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Regionalism in a New Europe: The Cases of the Basque and Catalan of Spain

By Julia Smith

2000

Introduction

Regionalism is a trend which we, in America, often have a difficult time understanding. Regionalism in America can only be seen in such ideas as the North versus the South, relating to a break so seemingly distant in our past that the causes and consequences have become misconstrued and have degenerated into vague references to slavery, carpet-baggers, and racist beliefs. Our ethnic tensions are due to displaced communities of people who are grouped into the lower working classes and occupy large segments of cities, rather than entire compact regions of our country. This is what makes regionalism difficult for many Americans to understand. Our only equivalents are related to socio-economic classes and racism, rather than regional separatism.

This is why, while traveling in Catalonia and Valencia two years ago, I was fairly shocked to realize that entire regions of Spain exist where people consider themselves separate ethnic groups and who speak a different dialect of Spanish from the standard. It is difficult to draw parallels to the American situation with concepts such as dialect. Only in the most remote regions of the United States can one find an actual *dialect* of English, meaning that it is still technically English, but nearly incomprehensible to a standard-English speaker. In the US, these dialects are written off as inferior because of the correlation between them and the poverty and lack of proper education found in those areas. In Catalonia, however, I found that dialect had no correlation whatsoever to educational levels, social class, or provincialism. Everyone, including those in Barcelona, communicated on a daily basis in Catalan, a dialect which I found to be distinct enough that my Spanish abilities were rendered nearly useless in conversation, unless someone had the heart to switch over to the standard Castillian dialect.

Upon returning to Madrid, where I could more easily communicate my questions, I learned that there was a deep-seated rivalry between Barcelona and Madrid, and that natives of these two cities had limited interactions with the other. To do so would be to admit that the other also held compelling cultural aspects and could be considered on a level with their own city. This was an impossibility for many of them. People from Madrid also hinted to me that, while natives of Barcelona could get by speaking Spanish in Madrid, natives of Madrid rarely knew any Catalan to get by in Barcelona. While a Catalan might slip into Spanish to help an American tourist such as myself, they are accused of never using Spanish with Castillians with the explicit intent of confusing them and making them feel unwelcome.

I learned that Spain was a country rent by separatist movements and ruled by an unstable democracy which was barely twenty years old. My host mother also explained to me how Spanish citizens are both excited by and fearful of the increasing centralized power of the European Union (EU). Many of them hope that the free trade associated with membership will help Spain regain its status as an economic power, which it lost, along with its empire, at the end of the nineteenth century. At the same time, there is a great deal of fear over the question of how to give up federal power to the EU without losing control of its already tenuous hold over the seventeen autonomous regions within its borders. Their present government does not have a history of stability, even in this century, comparable to any of the other large EU member states. The inherent instability, however, has not yet resulted in a major political break within Spain, and in some ways has served to foster a wealth of cultural expression not found in many other places.

Historically, groups of people who are trying to break with their nation-state experience this type of cultural and literary explosion as a way of defining themselves as a people, separate from and equal to the majority. While this is a phenomenon taking

place all over Europe, the specific case of Spain is especially compelling. Spain is a country trying desperately to catch up culturally and economically with the rest of Western Europe, while at the same time facing greater internal challenges to its government's control than any of the other EU member states. Regional groups such as the ones challenging Spain's political foundations have recently undergone a change in their options. Previously, any group which was the size of one of the regions, though it may have wished for independence, would have been left weak, unstable, and essentially indefensible due to its small size and limited economic and population base. Europe within the European Union is progressing toward and open economic market and provides what now appears to be a standing peace between its member states, which results in the fact that regional groups are striving to achieve their now plausible goals of independence. At the same time, the notion of statehood is fading in importance with regard to the increasingly powerful Union, perhaps changing the basic premise behind the ideas of independence within Europe forever.

European Nationalism vs. Regionalism

Europe, at the close of the twentieth century, is facing one of its most difficult challenges ever. In the aftermath of the two bloodiest wars in the history of the world, Europe has been strongly committed to becoming a unified, peaceful continent supporting democracy and the rights of the individual. An interesting and unintended outcome of this process is the growing strength of regionalist activities, especially within the post-authoritarian states found in Eastern Europe, Italy, and Spain. In the past, these regional movements for independence could be quashed easily with imprisonment, executions, and widespread censorship. The new "Europe," as defined by the European Union (EU), is not able to repress its citizens' actions so easily. Regionalist groups which previously would not have survived militarily or economically as independent states now have protection from invading neighbors provided by the EU, and the benefits of free trade established by the European Economic Community (EC).

The basic nature of European nationalist movements has changed from the pre-1914 pattern of expansionism and internal consolidation to the modern-day breakdown of states into regional communities defined by ethnicity, language, and cultural history. In the past, people would, in theory, determine their civic nationality solely according to the state or government of which they were citizens. At that time, the usage of minority languages was not seen as such a divisive factor. After the World Wars, European nations began to lose their overseas empires and became citizens of nation-states in which almost all citizens or subjects were similar in ethnicity, culture, and language. Now, many Europeans are progressing toward regional identification by considering themselves

Catalan, Castillian, or Basque rather than Spanish, - or Kosovar, Bosnian, or Serbian rather than Yugoslavian; this further breaks down their national identification.[1]

William Beer created an interesting definition of an ethnic group which has two defining points: 1) ethnic groups are a relatively large group of people who are socially defined as belonging together because of a *belief* in their being descended from common ancestors, and 2) because of this belief they have a sense of identity and share sentiments of solidarity.[2] This creates the argument that actual ethnic identity is not as important as a *perceived* common ethnic background. For example, the Catalan may not be ethnically distinct from the Spanish, but the subjective belief that they are is strong enough to have created a group of people that functions as an ethnic group, whether or not they would be considered one by virtue of their actual ethnicity. This is an argument which applies well to present day actions, because beliefs are what drive people to act, while their foundation in reality has little to do with it.

Many regional movements stem from oppression, and can be traced to racist tensions, most apparently in the present-day case of Yugoslavia, where ethnic cleansing had become rampant. Hannah Arendt linked racism to the rise of imperialist movements, pointing out that racist policies in governments are often accompanied by totalitarian objectives which were first introduced during the Imperialist era, in the late nineteenth century.[3] These racist tactics were first used as a method of colonizing primitive cultures while denying the native peoples their rights to citizenship in the European nations to which they then belonged. India and South Africa are prime examples that persisted well into this century.

These racist ideas in turn took hold on the continent in the dictatorial regimes of Nazi Germany, Italy, and Spain, which used them to repress all differences within the state, going so far as to ban the use of other languages and dialects. Spain, under General

Franco's regime, even went so far as to deny the existence of all Spanish dialects for a short time, refusing to acknowledge the language of *Galego*, which is spoken in the Northwest corner of Spain around Santiago, and is a dialect which differs more from Spanish than Portuguese does.

With the fall of the Eastern bloc dictatorial governments in 1989 and the death of General Franco in 1975, these nations began to allow regionalist feelings to resurge. Democratic states emerged, and with them the freedoms of speech, the press, and the right to use minority languages. The regions which had been ruled by repressive governments exploded with national feelings. Only in a few cases were the people able to settle their differences peacefully, as in the case of Czechoslovakia splitting into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. More often than not there resulted aggressive political factions and, in the most extreme cases, terrorist groups within these countries. This is evident in Spain where 17 different regions have acquired autonomous status within the state, most of which actively support their own regionalist political party.[4] Unfortunately, preservation of regional cultures can be transformed in practice into race preservation, thus compounding the problem by turning the oppressed into the oppressors.

Central to this idea is the definition of what makes up a regionalist or a nationalist group. For the purposes of this paper, nationalists are defined as people who seek political independence and statehood based on claims of a linguistic, cultural, and ethnic background which differs substantially from the larger state(s) to which they belong. They usually were an autonomous state in the past, strengthening the legitimacy of their contemporary claims to independence.

Regionalists are people who define themselves based on a common linguistic and cultural past. They usually speak a dialect of the predominant language of their state, and are also ethnically similar to the majority. Often, they have no history of self-rule, or if

they do, it lies in the distant past. They possess strong cultural ties, though it is these regionalist groups that are recently accused, by E. J. Hobsbawm and others, of "inventing tradition" for the sake of uniting their people.[5]

It is important to note that regionalist and nationalist groups have similar goals, even though they are grounded in different motivations. They both seek independence and freedom for their own cultural, linguistic, and religious practices. Nationalists, however, believe that they should be in charge, and often use racist beliefs in their push for self-rule, whereas regionalists often want only cultural and political freedom, which is possible to achieve within the bounds of a lenient greater state. Many times this is, unfortunately, impossible within a repressive state, and regionalist groups become separatists in an attempt to gain the personal freedoms which they desire. Therefore, both regionalists and nationalists can be separatist in nature, but for essentially different reasons. Obviously, these definitions rarely apply perfectly to any one group, although it is easy to see that the two case studies of the Basque and Catalan examined in this paper are generally regionalists, as will be shown later.

Regional movements are generally driven by a certain set of circumstances which motivate them to fight for their cultural rights. There are countless groups of people in Europe today who meet the linguistic, cultural, and historical requirements to justify regional awareness. In fact, an estimated ten percent of Europeans speak a language different from their national one.[6] However, only a small percentage of them actually develop an awareness of their regional identity and seek independence, or a greater measure of autonomy based upon it.

There are some regional groups that seek independence based upon a particular strength found in their population or their geographic location. This strength could be industrial power, possession of a major seaport or waterway, natural resource availability,

etc. In this case, the wealth produced in this area is eventually redistributed, by taxation or capital outflow, throughout the rest of the nation. The regional group which produced this wealth differentiates itself from the nation because it perceives the nation as a poorer, dependent entity which is drawing off the wealth of the minority. In this case, regional activation is a response to a community perceiving its resources as threatened rather than to their cultural heritage being threatened. This type of activism is driven by the wealthier classes: those who would benefit most from a lift on all trade restrictions. The attached map demonstrates how the industrialized regions of Spain correspond to the four most active regional groups: Basque, Catalan, Andalusian, and Castillian (the majority group).

Another way that a regional group is mobilized into seeking independence is by suffering oppression from the majority. This is, of course, the kind of minority group which gets the most support from the outside, due to the blatant disregard for human rights to which they are so often subjected. The most well-known examples are the Jewish people and, more recently, the Kosovars. The Western world has recently embraced these human rights causes, if they deem it advantageous and feasible to do so. Though this hardly means that all, or even most, of Europe's minority repression has ceased, the Western world is becoming increasingly disapproving of these acts, and the European Union openly condemns such actions. These group are supported by all levels of social classes, rather than just the wealthy or the poor.

It is interesting to note that most of the regional groups which seek independence because of their internal wealth try to take on characteristics of the oppressed, or play up the oppression which they do encounter in their attempts to gain independence. This is not only to rally support from the outside, but also to convince more reluctant members of their own populations to join in the struggle. This method of attempting to attract

wider public sympathy was frequently used by both the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA) in the Basque Region.[7] Often, the oppression would then become real due to terrorist activities, forcing regionalist groups originally formed on an industrial basis to transform themselves into groups protecting their rights from the majority.

The prevailing position which both European regionalists and nationalists stand behind is the importance of linguistic differences. Language and dialect are proving to be both the dividing and uniting factors among smaller cultural groups. Frequently these are languages which are on the verge of death from lack of use, and have been rescued and reintroduced to the population by leading cultural activists. They then begin to reappear in literature and eventually are incorporated into the school systems. With the increase in regional awareness among a group of people, linguistic awareness follows which further defines the group and widens the gap between them and their ruling states. The European Council recently pledged to encourage the use of minority languages in schools, estimating that fifty million Europeans speak a language different from their state's official language.[8] This illustrates the EU's commitment to cultural preservation within a United Europe, a preservation that isn't limited to larger countries, but extends to the minority regions as well.

Many European ethnic groups still desire independence, regardless of the fact that this could leave them relatively defenseless due to their small sizes and with a heavy dependence upon foreign trade because of the limited resources available within these smaller geographic regions. However, the possibility of independent small states is growing, due to the existence of the EU, EC, and NATO. The EU assures relative peace between all of its members, while the EC makes it possible for small states to compete economically by eliminating all trade barriers between its nations. Despite its fluctuating

policies, NATO has begun to protect some small states, and in the case of Yugoslavia, small ethnic groups from oppression by the majority. The European Union is furthering the process of weakening national boundaries with the increase of centralized power in Brussels. Within the EU, the idea of regionalism takes on a new meaning. Before the EU, cultural freedom was the only realistic goal of relatively small groups of people. Though these regional groups may have fought for independence, this was an unrealistic aim, as proved in the cases of Belgium and the Netherlands who were overrun so easily during the World Wars. The present situation, however, has transformed regional separatists' goals of independence into feasible scenarios.

In theory, the European Parliament represents the people directly, with the exception of Great Britain. The Euroregions represented in it frequently cross national lines to better represent the interests of the people over the interests of the states.[9] This can help to further the cause of regionalist groups within Europe because their personal interests are represented, rather than the interests of the larger states.

In 1991, the EU drafted agreements with the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, allowing for free trade within ten years. This will be followed by a period in which they prepare themselves economically and politically for entrance into the EU and the EC. The introduction of Eastern European states will probably force the EU to deal more directly with regionalist movements because Eastern Europe currently has a greater problem with regional conflict than Western Europe, due to the fact that many of the Eastern states were created out of the power vacuum left by the crumbling Ottoman and Austrian Empires without regard to which cultural groups were being combined into greater states.

Within this turbulent European framework, the two specific groups which will be examined are the Basque and Catalan, both located primarily within Spain. To

understand their situations fully, a brief overview of recent Spanish history is necessary. Over the last 150 years, Spain has changed repeatedly. It has been a monarchy, a republic, a constitutional monarchy, a military-run state, and finally a new Republic built on the bureaucracy of the previous fascist government. Beginning in 1868, General Prim led a coup against Queen Isabella, which coincided with a Cuban revolt. By 1869, a constitution was drawn up which allowed for universal suffrage and freedom of religion, and the crown was given to Amadeo of Savoy. Amadeo abdicated in 1873 in the face of radicals in Congress, and the first true Republic was established, headed by Pi y Margall. At this time, a virtually independent state existed in the northern part of the country which supported the Carlist demands for restoration of the throne. By 1874, royalist generals managed to restore Alfonso XII, Isabella's son, to the throne by 1875. Antonio Canovas del Castillo, the prime minister, was in control of most policies, and at that time suspended the freedom of press and restored Catholicism as the state religion. In 1885, Alfonso died and liberals once again gained control. Canovas was assassinated by anarchists from Barcelona in 1896, followed by the Spanish loss of Cuba, the last remnant of its once great empire, in 1898.[10]

General Primo de Rivera led a dictatorship to restore social order under King Alfonso XIII, from 1920-1930. With the onset of the depression, Alfonso withdrew confidence in Rivera, then fled in 1931 in the face of massive opposition. This left a power vacuum which the second Republic tried to fill from 1931-1936. In 1934, a "state of alarm" was declared, which resulted in the government suspending civil rights frequently in the face of opposition to its rule. In 1936, the Popular Front Coalition gained power and the Civil War broke out in Andalusia, as General Francisco Franco broke with the Republic, entered from Africa, and began to take control of the unstable state. By February of 1939, Europe officially recognized Franco's rule, and Madrid

finally fell on March 28 of that year. Initially, the West called for the overthrow of Franco as soon as the Germans were defeated, but as the threat of communism grew, they began to respect his extremely anti-Communist stance. By 1955, Franco's Spain was allowed into the UN. After Franco's death in 1975, King Juan Carlos, Alfonso XIII's grandson, was restored to the Spanish throne, and he permitted the Third Republic to form. The first elections of this Republic were held in 1978, and a new constitution was drawn up that same year. In 1981, Europe watched as yet another military coup took place in Madrid. This one, however, did not succeed, and King Juan Carlos gained the respect he needed from his people for successfully mediating that situation. In 1982, Spain joined NATO, and then joined the EU and the EC, in 1986. Since that time, the Republic has managed a short period of stability, which increased with the 1998 pledge of peace from the Basque terrorists. The citizens of Spain, however, are used to a turbulent government, and watch every change within their state's structure uneasily, hoping to preserve at any cost the peace which they have had for such a short time.[11] Regionalist activities now seem to pose the greatest threat to Spain's internal stability, and the Republic's ability to keep them under control is the true test of whether Spain can survive as a state in today's Europe.

The Basque People

The Basque people of Spain and France are a classic example of a regionalist group whose aims have turned to separatism due to cultural repression. Initially, their demands were only for cultural autonomy and for the right to enforce their own laws within their region, which was permitted until the late nineteenth century. They are a group working to thrive within the EU both culturally and through their comparative industrial advantage within the new free-trade region of Europe.

The Basque Country is a unique case in Europe for several reasons. It has never been a politically united region, has always been split between different states, and its people have a linguistic history independent from all other European languages. There are seven Basque provinces in all: Vizcaya, Guipuzkoa, Alava, and Navarre in Spain and Labourd, Basse Navarre, and Soule in France. (See Appendix II) These 7 regions all speak slightly different dialects of Basque, but for the most part can all be understood by a Basque from any other Basque region. The major industrial centers are Bilbao and Pamplona, both of which are located in Spain. The Basque people claim that they were the original inhabitants of their area because of several factors which they feel separate them from the rest of today's Europeans.

The greatest mystery about these people is their language, *Euskera*, which some linguists believe may be a language dating from the late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age, making it one of the few dialects in Europe to survive the introduction of the Indo-European language family.[12] Their genetic makeup is also unique; their skulls have significant differences from those of other Europeans, as well as other anomalies such as an extremely high percentage of people with Rh-negative blood, a condition frequently

causing stillborn children. Historically, the Basque have been referred to as a cursed people, accused of witchcraft to a startling degree. One of the reasons for this may have been the high degree of miscarriage within their community, since these incidents were often blamed on witchcraft.[13] These anomalies have led to many extreme theories concerning their origins ranging from their being a different race, evolved independently from Cro-Magnon or from Neanderthals, to their being the lost thirteenth tribe of Israel, or the displaced people of Atlantis. While their ethnicity may have been a deciding factor 100 years ago, it has since shifted to a linguistic difference. By the 1970's, most Basque activists only had one parent who could be considered ethnically Basque. Due to Spanish immigration, the definition of what makes a Basque now concerns only the ability to speak *Euskera* and respect for Basque culture.

Historically, there never was a "Basque" state as such, although the seven major tribes have always felt cultural ties and have always supported each other in struggles against oppression and foreign occupation. The only time during the historical record that any of the Basques enjoyed actual self-rule was in the small kingdom of Navarre, begun in 818 A.D. by Inigo Iniguez, lasting until 1512.[14] Currently, there is a faction of Navarrese involved in a separatist movement from both Spain and the Basque country, claiming that they are distinct from both. The region of Navarre, by itself, has very little political clout and will probably not achieve this goal any time in the near future.

The major city of Bilbao is located in an important metallurgical area, demarcated by the red line on the northern part of the first map. This area grew first as a mining district, and later developed into an important industrial sector. The present-day Basque country is fairly densely populated, as the second map insert indicates. This was not the case until the 1890's, when the population doubled due to Spanish "immigrants" entering to fill the increasing number of working-class industrial positions.

The Basque regionalist movement is most active in Spain, headed up by the political party *Partido Nacionalist Vasco*, (PNV), which is known in Basque as *Euskal Alderdi Jeltzalea* (EAJ), and the terrorist organization *Euskadi ta Askatasuna*, (ETA) meaning Euskadi and Liberty. Currently, the PNV holds 5 seats of 350 in the *Congreso de los Diputados*, and 4 of 208 elected seats in the *Senado.*[15] The PNV was founded in 1898 by Sabino Arana, who held racist beliefs similar to those later found in Nazi Germany. This was a time when the Basque region was industrializing rapidly, and the Basque people felt threatened by the influx of the Spanish working-class. Arana supported the belief that the Basque were an ethnically pure community, as evidenced by their unique language and the aforementioned ethnic anomalies. He claimed that they were the remnants of a master race of people who were being tainted by the increasing presence of the "lower" Spanish in their population.[16] The PNV supported these racist ideas and was initially a party supported almost solely by the upper classes. This persisted until the Basque needed the support of the predominantly Spanish working-classes to further their movement, and had a temporary alliance with the Spanish socialist party, thus forever altering the socio-economic makeup of the PNV. At the end of World War II, the PNV became more clandestine and inactive when it became clear that America and the West would not continue fighting in Europe to overthrow General Franco, as they had earlier implied.[17] Today's PNV is headed by Xabier Arzallus and has 31,000 active members.[18] Their goal is still to achieve Basque autonomy, but they no longer endorse the ETA's terrorist actions toward this end.

The ETA began as a student movement called *Ekin* in 1952, created out of youthful indignation at the passive attitude of the PNV.[19] This is common in many revolutionary groups, where the younger generation splinters from the older due to widespread resistance to the youths' attempts at party reform. The ETA emerged as a

terrorist force, rather than just a reform group, in 1961, when members of the group attempted to derail a train of Spanish Civil War veterans. The veterans were on their way to celebrate their part in the War, and had picked a Basque town for the ceremonies. This was the ETA's way of letting Spain and General Franco know that they had not forgotten the atrocities of the war. In 1962, the ETA drew up a Statement of Principles which strongly supported a federal Europe and toleration of non-Basque immigrants who respected Basque national interests.[20] This was an important step for Basque regionalism, favoring joining the EU (to which General Franco was opposed) and dropping their racist beliefs to be tolerant of all people who respected their cultural heritage.

The group transformed itself into a terrorist organization based on ideas which they saw played out in Northern Ireland in the later 1960's. Their leaders determined that the best way to gain popular support was to operate in secret, attack the government in a way that would bring retaliation, and then cry oppression when members of the innocent Basque citizenry were punished for the ETA's terrorist actions. They believed that the general population was blind to the rampant oppression of their people by Spain, and merely needed a little help to understand it. At this time, the PNV and ETA were no longer just representatives of the wealthier Basque citizens who owned the mines and heavy industry of the region, and began to represent the cause of all Basque social classes as a repressed people.

The Spanish began a pattern of retaliating fiercely for every act of Basque terrorism, turning Basque oppression into a reality. The ETA had, in this way, created the oppressive force that it required to justify its own existence as a terrorist organization. Though some repression had existed before, such as censorship and the ban on the official use of *Euskera*, this was common during General Franco's rule, and was not a specific attack upon the Basque but against all minority groups. For the Basque people,

however, this kind of ban was perhaps the harshest that could have been imposed. To understand this, one must consider that language was the only true uniting factor among these people who had no true political alliance to fall back on. Their language is *Euskera*, and they call themselves *Euskaldun*, or *those who speak Basque*. The region they live in is known to them as *Euskal Herria*, or *land of those who speak Basque*.[21] Their basic identity was therefore dependent on their language, and forbidding its use threatened their very existence as a people.

Perhaps the most terrifying attack on the Basque people was the bombing of Guernica on April 26, 1937. This was during the Spanish Civil War, when General Franco had the support of German and Italian troops and aircraft. Apparently, German officials were not satisfied with their attempts at breaking the morale of the Basque citizenry with ordinary bombing runs. They decided, instead, to try bombing the market town of Guernica at midday during a time when thousands of Basque farmers and merchants were out trading goods, an option which allowed for maximum civilian casualties. The decision was not entirely theirs to make, and many of the Basques believe that General Franco approved of the location because the townspeople were primarily Basque, rather than Spanish. For many years, Franco refused to admit that Guernica had even been attacked by bombers. When he finally admitted this point, he claimed that no German or Italian aircraft were involved, even though hundreds of eye-witnesses attest differently. The Spanish government finally made an official apology to the people of Guernica in 1998, though the military records of the attack have still not been released. The exact death toll has never been determined, but there were an estimated 10,000 people in the town that day, 3,000 of whom were present strictly for trade and were in the open market at the time. Spain only officially counts around two hundred casualties, though this figure is believed to be extremely underestimated.[22]

When Pablo Picasso was commissioned to create a painting in the 1937 Parisian World's Fair, he selected the bombing of Guernica for his topic.[23] Picasso was a Catalan nationalist who lived in Paris at the time of the Spanish Civil War. During this period of extreme political repression, representatives of the three northern Spanish regionalist groups, the Galicians, Basques, and Catalans, banded together for the sake of support against their common enemy. Picasso's choice of Guernica was his method of presenting to the world the horrors of civilian suffering in warfare and the scarring effect which it can have on the mentality of a people who were singled out to be slaughtered. A copy of this painting is included as Appendix IV.

The bloodiest years of Basque terrorism came after the death of General Franco, during the transition years which determined the fate of the Spanish political system. The ETA tried to emphasize the fact that they wanted autonomy, and fought to force the government to grant them this in the 1978 constitution. To get the attention they wanted, they assassinated members of the *Guardia Civil*, the Spanish police force stationed in that region. Retaliations were brutal; and came in the form of mass arrests, torture, and executions as the newly formed Republic tried desperately to keep the Basque under control. The Spanish knew that if they let the Basque have their way, they would have similar situations erupt in Catalonia, Galicia, Aragon, etc., and therefore felt that a free Basque nation meant the end of the Spanish state. The Basque looked to Europe for help, but the EU ignored the torture and executions, hoping that Spain would stabilize and form a peaceful Republic without foreign intervention.

In September 1998, after an estimated 800 deaths over a 30 year period attributed to the ETA, they declared peace with the Spanish government. Since that time, there have been a series of talks concerning the future of the Basques. Xabier Arzalluz, leader of the PNV, admits that their goals have changed with the increasing power of the EU.

He said, "The concept of a state is changing. They [Spain] have given up their borders, are giving up their money. We are not fighting for a Basque state, but to be a new European state."[24] It seems that the Basque people, the ETA, and the PNV, have decided to wait out the next few years until they can negotiate their claims as a region of Europe, rather than as a Spanish regionalist group.

Catalonia

Catalonia is a region in Northeastern Spain, with the major provinces of Catalonia, Valencia, the eastern strip of Aragon, the kingdom of Andorra, and Roussillon in France (See Appendix III). The primary language of these areas is Catalan, although in the province of Valencia it is called Valencian, even though there are only differences in accent between these two areas. The Catalan language is, in actuality, a dialect of Spanish, though one which is so far removed that it is nearly impossible for a native speaker of one to understand the other. Catalan linguists, of course, argue that Catalan is a different language, not only because of its structural differences from Spanish but also because of the large body of Catalan literature which exists. The people are ethnically similar to the Spanish by the standard definition of ethnicity, but have considered themselves an independent region for so long that they don't see themselves as such. Catalonia did exist as an independent nation at one time, but this ended over 500 years ago with the unification of Castille and Aragon in 1492.

The Catalan are the strongest regional political force active in Spanish politics, represented by the united party of *Convergencia i Unio de Catalunya.* They hold 17 of 350 seats in the Congress, and 14 of 257 seats in the Senate. This makes them the fourth largest party of eleven in the Congress, and the third largest holding elected seats in the Senate.[25] This alliance is currently headed by Jordi Pujol, president of the regional government, and is pressing for autonomous representation in the European Parliament. They have already acquired the right to two regional observers through the 1996 Political Agreement for Governance.[26]

The Catalan movement is interesting in that it began as a conservative movement. In 1898, Spain lost Cuba due to US intervention in an event known to Spaniards as "El Disastre." At this time, Catalonia depended on Cuba for its economic survival, since around 60% of Catalan exports were sent there. Naturally, the Catalans blamed this loss on the weak parliamentary monarchy, in which King Alfonso XII had lost almost all power to Prime Minister Antonio Canovas, who was later assassinated by Catalan anarchists in 1896.[27] In 1897, the Catalan party *Unio Catalanista* wrote a letter of sympathy to the Greek king, who was at war with Turkey over the fate of Crete. The Spanish government intercepted this letter and occupied Catalonia for the next four years, suspending civil rights and crushing regionalist activities in all visible forms.[28] This occupation was intended to show that Spain would not tolerate a province acting outside the authority of the Spanish government, but instead only consolidated the region in its aims for independence. As history has repeatedly shown, general repression with the intent to crush peoples' spirits often results in a stronger unification in the end.

Catalan culture has had a startling influence on European society over the last century. Barcelona was home to Pablo Picasso, one of the most influential artists of the twentieth century. It was also the home of Antonio Gaudi Cornet, an architect whose brief but astonishing career made Barcelona a city famous for his unique works and his challenges to the comparatively bland, utilitarian face of modern architecture which has become so abundant in this century. Catalan universities recently enacted a policy requiring all students to study the Catalan language and literature, and also began offering many courses in other disciplines in Catalan. This has produced a unique Catalan literary movement that competes with that of Spain in its creativity and abundance. The Olympics and World's Fair also brought the city to the attention of the world for its

unique sense of beauty, as well as creating a method for the Catalan to present their society to the world as a vibrant and viable world community.

The Catalan have a large enough population base and enough economic power to support a separatist force even larger than that of the Basque. However, they have historically taken a more restrained approach toward attaining regional autonomy. Part of this is because they have been able to have their demands met more easily than the Basque, since their political party is large enough to enter into coalitions with the major Spanish parties in Parliament. Also, they were permitted to send a representative to the 1978 drafting of the Constitution, where they were able to arrange for a greater degree of autonomy than the Basque.[29] They have always stood behind the Basque in times of extreme repression or in periods of great importance. In 1998, with the ETA's pledge of peace, the Catalans and Galicians joined in with the Basque in their demands for a revision of the Constitution to allow for greater political autonomy. This is the development that Spain has always feared, because most of Spain's meager economic power is located in these regions, and the loss of revenue from them could result in economic disaster for the remaining regions of the Spanish state.

The Catalan, like the Basque, hope to eventually become a European region rather than a region of Spain. They have already made some progress toward this goal, especially with the 1989 formation of the Trans-Pyrenean Euroregion of Catalunya, Languedoc, Rousillon, and Midi-Pyrénées, which contain Catalan territories of both Spain and France.[30]

Conclusion

People inevitably feel the desire to belong to a larger group for the sake of security from without. In these times, when there is less of a threat of intra-European warfare between EU member-states than ever before, the necessity of membership in larger state fades in importance as the feelings of security increase.

Separatist movements have existed in Spain, as well as in the rest of Western Europe, for far longer than the European Union has. The major difference is that new, small states would have had far less of a chance of survival before than they do now. During the World Wars, small states such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Denmark were easily overrun and only restored to their original status of statehood because of their long-standing histories of independence, while others were not. It is easy to imagine that a newly separated region would not have been restored to its original state in the aftermath of these wars.

Spain is a unique European case because it lost its position as a European power before 1900, and instability has fostered internal agitation throughout this century. In 1898, when Spain lost Cuba, it lost far more than just a colony. Spain lost the clout of being an international power and the appearance of being a viable military force. This coincided with the time period when Spain's regionalist movements became separatist, rather than simple exercises in cultural expression. Though it may be natural to feel loyal to a larger state that is capable of defending itself from without, the loss of Cuba signified something far greater. The United States had intervened on Cuba's behalf, and defeated the Spanish on what they claimed as their own ground. In effect, Spain had proven itself incapable of protecting its colonies from foreign invasion. The Basques especially, who

perceived themselves as an occupied colony that happened to be located within the political bounds of Spain, began to fear that Spain might just "run out" on them in the face of foreign invasion rather than defending them as a part of Spain proper. In Catalonia's case, many people believed that the loss of Cuba proved that Spain's present government was no longer able to defend itself because it was inherently weak and unstable. They wanted either independence or the restoration of the Spanish monarchy to its previous, more powerful position.

Though it might seem that separatism evolved because the regional groups believed Spain was too weak to stop them, this is proven wrong by the Spanish occupation of Catalunya between 1897 and 1901. Spain was, in fact, more capable of repressing internal tensions than before because the overseas army could now be deployed internally. Guernica is another example of a crushing Spanish attack on a separatist region. Though Spain denied that the Guernica massacre had even taken place for many years, then later blamed it on the Civil War alone, the Basque people refuse to believe that it wasn't directed at them as an ethnic group as well.

Franco's regime represented a period of repression and restriction of personal freedoms for all Spanish citizens. His death, in 1975, marked the end of an era within Spain. The newly created Republican government faced the challenge of creating a carefully balanced state and integrating it into the European Union at the same time. Because of the difficulty involved in this, Spain may be the first European state to be broken down by the weakened political lines. The central government's already tenuous hold over the stronger outlying regions is fading quickly in the face of centralized European power. If the Catalan, Basque, and Galicians succeed in forcing Spain to rewrite its Constitution, and acquire the ability to report directly to the EU rather than Madrid, Spain may become the leading example of the new European form of

regionalism. As Xabier Arzallus said, "The EU represses artificial barriers. Cultures are not barriers, borders are barriers."[31] Critics of the EU have often stated that the weakening of state lines will destroy the cultures found within these states, creating a melting-pot of European culture. However, the argument does exist for the opposite: that weakening state lines will allow minority cultures throughout Europe to flourish as they never have before, with greater economic and military stability possible for smaller regions than the current state-system allows for. This repression of national barriers may well begin a new period in European history, driven by cultural autonomy rather than state politics.

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[14] Ibid., 42.

[15] *The Europa World Yearbook*, (London: Europa Publications, Ltd., 1999), 3249.

[16] John Sullivan, *The ETA and Basque Nationalism,* Chapter 1.

[17] Ibid., 23.

[18] *The Europa World Yearbook*, 3251.

[19] Mark Kurlansky, *The Basque History of the World,* 242.

[20] John Sullivan, *The ETA and Basque Nationalism,* 37.

[21] Mark Kurlansky, *The Basque History of the World,* 19.

[22] Ibid., 198-200.

[23] Ibid., 201.

[24] Ibid., 350.

[25] *The Europa World Yearbook*, (London: Europa Publications, Ltd., 1999), 3250.

[26] Hanf and Soetendorp, eds., *Adapting to European Integration: Small States and the European Union,* 108.

[27] Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans, and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation* (Reno: The University of Las Vegas Press, 1997), 25; Robert Gildea *Barricades and Borders, Europe 1800-1914* , 360.

[28] Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans, and Spain*, 21.

[29] Mark Kurlansky, *The Basque History of the World,* 272.

[30] Hanf and Soetendorp, eds., *Adapting to European Integration: Small States and the European Union,* 109.

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APPENDICES

I. Industrialization of Spain; Major Metallurgical and Textile Areas

Geoffry Barraclough, Ed. *Hammond, The Times Atlas of World History,* (London: Hammond Inc, 1996), 176.

II Spain and the Basque Country

John Sullivan, *The ETA and Basque Nationalism: The Fight for Euskadi, 1890-1986* (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall Inc., 1988).

demographics:
Barry Turner, Ed. *The Statesman's Yearbook: The Politics, Cultures, and Economic of the World, 2000* (London: Macmillan Reference Ltd, 1999) 1446-7.

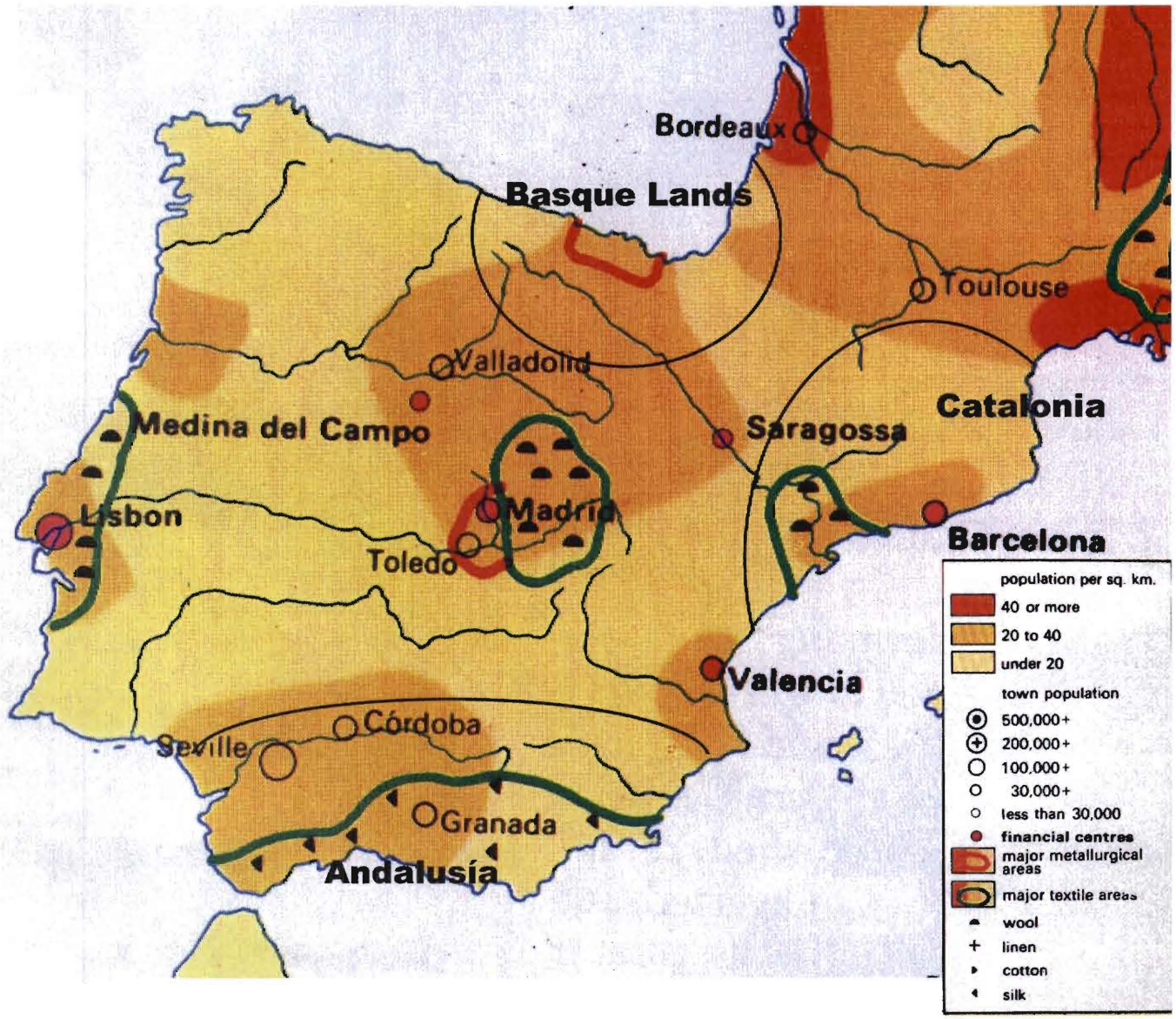
III Catalonia

Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans, and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation* (Reno: The University of Las Vegas Press, 1997), xx.

demographics:
Barry Turner, Ed. *The Statesman's Yearbook: The Politics, Cultures, and Economic of the World, 2000* (London: Macmillan Reference Ltd, 1999) 1446-7.

IV Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*

from the website:
www.ricks.edu/Ricks/Employee/DavidR/Art/Picasso,%2 Guernica.JPG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Basque Lands
Toulouse
Valladolid
Catalonia
Medina del Campo
Saragossa
Lisbon
Madrid
Barcelona
Toledo
Valencia
Córdoba
Seville
Granada
Andalusía
population per sq. km.
40 or more
20 to 40
under 20
town population
500,000+
200,000+
100,000+
30,000+
less than 30,000
financial centres
major metallurgical areas
major textile areas
wool
linen
cotton
silk

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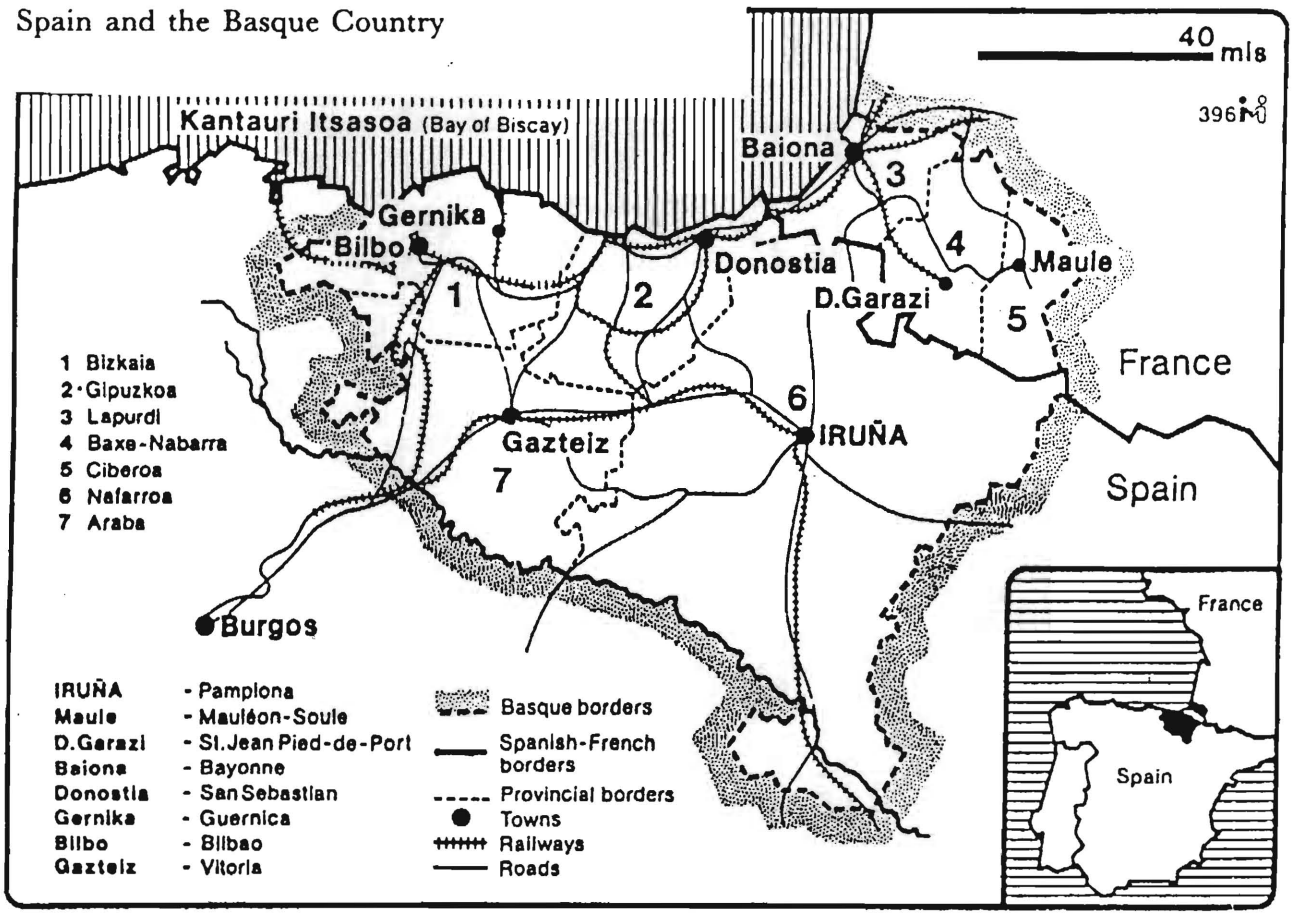
Spain and the Basque Country



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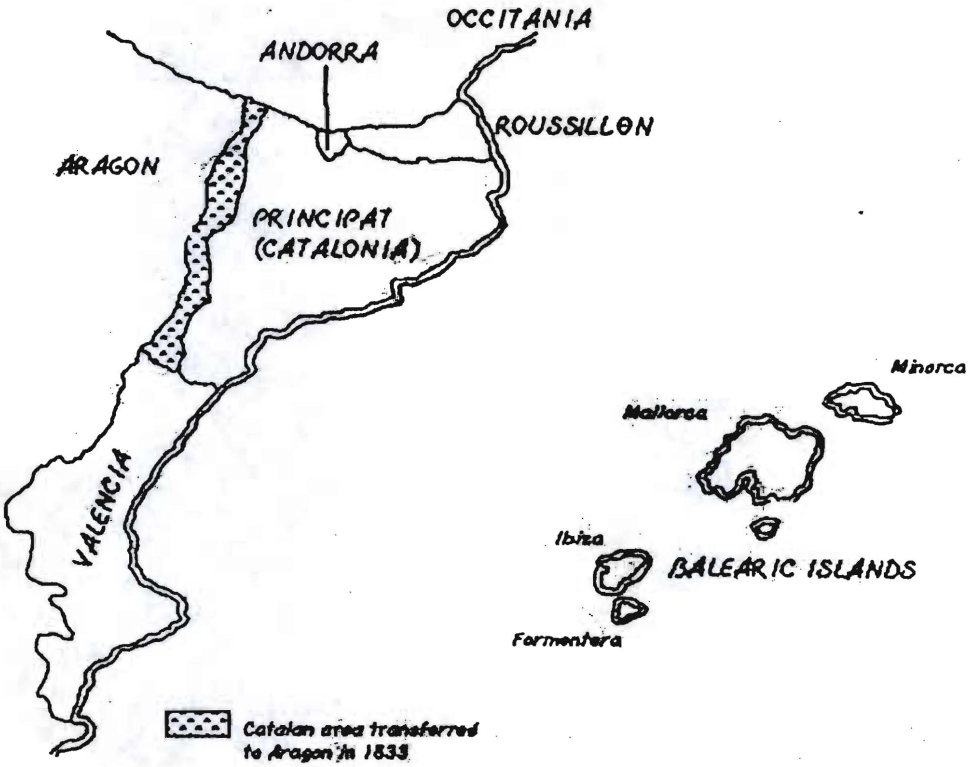
Basque regions and Populations:

Region		Area (sq. km)	Population
Bizkaia	Vizcaya	2,217	1,163,726
Gipuzkoa	Guipuzcoa	1,997	684,113
Lapurdi Baxe-Nabarra	Labourd Basse Navarre		~198,000
Ciberoa	Soule		~14,000
Nafarroa	Navarre	10,421	520,574
Araba	Alava	3,047	282,944

Major Basque cities:

Basque name	Spanish name
Bilbo	Bilbao
Gernika	Guernica
Iruña	Pamplona



Catalonia and the other Catalan countries

Major Catalan Areas:

Region or City	Area (Sq. km)	Population
Catalonia	31,930	6,226,869
Gerona	5,886	541,995
Barcelona	7,773	4,748,236
Valencia (region)	10,763	2,172,840

Not all Catalan regions are represented here, because they are either sections of a larger political region, in the case of Aragon, or, in the cases of the French regions, they are not made up of a majority of Catalan people.