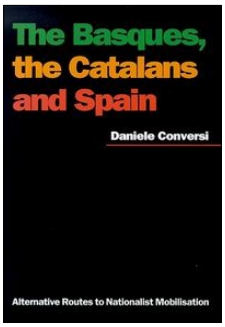
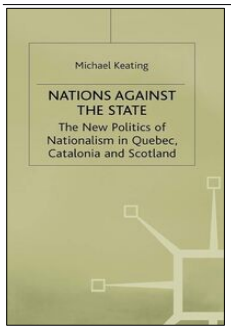


Conversi, Daniele (1997).

The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Political Mobilisation. Madrid: Acuarela libros.

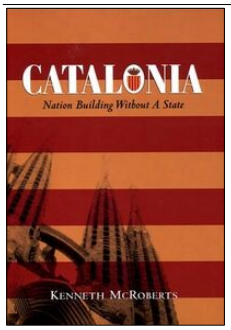
ISBN: 9685414203



Keating, Michael (2001)

Nations Against the State. The new politics of nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland (2nd edition). Basingstoke: Palgrave

ISBN: 0333921526



McRoberts, Kenneth (2001)

Catalonia: NationBuilding Without a State. Ontario: Oxford University Press.

ISBN: 0195414810

John MacInnes

john.macinnes@ed.ac.uk

administrative reasons, but for reasons of identity'.
Jordi Pujol, quoted in Conversi, p.172

La llengua té una importancia primordial. Si la llengua se salva, se salvará, tot[1].
Pujol 1976, p.85

In order to understand the past, we ought to learn from the future. So 'picture this, if you's will'. It is 2030 and the SNP has been in power for a generation. Armchair speculation about how devolution would work with different parties in power in Holyrood and Westminster had been tested out sooner than expected when in the 2007 elections disenchantment with New Labour

[1] Language has a fundamental importance. If the language is saved, everything will be saved.

in Scotland had contrasted sharply with the fortunes in England of an increasingly popular and presidential Blair: at one and the same time champion of the Euro and indispensable ally of 'Dubya' Bush. The opportunistic coalition between an SNP that claimed the true inheritance of old Labour in Scotland and the Scottish Tories, newly cut loose from the terminal internecine belligerence of their former English colleagues, was not expected to last long, but given the interest of both parties in the construction of a technocratic Scottish 'centre ground' it worked surprisingly well. The weakness of a Labour Party mired in corruption scandals and repeatedly lampooned in the Scottish press as centralist in instinct, and unused to the business of providing effective opposition in what it had regarded as its political heartlands, only consolidated a process which had begun with the way in which senior party figures had shunned the parliament for the promise of greater influence at Westminster.

Conflict over the concordats and division of powers reached its decisive phase in the confrontation over borrowing and public expenditure in the run up to the 2011 Scottish elections. Prime Minister Brown's reputation for 'prudence' counted for much less than had been hoped for from a Scottish electorate that had retained an appetite for higher spending and taxes. Fiscal autonomy, once granted, together with the declining role for Westminster in Defence and the economy, now governed almost exclusively by the European Commission and the European Central Bank, had ended the arguments about an English parliament. While Scottish members still attended Westminster in theory, the convention of voting only on matters of UK or Scottish relevance meant that in practice the UK was increasingly a ceremonial institution. With the benefit of hindsight the Union had been doomed from the end of World War 2 onwards, as only Empire had ever given it rationality and coherence. It only required the consolidation of the European Union to provide a mechanism capable of containing the transition to a new political order. In retrospect what stood out was the remarkable resilience of the distinctive personality of Scotland as a nation across just over three centuries of Union: something Scottish Labour had originally understood, that most Scottish Tories had always understood, but that the Thatcherites and Blairites had managed to forget. To understand Scotland, you had to understand it, first and last, as a nation.

All nonsense of course, although you never know. But the point is this: how can we understand the history or sociology of 'nations' in a non-teleological way, when the 'proof' of history is always that things turned out the way they did; nations reveal themselves as 'historic' if they crystalise out of the flow of history and stay put in their new solidified state, or they disintegrate and liquefy again away down into the drain, if not into the dustbin, of history. This becomes still more problematic when, as in the case of many nations, there can be disagreement about what is the relevant 'national' context of analysis (Scottish? British? both?) and such disagreement is inherently irresolvable so long as social science proves incapable of defining the category 'nation'. Thus, one challenge we face is to understand nationalism and national identity without either assuming it 'must' exist as a normal, modern, state of affairs so that we can understand historical processes in terms of their contribution to the evolution of national 'liberation' or, conversely, viewing the 'national' as the mere epiphenomenon of deeper, more important, more 'rational' or even more 'real' social relations.

Social scientists have often turned to comparative analysis to try to understand things more clearly and, given recent constitutional change in Scotland, eyes have often focused on Spain.

Since Spain is also a former imperial power with a multinational civil society which had a centralist state, and a (rather substantial) 'democratic deficit' until a quarter century ago, it is not surprising that those looking to analyse and understand devolution in Scotland within a comparative perspective have turned their attention there. Unfortunately, the amount of material available in English is not substantial, and much of it has focused on the sometimes painful modernisation of Spanish society and politics. When it comes to the 'historic nationalities' of Spain we face the problem of which comparison to choose. Most observers have fastened on Catalonia for fairly obvious reasons. It has been called, with good reason, the 'south of the north' as well as the 'north of the south' and shares many of the cultural and social legacies of Europe beyond the Mediterranean. Its transition to autonomy, unlike the Basque case, has been largely peaceful. It is prosperous and democratic, and has exerted substantial (for some in the rest of Spain too substantial) influence in Madrid. Its nationalism defines itself as civic, and suffers none of the openly racist legacy that continues to disfigure its Basque neighbour; nor have Catalan politics been characterised by quite the overpowering degree of clientilism practiced more or less openly by the Partido Popular (PP) in Galicia. But, as we shall see, there are good reasons to make such comparisons with care and, like it or not, as many reasons to compare the Scottish experience with the less happy histories of the Basque Country, and Galicia. The youth wing of Convergencia Democratica de Catalunya, (governing partner with Unio Democratica de Catalunya in the federation CiU) is keen on the slogan 'Catalonia is not Spain'. This review article suggests that it is not (much like) Scotland either, and that a deeper analysis of nationalism and national identity than that offered in these works is necessary if we are to understand the varieties of what has been (in my view mistakenly) called 'stateless nationalism'.

There are already a number of older works on Catalonia that are indispensable. Giner's short **Social Structure of Catalonia** (Giner 1984) is still, twenty years after its appearance, the best and briefest place to start, although it can now be usefully read in conjunction with the author's later thoughts on the subject (Giner 2001). Balcells' **Catalan Nationalism** (1996), Diez Medrano's **Divided Nations** (1995) Woolard's **Double Talk** (1989) and Barrera González's **Language, Collective Identities and Nationalism in Catatonia, and Spain in General** (1995) are also key texts. However, no literature exists in a vacuum, so that it is important to take account of the tradition from which some of this work has emerged in order to appreciate the three, more recent, works on Catalonia considered here.

A distinguished historian of nationalism in Spain, Xosé-Manoel Núñez Seixas Sanchez (1993, 35-39), has argued that much historiography there has tended to fall into a nationalist and teleological approach, with four five characteristics. First, the existence of the nation itself is taken for granted, so that its history comes to be seen as its re-awakening after a period of decadence (in which the malevolence of the central state may often be seen to play a part). Second, undue emphasis is consequently placed on the role of political events and leaders in this process of 're-awakening'. Romanticism or any anti-centralist political tendency comes to be seen as part of what will eventually reveal itself as the re-birth of the nation. Any form or autonomy from Madrid, or expression of popular feeling, must, it follows, be part of such a specifically national evolution. Third, this understanding of the process leads to an emphasis on studying the first intellectuals to '(re-)discover' the explicitly national and thus 'true' character of popular self-expression. Fourth, all that remains to be studied is the generalisation of this 'truth' to the masses,

in terms of its specific content and the mechanisms used, including the study of how the 'cultural' becomes the essence of the political or how literary or other movements forged relations with, or evolved into, more explicitly political organisations. Deeper social forces that might explain the rise of peripheral nationalism are left unexplored, as are the social bases of national movements or comparative analysis, either within or beyond Spain. Finally, Españolismo or Spanish as opposed to peripheral nationalism has been left underexplored. Historians and others have relied too much on the theory of Linz (1973) about the failure of nation building in Spain. He argued that education and military service were weak or disorganised, so that they failed to play the nationally integrating role achieved in, for example, France and described by Eugene Weber's classic study **Peasants into Frenchmen** (1976). The economy was not integrated across the state's territory while, instead of developing a national democratic form, politics degenerated into a *caciquismo* clientelism and oligarchy, which was as much local as statewide. It follows that it has been too easy to view Spain after the disastrous war with America over Cuba in1898 and the consequent loss of its colonies, as a state in which 'decadence seemed to be unavoidable'(Núñunez 1993). All that remains is then to describe the peripheral nation-building projects as the inevitable result of such decadence. On the contrary, other observers, such as Álvarez Junco (2001) have argued convincingly that the key rival to weak liberal nationslism was not peripheral nationalism (which only emerged at the end of the nineteenth century) but 'national' Catholicism.

Sociologists of nationalism and national identity in Britain might find all these themes familiar, with the slight amendment that any 'failure' of nation-building in Britain appeared confined to the Irish Question until after Suez, North-sea oil and the rise of Scottish and Welsh nationalism. 'Decadence' and 'democratic deficit' might well be used to describe the gung-ho Unionism of the Thatcher years, but they hardly rival the brutality or intellectual poverty of the Franco dictatorship, especially in the years before the technocratic turn of 1959.

In this histiographical context 'nationalist' need not mean the simple reproduction of a nationalist party's point of view. Indeed the left wing sympathies of many historians have brought them into conflict with the moderate or conservative nationalism of CiU or the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV). Rather it means a disposition to resort to posing the existence of a nation as an explanation for historical processes, that might have other, better, explanations. For example Marxist historiography, such as Pierre Vilar's work on Catalonia (1973), has been pressed into the nationalist cause, since its argument that a distinct Catalan model of modernisation and economic development existed could be used to argue that a distinct society merited distinct political arrangements because such distinction demonstrated the existence of a separate nation. Nor need such kinds of argumentation be confined to the 'historic' nations. As part of the transition to democracy in Spain the Autonomous Community system created new regional political entities that have lost little time in searching out historical antecendents to their existence and have adopted the syntax and sometimes also the language of nationalism in their operation. And sometimes, given the importance of language in peripheral nationalism in Spain, new, or rather 'old' languages, such as Asturiano, have been 'reawakened' by the Estado de las Autonomias too.

All three of the works reviewed here fall into the approach described by Nunez at times, although they also rise above it. Like all works attempting to synthesize and summarise they de-

pend in part upon the unevenness of secondary sources available: for example, election and voter behaviour studies and biographies of historical figures in the nationalist movement are abundant, while institutional studies are thin on the ground, and some of the evidence that a complete analysis might wish for simply does not exist: such as any adequate study (remarkable after twenty five years of democracy) of migration and class in Catalonia or the Basque Country. To some extent, therefore, these studies are prisoners of the available material, but it might be said that they are willing prisoners. Nor can this account for an overriding weakness which they all share, which becomes truly problematic when applied to comparative analysis. This is a tendency to see the Catalan world through not only nationalist but more or less Convergente spectacles. All are not only positive about Catalan nationalism (and there are many compelling reasons for such a judgement – such as its role in the transition to democracy or its hitherto honourable record in practice in dealing with immigration from beyond Europe and generally progressive social legislation) but also rather uncritical of it: in the precise sense of failing to analyse its nature and origins or of taking at face value nationalist movements' own accounts of where they come from and what they do. I do not mean to suggest, in a McCarthyite spirit, that the authors are somehow Convergente fellow-travellers, but rather that their works suffer from too uncritical an acceptance of Catalan nationalism's own assumption that the only way to understand Catalonia is as a nation that 'is not Spain'. This is an important aspect of the truth, but it is not all of it, by a very long way, and social science ought to differentiate itself from journalism by going beyond such immediate evidence to produce analytical models of what is going on: to go beyond participants' descriptions of their social experience to make sense of it as part of a bigger and possibly more complex whole.

Moreover, there is especially good reason in the Catalan case to evaluate nationalist accounts critically because there is abundant primae facie evidence that while the political elite across the political spectrum, along with its organic intellectuals, including journalists, is convinced of the importance of the national question, it is often of a good deal less importance to the great majority of ordinary citizens. It may be the paradox of Catalan nationalism that the very civil society from which it claims to draw its inspiration is at best apathetic about its historical mission: like workers blissfully unaware that they comprise the vanguard of the proletariat, most Catalans, most of the time, are untroubled by an urgent vocation to 'fer país'. Similarly, just as labour leaders who may nevertheless harbour a revolutionary ardour are constrained by the moderation of the rank and file to blend radical rhetoric with cautious pragmatism, so do nationalist politicians in Catalonia take care in practice to distinguish talking about the nation from taking any practical action to develop it that might impose any significant costs of membership. In the Catalan case this routinely takes the form of emphasising the need to safeguard 'convivencia' literally 'living together' – a phrase which implies that there are non-Catalans as well as Catalans within the Autonomous Community – while at the same time it is repeatedly affirmed that 'everyone who lives and works in Catalonia is Catalan' and that the idea that there are two 'communities' in Catalonia does not correspond to social reality!

The books here take the existence of the Catalan and Basque nations for granted, and uncritically accept the definitions and history of such nations used by the political parties that govern them. Readers familiar with Scotland, where there is a solid popular consensus that Scotland is a nation – though wildly differing views and expectations about what this means – are unlikely to

grasp the dynamics of the Spanish case unless they are aware of the fact that only McRoberts pays (very brief) attention to the facts that only a minority of those living in either the Basque Country or Catalonia think of their Autonomous Communities as nations, and still fewer want independence for them. Around a quarter of the inhabitants of the Basque Country think of themselves as exclusively Basque, one quarter want 'self determination' and just over one third think of it as a nation (compared to a half who think of it as a region of Spain). Neither would they grasp from Conversi's book, for all the fascinating historical detail that it contains, that until democratisation Basque nationalism was a singularly rather unsuccessful political force (Max Weber, holidaying there in 1897, announced rather presumptuously that Arana's recently formed separatist movement 'had no future'); that 'the Basque Country' – in the way the term is used to denote the three Spanish provinces grouped in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, the former province and now Autonomous Community of Navarra and the three French provinces – has never existed as any kind of cultural or political fact beyond the existence of varieties of spoken language. The 'fueros' whose abolition provoked Carlist and later nationalist reactions were enjoyed by individual provinces. Arana wrote about the province of Vizcaya. Some Basque nationalists might envisage Navarra as part of their homeland, but the majority of the Navarran population do not see it that way. In none of the seven provinces are a majority of the population Basque speakers. The 'Basque Country' certainly does exist, but as an aspiration held by some and disputed by others.

All three authors employ what might be called a pneumatic theory of nationalism. Nationalism exists as a basic force that, once established by such factors as modernisation or uneven development, might be channelled in different directions, take different forms, be compressed or repressed by hostile state action, but will never go away. For example, Conversi writes (p.123):

> Catalonia was like a fertile field which had been covered with concrete, flattening all forms of life on the surface; grass soon started to grow up again through every available crack until nature reconquered what had once been its own.

Such a metaphor would be acceptable if it were an accurate description, and if it were accompanied by some theory that accounted for it, but I doubt if either condition holds. We ought to ask therefore where this theory comes from – the answer, of course, is that it is how nationalism conceives of itself.

All three books concentrate on the political expression of the nation although, insofar as culture, economics and that obscure beast 'civil society' impact upon this, they are considered too. All place Catalan politics in the context of a Protean struggle with Madrid over national autonomy. Catalan national 'identity' is described overwhelmingly in cultural terms, especially language, and the politicisation of this culture is described in the terms described by Núñunez, rather than analysed. Spanish 'decadence' gets more than a walk-on part, usually in the guise of presenting peripheral nationalism as the antidote to a rancid centralist Españolismo. They thus take much the same starting point as Balcells, who asserts that polities not founded on a common culture are weak, and each culture needs its own state (or at least its own powerful autonomy) to develop properly:

> An exclusively political nation is fragile because it lacks a socio-cultural base: a cultural nation, on the other hand, has to become a political nation if it wishes to

> lay plans for its own future. Exclusively political nations strive to do away with the cultural nations they dominate and deny their national identity, while cultural nations struggle for political power, an objective that does not necessarily involve total independence, especially nowadays when the sovereignty of the great majority of old states, particularly in Europe, is steadily dwindling. (Balcells 1996, p.2)

This is a common assumption underlying Catalan thinking, but it hardly applies to Scotland. Nationalism here has been mostly political, but hardly fragile. Nor has the BritishState – an exclusively political one if ever there was such a thing – 'dominated' Scotland or Wales.

Finally, all three books define Catalonia, along with Scotland, Quebec and the Basque Country, as 'stateless nations'. As well as begging the question of just what comprises Catalan or Basque nationhood, as I have suggested, this raises the issue of the manner in which such nations may be imagined to be 'stateless'. They are each ruled by a state, of which their inhabitants are full citizens and in whose democratic processes they play a full part (indeed given Convergencia's possession of the balance of power in Madrid from 1993 to 2000, some Spanish feel they have played an overfull part); they each enjoy substantial political and administrative autonomy within that state, with parliaments, governments, civil services, legal codes, tax raising powers and police forces of their own. It is clear that the only sense in which these nations are stateless is that they are not independent states in their own right. Yet the ruling nationalist party in Catalonia has always rejected classic independence as a goal, and recent interest in stateless nations has been, at least in part, based on analysing questions of shared sovereignty, multi-level governance, and so on that goes beyond the old formula of 'one state, one (independent) nation'. In neither Catalonia nor the Basque Country has a party with a clearly independentist programme ever won anything approaching a majority of votes, nor has a referendum on self determination ever been conducted, let alone won. In this sense, they are no more 'stateless' than Greater London, Castile or the Orkney Isles.

The most ambitious, and most debatable, of the three works is Conversi, for alongside the attempt at a comparative analysis of Catalonia and the Basque country it attempts to set out a theory of what makes ethno-nationalist movements peaceful or violent. His answer, in a word, is 'culture'. It is therefore unfortunate that Conversi fails to define this notoriously flexible term, and in fact his usage shifts according to the arguments he makes. Conversi's study focuses on questions of 'national culture and symbols, their systematisation and manipulation by nationalist elites' (p.1) rather than on economics, politics or class cleavages, although in practice it is hard to exclude the latter from the analysis. Conversi argues that:

> Many of the founding fathers of the two movements were primarily cultural nationalists who felt that the national culture was being threatened by state centralisation. As the state was needed to protect the culture, cultural nationalists needed to ally themselves with political nationalists in order to reach the state. (p. 7)

He argues that the two cases offer a great opportunity for such comparative research because the nationalist movements operate within the same state structure, arose around the same time, were rooted in societies marked by similar process of economic development (rapid industriali-

sation towards the end of the nineteenth century and further development in the 1960s under the 'technocratic' phase of Francoism) which drew in massive immigration. Both achieved a brief experience of autonomous government under the SecondRepublic. Both used language as a marker of national identity, albeit in different ways. Language plays a fundamental role in Conversi's model: language maintenance in Catalunya, and the stress on integration achieved by adoption of the Catalan language by in-migrants, created the grounds for an inclusive, broad, peaceful nationalist movement. Amongst other things, language shift in the Basque country produced an exclusive nationalism, uncertain of its core values, at times stressing descent, race and ascriptive elements and eventually focusing on action and violence.

Conversi overdraws the contrasts between the two nationalist movements and underestimates the differences in the socio-economic context. As various authors have pointed out, and Conversi himself admits in his discussion, Basque industrialisation was more rapid, and concerned much larger units of capital tied to the Spanish state and under oligarchic control, employing large concentrations of immigrant workers in mines and shipyards which were often isolated from surrounding society. Most important of all, it was confined to Vizcaya until the 1950s. Because Catalan industrialisation was based on small capital in the textile industries dependent on water power, it spread much more deeply into Catalan society.

The idea that Basque nationalism has been fragmented, sectarian and violent while its Catalan counterpart has been unified inclusive and peaceful is hardly accurate. One single party has dominated Basque nationalism: the PNV. As Mees (2001) points out, this party embraced a range of organisations analogous to Catalan nationalist 'civil society' groups. Yet Conversi virtually ignores the PNV in his account of the Basque Country after Franco and concentrates on ETA. This is Hamlet without the Prince, especially because the PNV has made language – central to Conversi's argument – much more prominent in its definition of 'peaceful' Basque nationalism since the 1970s. Conversely, the student of Catalan nationalism up to the civil war needs a very large diagram indeed to chart its family tree of rapidly changing sects and ideological orientations. Between 1910 and 1925 for example, Balcells mentions no fewer than thirteen separate nationalist, regionalist or federalist parties in Catalonia. What does distinguish the Catalan case, but is left unexplored by Conversi, is the special position of the socialists, with the Partit dels Socialistes Catalans forming a party within a party in PSOE (the Spanish socialist party).

Pre-civil war Catalan nationalism had its militarist and violent aspects. Francesc Macia, the first president of the Generalitat, honoured today by a fine statue in Placa Catalunya, was exiled to Belgium after leading an invasion of Spain from France, having earlier failed in an attempt to murder the king by blowing up the royal train. His political force, Estat Catala, drilled its militant 'greenshirts' in military parades like the Communists and Fascists (Ucelay-Da Cal 2001). Catalonia's own version of ETA, Terra Liure, eventually abandoned the armed struggle (which had nevertheless involved a fatality) and integrated into the short lived Independence Party, but in the first six months of 2001 the police recorded 53 attacks with incendiary or explosive devices, and 74 occurrences of street violence, including 46 incendiary or explosive attacks, prompting **La Vanguardia** to comment that 'there are too many to pretend that nothing special is going on' (cited by Goligorsky 2002, pp.86-90).

Conversi contrasts an 'exclusive' Basque nationalism with civic, 'inclusive' Catalanism. It is obvious that Arana was a convinced racist, part of his wider hatred of almost everything modern and liberal, but early Catalanism had such thinkers too, such as Vandellos. And Catalan inclusiveness has its limits: for often the price of inclusion is learning Catalan. There are good reasons for this, but it hardly constitutes a civic nationalism, since this (permeable) boundary can be crossed only by those willing to invest the time and effort in learning the language. Conversi quotes Maluquer's account of migrant integration in Campdevànol, including his argument that use of the term 'xarnego' by autochtonous Catalans was acceptable since

> this form of verbal discrimination was employed against the newcomers, not only by the Catalans but also by older immigrants, who thus tried to elevate themselves by stressing a social distance … Despite the fact that the teaching was carried out only in Spanish, the school children spoke Catalan among themselves and called xarnegos those who did not. … This [attitude] encourages assimilation'. (Maluquer 1963, p.63)

Conversi takes this as evidence of the 'successful Catalanisation of future generations' (209). Only if the reader is aware that the word 'xarnego' is a term of abuse roughly equivalent to 'nigger' does the real meaning of Malaquer and, by extension, Conversi's argument become clear.

Conversi's focus on ETA stems from his aim of comparing peaceful Catalan and violent Basque nationalism, but hampers any attempt to understand Basque nationalism as a whole. His judgements on the armed struggle are sometimes also open to question. ETA has enjoyed a more positive reputation in the rest of Europe than it merits, probably due to its spectacular removal of the major stumbling block to Spanish democratisation that was Admiral Carrerro Blanco (his car cleared a six story building). Today its militants murder traffic policemen and local councillors: better protected civil guards or prominent politicians are too risky targets. Conversi describes the now banned Herri Batasuna as having

> ideological heterogeneity. Marxists, environmentalists, gay activists, neo-traditionalists, anti-nuclearists, cultural revivalists, punks, pacifists, feminists, unemployed, priests, small-town businessmen, students, peasants and every other imaginable sector from both urban and rural milieux are all well represented in what is probably one of the most unorthodox, unconventional and sui generis parties in Europe. (p.150)

More to the point is that Batasuna was the political arm of, and took orders directly from, ETA. Its best ever electoral result, in the wake of the Pact of Lizarra and ETA cease-fire, was in the local elections of 1999 when it obtained almost 30% of the vote in Guipuzcoa and about half that in Vizcaya, Alava and Navarra. In the elections to the Basque parliament in 2001, following ETA's renunciation of the cease-fire, its vote collapsed and it lost half its seats. At that time, asked which party might best resolve the problems of the Basque Country, a grand total of 3% cited Batasuna.

McRoberts presents an 'overview of Catalonia's political, cultural, economic and social life' (p.2). Catalonia is an example for him of a nation 'willed into existence by historical forces' (p.2) rather than 'merely the artifacts or creations of intellectuals who have deliberately "constructed" them.'(p.2), of a nation which is definitely not 'ethnic' and which, although stateless, is neither

backward nor peripheral but which has nevertheless 'never had a significant movement for political independence' (p.2) and, moreover, has enjoyed some of its greatest cultural and economic success when it was bereft of any autonomous political institutions. It offers the opportunity to examine the dynamics of political symmetry, language 'co-officiality' and the fate of vital 'civil societies' in an era of globalisation and the attrition of indigenous bourgeoisies. McRoberts argues that language is at the centre of Catalan nationhood, and forceful 'indirect testimony' to this is the failure of repeated attempts by the Spanish authorities to eradicate it. However, he notes that only half the contemporary population of Catalonia use it as their daily language (p.8) but comments that 'it is still the primary or secondary language of a critical mass of people.' Since there are only two languages at issue, all this tells us, as we know, is that not only are virtually all Catalan speakers bilingual, but most are users of Castilian. Given the similarity of the languages it is not too difficult for Castilian speakers to understand Catalan, even if they would have trouble speaking it, and would find writing it impossible. But language only 'reflects' more 'profound' 'distinct social entity' (p.9). Yet there is also 'distinctiveness that goes far beyond language'

Three historical chapters cover the emergence of Catalan as a distinct romance language in the tenth century and the separation of what was to become Catalonia from the Frankish monarchy by Wilfred the Hairy and the Counts of Barcelona, and take the reader through to the cultural revival of the *renaixança* in the nineteenth century, the birth of Catalan nationalism as a political movement, the civil war, dictatorship, the 'pactada' transition to democracy and finally the struggle for the Statute of Autonomy under the 1978 Constitution. McRoberts argues that turning the principles of the new 'State of Autonomies' into workable practice in Catalonia required political skill and determination on the part of Convergència i Unió, helped by holding the balance of power in the Spanish Cortes from 1993 to 2000, along with the Basque Nationalist Party. President Pujol's ability to draw up 'governability' pacts with the Spanish Socialist Party and subsequently with the Partido Popular deepened Catalan autonomy. A chapter on the economy discusses restructuring, foreign investment and Catalonia's fiscal deficit, one on 'national reconstruction' examines the decline of Catalonia's 'civil society' institutions and their increasing reliance on Generalitat support, given 'the virtual disappearance of the Catalan bourgeoisie' (p.137). The politics of language 'normalisation' and its role in education is covered, and the contours of national identity in a nation fundamentally marked by the very substantial in-migration of the 1960s and early 1970s are described, using social survey data which show, amongst other things, that only a third of the Catalan population, and around a half of CiU supporters themselves, agree 'with the fundamental premise of all nationalist discourse, that Catalonia is a "nation"' (p.164).

McRoberts conclusions are perhaps marked by his Canadian background and the weight of sovereigntist arguments there, so that he counterposes what he sees as Catalonia's remarkable achievements to its lack of state power: 'Catalonia appears to be a most compelling demonstration of the ability of nations to achieve greatness without the advantages of a state.'(p.180) This is an argument McRoberts rejects, however: the Catalan bourgeoisie is less powerful than it was, Catalonia has secured no independent role in Europe and there is the 'challenge' posed by 'the enormous wave of immigrants' of the 1950s and 60s. To continue to

prosper, suggests McRoberts, Catalonia will need more autonomy – perhaps within a federal structure.

But McRoberts' most interesting conclusion, and for this reviewer the most mistaken one, concerns the lessons of the Catalan case for a more general theory of states and nations. He argues:

> Catalonia is an especially clear demonstration of the extent to which nations, and in particular nationalist movements, do not simply emerge in some spontaneous manner but are created or 'constructed'. … Catalonia … has long possessed all the preconditions of a nation. But it was only quite recently, at the end of the nineteenth century, that this potential was finally realized and a clear sense of nationhood emerged as leadership articulated the idea that Catalonia constituted a nation.
>
> Still, this nationalist leadership was successful only because its idea of nation was so clearly supported by the social and cultural reality that was experienced by most members of the would-be nation. The idea of a Catalan nation 'took' because most Catalans could recognize themselves within it. For the same reason they consistently rejected the idea of membership in a Spanish nation, both before and after the emergence of Catalan nationalism. … In short, the sense of nationhood does involve active construction on the part of a leadership, but, at least in nations without states, these leaders do not create the nations. … In any event, by definition, nations without states are not the creation of a state apparatus. There, at least, the emergence of a sense of nation involves the transformation of a long-standing sense of identity and a historically constituted culture. (pp.184-5)

As well as being another clear example of Núñunez's teleology at work, the argument is both logically flawed and empirically wrong. For every period for which we have empirical evidence, a substantial majority of Catalonia's inhabitants, both 'autochthonous and in-migrant', have thought of themselves as Spanish. It is precisely their refusal to 'reject' Spain that has, amongst other things, limited the freedom of manouvre of Catalan nationalism and held it back from more sovereigntist approaches. Second, it is difficult to argue that the Generalitat is not a form of state. It is not independent, some of its powers are delegated from the centre, and it must work within a framework set by the Estat Espanyol (which is the state, let us not forget, of Catalans too). This is also true of Spain in its relations with Europe, its subscription to international conventions and so on. What greater proof of this could there be than CiU's project of 'fer país' that McRoberts' book has described so well. McRoberts' argument is, at heart, a redescription of Catalan nationalism's self perception, not a critical analysis of it.

It is problematic to claim, as McRoberts does, following the arguments of Pierre Vilar, that 'in the 1200s, Catalonia may have been closer than any other European society to becoming a nation state' (p.179). Does it really make sense to imagine social relations taking a form even faintly resembling the 'national' a couple of centuries before the expansion of trade, let alone industry, and half a millennium before the ideas of liberalism, democracy or disenchantment made the main dimensions of a national imagination even possible? The only reason to ad-

vance such a logically doubtful thesis is to lay claim to 'historic' nation status: the further back in time the traces of the contemporary nation can be discerned, the sounder the claim. But this is an argument of everyday politics, not political science. Every contemporary territory has its history, as Jimenez de Parga, President of the Spanish Constitutional Court, pointed out, albeit in an unduly blunt way, noting how his native Andalusia, which has no 'historic nation' status, enjoyed, thanks to the Moors, an extensive and advanced plumbing system, at a time when the inhabitants of Catalonia or the Basque Country 'barely washed'. His comments may have been 'insensitive', but are they less so than an argument that founds a claim to special rights or asymmetric powers based on claims to enjoy a special, 'national' history?

Keating's comparative study of Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland has been released in a second edition which includes new developments since its first appearance in 1976, but makes essentially the same argument. It is a thoroughly sociological approach, and does at least confront some elements of the nationalist argument with empirical evidence: for example he points out (as does McRoberts, using different sources) that the oft cited vibrancy of Catalan civil society is something of a myth, with levels of party membership, for example, below that of the rest of Spain. His 60 pages on Catalonia are an incisive summary of the key issues, institutions and developments in Catalan politics reviewing the origins and key doctrines of nationalism, the establishment of democratic politics in Catalonia and the nation-building efforts of CiU, the development of civil society and the economy, the politics of language and the international dimension of Catalan politics in the European Union and external relations

Again, one might wish to debate some of the judgements. Thus when he argues that '[t]he right wing vision of Catalonia was discredited before the civil war and killed off by Francoism' (p.151). Another, for me more plausible, interpretation is that, especially in its last legislature, in alliance with the 'españolista' PP, CiU has appeared ever more like a reincarnation of the early Lliga: Catalanist, but essentially conservative. What Franco killed off, literally, and even more ruthlessly than Hitler in numerical terms, was the Catalan and Spanish left. This, probably more than anything else, brought nationalism and the left together in Catalonia. Paradoxically, it was possibly the efforts of the Caudillo himself that fortified the very 'rojoseparatismo' he feared.

Although Keating discusses the discourse and doctrine of Catalan nationalism, we perhaps do not get enough sense of the contrasts with Quebec and Scotland, and at times his formulas are rather vague. We read sentences like: 'While a diffuse Catalanism is hegemonic, and nationalism is strong, support for separatism in Catalonia has always been weak.' This is a key message: stateless nationalism is not about independence, in either the first or last instance. But empirically what might a 'diffuse Catalanism' comprise, and is it the same thing as a diffuse sense of Scottishness? Is it 'diffused' amongst in-migrants, non Catalanoparlantes, and 'the right' as well? Is it the nationalist movement or political parties that are strong? Or nationalist sentiment in the population at large? And what constitutes strength? Survey evidence suggested that barely one in twenty in-migrants think of themselves as members of a Catalan nation. Conversely, over 90% of those who prioritise their Catalan identity over a Spanish one were born in Catalonia and almost as many have Catalan parents. Keating discusses this (using rather old survey material) but his analysis is disingenuous. He points out that relatively few children of immigrants born in Catalonia prioritise a Spanish identity over a Catalan one. This is true, but omits the salient fact that even fewer do the reverse, while no less than 70% of those

with Catalan parents do so. This hardly constitutes, as Keating describes it, 'assimilation'. Neither does it tell us what respondents mean by these identities. It is absolutely true, as Keating argues in his introduction, that it is wrong to classify all nationalists as 'ultimately' seeking a separate state, but what limits are there to 'autonomy' and does even the most responsible autonomist possess a more effective stick to beat the central state with than the potential threat of separation? Just as business unionism nevertheless shares with revolutionary syndicalism the right to withdraw its labour, practical means can become as significant as rhetorical ends.

This also poses an empirical qualification to the claims of both Basque and Catalan nationalism to be 'civic', in the sense that the best predictor of national identity and desire for autonomy in both Autonomous Communities is lineage. The autochtones claim a relatively strong peripheral nationalist identity, the in-migrants do not, as Table 1 shows:

	Both parents born		One parent born		Respondent only born		Migrant		All	
	Eusk.	Cat.	Eusk.	Cat	Eusk.	Cat	Eusk.	Cat	Eusk.	Cat
Only Spanish	1	1	2	2	0	6	19	31	5	13
Spanish > Basque/Catalan	1	0	0	7	5	11	8	13	4	8
Spanish = Basque/Catalan	26	24	32	30	64	58	52	46	39	38
Basque/Catalan > Spanish	26	40	38	45	19	18	13	6	23	25
Only Basque/ Catalan	47	35	29	16	13	7	8	4	29	17
N (unweighted)	249	305	61	123	94	163	168	315	572	906

source: CIS survey 2455 (2001)

Table 1. Catalonia and Basque Country: Lineage by Identity

Keating also falls into nationalist argumentation at times. In part this is because he wants to demonstrate the progressive character of stateless nationalism, especially to a sceptical left: 'Much of the literature on minority nationalism is written from a hostile or patronising perspective … in many cases they represent modernizing and democratizing movements in the face of archaic states.' (p.xii). Thus he starts out: 'Catalonia's national identity has its origins in the Middle Ages' (p.141). Literally, this is nonsense. What is true is that contemporary nationalists, whose ideas are a little over a century old, claim to discern the roots of a modern Catalan polity there. Others could equally claim to discern the later dissolution of any local 'Catalan' distinctiveness into a wider Iberian identity or polity. Keating claims to explore 'the meaning of identity and autonomy' but I would take issue with his argument that it is a new civic and progressive form of politics that overcomes 'the semi-paralysis and functional fragmentation of the state' (p.48).

Nowhere is Keating explicit about the meaning of identity, just as Conversi fudges what culture comprises; neither does he set out just what it is that distinguishes stateless nationalism from 'mere' (his word) regionalism. This is important because, at least in Spain, the difference be-

tween the two is not always clear, so that the kind of statistics about 'identity' and the kind of devolution of power that Keating describes for Catalonia can also be found in Andalusia, Valencia, the Canaries, the Balearics or Asturias, but less so, paradoxically, in the 'historic' nation of Galicia. Of course, if the key goal, as it is for CiU, is asymmetric devolution, with special rights for 'nations', then the difference between nations and 'mere regions' must be emphasised, but if, as Keating claims, we are interested in the structural reorganisation of governance away froorm the centralised and monolithic nation state, then it is not immediately clear why this should normally have a specifically national basis, nor why it should be based on identity-based demands. As he argues in his analytical opening chapters:

> One problem with nationalism as a doctrine is that there is nothing to stop groups within the nation themselves advancing national claims in competition with the existing definition of the nation. Minority or separatist nationalism involves the denial of exclusive claims on the part of the state nationalism and the assertion of national rights of self determination for groups within it. In the conflict between the two lies one of the central problems of nationalist theory, as it is generally understood. In the absence of agreed criteria for determining nationality claims, this conflict cannot be resolved. (p.19)

Perhaps it is in an attempt to escape this vicious circle that Keating makes the following, intriguing, argument:

> Arguably, the problem of asymmetry lies not so much in the minority nations themselves as with the majority, which either has not constituted itself as a nation, or has not formulated its own constitutional preferences. Canadian nationalism generally includes Quebec as part of its definition and there is resistance to formulating a common vision for Canada-outside-Quebec, even were it possible to find common interests above provincial particularism. Similarly, there is no such thing as Spain-without the historic nationalities. There is a nation of England distinct from the UK, but the English themselves have difficulty recognizing it or formulating a national vision.

While this argument fits well with the logic of stateless nationalism, and versions of it are frequently to be heard from peripheral nationalists in both Britain and Spain, it is topsy-turvy, to say the least. It both projects responsibility for the categorisation of any identity onto those who lie beyond it and simultaneously implies that there must be an underlying coherence to this proto-identity, in a splendidly paranoid logic. Empirical reflection reveals the problem. There is plenty of evidence that, at least in Spain, and almost certainly elsewhere, people identify, to some extent, with their local region: Emporda, say, or Glasgow, rather than just Scotland or BarcelonaCatalonia. Does this mean, therefore, that all non-Empordanes or non-Glaswegians ought to constitute a common identity, so as to be able to treat with these regions, cities etc. on equal terms? The Orkney Isles have a clearly historically rooted distinct 'identity', given such factors as their geographical isolation, past links with Norway and an economy specialised in pastoral farming, fishing, oil and tourism. Does this mean that Scotland-minus-Orkney has the responsibility to develop its identity? And if it does, where would this leave Shetland: similar to Orkney in many respects but deeply conscious of those factors which mark it out from its neighbour? One only has to pose questions like this to appreciate the absurdity of the logic. Asymme-

try is not about equal rights across nations, but about unequal rights within states. Ironically, Pujol has made this clear many times. He argues for decentralisation of power, but with the prior condition that Catalonia, as a 'historic nation', gets more power than other 'mere regions'.

All the authors considered here reify the role of language in some way, again imitating rather than analysing the discourse of Catalan nationalism, as illustrated by the opening quotation from Pujol, dating back to 1958. Language plays a role in Spanish nationalism, but it is more complex than the role imagined for it by the three authors here. First, the category of language is a socially constructed one in the first place. This is not just a question of the prestige that states can bestow or withhold from languages by classifying them as 'official' or mere folklorish 'dialects'. Only states create languages in the first place from codifying and standardising paroles and compelling people to use them. An essential difference between the Catalan and Basque cases was that Catalonia carved out enough state power at the beginning of the twentieth century for the Mancomunitat to fund Pompeu Fabra's work of standardisation. Catalan became an urban language that survived modernisation, rather than a regionally diverse unstandardised parole condemned to attrition by the forces of modernisation. Thus, rather than the independent variable it is often imagined to be, and proclaimed as such by Catalan nationalism, language is deeply dependent.

Thus one might read any of the books here and hardly notice that Catalan is widely spoken not only in Catalonia, but in Valencia, the Balearics and the Eastern fringe of Aragon, not to mention Andorra and the Sardinian port of Alguer. Because of linguistic politics it is sometimes known as Valenciano or Mallorquin, but the differences in grammar, vocabulary and spelling are inconsequential: no greater than differences between versions of Catalan or Basque before state sponsored standardisation. Possession of this common language has never led the inhabitants of the 'Paisöos Catalans' to express their fellow feeling with other Catalan speakers in a pan-catalan political movement. In Valencia, for example, we find a link between language and national identity that is almost as strong as in the Basque country. But this has never led to demands for autonomy or nationhood.

Does any of this matter? It think it does for two main reasons. The first is simply a question of academic rigour. We will understand nationalism better if we treat the self-perceptions of nationalist movements as data for analysis rather than as an analysis in itself. Sometimes the authors here end up closer to the second position than the first. The second is a question of political practice. Paradoxically, the case for the devolution of governance is often weakened when it is made in an over-simple nationalist way. To base it on the existence of pre-existing distinct 'peoples' or 'cultures' is not only to get history badly wrong but to open the door to a sterile argument and counter-argument over where the boundaries of such peoples or cultures lie. I say Spain, you say Catalonia. I say Europe, you say Britain, and so on. Such arguments have no possible empirical resolution. The deeper issue of devolution is how to combine democratic processes that are sufficiently 'local' (however we conceive of that spatially) with the recognition that, in a globalising world, power and decision making routinely depends upon processes that stretch far beyond the local compass. Imagining the world as a series of increasingly micro 'nations' 'peoples' or 'cultures', or imagining that devolution'reveals' some national essence hitherto hidden from view does little to helps us tackle understand neither pole of this contradiction,

rather as opposed to imagining, when devolution takes place, that it 'reveals' some national essence hitherto hidden from view.

References

ÁlvarezJunco, J. (2001).*Mater Dolorosa. La Idea De España En El Siglo XIX.* Taurus Madrid.

Díez Medrano, J. (1995), *Divided Nations: Class Politics and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia*, Ithaca. CornellUniversity Press.

Balcells, A. (1996), *Catalan Nationalism*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Barrera González, A. (1995) *Language, Collective Identities and Nationalism in Catatonia, and Spain in General*, Florence: European University Institute Working Paper EUF No. 95/6.

Giner, S. (1984), *The Social Structure of Catalonia*, University of Sheffield, The Anglo-Catalan Society.

Giner, S. (2001), 'Catalonia the Tradition of Modernity' in J. MacInnes and D. McCrone (eds), *Stateless Nations in the 21st Century* (Special issue of Scottish Affairs), pp. 166-180.

Goligorsky, E (2002) *Por Amor a Cataluña*, Barcelona: Flor de Viento.

Linz, J. J. (1973), 'Early state-building and late peripheral nationalism against the state: the case of Spain', in S.N Eisenstadt and Stein Rokkan (eds), Building States and Nations, Beverly Hills: Sage, vol. 2, pp.32-116.

Maluquer i Sostre, J (1963), L'assimilation des immigrés en Catalogne, Geneva: Droz.

Mees, L. (2001), 'Between votes and bullets: Conflicting ethnic identities in the Basque Country', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 24 No. 5 September pp.798–827.

Núñez Seixas, X.M. (1993) *HistorigraphicalApproaches to Nationalism in Spain*. Saarbrcken/Fort Lauderdale: Breitenbach.

Maluquer i Sostre, J (1963), *L'assimilation des immigrés en Catalogne*, Geneva: Droz.

Pujol, J. (1976), *La immigració, problema í esperanza de Catalunya,* Barcelona: Nova Térra.

Ucelay-DaCal, E. (2002), *'The shadow of a doubt: fascist and communist alternatives in Catalan separatism 1919-1939*', Working Paper no 198, Barcelona: Institut de Ciéncies Polítiques i Socials.

Vilar, P. (1973), *Catalunya dins de l'Espanya moderna,* 4a ed., Barcelona: Edicions 62.

Weber, E. (1977), *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernisation of Rural France, 1870–1914,* London: Chatto and Windus.

Woolard, K. A. (1989), *Double Talk. Bilingualism and the Politics of Ethnicity in Catalonia,* Stanford. StanfordUniversity Press.