Introduction: conceptual premises

Theories and analyses related to concepts such as decentralization, ethnicity, federalism, multiculturalism or nationalism have frequently been limited to the discussion of the efficiency or inefficiency of public institutions in the provision of policies and services. Such partial treatment has minimized the comprehensive study of: (a) the development of modern states (state formation, nation-building, mass democratization); (b) the intergovernmental relations within the boundaries of the polity; (c) the crisis in the legitimacy of the political institutions of the nation-state; and (d) the impact of globalization in ‘post-industrial’ societies [19].

Functionalist theories have persistently conveyed the idea that internal territorial differences within nation states would disappear with the extension of liberal democracy and industrial capitalism. As communication of political, economic and cultural matters increased, the peoples of different regions within a larger polity would develop a new common identity, which would transcend their differences [5]. The centre-periphery dichotomy was to decline in importance as society became modernised by means of elite-initiated policies aimed at achieving social standardisation (e.g. a common language and citizenship). Likewise, the cultural identities of ethnic groups and minorities would be replaced by a set of class-oriented conflicts, or conflicts among interest groups. Thus, modernisation was thought to have brought about an all-embracing nation-state identity rooted in both cultural and civic bases. History, however, has repeatedly falsified such analyses.

While reports of the death of the nation-state [28] have been greatly exaggerated, it is facing a challenge to its predominance and scope from three distinctive sources. It is challenged from above by the

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1 The author gratefully acknowledges the support provided by the Spanish Ministry of Education (PR2010-0095) at the time of writing this paper.

2 For William Safran, one of the prominent characteristics of American social science in general, and the behaviourist-functionalist school of political science in particular, is its ahistoricist bias: ‘History is rejected on two grounds: ‘First...as a succession of events that...do not lend themselves to comparison and generalisation...Second...because it is associated with pre-modern (primitive) societies’ [30, p.13]. Mainstream Marxists have traditionally taken a functional approach to the analysis of political integration and modernisation [2].
forces of globalization and continental integration. It is challenged from below by the reassertion of territorial minorities demanding increased autonomy and home rule. Finally, it is also challenged internally by the advance of the market and individualized social relations, and by a declining confidence in and engagement with the formal political process [12].

The revival of ethnoterritorial political movements around the world and its challenge to the centralist model of the unitary state is now a well-documented phenomenon. In the case of Spain, as in other pluriethnic states, regional decentralisation and federalisation has aimed during recent decades to articulate an institutional response to the stimuli of a plural society comprising cultural/ethnic groups with differences of language, history or traditions. This diversity is also reflected in the political party system [25].

In the following sections a succinct review to Spain’s historical background and Spaniards’ dual identity will frame the subsequent discussion of the explanatory model of multiple ethnoterritorial concurrence and ethnoterritorial accommodation in Spain.

**Historical background to contemporary ethnoterritorial mobilization**

Despite its secular ethnoterritorial diversity, Spain is an entity clearly identifiable as a historical unity. This unity goes beyond the simple aggregation of territories and peoples with no other affinity than their coexistence under the rule of one common monarch or political power. Political unity was first achieved during the ancient Roman presence in Hispania for nearly five and a half centuries until AD 404. The so-called barbarian invasions opened up a new process of political unification, strengthened by the occupying Germanic Visigoths from AD 540 onwards. Since early 8th century, the crusading spirit against the Muslim invaders, and, fundamentally, the unity of the Christian faith, ensured a high degree of mutual understanding of all peoples and territories in Spain prior the discovery of the ‘New World’ in 1492. In Modern and Contemporary times Spain saw the rise and fall of the first world-wide Empire in human history. Economy, traditions, idiosyncrasies, arts and cultures, and a common ancestry ought to be regarded as factors conforming Spanishness in a long-term process of historical sedimentation.

The economic, cultural, political and social that makes up Spain’s unity does not, however, obliterate internal oppositions. As has happened in the past, territorial rivalries among Spanish nationalities and regions have brought about an extra cultural incentive for creativity and civilization, but they have also provoked confrontation. From an historical point of view, it can be said that Spanish central actors, institutions and political forces have often been both weak through inefficacy and strong through violence, something which has resulted in damage to the unity of Spain’s diversity. Since its formation as a modern state, centrifugal tendencies and lack of internal accommodation have found expression
in a number of civil clashes: e.g. the Revolt of the Reapers (1640-52); the War of Spanish Succession (1701-14); the Carlist wars (1833-40, 1846-48 and 1872-75); or the Civil War (1936-39). In these conflicts ethnoterritorial cleavages played an important role [8; 21].

Language is a crucial identity and political marker fuelling national and regional sentiments in Spain. Castillian, or Spanish as is usually referred to elsewhere, is the official language state-wide. But approximately a fourth of the Spanish population of 42 million distributed in the 17 regions, or Comunidades Autónomas, is bilingual. Their minority languages¹ are also official in their respective regions²: Catalan (Català) in Catalonia, Valencian (officially as valenciano) in Valencia;³ the Balearic Islands, and in some boundary areas in Aragon; Basque (Euskera) in the Basque Country and Navarre; and Galician

¹ This denomination is controversial as well as that of ‘regional languages’. Some sociolinguistics have put forward the category of ‘Constitutional, regional and smaller-state’ (CRSS), which include Basque, Catalan and Galician languages (see http://www.npld.eu:80/Pages/default.aspx, website of the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity established at the end of 2007).

² In this chapter ‘regional’ or ‘regions’ are generally used in reference to the ‘autonomic’ – or ‘meso’— layer of government and to the Comunidades Autónomas (Spanish Autonomous Communities). Indeed, some of the latter are also nations (stateless or minority), and some other self-defined regions are now in the process of claiming ‘national’ (minority or stateless) status as such of the so-called ‘historical nationalities’ Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia.

³ Valenciano is a dialect of the Catalan language. It was defined as a ‘proper language’ by Valencia’s main political forces in the new Statute of Autonomy, or regional constitutional law, approved in 2006.
(Galego) in Galicia. Asturian (Bable/Asturianu), though not official, is a ‘protected’ language in Asturias. There are also some other surviving Romance minority languages or dialects such as Astur-Leonese, Leonese, Cantabrian or Aragonese (these do not have any official status because of their very small number of speakers). Unlike the situation in Switzerland, Canada or Belgium, in those Spanish regions with vernacular languages other than Spanish, most people with vernacular languages as mother tongues are perfectly bilingual. Bilingualism of those living in those regions and with Spanish as a mother tongue is not as extended. For this reason, it could be said that Spanish is spoken throughout Spain, serving as a *lingua franca*, virtually including all Catalans, Basques and Galicians.

Spain’s internal relations are crucially shaped by the historical trajectories of its territorial constituents. Indeed, history is the main source out of which regional elites and political actors take stock for the claiming of sub-state home rule and the decentralization of political power in contemporary Spain. On analysing the internal processes of conflict and cooperation in Spain, the interpretations made on past events often carry more weight as political claims for home rule than ‘differential’ or ‘distinct origin’ factors, such as language, law or economic development. Most minority nationalisms and regional movements find in the fertile and complex Spanish history reasons for legitimizing their quests for autonomy, self-government or self-determination.

**Dual identities**

Both processes of state formation and nation-building in modern Spain explain to a large extent how citizens express their territorial identities and institutional allegiances. During the 19th and 20th centuries, large-scale programmes of state-wide nation-building were put into practice (e.g. schooling, military conscription, or common currency and legal jurisdiction). But the profound attachment of Spaniards to their 17 *Comunidades Autónomas* remained firm and committed.

Indeed, the persistence of a dual identity or compound nationality in Spain reveals the ambivalent nature of its internal ethnoterritorial relations: Already in the early 1970s, Juan Linz expressed vividly that: “Spain ... is a state for all Spaniards, a nation-state for a large part of the Spanish population, and only a state but not a nation for

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1. In Catalonia, 95 per cent of the population declares to understand Catalan and 75 to speak the language. In the Balearic Islands 93 per cent understand Catalan and 75 percent speak it on daily basis. In Valencia, 29 per cent understand valenciano and 14 percent can speak and read it. In the Basque Country, Basque language is spoken by around a third of the population, but half of the population is unable to understand it. Basque is also spoken in mainly in northern Navarre, but 83 percent of all Navarrans do not understand it. In Galicia 98 percent understand galego and 89 percent speak it [6].
2. There are also a number of dialects of the aforementioned languages widely spoken in other regions (Andalusia, Canary Islands, Extremadura, or Murcia).
important minorities” [16, p. 423]. According a manner of dual self-
identification, Spaniards incorporate in variable proportions both ethnoterritorial (regional) and state-wide (national) identities. The degree of internal consent and dissent in decentralised Spain has found in the concept of dual identity a useful methodological tool for socio-
political interpretations.¹

Dual identity helps greatly to explain Spain’s constitutional accommodation in the process of democratization and federalization after the death of General Franco in 1975. Spain certainly falls into the category of ‘hold-together’ federal-like countries, such as Belgium or India, which have implemented devolutionary federalism ‘top down’ in order to avoid institutional deadlocks between political actors and stakeholders in the process of achieving democracy after 1975 [31].

In all 17 Spanish regions (Comunidades Autónomas), a high proportion of citizens claims some form of dual identity. During the last two decades, aggregate data have indicated that a degree of duality has been expressed by about 70 per cent of Spain’s total population. Some regions show percentages of dual identity higher than 75 percent (e.g., La Rioja, Navarre, Extremadura, and Galicia). Not surprisingly, a growing majority of Spaniards is satisfied with the current Estado de las Autonomías (Autonomic State); support increased from 33 percent in 1987 to 51 percent in 2003. A second group is happy with the autonomic state, but would like more regional autonomy (19 percent in 1987, 23 percent in 2003). Asked about alternative forms of state organization, support for centralism decreased from 43 percent in 1976 to 9 percent in 2005. Only in some Comunidades Autónomas (i.e., Aragon, both Castilles, Madrid, Murcia, and Valencia) does more than 10 percent support the return of the centralized state. In the Basque Country (29 percent), Catalonia (21 per cent), and Navarre (13 percent), significant minorities would like the state to recognize a possibility for the Comunidades Autónomas to gain independence [6].

The progressive inception of the Estado de las Autonomías initiated in 1978 can be explained by the characterization of a model of multiple ethnoterritorial concurrence. The explanatory model put forward subsequently aims at providing interpretations for the understanding of such an intricate political process. Its defining traits incorporate social, economic and political elements in a dynamic manner and are, thus, the main constituent elements of the Spanish case of federalization. In the next section the guidelines which set the conceptual boundaries of this interpretative model are put forth.

¹ The so-called ‘Moreno question’ requests surveyed people to respond as follows: “In general, would you say that you feel... (1) Only Basque, Catalan, Galician, etc. (2) More Basque, Catalan, Galician, etc., than Spanish. (3) As much Basque, Catalan, Galician, etc. as Spanish. (4) More Spanish than Basque, Catalan, Galician, etc. (5) Only Spanish. (6) Don’t know. (7) No answer.” Duality corresponds to categories 2, 3, and 4 [22; 24].
Multiple ethnoterritorial concurrence

The establishment of the Estado de las Autonomías in Spain has generated a complex of relations which can be explained as multiple ethnoterritorial concurrence [23]. ‘Concurrence’ should be understood in this context as the simultaneous occurrence of political transactions at state and sub-state levels, within the framework of a multi-national state. The term should not simply be made equal to ethnoterritorial ‘competition’. In a situation of ethnoterritorial concurrence there are competitive actions between majority and minority nationalisms and regionalisms, or between the latter. However, there is no compulsion per se to eliminate concurrent actors [29].

The Spanish mode of multiple ethnoterritorial concurrence involves, in the first place, two axioms, which refer to general features that are common to most of the contemporary world’s decentralised and federal systems: (a) conflicting intergovernmental relations, and (b) the politicisation of ethnoterritorial institutions. Secondly, two premises relate to the stage prior to unfolding of Spain’s process of decentralization: (c) the differential fact, or political ‘distinctiveness’ claimed by the minority nations within Spain, and (d) the centralist inertia, or path dependent assumption by the central administration of being hierarchically ‘superior’. Thirdly, three principles are the fundamental pillars upon which the territorial rationale of the 1978 Constitution rests upon, explicitly or implicitly: (e) the democratic decentralization, by which liberal democracy and territorial autonomy are intimately related (f) the comparative grievance, in order to vindicate powers and competencies among the Comunidades Autónomas, and (g) the inter-territorial solidarity, so that basic levels of wealth are similar throughout Spain. Lastly, three rules are singled out as the most compelling elements in the social and political structuring of the future development of federalization in Spain: (h) the centrifugal pressure, put on the centre by regional parties or elites (I) the ethnoterritorial mimesis, or the practices of policy equalisation among the Comunidades Autónomas as none wants to be ‘left behind’, and (j) the inductive allocation of powers, a consequence of the a gradual top-down process of decentralization. These elements are responsible for the asymmetry, heterogeneity and plurality which embody the Estado de las Autonomías [25]. We shall now consider each of these elements in turn:

(a) The axiom of conflicting intergovernmental relations is shared by most of the plural systems of government. Usually, it is closely linked to the diversity in the political leanings and partisan affiliations at all levels of government and other institutions representing and articulating territorial interests. Conflict and agreement are also present in intergovernmental relations in Spain as in any other federal-like

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1 According to Karl Popper a situation of concurrence can and ought to be explained as an unintentional consequence (usually unavoidable) of the human actions (conscious and planned) of the competitors.
state. Due to the open nature of the provisions of the 1978 Constitution regarding state territorial organization, a climate of permanent political bargaining among local, regional and central governments remain as the most characteristic feature of the Spanish process federalization.

(b) The axiom of the politicizing of ethnoterritorial institutions is associated with the practices of political rivalry among the three layers of government in pursuit of maximizing their political image and performance. At the intermediate, or meso level, the consolidation and growing influence of regional elites have empowered them for practices of co-option. This accretion of sub-state national power is commensurate with the growing capacity of regional elites for negotiation. These practices are legitimized by the constitutional order and are grounded in the budgetary manoeuvrability of the Comunidades Autónomas’ mesogovernments.

(c) The premise of differential fact is taken to refer to a feature, or rather a combination of features, which characterize an ethnic group or community in comparisons with other. It is therefore a concept deriving much of its meaning from a rather subjective perspective rooted in the ethnicity or ethnic identity of a given people. The mobilization patterns of the ‘historical nationalities’ (Basque, Catalan, Galician) were premised on this differential fact since the earliest stages of the decentralization process in Spain. This idea is directed towards the historical origins of the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia, sub-state minority nations whose own languages, which are different from Spanish (Castilian), are also ‘official’ according to the Constitution. Media and citizens in these nationalities use autochthonous languages and their regional parliaments and governments have greatly encouraged the preservation and protection of this cultural legacy.

(d) The premise of the centralist inertia is rooted in a long-standing perception of the superior value of the central administration. This perception is the result not only of a tradition of dictatorial rule, which includes Franco’s lasting dictatorship (1939-1975), but also of the Jacobin attitude imported from France and espoused by Spanish liberals throughout the 19th century. According to their view, state and central government, as well as nation and citizenry, were interchangeable concepts. The very term ‘state’ is ambiguously employed in the text of the 1978. The Constitutional Court’s judgement on 28 July 1981, clarified the semantic conflict by asserting that the state must be regarded as a composite whole including all the institutions of central, regional and local governments. However, a certain mentality persists among some politicians and opinion leaders who regard Comunidades Autónomas as politically dependent on the central administration. This is considerably aggravated by the political paralysis of the territorial chamber of the Senate, Spain’s upper legislative body.

(e) The foundations for the principle of democratic decentralization were laid down, paradoxically, by Franco’s dictatorship. A unitary concept of Spain taken from the totalitarian ideas and values of some of those who had ‘won’ the Civil War (1936-39) had been imposed through a defence of Spanish nationalism. In the eyes of those who had
‘lost’ the war, however, all things ‘Spanish’ came to be tainted with Franco’s cultural genocide, repression and re-invention of history. As a consequence, many of the democratic forces were suspicious of the ‘Spanish’. Throughout the Franco era, ‘Spanish’ symbolism had tried to hide the plural reality of Spain. The democratic opposition forces to Franco’s regime articulated a strategy of political action, which amalgamated both the struggle for the recovery of democratic liberties and the quest for the decentralization of power. The quest for democracy and territorial home rule thus went hand in hand.

(f) The principle of comparative grievance determines the mobilization patterns of the nationalities and regions in Spain to a large extent. In accordance with this principle, the exercise of the right to autonomy legitimately practised by the regions compels them to claim the same degree of autonomy as the ‘historical nationalities’. None of the regions wants to be left behind. This principle interacts in a conflictive manner with the premise of the differential fact claimed by the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia. Perceptions of comparative grievance and the differential fact cannot easily be translated into legislation reflecting social realities with varying aspirations for the degree of self-government to be achieved. In a country where grudges and envies are inherent features shared by all its idiosyncrasies, the zealous desire to not get left behind or be neglected is to be seriously taken into account. Not surprisingly, the Comunidades Autónomas keep an eye on each other, and scrutinize, both formally and informally, transfers, delegations and governmental arrangements could entail a position of ‘privilege’ of a given community over the others.

(g) The principle of interterritorial solidarity is laid down in the 1978 Constitution (Article 2) as fundamentally necessary to guarantee the integration and interrelation of the Spanish Comunidades Autónomas. The principle refers to the transfer of funds from the richer to the poorer regions of Spain, with the aim of attaining a minimal level of basic services state-wide, together with a fair and adequate distribution of the financial burdens. The Constitution states (Article 40) that the three levels of public power (central, regional and local) must seek to balance out the rates of income, both regional and personal, attending to the modernization and development of all economic sectors, with the ultimate aim of bringing the standard of living of all Spaniards up to the same level (Article 130). It also stipulates that the state should guarantee the effective application of the solidarity principle through seeking an economic balance among the Spanish Comunidades Autónomas, so that differences between their Statutes of Autonomy may in no case imply economic or social privileges (Article 138).

(h) The political pressure exerted upon central power by both Basque and Catalan nationalisms decisively contributed in 1978 to the establishment of a constitutional accommodation, which recognized the internal plurality of Spain [3]. Since then, and during the continuing decentralization process, the rule of centrifugal pressure has been repeatedly and generally applied by ethnoterritorial political elites. It has not only been used as a vehicle for negotiation, but also to dissuade
certain politicians and higher civil servants of the central administration from reverting to centralizing tendencies. The continuous and active presence of representatives of the Catalan and Basque nationalist parties in the Spanish Parliament has been crucial in the consolidation of an autonomist and decentralized vision of the state with respect to the political relations between the three levels of government.

(i) The rule of the ethnoterritorial mimesis has been the main factor responsible for ‘tuning’ the decentralization process in Spain. Nationalities and regions are constitutive units of the Spanish State. However, there is a clear asymmetry where the legitimacy of their political claims is concerned. According to the referential mechanism of the ethnoterritorial mimesis or imitation, the ‘historical nationalities’ (the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia) aimed at replicating the powers and symbols of the Spanish central state (their own police force, official visits to foreign places, public policies in the field of education, health and policy, police, external and ornamental signs such as the flag, the anthem, and so forth). On deploying their political claims during the 1980s, a second group of Comunidades Autónomas with ‘earlier’ aspirations for home rule (Andalusia, Canary Islands, Navarre, Valencia) attempted to ‘imitate’ the institutional outlook of the ‘historical nationalities’. A third group of ‘late-comer’ regions in the home rule process of decentralization (Aragon, Asturias, the Balearic Islands, both Castilles, Extremadura, Murcia) also struggled not to feel discriminated against by the achievements of those ‘early rising’ regions referred to in the second stage of the mimetic sequence. Ethnoterritorial mimesis has also applied to those communities with less well-defined ethnoterritorial identities (Cantabria, La Rioja, Madrid).

(j) The rule of the inductive allocation of powers has set the pace of the construction of Spain’s Estado de las Autonomías. This rule, which is implicit in the provisions of Title VIII of the 1978 Constitution, draws attention to the fact that the division of powers between the three territorial levels of the administration was not established at the beginning of the process of decentralization. Essentially, the Spanish decentralization process has followed an open model of territorial structuring which only the passage of time has gradually defined, as it shall continue to do. The fine-tuning of the federalizing technique for the distribution of political powers and financial resources, together with the general objective of reconciling both the highest level of decentralization and home rule and the necessary intergovernmental co-ordination, remains an enduring challenge for the consolidation of the Spanish Estado de las Autonomías.

Multiple ethnoterritorial concurrence is a distinctive feature of Spain’s process of federalization. It can also be found in other democratic federations and provides explanation as how unity and diversity can work. Rather than a stepping-stone towards territorial dissolution, ethnoterritorial competition and accommodation, as the Spanish case illustrates, can be regarding as consolidating liberal democracy in multi-national states [14].
**Concluding remarks**

It has been argued that to secure political and institutional stability in multinational societies is very difficult --if not impossible-- to achieve. Furthermore, attempts made to achieve such a goal are bound to result in either the break-up of the state or the consolidation of a type of hegemonic authoritarianism to maintain the state’s unity [4; 10]. Contemporary liberal thinkers have greatly revitalised the debate concerned with how collective rights could square with individual rights in the context of multicultural societies [13; 34]. More broadly, they have been interested in reconciling the realities of group and cultural senses of belonging, or ‘we-feeling’, with the tenets and practices of liberalism in multicultural societies. The conceptual linkage between nationalism and democracy remains as an enduring challenge for researchers and theorists of ethnoterritorial politics [7; 18].

Indeed, ethnoterritorial co-operation and agreement can overcome not only conflicts and divergence within multinational polities, but may also foster a deepening of democracy by means of favouring citizen participation at all levels of institutional life and political decision-making, something which in the case of Spain overlaps with its internal ethnic and cultural diversity.

**ЛИТЕРАТУРА**


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1 Robert Dahl’s position is in line with the views of Ernest Baker who also regarded political secessionism or authoritarianism as the two viable options in ethnocultural polyarchies. See Connor [1, p. 124], and Linz [15, pp. 103-104].
2 Some author concentrated on the notion of ‘liberal nationalism’ [17; 33], while others did the same on ‘multinational citizenship’ [9], or in ‘multinational democracies or federations’ [26; 27; 35]. The basic conclusion of this line of research is that nationalism and democracy ought not to be incompatible. This is particularly relevant for minority nationalist movements --in stateless nations-- which aspire to political autonomy but not necessarily full independence [11; 12; 20; 32].