
Galicia	13	13	44	61	43	25
Madrid	52	33	44	52	2	4
Murcia	37	27	55	65	8	5
Navarra	12	7	49	43	29	37
País Vasco	9	12	36	33	51	46
Rioja	6	15	82	70	12	11
España	22	20	49	57	26	19

IV The Positive Effects of Compounded Representation: the Development of Democratic Nationalism

The federalization of Spain, with its accompanying multiplication of sources of representation, has had a number of positive effects on the relationship between nationalism and democracy. These effects are positive because they have contributed to make the living together of minority nationalism and democracy viable. The most relevant of these positive effects are discussed in the following section of the paper.

1) *The Increased Legitimacy of Spanish Democracy*

The history of Spanish democracy during the last thirty years cannot be understood independently from the history of the *Estado de las Autonomías*. Democratic Spain and autonomous Spain have developed simultaneously and in constant feedback. Political leaders of all tendencies, irrespective of whether they are satisfied or not with the degree of decentralization achieved, agree on this. Spanish democracy would not have consolidated itself without the federalization of the state, and the federalization of the state could only have worked under democratic conditions.

State parties and nationalist parties coincide in their support of the Spanish *Estado de las Autonomías*. Undoubtedly, the rationale that moves the process of territorial and political decentralization is different for state parties and nationalist ones, despite some overlapping, and their concrete institutional preferences also vary. But almost everyone agrees that the *Estado de las Autonomías* has contributed to the democratization of Spain, to the welfare of its citizens, and to the empowerment of its cultural minorities. Political decentralization started as a way to accommodate nationalist separatism but has become, with time, an end in itself. Nationalist parties recognize this:

“... [I]n the recent history of the Spanish autonomic development [development of the *Estado de las Autonomías*] the same dynamic always repeats itself: that which a few years ago was presented as a grave danger (...) for the integrity and even the existence of the State reveals itself, with time, as a great formula for the distribution of political power and for the consolidation of a complex system that is enriched by its own plurality, a system that provides instruments of self-government, never privileges, and that recognizes and treats differently different realities” (Xuclá, *Convergència i Unió, Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 20 September 2005: 5570)⁸

“By the way, this position according to which self-government is a good thing was not common twenty-three years ago in many places; today, however, we all understand that the self-government of the Autonomous Communities is a good thing, and this is an important ad-

8 All texts from parliamentary debates have been translated from Spanish by the author.

vance.” (Lagasabaster, *Eusko Alkartasuna, Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 12 September 2006: 9938)

State parties in favour of decentralization argue that to decentralize is good in itself, that it brings politics closer to the people, that it makes politics more democratic, even more efficient. Nationalist parties argue the same⁹. Nationalism is raising the banner of democratic values to legitimize its desire for territorial self-determination. Thus, the discourses of state parties and nationalist parties sometimes overlap. Recently, during the discussions in parliament to reform the Statutes of Autonomy of several Spanish regions, the party in government proclaimed that “the reforms of the Statutes of Autonomy (...) are moved by one objective: to improve the capacity of institutions to respond to the needs of the citizens, to be more effective (...), more receptive to [their] demands” (Fernandez de la Vega, vice-president, *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 21 December 2006: 11475). In a similar vein, the prime minister, Rodríguez Zapatero, of the Socialist Party, declared:

“I am deeply convinced of the goodness, the utility, and the success of the *Estado de las Autonomías*, by what it means in terms of proximity (...) to the citizens, by what it means and represents in terms of the capacity to defend the territorial regional interest” (*Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 23 May 2006: 8983).

Nationalist and regionalist parties, in turn, argue similarly:

“The solution to [the new] problems requires the development of measures in the Islands by an administration that is close to the citizens (...). This is the main objective of the reform of our Statute of Autonomy” (González, *Coalición Canaria, Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 6 February 2007: 11598).

“To give more self-government to the Autonomous Communities is to bring the government closer to the citizen” (*Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds, Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 12 September 2006: 9931).

“The main *raison d’être* of aragonese nationalism is to continue our fight for self-government. And this self-government must not be understood as an end in itself but as a method, as a way of improving democracy, as a way of achieving higher levels of welfare, a more educated society, a better trained society, a society that is more conscious of itself, with a higher capacity for criticism of everything that surrounds it” (Bernal, *Chunta Aragonesista, Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes de Aragón*, 17 May 2006: 5118).

Spanish citizens also have a positive vision of the *Estado de las Autonomías*. According to a CIS survey (n° 2286), 64% of respondents think that the creation and development of the Autonomous Communities has been a positive event. Spaniards have even developed a taste for decentralization. Another recent CIS survey (n° 2610, from 2005) shows that 57% of respondents are in favour of increasing even more the level of competencies of the regional governments (17% are “very much in favour” and 39% are “quite in favour”). A mere 16% are against it.

9 Spaniards seem to agree with this. In a 1998 CIS Survey (n° 2280), 54% of respondents agree that the *Estado de las Autonomías* has brought politics closer to the people; 15% disagree.

2) *The Development of Civic Forms of Minority Nationalism and the Normalization of Nationalist Conflict*

All sub-state nationalist parties in Spain, even the most radical ones, agree that membership in the (sub-state) nation is determined by choice, and not by birth. This means that, in theory, all the persons that live and work within the territory of the (sub-state) nation are considered to be members of it. Even Basque nationalists, who are usually depicted as representing an ethnic type of nationalism, participate in this rhetoric¹⁰. This is a civic conception of the nation and, both in constitutional and institutional terms, nationalist parties abide by it. Membership in the Basque nation, as in all other nations of Spain, is not closed to those that are not born into the ethnic group. One does not have to be born a Basque (or Catalan, or Galician, or Andalusian) to be one. Minority nationalists are very clear in this respect. Here are some examples:

“Therefore, the opinion of all those who live and work here [Basque Country], no matter where we were born, no matter whether we vote for the Popular Party, the Socialist Party, Batasuna, the Basque Nationalist Party, Eusko Alkartasuna, Ezker Batua, or Unidad Alavesa,¹¹ this has to be the ground [for deciding the status of the Basque Country through a referendum]” (Ibarretxe, Prime Minister of the Basque Country and member of the Basque Nationalist Party, *Diario de Sesiones del Parlamento Vasco*, 30 December 2004: 24).

“Catalonia is a nation under construction, a nation that is built day by day with the contributions of many men and women of different origins and cultures” (Puigcercós, *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*, *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 23 May 2006: 8947).

The combined existence of complex national identities and dual citizenship (citizen of the Spanish State and citizen of the Autonomous Community) turns the defense of an ethnic conception of the nation into an almost suicidal strategy for nationalist parties, and they know it.¹² Nationalist parties would never achieve electoral majorities by claiming to rep-

10 If membership in the nation were based exclusively on ethnic origin, the electorate of the Basque Country should be highly segregated (i.e., nationalist parties would only get the vote of those who have a Basque identity or, at a minimum, who have been born in the Basque Country). Similarly, as a result of ethnic nationalist mobilization, no immigrants to the Basque Country would show a Basque identity. The data, however, do not confirm these expectations. According to a 2005 CIS survey (n° 2610), 20% of the respondents that voted for the coalition *Partido Nacionalista Vasco/Eusko Alkartasuna* in the 2001 regional elections and 14% of the respondents that voted for *Aralar* have a dual identity (feel as Spanish as Basque). On the other hand, a 1979 CIS survey showed that 12% of the immigrants in the Basque Country felt only Basque. In his work on the political participation of immigrants in Basque nationalism, Daniele Conversi explains how the “high percentage of votes for the pro-independence coalition HB in areas where immigrants are a majority can testify to the immigrants’ involvement in nationalist politics” (Conversi 2002: 16). Admittedly, a voluntary conception of the nation has taken a long time to develop in Basque nationalism, as opposed to, for example, Catalan nationalism (Conversi 1997).

11 This is a list of all parties represented in the Basque parliament.

12 According to a 1996 CIS survey, 7.6% of Basques, 4% of Galicians and a mere 1.2% of Catalans contend that the most important factor defining a nation is the ethnic or racial composition of its members. A majority of the respondents in the three regions mention the language and the history as the defining

resent only those who are, by birth or ancestors, born into the “ethnic” nation. In a globalized world, in which not only domestic migration but also immigration into the regions from outside Spain is increasing at a fast pace, such a strategy makes even less sense in the medium and long term. Moderate nationalists recognize that the citizens of their regions have multiple positions with respect to territorial self-determination and also multiple national identities:

“For us, Catalonia is a nation, but we know, and we respect, that (...) for hundreds of thousands of Catalans, Spain is their nation. If we renounce exclusiveness, these are the two sentiments that we will have to reconcile.” (Durán i Lleida, *Convergència i Unió*, *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 2 November 2005: 6186).

Undoubtedly, Basque and Catalan nationalist parties, when in office at the regional government, dedicate a sizeable part of their policy efforts to building a national community, much in the same way as French and American revolutionaries were predicating in the nineteenth century. Therefore, the civic rhetoric defended by all minority nationalists is, in some cases, reformulated as follows: all those living and working in the region are *potential* candidates for membership in the nation. Anyone can be Basque or Catalan or Galician but, in order to achieve this identity, they have to assimilate into the national cultures, mainly through the learning and use of the vernacular language.¹³ This assimilationist position will always be found with nationalist parties from regions with a vernacular language. Without the boundary demarcation provided by language, it is difficult to defend an assimilationist position, given that the sub-state nation shares its language with the state one. The fact of defending assimilationist policies, on the other hand, does not make minority nationalists less civic than state nationalists. After all, cultural assimilation has been the preferred tool of Western countries to deal with national minorities until quite recently.

The evolution towards civic forms of minority nationalism in Spain seems to prove right the conclusion arrived at by Nicole Gallant in her analysis of minority nationalisms in Canada:

“In order to develop a civic narrative about itself, a national minority needs the capacity to build this narrative in a legitimate context. The above discussion repeatedly points toward the necessity of the existence of a distinct political space for engaging in this narrative-building, as some form of sub-state building. (...) if the States’ goal is to achieve more civic-ness in the identities of the people of the country, then this can be best achieved by granting more autonomy to national minorities (even when they are initially ethnic)”(Gallant 2008: 15).

characteristics of a nation. In Spain as a whole, only 4% of respondents have an ethnic understanding of the nation.

- 13 Joseba Eguibar, a member of the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco*, recently declared in the Basque parliament: “Basque is anyone who *feels Basque* [emphasis added]” (*Diario de Sesiones del Parlamento Vasco*, 30 December 2004: 56). In a similar vein, Antoni Durán i Lleida, member of the Catalan nationalist party *Convergència i Unió*, said during a recent session of the Spanish parliament: “What is a nation but culture, language, history, but, above all, *a will to be* [emphasis added]” (*Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 30 May 2006: 8291).

3) *The Development of Complex Identities among the Citizenry*

The immediate effect of compounded representation is that it allows individuals to have multiple sources of identification: with the region (sub-state nation), with the state (the nation state), or with both of them. This is simultaneously combined with other identities—such as class and religion—that are also potent determinants of political behaviour.

Despite the nation-building efforts by nationalist parties in the regional governments, exclusive national identities have not increased among Spaniards, as is shown by the evolution of national identity between 1996 and 2005 (CIS electoral surveys, see Table 2 and Graph 2). In 1996, a bit less than one half of Spaniards felt “as Spanish as Andalusian (Basque, Catalan, etc.)” and the other half were split between those who felt only Spanish (or more Spanish than defined by their region), 22%, and those who felt only defined by their region (or more by their region than Spanish), 26%. In 2005, those Spaniards who felt a dual identity had increased their numbers from 49% to 57% and represented a clear majority. The exclusive Spanish identity had remained the same and, significantly, those who identified exclusively with their region (only Andalusian, only Basque, etc.) had decreased from 26% to 19%, by as much as the increase in dual identities.

The regional branches of state parties are the main defenders of the dual identity although some regional parties participate in this discourse. The defenders of dual identities constantly claim that it is possible to feel Catalan and Spanish, or Andalusian and Spanish, at the same time.

“The Catalan nation does not deny the Spanish nation. It enriches it, because Spain is a nation of nations. We want the [new] Statute [of Autonomy] in order to defy the logic of one state-one nation. We are not a nation without a state, no. We are a nation that already has a state, the Spanish state, which is also ours.” (De Madre, *Socialist Party of Catalonia, Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 2 November 2005: 6168).

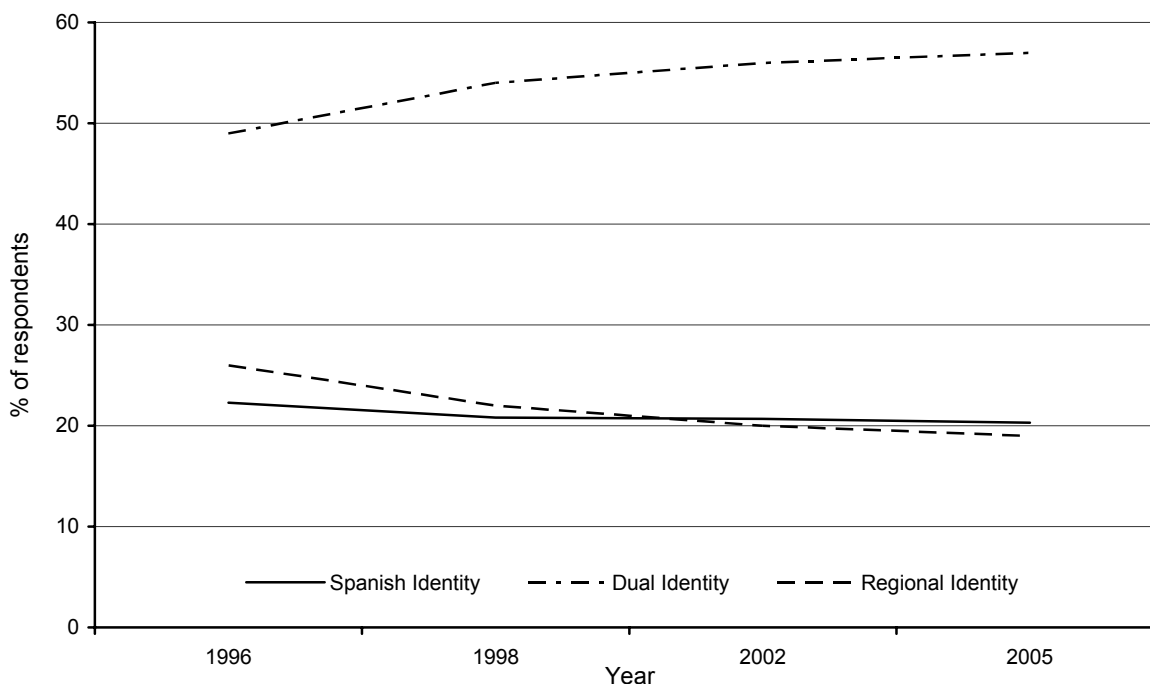
“We feel as Spanish as Valencian and as Valencian as Spanish.” (Castellano Gómez, *Partido Popular de Valencia, Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 20 September 2005: 5560).

“Andalusia is a substantial part of Spain, and we [Andalusians] do not understand neither our past nor our future outside the Spanish nation. We are Spain, but, at the same time, we have an active idea of belonging to Spain (...) A stronger Andalusia is not incompatible with a stronger Spain; it is coexistent with it.” (Chaves, prime minister of Andalusia, *Socialist Party of Andalusia, Diario de Sesiones del Parlamento de Andalucía*, 16 February 2006: 4626).

At the same time, in places where nationalism has a strong cultural and assimilationist orientation, such as the Basque Country, the exclusive Spanish identity does not only not disappear but gets larger. In 1996, in the Basque Country, 9% of Basques claimed to feel only Spanish; in 2005, this figure had grown to 12%. This had happened at the expense of dual identity and of the exclusive Basque identity, which were lower than in 1996. Furthermore, this had happened despite the policies of nation building implemented by the Basque gov-

ernment, in the hands of the nationalists. After 30 years in the regional government, the Basque Nationalist Party was not in a better position to obtain an electoral majority than in the past.

Figure 2: Evolution of national identity in Spain, 1996–2005



Data: CIS surveys: 2228 (1996), 2286 (1998), 2455 (2002), 2610 (2005).

Therefore, with the federalization of Spain, the identitarian evolution of Spaniards follows a path different from the one desired by nationalists. Dual identities seem to be on the rise in almost every region, while exclusive regional or state identities follow variable paths among the regions and across time. This is evidence against the argument that the growth of minority nationalism and nationalist parties necessarily strengthens ethnic exclusive identities among the citizenry and, therefore, goes against democratic values. Further evidence against this line of thought comes from voting behaviour.

The combination of multiple identities and institutionally compounded representation have given way to a type of electoral behaviour known as dual voting. There is dual voting when voters split their vote between regional and state elections. It usually takes the form of voting for nationalist parties at the regional level and for state parties at state elections. All nationalist parties, without exception, get better electoral results at regional elections than at local ones, and at local elections better than at state ones (see Table 3). Movements of votes take place between nationalist and state parties. The existence of dual voting is telling us that the electorates of the Spanish regions are not segregated between nationalist and state “camps.”

In fact, Spanish electorates have a wider choice to select their representatives, and to do it strategically if they wish, than citizens in unitary states or in bi-partisan federal states.

Table 3: Nationalist vote in Spain by region, average percentage of overall nationalist vote (1977–2007)

Region	Elections to Spanish parliament	Elections to regional parliaments	Local elections
Andalusia	4.7	7.2	8.5
Aragon	13.4	23.2	21.9
Asturias	1.7	2.9	2.6
Balearic Islands	5.6	16.1	14.7
Basque Country	47.2	58	51.5
Canary Islands	17.6	34	33.1
Cantabria	2.2	14.5	14.2
Catalonia	40.4	56.7	43.7
Galicia	10.4	16.9	18.3
Navarre	16.6	23.3	19.2
Valencian Country	5.3	10	9.2

4) *Constitutional Provisionality*

It seems clear that one of the main features of multinational representative democracies is the permanent discussion about the best way to represent the plurality of national identities inside of the state. A multinational representative democracy, therefore, is not a democratic way to solve, once and for ever, nationalist claims; it is just a democratic way of dealing with them now and in the future.

The Spanish *Estado de las Autonomías* is under construction and, very likely, it will always be. This is one of the features of representative democracies in multinational states: permanent provisionality. I agree with Tully that the main characteristic of a free and democratic society is that it is involved in a continuous process of discussion (Tully 2001: 14). Multinational representative democracies have no definitive solution for the problem of mutual recognition:

“[T]he language of constitutionalism and struggles for recognition dispose us to presume that there is some definitive and permanent system of rules of mutual recognition, some definitive configuration (...). But this is false. (...) *What is definitive and permanent is the democratic discussion and alteration of the rules over time* [emphasis added]” (Tully 2001: 14).

The provisionality of agreements such as the new Statutes of Autonomy was implicitly admitted by one parliamentarian at the Andalusian legislature, a member of the left party *Izquierda Unida*: “[T]he Statute that will serve as a framework for all the Andalusians dur-

ing, very likely, the next 25 years” (Caballero, *Izquierda Unida, Diario de Sesiones del Parlamento de Andalucía*, 16 February 2006: 4620). This member of parliament did not say that the new Statute of Autonomy of Andalusia was a definitive one; she recognized that it had a life cycle and a probable deadline (coinciding, more or less, with one generation), when it will be necessary to reconsider it again and, maybe, change it. In the same spirit, a member of the Basque parliament and of the Basque Nationalist Party, was admitting some kind of provisionality, though not any kind:

“Is this statute provisional or definitive? To begin with, it is not more or less provisional than many other things are (...) It is not a statute for four days, nor is it for four or eight or twelve years. It does not have that kind of provisionality. Neither the president of the government, nor Mr. Rajoy, nor me, nor anyone on these benches can afford to put this debate on the agenda every short while” (Esteban, Basque Nationalist Party, *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 23 May 2006: 8952).

Implicitly, this parliamentarian is accepting that rules cannot be completely and arbitrarily provisional, but he is also admitting that rules are not definitive solutions. The Basque Prime Minister, Juan José Ibarretxe, also recognized explicitly this provisionality at the Spanish parliament when he was defending the proposed Statute of Autonomy of the Basque Country:

“Do you know what Thomas Jefferson used to say? He said that each generation should approve its own constitution. In the Basque Country, all those who are less than forty-three years old, men and women, did not have the possibility at that time to vote the Statute of Gernika [the name of the Statute of Autonomy of the Basque Country]” (Ibarretxe, Basque Prime Minister and member of the Basque Nationalist Party, *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 1 February 2005: 3133).

In a similar line of argumentation, minority nationalists in Spain see Spanish constitutionalism as rigidly fixing the limits of the *demos* in a way that does not correspond to Spanish plural reality. Some parliamentarians refer to this rigidity as “constitutional talibanism” or “constitutional fundamentalism”. One Basque parliamentarian at the Spanish parliament was defending democratic change against rigid constitutionalism as follows:

“The border that separates a democracy from an authoritarian system is not the observance of the law. All political systems, all, need to rely on a coercive force and to impose, to demand, the observance of the law in order to survive as such political systems. This happens with democracies and with dictatorships, with all. (...) The border that truly separates, the last and fundamental border that separates democratic systems from totalitarian ones is not so much the observance of the law, but the fact that the law is the reflection of the general will, is the reflection of the will of the majority” (Erkoreka, Basque Nationalist Party, *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 1 February 2005: 3142).¹⁴

Far from creating instability, the provisionality of arrangements is a way of engaging national minorities in the democratic process of discussion and of gaining their loyalty to the

14 The weakness of this argument is that it still begs the question: which general will, that of Spain as a whole or that of the Basque political community?

democratic institutions that allow such constant discussion and re-negotiation to take place.

V The Negative Effects of Compounded Representation: More Nationalism and More Demanding

The advantages of compounded representation come at a price. Among other problems that I will not discuss here (concerning the principles of equality and accountability), the federalization of the state, that institutionalizes the nationalist agenda and encourages the birth of new nationalisms, may lead to a process of nationalist outbidding.

The asymmetric nature of the Spanish federation initially conceived by the 1978 constitution has triggered a process of competition among regions, fueled by two main principles: the differential fact and the comparative grievance. The premise of the differential fact was claimed by the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia which, at the time when the regional Statutes of Autonomy were established, envisaged only a limited degree of administrative decentralization for the other Spanish regions. However, starting with Andalusia and the socio-political mobilization of 1980 that allowed it to achieve the same level of autonomy as the “historical nationalities”, the principle of comparative grievance has led the rest of the Spanish regions to compete in “an ethno-territorial race in search of equal access to the institutions of self-government” (Moreno 2001: 215). New nationalisms in regions other than the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia are being born whose main *raison d’être* is to be equal to these historical nationalities, to have the same rights (that regional elites call “privileges” of Basques, Catalans and Galicians), and to have the same competencies:

“The identity of Andalusians, in this period of our history, is, precisely, that we want to be equal [to other regions]. The specificity of being Andalusian, what differentiates us from others, is that we want to be equal to the others. Twenty six years ago, this willingness to be equal required being defined as a ‘historical nationality.’ Today, this willingness to be equal requires being a ‘nation:’ a nation not to be less, a nation to be equal” (González, *Partido Andalucista, Diario de Sesiones del Parlamento Andaluz*, 2 May 2006: 5308).

By making use of the comparative grievance, nationalist politicians in regions other than the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia are achieving a double objective. On the one hand, they are building a regional identity, based on the idea that, unless they defend themselves, they will remain backward and discriminated against by the central Government. This reactive regional identity seems to be working among voters. Fifteen years after the establishment of the AACC, 40% of Spaniards thought that claiming for the right of the regions to territorial self-determination had one major advantage: the possibility to reach the same privileges that the historical nations have (CIS survey nº 2228). On the other

hand, politicians are presenting themselves as the only *representatives* of the interests of the region, which are not being defended at the centre, in Madrid, by the representatives of all Spaniards in the Spanish parliament. According to this view, citizens are the better represented the closer the representative is to them. In this manner, the “invention” of a regional identity and the advantages of political decentralization reinforce one another in the strategies of nationalist politicians.

The intensity with which most parties at the regional level, nationalists, regionalists, and state parties alike, wish for the recognition of their regions as nations or, at a minimum, “historical nationalities” in their reformed Statutes of Autonomy signifies a political and symbolic battle, not a substantive one. Whether the Statute defines the people as a nation, as a historical nationality, or as a region, has no effect on the scope of self-government that it can constitutionally incorporate. It has, however, political consequences. It is a way of “strengthening the symbols of identity” of the different peoples (Puigcercós, *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 23 May 2006: 8950). It is a way of protecting the regional community against possible future attempts at recentralization and homogenization by the state. Once the idea of a national community has been accepted and internalized by the citizenry and the regional political elite, the lack of “identitarian pedigree” cannot be hoisted by the centre as an excuse to reduce self-government or to take it back altogether.¹⁵

All the preambles of the reformed Statutes of Autonomy approved since 2005 make extensive use of nationalist rhetoric (an ancient culture, long history of particular self-governing institutions, geographical peculiarities, etc.).¹⁶ These reformed statutes have been elaborated and approved by the regional branches of the two main state parties or, at least, with their participation. The Popular Party participated actively in the formulation of the new Statutes of Autonomy of Valencia and the Balearic Islands which were, in turn, rejected by the nationalists in their respective parliaments for not taking self-government far enough. The Socialists were the initiators of the reform in Andalusia, Aragon, the Canary Islands, and Catalonia, in the last two cases in coalition with the nationalists. The Basque Country is the only case in which the reform process was, almost exclusively, in nationalist hands. It is also the only statute that was rejected by the Spanish parliament for lack of support, given that it had not been agreed upon with any of the two major Spanish parties in the Basque parliament.

15 It is still fresh in the minds of many regional elites that the lack of “identitarian pedigree” was the reason why, at first, they were denied the maximum level of self-government that was however offered to the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia.

16 The texts of the reformed Statutes of Autonomy can be found on the web page of the Spanish parliament: <http://www.congreso.es/portal/page/portal/Congreso/Congreso/Iniciativas/PropRefEstAut>.

This race in the pursue of ever greater autonomy, unleashed by the comparative grievance among the regions, is transforming the regional branches of state parties into regionalists or even moderate nationalists (as the Socialist Party in Catalonia can reasonably be qualified), creating internal cleavages within these parties. Regional branches of state parties have both regional and state interests and, as a consequence, face a trade-off, “as this dual nature provides both potential benefits and costs to various groups and actors within the party” (Roller and van Houten 2003: 3). This is especially obvious in the case of the *Partido Popular*, given that the party is, by history and ideology, the party of Spanish nationalism, the party that believes that the nation in Spain is one and indivisible. Despite its ideological stance, the regional branches of the *Partido Popular* have defended the definition of the Valencian Country and the Balearic Islands as historical nationalities, have pushed for the highest level of self-government that can be assumed within the constitution and have succumbed to the rhetoric of nationalism in the preambles of the new Statutes of Autonomy of these two regions.

The *Partido Popular* has shown a very inconsistent policy towards the process of reform of the Statutes of Autonomy. It has supported in Valencia what it has rejected in Catalonia; it has rejected in the Andalusian parliament what it has supported in the Spanish one. This is the consequence of the internal tensions that the party is experiencing as a result of this simultaneous process of political decentralization and articulation of a multi-nation state. The Socialist Party is not free from this tension either, as has been evident by the different approaches that the party in Catalonia and the party in Madrid have maintained with respect to the reform of the Catalan Statute of Autonomy.¹⁷

When state parties are incumbent in regional governments they show to be more inclined to press for increased autonomy, and even to adopt a nationalist rhetoric, than when they are not. This is a rational strategy for the survival of the party at the regional level; or, in case survival is not at stake, for keeping whatever level of support they already have and increasing it. The head of the Andalusian government, Manuel Chaves, from the Socialist Party, recently admitted to *El País* that he took the initiative to reform the Statute of Andalusia when he considered it irreversible that Basques and Catalans were going to initiate the reform of their own Statutes. According to him, “it would have been a strategic error to stay outside [of the process].” (*El País*, 3 March 2008).

The positions defended by the regional branches of state parties in the regions are hollowing out the nationalist alleged monopoly of regional representation. Moreover, the tension between the regional branch and the central organization of the state parties contributes to their credibility at home (the region) as representatives of regional interests.

17 For an analysis of the tension within the Socialist Party between the Catalan branch of the party and the central organization see Roller and van Houten (2003).

To exemplify: the Catalan branch of the Spanish socialists can be as credible as the Catalan nationalists when it claims to represent the interests of Catalonia in Spain.

There is one further effect of the institutionalization of the minority nationalist agenda. Spanish nationalism is feeling threatened by the strengthening of minority nationalists and state parties with a strong Spanish nationalist stand, such as the Popular Party, are radicalizing their discourse against nationalists in the periphery. As a result, there is an increasing polarization of the political positions defended by Spanish nationalists, on the one extreme, and minority nationalists, on the other. The recent vote hemorrhage suffered by Basque and Catalan nationalist parties in the 2008 general elections is, in part, the result of a strategic vote for the Socialist Party by of nationalist voters in order to avoid the victory of the Popular Party. This phenomenon is known as “the vote of fear,” fear of Spanish nationalism by minority nationalists.

Now that minority nationalists are losing the monopoly of the nationalist discourse—according to which they are better placed, by their very nature, to represent the interests of their regions and peoples—, and that Spanish nationalists are radicalizing their positions, there seems to be only one way ahead for minority nationalist parties: the further radicalization of their demands. For those who already defend independence, a radicalization could affect their strategies rather than their objectives. For those who are not yet secessionists, a radicalization might lead them to press for independence.

VI Conclusion

Democracy is feasible in multinational states. Minority nationalism in Europe has grown stronger, not weaker, during the last decades. And this has taken place because of democracy and not in spite of it. Representative democracy is the only system that enables the cohabitation, in equality and freedom, of different national identities within the same state. It encourages diversity while maintaining unity. Undoubtedly, some multinational democracies are better at this than others. But they all have one thing in common: the federalization of the state or, at a minimum, the introduction of federal-like arrangements in the homeland of national minorities.

The cohabitation of democracy and nationalism is guaranteed by the establishment of compounded representation. The federalization of the state produces a multiplication of the sources of representation. Territorial representation becomes as important as individual representation, and minority nationalists lose incentives to defend a type of political representation that is ethnically based in favour of one that is territorially based. As a result, membership in one nation ceases to exclude membership in another and dual national iden-

tities become the rule and not the exception. At the same time, the existence of plural national identities is moving democracy away from its traditional focus on the nation state towards new multinational forms of state.

Nationalist conflict in Spain is part of normal democratic politics, despite raising a debate about the territorial integrity of the state. It could even be claimed that the organization of Spain's multinational democracy institutionalizes permanent conflict. Federal democracy in Spain has encouraged the presence of minority nationalism. At the same time, however, the complexity of identities and the wide scope of strategic electoral behaviour make it unlikely that minority nationalists will turn undemocratic or will pose a threat to the stability of democratic institutions. Before minority nationalists can "go radical," they must convince their voters that this radicalization is important and that it will contribute to improve their welfare. And this is not an easy task. The more the rights of national minorities are recognized and guaranteed by the democratic state, the less the people see the need to defend a minority nationalist agenda. The real incognita for the stability of democracy is in the reaction of Spanish nationalists to the growth of peripheral nationalism.

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Annex

Region	Nationalist party	Year founded	Year dissolved
Andalusia	Partido Andalucista (until 1986, PSA)	1976	
Andalusia	Nación Andaluza	1991	
Andalusia	Partido Socialista de Andalucía	2001	
Andalusia	Asamblea Nacional de Andalucía	1995	2004
Andalusia	Partido Nacionalista Andaluz		
Aragon	Chunta Aragonesista	1986	
Aragon	Partido Aragonés Regionalista	1978	
Aragon	Unidad Aragonesa	1994	
Asturias	Partíu Asturianista	1985	
Asturias	Andecha Astur	1990	
Asturias	Unión Renovadora Asturiana	1998	
Asturias	Conceyu Nacionalista Astur	1976	1981
Asturias	Ensame Nacionalista Astur	1982	
Asturias	Xunta Nacionalista Asturiana	1986	
Asturias	Unidá Nacionalista Asturiana	1989	
Asturias	Unión Asturianista	2004	
Asturias	Conceyu Independiente d'Asturies		
Asturias	Bloque por Asturias	2003	
Balearic Islands	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya	1931	
Balearic Islands	Partit Socialista de Mallorca	1976	
Balearic Islands	Partit Socialista de Menorca	1977	
Balearic Islands	Unió Mallorquina	1982	
Balearic Islands	Convergència Balear	1991	1995
Balearic Islands	Unión del Pueblo Balear	1998	
Balearic Islands	Entesa Nacionalista y Ecologista	1989	
Balearic Islands	Federació de l'Esquerra Nacionalista de les Illes Balears	1989	
Balearic Islands	PSM-Entesa Nacionalista	1998	
Basque Country	Partido Nacionalista Vasco	1895	
Basque Country	Herri Batasuna	1978	1998
Basque Country	Euskal Herritarrok	1998	
Basque Country	Eusko Alkartasuna	1986	
Basque Country	Aralar	1995	
Basque Country	Convergencia Socialista Vasca ESB	1976	
Basque Country	Acción Nacionalista Vasca	1930	
Canary Islands	Pueblo Canario Unido	1977	1979
Canary Islands	Unión del Pueblo Canario	1979	
Canary Islands	Partido Nacionalista Canario	1924/1982	
Canary Islands	Agrupaciones Independientes de Canarias	1985	
Canary Islands	Iniciativa Canaria Nacionalista	1991	
Canary Islands	Asamblea Majorera		
Canary Islands	Centro Canario Independiente (d. Nacionalista)	1992	
Canary Islands	Coalición Canaria	1993	
Canary Islands	Nueva Canarias	2005	
Canary Islands	Frente Popular por la Independencia de Canarias	1986	
Canary Islands	Partido de Independientes de Lanzarote	1989	
Canary Islands	Agrupación Herreña Independiente	1979	
Canary Islands	Federación Nacionalista Canaria	1985	

Region	Nationalist party	Year founded	Year dissolved
Canary Islands	Unidad del Pueblo	2003	
Canary Islands	Plataforma Nacionalista Canaria	2003	
Canary Islands	Partido Independentista Canario	2004	
Canary Islands	Alternativa Popular Canaria	2002	
Canary Islands	Alternativa Nacionalista Canaria	2006	
Cantabria	Conceju Nacionaliegu Cántabru	1997	
Cantabria	Partido Regionalista de Cantabria	1983	
Cantabria	Unidad Cántabra	2000	
Cantabria	Partido Nacionalista Cántabro	1988	
Cantabria	Regionalistas Cántabros Independientes	2007	
Castile	Tierra Comunera	1988	
Castile-and-Leon	Izquierda Castellana	2002	
Castile-and-Leon	Movimiento Popular Castellano		
Castile-and-Leon	Castilla Nación		
Castile-and-Leon	Unión del Pueblo Leonés	1991	
Catalonia	Nacionalistes d'Esquerra	1980	
Catalonia	Bloc d'Esquerra d'Alliberament Nacional de Catalunya	1979	
Catalonia	Estat Catalá	1922	
Catalonia	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya	1931	
Catalonia	Convergencia i Unió	1979	
Catalonia	Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya	1936	1987
Catalonia	Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds	1987	
Catalonia	Catalunya Lliure	1989	
Extremadura	Extremadura Unida	1980	
Galicia	Partido Galeguista	1931	1950
Galicia	Partido Galeguista	1978	1984
Galicia	Partido Galeguista	2004	
Galicia	Partido Galeguista Nacionalista	1984	1988
Galicia	Partido Socialista Galego	1963	1983
Galicia	Unidade Galega		2003
Galicia	Bloque Nacional Popular Galego	1977	
Galicia	Bloque Nacionalista Galego	1982	
Galicia	Frente Popular Galega	1987	
Galicia	NÓS-Unidade Popular	2001	
Galicia	Coalición Galega	1983	
Galicia	Converxencia Nacionalista Galega	1992	
Galicia	Partido Nacionalista Galego	1987	1988
Galicia	Terra Galega	2005	
Galicia	Esquerda Galega	1980	1984
Galicia	Unión do Povo Galego	1964	
Galicia	Partido Obreiro Galego	1977	
Galicia	Iniciativa Galega	1999	
Galicia	Partido Comunista do Povo Galego	1984	
La Rioja	Partido Riojano	1982	
Navarre	Basque Nationalist Party	1895	
Navarre	Herri Batasuna	1978	1998
Navarre	Euskal Herritarrok	1998	
Navarre	Eusko Alkartasuna	1986	
Navarre	Aralar	1998	
Navarre	Euskadiko Ezkerra	1977	1993

Region	Nationalist party	Year founded	Year dissolved
Navarre	Batzarre	1982	
Navarre	Nafarroa Bai	2004	
Navarre	Unión Navarra de Izquierdas	1977	1982
Navarre	Acción Nacionalista Vasca	1930	
Navarre	Convergencia de Demócratas de Navarra	1995	
Valencian Country	Bloc Nacionalista Valencià	1998	
Valencian Country	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya	1931	2000
Valencian Country	Esquerra Republicana del País Valencià	2000	
Valencian Country	Unió Valenciana	1982	
Valencian Country	Partit Nacionalista del País Valencià	1978	1984
Valencian Country	Agrupament d'Esquerres del País Valencià	1982	1984
Valencian Country	Unitat del Poble Valencià	1982	1998
Valencian Country	Partit Valencià Nacionalista	1990	1998
Valencian Country	Iniciativa del Poble Valencià	2007	
Valencian Country	Opció Nacionalista Valenciana	2005	
Valencian Country	Esquerra Nacionalista Valenciana	1979	
Valencian Country	Units per València	2007	
Valencian Country	Coalició Valenciana	2004	
Valencian Country	Identidad del Reino de Valencia	2000	2007

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