Demanding only autonomy:
The mobilization of Catalan nationhood in the Spanish democratic transition, 1970-1975

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Abstract:
Much of the literature on democratic transitions and ethnic conflict focuses on the role of elites, whether as constructive contributors to ethnic harmony and pacted transitions, or as fomenters of disharmony. What these accounts often fail to take into account is the extent to which the existence of political elites is a variable in itself, particularly when their power bases are not organizations like an army but rather nations or classes. The article develops, based accounts of labor movements in transitions, an analysis of how competition for scarce militants and the demands of organizing them shapes the power and importance of elites. It does this through a case study of Catalonia in the years preceding the Spanish transition. During those years Catalonia, both a stateless nation and a potentially divided society, was the site of organizing from the left and right that nearly monopolized militants and channeled their activity into autonomist, exclusive forms of nationalist mobilization that stifled attempts at internal polarization while creating elites who could negotiate on Catalonia’s behalf in the transition. In other words, the ability of moderate Catalan nationalists to organize before the transition explains their ability to represent Catalonia and control its fissures later, and contributes to explaining the success of Catalonia as a case of peaceful multinational coexistence.

9330 words
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Democracy might be about masses, but studies of democratic transitions and of ethnic conflict management tend to be about elites. Donald Horowitz and Arendt Lijphart, for example, do not agree on much in the study of ethnic conflict management, but in a recent debate about democratic design for a divided society they both agreed on the contribution that is made by group leaders interested in negotiation— in other words, of elites. This focus appears throughout vast literature on ethnic conflict. Their good behavior is the prerequisite, for example, for consociationalism. Or national elites can choose to make ethnic conflict more intense. In a comprehensive review of literature on ethnic tensions, Williams argues that “social movements on behalf of ethnic interests have been stimulated and organized in country after country by ambitious ethnic entrepreneurs. Ethnic leaders at all levels from local to international always are tempted by, and many times use, all the devices of demonization.” In other words, elite activities often do much to explain the level of conflict in divided societies.

Mainstream studies of democratic transition are equally clear about the role of elites commanding organized resources. The common study of “transitionology,” of course, is based on the study of elite pacts. Discussing it, Collier notes that “the dominant framework used in theoretical and comparative accounts... has not only adopted an actor-based rather than a structural perspective, but it has tended to privilege certain kinds of actors: individual elites rather than collective actors, strategically defined actors rather than class-defined actors, and state actors more than societal actors.”

The point is simple enough: many of the strongest and most widely accepted studies of
both democratization and ethnic conflict management focus on the activities of (at least certain kinds of) elites. As Collier suggests, the definition of relevant elites assumes their power and might be biased towards those who control formal organizations with clear political roles. Sometimes this is acceptable; without understating the complexity of military politics, an army is usually a large set of complex organizations with visible hierarchies, identifiable leadership, and reasonably consistent self-definitions, factions, and interests.

But, this is not the case with other groups that must be constituted, often rapidly and from the fragmented and demobilized bases of a society emerging from authoritarianism, if they are to participate in pacted transitions. But when it comes to actors such as classes or nations the existence of the elites necessary for a pacted transition is a variable.

A nation is a group that, like classes, need not have the clear boundaries of a church, any elites who are identifiable with the precision of military hierarchs, or any leaders as able to bring along their followers. Without such leaders, the nation cannot “negotiate,” and it will be only learned later whether the deal created a national grievance that will cause problems. Or, with leaders who lack real implantation and mobilizational capacity in- and from that, authority over-their nation can make deals with which they cannot ensure compliance.

This article examines the creation of a national elites- leaders who can command the resources of and negotiate on behalf of their nation- in Catalonia. Specifically, it examines the creation and “catalanization” of elites in Catalonia during the runup to the Spanish transition. The contribution of the article is to highlight the variability of national elite presence by discussing the work it took in one case of undisputed elite-led democratic transition. It uses theories developed for labor politics to start to explain that variable of national elite existence. Insofar as the democratization literature has directly addressed the question of elite formation
among groups with collective action problems, and it has only rarely done so, it has usually been in studies of labor. This includes studies that highlight the importance of labor, particularly when it solves its collective action problems and develops organization\textsuperscript{vii} and ones that go beyond it to discuss the dynamics by which labor movements mobilize and develop leaderships with different strategies\textsuperscript{viii}.

Fishman’s analysis of working-class mobilization during the Spanish transition highlights two major problems of organization that face any who would like to mobilize\textsuperscript{ix}. The first problem is that of finding activists, i.e. of finding people capable of and willing to work as an organization’s representation in a given gathering. These people are in short supply, and therefore are a key resource. Whoever can get the largest number of such activists signed up is likely to be the dominant force in representing that social sector and in organizing it on the ground. Second, Fishman’s analysis directs us to the way those leaders were organized: how they were fit together into networks that multiplied the effects of their efforts, and also channeled their demands to fit with high-level leaders’ broader political projects.

Third, and present throughout Fishman’s work in the form of the looming democratic transition, looking at the process of organizing directs us to their goals- the way those political projects were formulated as poles around which mobilization could occur and coalitions could form. In short, the key to the power and strategies of leaders lies in their ability to construct organizations that can identify and recruit local leaders; build infrastructure and networks with them; and then both use those leaders to extend their organization- their ability to speak for a mobilized social sector- and also to sustain particular political projects.

This article takes Spain and Catalonia, a case in which it is accepted that nationalist elites played a significant role in both democratization and ethnic conflict management. It argues that a
great deal of political work went into creating the Catalan leadership and its combination of inclusive nationalism and autonomism (i.e. Catalanism). This was because two political forces—the Catalan Communist party (Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya, PSUC) and the activist Jordi Pujol—were able to mobilize most of the available activists, dominate sources of social protest, and thereby prevent any other leadership espousing anything else from finding activists. They were both Catalanist parties, and their commitment to minimal (and, eventually, formally agreed) Catalanist goals combined with their strength to freeze out alternative leaderships and ideas and make it possible for Catalonia to represent itself in the transition as a comparatively united nation.

The Case of Spain

The “very model of an elite settlement”\textsuperscript{x}, the Spanish transition depended in large part on the ability of the pacting elites to control forces as disparate as discontented officers and nationalist separatists. “All evaluations [of the transition]...see Spanish leaders as consciously striving to direct events so as to minimize the potential for conflict, to craft a transition that would not stir up the demons on historical memory”\textsuperscript{xii}. While the elite settlement is well studied, the construction of these elites, the bases of and limits to their power, and the origins of their preferences are far less studied in the often Madrid-centric democratization literature.

Spain’s pacted transition required that many elites be able to use and control mass pressure\textsuperscript{xii}. Strikes, assassinations, demonstrations and protests all served notice to elites and leaders within the state that the status quo would not be an option after the 1975 death of Francisco Franco\textsuperscript{xiii}. The transition would in good part be about bargaining between elites of
clearly visible institutions, and leaders of political movements who could, others hoped, bargain on behalf of the masses of strikers and demonstrators that were undermining the regime and state itself. The hope of other partners, for example, was that the Communists and unions, both obviously powerful in the working classes, could settle an agreement that would give the workers enough to satisfy them and restore labor peace. This accounts for the neo-corporatist aspect of the Spanish transition, with its incessant elite pacts, most famously those of Moncloa xiv.

It also accounts for one of the two tasks of Catalan national elites in the transition: representing Catalonia in the broader transition. “Nationalists” held a leading place among the varied mix of groups, ranging from the Church and Communists to the military and unions, thought to be able to pose or control threats. During the transition, the two most prominent stateless nations were the Basques and the Catalans. Catalan elites consequently could play a significant part in the transition and memories of the Civil War, which was arguably triggered by Catalan autonomy, made for a good prima facia case that nationalism could cause trouble. There was accordingly a premium on Catalan participation in the pacts that framed the new Spanish politics. One of the first acts of the transition, after the new government of Adolfo Súarez came to power and passed the Political Reform Law that mapped out the transition, was the creation of a Catalan “pre-autonomy” with the evocative historic name of the Generalitat. This was led by Josep Tarradellas, whose legitimacy came from his role as the last major politician of the 1930s Generalitat, and had the support of the full spectrum of Catalan parties. Miquel Roca from the Catalan nationalist party Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya was one of the panel that drafted the constitution; it included both the extreme right and him (as representative of
“nationalists”) in order to make sure all social groups would be adequately represented and supported (the Socialists gave up a seat to do this)^{xv}. In other words, key moments in the Transition involved incorporation of Catalan leaders.

The second task for Catalan elites was to ensure their domestic bases- ensure that they “spoke for” their nation. Both Catalonia and the Basque Country contained a potentially explosive problem: a combination of ascriptively self-identified Basques and Catalans, many eager to reverse Francoist oppression and develop their own autonomy, and large populations of Spanish-speakers, often born elsewhere in Spain, whose commitment to the Basque and Catalan causes might be weak and who might even be potential supporters of a Spanish backlash. Such fragmentation of both representation and society happened in the Basque country, but not in Catalonia- it is indicative that every major party in the first Catalan autonomous legislature accepted the Spanish constitution (the nationalists of Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya abstained on the Constitution but supported the Statute of Autonomy), and that the campaign against ratification of the Constitution was ineffective.

The question, then is: what processes in pre-transition Catalan politics constructed elites who could both forge a consensus at home and represent it in Madrid? Some arguments are simple and taugological: the nature of Catalan nationalist politics is just moderate.^{xvi} The next section argues that the mobilizational resources of Catalonia were principally dominated by one of two groups- the Catalan Communist party PSUC or the networks associated with the Christian Democratic nationalist Jordi Pujol. These two groups, above all the PSUC, had been effective at extending their networks throughout Catalan society. By penetrating the leadership of local struggles, whether in neighborhoods or factories, and offering a combination of attractive beliefs and concrete organizational support, they were able to dominate the organization of Catalan
resistance. The two leaderships then very deliberately and with a great deal of effort committed their organizations to catalanism: a combination of support for autonomy with a rejection of any social division, we find a great deal of political work to structure and make “catalanist” the opposition politics of Catalonia before the transition.

*Divided society, oppressed nations?: Population and the state in Catalonia 1970-1975*

Like the rest of Spain, Catalonia underwent rapid economic growth and urbanization in the 1960s and 1970s. Catalonia was less of a newcomer to urban society and industrial prosperity than most of Spain; one of the great mysteries of Spanish economic history is the ongoing prosperity and light-industrial, family-enterprise base that a distinctive Catalan economy has managed to maintain despite all sorts of political and economic vicissitudes xvii. The distinctive industrial base of Catalonia, and the distinctive elites it created, had for centuries defied attempts by the bureaucratic-aristocratic Spanish state to integrate them xviii.

The changes from the 1960s onward were nevertheless dramatic. In relative terms, much of Spain’s growth was in Catalonia, with other regions only starting to narrow the gap in the 1970s xix. A number of social changes came with this industrialization. The rapid demographic and economic changes of the 1960s and 1970s broke up older networks of solidarity that had made Barcelona’s workers famous for their ability to mobilize xx. New prosperity allowed a consumer society to arise from the poverty of the immediate postwar years while work in Europe raised horizons while the increasing pluralism of the society’s elites meant that the possibility of arranging compromises without liberal democracy steadily decreased xxi.

Development produced mass immigration from other parts of Spain. 1.4 million
immigrants arrived between 1950 and the peak of the immigrant population in 1970, during which Catalonia’s total population grew from 3.24 to 5.12 million. The immigrants came from most areas of Spain but above all from Andalucia, arriving at an average rate of 72,000 a year\textsuperscript{xxii}. The change was particularly marked in Barcelona city and province. In 1962, just under a third of the inhabitants of Barcelona were from outside Catalonia\textsuperscript{xxiii}. That same year more Andalucians arrived than Catalans were born\textsuperscript{xxiv}. By 1975 these (uniformly Spanish-speaking) immigrants made up an estimated quarter of the population of Catalonia. On one hand, this new proletariat was treated badly by the regime, with their housing, education, health and municipal services virtually ignored, creating great discontent over time. On the other hand, the influx of immigrants threatened to destroy Catalan identity, or create a social divide between Catalans and immigrants. Such a divide seemed especially plausible as the Catalan-born workers were generally better educated and many small businesses were Catalan-owned.

This fear for Catalonia was worsened by the linguistic and social policies of the regime, which systematically repressed Catalan identity-- above all, the Catalan language\textsuperscript{xxv}. Catalan nationalists worried that the influx of immigrants, combined with the official repression of the language and culture, would mean the death of Catalonia as a community\textsuperscript{xxvi}. Francesc Candel, the essayist who coined the term “the other Catalans” for these immigrants, summarized Catalan nationalist fears with a reference to a sign in the working class neighborhood of Torrassa, in the industrial Baix Llobregat, that declared “Catalonia stops here. Murcia begins here.” “It is not possible to blame them at all for their fidelity to Castilian [Spanish]” wrote Candel of the postwar immigrants in his famous book; “they found themselves in a hispanicized [castellanitzada] Barcelona...the prewar immigrants had it in their favor that they noted Catalonia much more, all around them\textsuperscript{xxvii}.”
In other words, Catalonia was potentially fragmented—potentially fragmented to the point of conceivably becoming a divided society like its Basque neighbor. Its nationalists were fighting against the legacy of both a Spanish nationalist regime and social changes that made nationalist consensus-building more difficult. They expressed this in their fear of “Lerrouxism”—the development of a (presumptively populist) anti-Catalanist political party that would turn the “immigrants” against Catalans and the Catalan national project. The experience of such a movement in the 1900s, when Catalonia was much less divided, under the leadership of the populist Alejandro Lerroux, gave such worries credibility. There was no clear assurance that there would be a social consensus around Catalan nationalist demands, or that there would be a political leadership able to make demands for Catalonia without polarizing Catalonia internally between self-described Catalans and self-described Spaniards. How was anybody to develop a Catalan concept of identity that could combine ascriptive Catalans—those self-identified Catalans, born to Catalan speaking families in Catalonia, with the “immigrants.”

Nation-building: The Political Opposition

The answer was that two organizations (or networks, given the conditions of clandestinity) dominated the available organization and cadres, and both were catalanist—committed to Catalan autonomy and an inclusive understanding of Catalonia. The largest and most important was that of the Communist PSUC, with its networks and leadership concentrated in the Spanish-speaking industrial facilities and residential areas around Barcelona. It became the dominant alternative for any form of organization, and that meant that leaders were likely to be signed up to it, or two an organization permeated with it such as the Workers’ Commissions, and
likely therefore to be under constant pressure to accept catalanist views.

Jordi Pujol, meanwhile, had status networks among the more rural and middle-class Catalans who were mostly immune to (or unaware of) the PSUC but who were if anything too willing to support Catalan nationalism at the expense of peaceful co-existence within Catalonia. Between them, they established a near-oligopoly of leaders, resources, and organization and froze others, including non-catalanist political forces. That allowed them to formulate demands and influence the general cultural climate (the latter discussed in the next section).

The opposition in Catalonia did not start from a good base. Sanguinary repression unleashed by the Francoists at the end of the Civil War was staggeringly widespread and thorough. There were approximately 150,000 executions by the regime in Spain\(^{xxi}\), with approximately 13,000 executions in Catalonia between 1936 and 1953. When de Riquer and Culla add in the deaths from the war or from the consequent injuries and hunger, they conclude that between 2.3 and 2.7% of the Catalan population died from the war and the postwar repression\(^{xxxi}\). In addition to the executions, at least 60,000 Catalans went into exile\(^{xxxi}\). The regime continued with an extensive regime of \(\text{Apurification}\) that left those implicated in Second Republic politics and administration jobless if they did not recant and enjoy good luck with the regime’s hastily constituted local tribunals, and this was in an era during which rations were often dependent on work. As a result, the infrastructure of the Catalonia of the Second Republic was destroyed, its militants dead, exiled, or struggling for survival\(^{xxxi}\). Some organizations, such as the historic parties Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (dominant in the Second Republic) and the Christian Democratic Uniò Democràtica de Catalunya survived, but as small nuclei mostly in exile. It was only from the 1960s, with a relaxation of censorship and repression and the rapid
industrialization of Spanish society that political forces began to be able to organize in clandestinity. These more open 1960s and 1970s were an era that Maravall described as having “two worlds...political inactivity opened the door to the material goods of an increasingly affluent society while it also became possible to indulge in ideological radicalism...On the other hand, political activity against the regime led to the dark side: repression, fear, and persecution. Management by the regime of the boundaries between the two worlds was skillful and it conveyed an image of change, liberalization, and abundance.”

The PSUC

Organized opposition to Francoism was dominated by the Partit Socialist Unificat de Catalunya (the PSUC), an independent party that was the homologue of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) in Catalonia, which with external help and adept leadership, gained a leading position in the resistance to Francoism. In terms of social importance in late Francoism and preparation of cadres, the PSUC was vital for its ability to recruit activists and organize clandestine political activity among the working classes of the Barcelona periphery and at the same time attract intellectuals through its strong university and intellectual sections.

Its dominance of the resistance among both workers and intellectuals had the side effect of diluting the actual number of Communists. Many militants were primarily interested in resisting the Francoist state in the name of rights, democracy, and (often) Catalan identity, and joining the PSUC was the most effective way to do so. This pattern might be called instrumental communism- the use of membership in a social movement organization to achieve goals that are not precisely goals of the movement. Membership in the PSUC was the best
way for democrats, liberals and Catalan nationalists as well as leftists of any sort to resist the dictatorship and so much of the Communism in Catalonia was instrumental.

The greatest political impact of the PSUC in structuring the nature of Catalan politics was its catalanization of opposition politics. Rafael Ribó, a long-time activist in the intellectual section, former general secretary, and former leader of its successor party Iniciativa per Catalunya, argues that the PSUC did four things to “Catalanize” politics in Catalonia during late Francoism: publish books in Catalan even during the days of harshest repression; publish its underground newspaper, *Treball*, in Catalan; publish *Nou Horitzons*, a leading journal of opposition, in Catalan; and, in addition to these efforts to preserve written Catalan, it had “a presence in all the clandestine movements-- unions, neighbors’ movements, cultural movements, educational movements-- always doing pedagogy about the national liberties of Catalonia and the education of all the cadres, born in Catalonia or no.”xxxix This last point, stressed its 1970s leader, is probably the most importantxl. Given that anti-Francoist resistance was generally organized through the PSUC or through its allies aspiring activists were recruited into the PSUC. The PSUC, internally, then took on the role of pedagogy, promoting Catalan in its meetings and publications, and constantly reclaiming Catalan self-governmentxli.

From this base it extended its Catalanist, autonomist influence into the two most vibrant social movement sectors of late Francoism: the labor movement and the urban “neighbors’ movements.” The PSUC cadres, almost uniquely in the urban, industrial areas of Catalonia, could offer experience, resources, organization and connections. The result was that they often assumed guiding or leading roles in these movements and did their best to mold them in a popular-front style autonomist Catalanism. Fishman’s point about scarce cadresxlii here matters:
the available cadres had instrumental incentives to go with the PSUC, and the result was that Catalanist Eurocommunism was the dominant political alternative in the resistance. This shows particularly in the PSUC role in the major forms of popular mobilization: industrial action neighborhood movements.

Workers’ Commissions (CCOO)

First came the phenomenon of the Workers’ Commissions, known by their Spanish initials as CCOO, and in Catalonia organized into the National Workers Commissions of Catalonia, or CONC. The early postwar labor regime had relied on state-set wages in a rigid corporatism that produced a recession rather than growth. In 1958, the state backtracked, allowing employers some ability to fix wages independently as part of the first Stabilization Plan, and in 1962 it loosened the restrictions on firm-level or plant-level wage negotiations, and as part of that made strikes legal if almost impossible to legally hold. This was mostly a boon to employers seeking labor and autonomy, and served also to let off some pressure from the squeezed workers, but what ultimately proved most important for political organization was the combination of permitting plant-level labor negotiations and strikes with the older structures of elected committees

Workers’ Commissions began to arise, mostly spontaneously, in other Spanish regions such as Madrid and Asturias in order to coordinate workplace demands. CONC formed in 1964 in a Barcelona church, after being denied use of “their” union buildings by the Francoist representatives who controlled the Vertical Union. It was made up of activist workers from two sectors. First was the PSUC which was acting on the point made in a debate of the Seventh
International: Communists should infiltrate “mass fascist organizations” for “it is here that the masses are”\textsuperscript{xlvi}. Second, there were workers from the Front Obrer Català (FOC), the Catalan Workers’ Front, and the Catholic JOC (Young Catholic Workers), groups that were more radical than the PSUC but rapidly incorporated into its broad goals as they worked with it\textsuperscript{xlvii}. In 1967 the Spanish Supreme Court declared it an illegal movement and it had to go underground after suffering serious damage in police repression. The Communists were better organized to survive the crackdowns after 1967 than the other groups and so the PSUC won what hegemony was attainable within Comisiones\textsuperscript{xlviii}.

In many parts of Spain, the CCOO were the first real protest movement to arise. In Catalonia, the PSUC and the FOC predated them and had been involved in some exhilarating strikes such as those of 1951, 1956, and a large 1957 action\textsuperscript{xlix}, even if they then suffered in the repression that followed each time. Thus, the PSUC predated the CCOO and could supply cadres, networks, and expertise at the price of linking the CCOO to it and incorporating the cadres recruited through CCOO.

CCOO was therefore key to Catalanizing workforce activists. Even if the strikes were work-related, CCOO was there responding to a demand, providing skills and techniques, and giving shape to militants’ activities. It came to dominate the leadership cadres of the workers. Its style of organizing and political demands were catalanist, thereby contributing to the linking the struggles of workers and of nationalists. Its language was “Andaluz” joked a leader, but it constantly promoted Catalan and Catalanism. Third, it was an impressive set of networks and connections, and thus was an important prop for Catalanist umbrella organizations. CCOO was as much a process as an organization or phenomenon: its effect was to increase the efficacy of workplace demands while channeling them toward a number of viewpoints which significantly
included the PSUC and thus Catalanism.

Neighbors Movements

A second source of cadres and networks attached through the PSUC- and therefore able to both spread the catalanist message and bolster PSUC dominance in clandestine politics- was the neighbors’ movements. Francoist rapid industrialization massively expanded not only the industrial working class but also its residences. The concrete conditions to which the Neighbors Movements responded were the results of unregulated, often corrupt, urban development during the 1960s and 1970s. In these years, an explosion of speculative construction took place, often in a miasma of corruption, that both housed waves of arrivals in the industrial cities and employed new arrivals in the booming (and corrupt) construction industry. The result was a ring of workers areas around the major cities, especially Barcelona and Madrid, comprised of shoddy concrete towers in vast neighborhoods lacking services as such as schools, clinics, hospitals, shops, or transport. This was presumably an improvement on the shanty towns that were still common around Spanish cities into the 1970s, but these areas, dominating the industrial counties of the Baix Llobregat and Vallès around Barcelona, still produced serious complaints. The result was a wave of social protest, originally in the form of demands by neighborhoods for services such as schools and clinics. Later it extended to relatively middle-class neighborhoods that could still complain of the same dismal public services.

The protests generally remained local and focused on improved welfare services, but they presented a serious structural challenge to the regime. It is impossible to separate them from the Transition; they were not at the table in any sense during the negotiations, but they shaped
the environment of political leaders by mobilizing large sectors of society. By 1974, 90 had formed in the city of Barcelona and by 1978 they had 70,000 members\textsuperscript{lii}. They entwined with (and were often started by) cadres of the PSUC and CCOO activists, adopted Catalanist concerns as these nationalist and leftist activists came to the fore, and built links with Neighbors’ Movements across their cities, across Catalonia and across Spain. Much of this was due to intentional activity by the PSUC, but it reflected more the fact that the PSUC cadres were more skilled; participants in neighborhood oppositional networks; and indistinguishable from the core of resistance activists.

In Catalonia, the Neighbors’ Movements provided a school and recruitment ground for Communist cadres. Thanks to CCOO and the Neighbors’ Movements the PSUC now had much deeper roots and capacity to spread its ideas among sectors it could not have reached-- ordinary workers, ordinary citizens, and women who participated in neither the masculine arena of the PSUC’s clandestine politics nor that of the CCOO’s manual shopfloor.

\textit{Jordi Pujol}

The PSUC, the unions its CCOO developed, the neighbor’s movements it co-opted make up the bulk of organized resistance activity and counter-elite formation. But their roots were largely confined in the industrial areas around Barcelona and in that city’s intellectual, Catalan, elites\textsuperscript{liii}. Those areas and people mattered, but there was also the question of the “native-born,” often rural, Catalans and their views and their mobilization. The only important opposition forces not subject to the Catalanizing influence of the PSUC were already Catalan nationalist forces. Of these, the most important, although far smaller and less important in the actual resistance to
Francoism than the PSUC, was the group led by Jordi Pujol and based first lay Catholic movements and later in a bank.

Pujol and his followers, when young, engaged in some relatively high-profile symbolic actions that demonstrated, however evanescently, that nationalist resistance was alive and got him put in jail. The heroism and interest of his activities, and his followers’ continuing symbolic escapades absolutely validated Pujol’s nationalism. However, the real activity of Pujol was contained in the activity of “fer pais,” which translates roughly as “making the country.” Catalonia was one of the European countries in which the Catholic social thought of Emile Meunier, known as Personalism, formed a bridge for the entry of Catholic youths into politics that had been polarized between Church hierarchies and anticlericalism. From his roots in the (minority) stream of Catholic thought in Catalonia, roots not sunk far from the FOC, Pujol and other followers of the theologian Ramon Galí constructed a democratic, Catholic ideology that stressed the creation of a Catalan community. This Christianity, while not strongly marking the political actions of Pujol, linked him to many progressive sectors of the Catholic church, including the Abbot of Montserrat, a monastery with a long tradition of Catalanism which engaged in illegal activities such as flying Catalan flags and secretly publishing books in Catalan.

One way to “fer país” was to seek ways to build the social community of Catalonia through cultural and economic activities that would fortify the nation and help it recover. Pujol, his mother, and his collaborators accordingly purchased a minor bank in the provincial town of Olot and converted it into Banca Catalana, an explicit bid to create a Catalan financial power that would impel the Catalan economy and forge a stronger Catalan community in the face of the
political and financial domination of Madrid.

Three aspects of Pujol’s activity and the position he constructed under Francoism were important for the later shape of Catalan politics. First, he had good networks. His Christian democratic orientation, which brought him into contacts with progressive clerics, and his economic activity allowed him to build networks through Catalan society that would prove useful in constructing a political movement. It did this both by legitimating him among Catalan and other elites and by allowing him to find resources and cadres rapidly during the transition. In this his relations with the Abbey of Montserrat were particularly helpful; Montserrat had great status as a Catalan Catholic center, and it was a helpful center for his networking within the church and for clandestine meetings as well as a great legitimator of his activities. Second, as a banker, he was able to fund and assist opposition activities (even those to the left of him personally). Third, while the Franco regime treated him badly (not only by imprisoning him for three years but also through efforts by political appointees to sabotage his bank\textsuperscript{[iv]}, Pujol’s economic moderation and capacity to enunciate a Catalan nationalist discourses made him more appealing to possibilist, “aperturista” (openist) or reform-minded forces within the regime than the PSUC could be.

Thus, for example, the aperturista leader and ex-minister Manuel Fraga Iribarne’s representative in Barcelona, Manuel Milian Mestre, took care to establish links with Pujol, noting that “he had the best team” (el mejor equipo)(meanwhile, knowing that Mestre was Fraga’s man in Barcelona, the PSUC had inserted a party member as his personal secretary in order to monitor developments\textsuperscript{[vii]}). In 1972 Mestre would organize a meeting in rural Catalonia between some elite Catalan fixers, Fraga, and Pujol to prepare for the Transition\textsuperscript{[viii]}. They would later publish a short book to celebrate it.
Summary

I earlier identified three components of collective action that shape the formation of elites for stateless nations. The leaders who can be national elites are those who successfully capture much of the pool of available activists and control over the networks and organization that make a group of activists more than isolated individuals. In Catalonia during the last years of the Franco regime the dominant force in both developing activists and organization was the PSUC, and the alternative was Jordi Pujol’s network. As the next section will argue, these were both able to develop an ideology of Catalanism and demands with enough shared content to be able to both determine who could represent Catalonia and, through control of scarce recruits and organization, to suffocate any efforts to divide society in Catalonia.

Catalanist goals: Politics against ethnic conflict

What demands- even ideology- did these organizations eventually formulate? Catalan intellectual life in the 1970s and 1970s, often semi-clandestine, was in great part preoccupied with the threat that immigration and cultural repression posed, and sought to invent formulations and strategies that would allow Catalan identity to survive. The problem was to conjugate a will to national survival with the political and social difficulty of integrating new arrivals into a national community whose manifestations were mostly still illegal.

Language
Catalan intellectuals fell back upon the standby of language: that the true badge of Catalan identity was the language. In part this reflected the overwhelming role of language in the whole Catalan renaissance since the nineteenth century and its role as a possible social glue; it also reflected a postwar Catalan cultural revival and the regime’s own focus on suppressing use of the language. The signal advantage of the language is that a language can be learned. If speaking Catalan is a sign of Catalan identity, then learning Catalan is enough to at least provisionally join the community. Thus, a language was a perfect mechanism of nationalist politics. It effectively transmitted national high and popular culture; it insinuated the national identity into anything done in Catalan; and yet, despite affording such access to the Catalan-speaking community, it did not exclude anybody by definition.

The solutions that the Catalans proposed reflect the social location and composition of the Catalan political movements’ leaders. The PSUC tried to catalanize everybody with a leftist argument. In its most basic form, this meant the argument that both Catalans and immigrants were oppressed by capital and the regime, and that rather than see Catalans, some of whom were bosses, as the enemy, the enemy should be bosses in se. It spoke enough Spanish to communicate and attract followers while promoting Catalan within and without, and contributing to a Catalan identity that could include their non-native followers.

On the other hand, there was the small nationalist core around Pujol and the large social sector whose ideas he could formulate. This sector, mostly Catalan by birth and by linguistic preference, and primarily based in the middle classes, remaining small manufacturers, and the numerous shopkeepers, was composed of many people grappling with the problem of how to survive as a nation in the face of both repression by the regime and the overwhelming
numbers of immigrants arriving from the very heartland of the regime. Language promotion again fitted the bill as a way to construct Catalonia. Pujol was one of the major organizers and funders of Omnium Cultural, which began as an organization teaching Catalan and was promptly banned for some years, continuing in clandestinity.

The PSUC was large and had sunk roots into most industrial areas of Catalonia, with strong followings in the immigrant neighborhoods. Between that and its networks across the union and neighbors’ movements, it could claim the typical skilled or even interested activist under clandestinity, giving it an enormous headstart in creating a consensus. Furthermore, devices such as the Assemblea de Catalunya, by including non-members of the PSUC, explicitly worked to create a Catalan consciousness among the larval Socialist and other groups. Pujol occupied a different role. Pujol, with his authentic image, his networks, his nationalist credentials and his resources, was able to present ascriptive Catalans with an understanding of Catalanism and Catalonia that incorporated the immigrants. Outlined in a number of books, this view was the ideological complement to his influence.

Social thought

In addition to language and art revivals the increasing prominence of new Catalan intellectuals explains the effervescence of social thought in Catalonia: in fields as distinct as education, museum management, health care, broadcasting, architecture and urbanism, there were younger generations within the organizations planning how to develop Catalanist, democratic institutions in their fields. Given the small size of Catalonia and its institutional elites, the discussions converged in a few organs: the discussions of how to order a Catalan democratic
society most often appeared in the Church-protected, Catalan-language review *Serra d’Or*. Discussions also drew extensively upon the more theoretical journal *Taula de Canvi*, modeled on the influential international *New Left Review*, and the widely-read catalanist journal of history and current events *L’Avenç*. It was represented in books, predominantly those published by Edicions 62 (which worked with support from both Pujol and the PSUC\(^\text{ix}\)). In less prominent fields, such as cultural policy, there were intensive meetings with publications as a result. The result was that a Catalan government (and Spanish ones) would have extensive banks of policy and institutional design thinking, most of it leftist, waiting for them, and support within the organizations charged with carrying out that policy.

*Political demands of the Assemblea de Catalunya*

The symbolic culmination of the development of a Catalanist consensus was the Assemblea de Catalunya. If the PSUC’s participation in the Neighbors’ Movements and CCOO meant that it commanded the loyalties of most willing cadres, and was able to influence what they said, the Assemblea de Catalunya allowed it to make explicit its leading role among Catalan intellectuals and similarly help stifle non-Catalanist alternative politics. The Assemblea was an assembly of democratic forces of Catalonia that began in November 1971. It was made up of groups and individuals who could represent “active sectors,” and those who sought to find and include representatives of the middle classes had very poor results\(^\text{x}\). As a group of the existing resistance the PSUC loomed large as its focus and was its organizational mainstay.

The Assemblea made explicit the Catalan autonomist consensus. This formal version of the Catalanist consensus contained three demands: liberty, amnesty, and the statute of 1932.
Liberty referred to their demands for a liberal democratic state; amnesty to the call for the release of political prisoners, and the Statute of 1932 to the restoration of the statute that created the autonomous Catalan government of 1932, called the Generalitat. The call to the Statute was a lowest-common denominator goal negotiated within the Assemblea-- there had been calls from more nationalist sectors, for example, to demand unification in a Catalan region of Catalonia with Valencia and the Balearic Islands (the “Catalan Lands”)

It also explains why the demands include nothing about political organization other than autonomy and liberty. This lowest common denominator was quite powerful, however, as it meant that the entire resistance movement was now agreed on the necessity of Catalan autonomy and on the floor-- the powers of the 1932 Generalitat-- below which the autonomy would be unacceptable. These demands would go on to be the core demand of the Catalan political coalition right through to the approval of the Statute of Autonomy

Conclusion: Catalan politics into the transition

The Spanish transition to democracy began with the death of Franco in 1975, but it remained unclear whether the transition would succeed until at least 1983 when the opposition Socialists took power from the center-right. In those eight years, three democratic general elections had been held, the first of those elections had chosen a committee to write a constitution that it subsequently passed and which was endorsed in a referendum, the statutes of autonomy for regional governments including Catalonia’s Generalitat had been passed and endorsed in referenda, regional governments had been constituted and the whole new structure had survived a 1981 coup attempt. Throughout the period Catalans were represented, and they
were represented because frustrated Catalan nationalism was seen as a significant threat. In those conflict-filled years, when levels of labor and other conflict as well as terrorism were very high, Catalan elites were constantly represented in debates and it was understood that the pressure mobilized Catalans could apply was a threat to the success of the transition like the pressure other groups such as the army or unions could apply. The huge 1977 rally that the Assemblea de Catalunya pulled off right after the first democratic general elections, with the help of Pujol as well as its PSUC progenitors, was a clear-cut demonstration of the power of mobilized catalanism in the service of the autonomist demands of the Assemblea. \textsuperscript{lxiii}

At the same time, the consensus survived efforts both to establish more hard-line Catalanist political forces (such as that of the secessionists of the small Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya) and forces called “Lerrouxist” such as the Andalucian Socialist Party that was trying to organize in Barcelona’s industrial areas on a platform of immigrant rights. They were both suffocated by the lack of resources- the available cadres were taken up by what was emerging as Convergencia, or by the existing PSUC-CCOO hegemony among militants in the industrial areas around Barcelona.

In both cases, this success was because the PSUC, in industrial Barcelona, and in more solidly Catalan sectors Pujol, had been able to establish such dominance of leaders as to stifle alternative political forces. Their hegemony would decline rapidly as the transition went on and “normal” party politics began to emerge, but the had both put a great deal of effort into the task of channeling resistance in catalanist, autonomist ways and defeating threats to the unity of the six million people, all of whom the Assemblea’s slogan “Som sis mil.lions” turned into Catalans. Pujol would become president of the Generalitat in 1980 and remain so for more than two decades.
This unified Catalanist movement, with considerable powers of resource mobilization and a small pool of leaders with strong organization who were committed to the catalanist consensus, could not have happened by accident. The pool of potential leaders of clandestine resistance and other resources was small, as everywhere, and in Catalonia largely tapped out by the pro-catalanist forces of the PSUC and Pujol. The development of organization, the development of a catalanist bias to it, and the formulation of basic principles (liberty, amnesty, and the Statute as well as the overwhelming focus on the Catalan language) were all the consequences of successful resource mobilization that did not just give voice to a nation; it also very much helped create it as it is today.

In Spain, “the very model of an elite transition,” then, we find that the substantial role for national leaders was a function of their ability to channel many different sorts of collective action into the formation of a national coalition. Leaders who claimed to speak for Catalonia, to have any support from that coalition, would have to agree with its basic catalanist demands. This proposition does not undermine the many theories of ethnic conflict management and democratic transitions that focus on the role of elites. Rather, it focuses on the extent to which the existence of national elites such as they is variable, the consequence of hard political work that has gone into organization, collective action, and the development of a political coalition around key demands. If Lijphart, Horowitz and the others are right, and the behavior of national elites is key to successful ethnic conflict management in democratic transitions, then we probably need more understanding of such elites as a dependent variable, a dependent variable antecedent to elite-based studies of ethnic conflict management or democratic transition.

Democratic stability and peaceful coexistence both take political work—work to organize, and work to shape the bounds of acceptable discourse. And any process that relies on leaders and
their organization must not presuppose their existence and contribution to stability. That too takes work.

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5 Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, Transitions from Authoritarian Rule:
Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).


xv The Socialists would give up a seat to do this, after the idea of including Manuel Fraga of the far right and some nationalists was suggested by the Communist leader Santiago Carrillo Jordi Solé Tura, Una Història Optimista: Memòries (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1999).


xviiGabriel Tortella, El desarrollo de la España contemporánea: Historia económica de los


Balfour, Dictatorship, Workers and the City: Labour in Greater Barcelona since 1939., pp 41-61.


Josep Benet, Catalunya sota el franquisme. Informe sobre la persecució de la llengua i la cultura de Catalunya (Barcelona: Blume, 1978).

Josep M. Colomer, Cataluña como cuestion de estado: La idea de nación en el pensamiento político catalán (1939-1979) (Madrid: Tecnos, 1986). This book is an invaluable history of the Catalan debates around immigration, language and cultural survival.

Candel, Els Altres Catalans, pp 15, 87.

The use of the terms ascriptive and immigrant are mine.

Foweraker: APersonal networks remain at the centre of...analysis...because they are the grass roots of the whole process of the making of democracy in Spain. Foweraker, Making democracy in Spain: Grass-roots struggle in the south, 1955-1975, p. 10.

Carme Molinero and Pere Ysàs, Catalunya durant el Franquisme (Barcelona: Empúries, 1999), p. 2.

xxxii Molinero and Ysàs, Catalunya durant el Franquisme, pp. 10-15.

xxxiii de Riquer and Culla, El franquisme i la transició democràtica (1939-1988), pp 84-103. A maquis guerrilla uprising in the Pyrenees was short-lived and ineffective.


xxxv The PSUC, also known as George Orwell’s bete noir in Homage to Catalonia, was the only exception to the Third International’s rule of one party per state.

xxxvi Carme Cebrián, Estimat PSUC (Barcelona: Empúries, 1997) for the best overall history and analysis.

xxxvii Foweraker, with data from the other end of Spain, puts it well: AThe [Communist] Party itself was not very democratic...but...was often as nasty and as authoritarian as the regime it was committed to combating. But it did provide a structure for organization and coordination which proved effective in fighting the dictatorship; and, even more important, at many times and in many places it represented the only political option for those wishing to oppose Franco. Not all of those within the Party, and perhaps not even a majority of them, were “communist” therefore; and many belonged because of the happy coincidence between the operational exigencies of clandestine politics...and the tight patterns of personal networks@. p 5 of Foweraker, Making democracy in Spain: Grass-roots struggle in the south, 1955-1975.

xxxviii It can be seen as a subset of the Amovement surrogacy@ identified in the decaying Soviet
Union in which it was not uncommon for...actors to hide behind surrogate causes that targeted similar audiences and it happened for much the same reason, namely constraints on available mobilizational resources. Jane I Dawson, Eco-nationalism: Anti-nuclear activism and national identity in Russia, Lithuania and Ukraine (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), p.6.

xxxix Interview, February 2001, Barcelona.

xl Interview, Antoni Gutiérrez Diaz, February 2001, Barcelona.

xli Interviews, Rafael Ribo, Antoni Gutiérrez Diaz, Jordi Sole-Tura, Barcelona, January-April 2001


xliii Carme Molinero and Pere Ysàs, Productores disciplinados y minorías subversivas: Clase obrera y conflictividad laboral en la España franquista (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1998), pp 5-98. The Socialist UGT union would matter later in the transition, and primarily elsewhere in Spain. In Catalonia the story is of CCOO.


Maravall, Dictatorship and Political Dissent: Workers and Students in Franco's Spain. p. 81.

Gabriel et al., Commisions Obreres de Catalunya 1964-1989., p. 80.

Ibid., p. 64.

Ibid., pp. 40-42.


2Ana Alabart, "Els barris de Barcelona i el moviment associatiu veïnal" (Dissertation, University of Barcelona, 1981).

3Balfour, Dictatorship, Workers and the City: Labour in Greater Barcelona since 1939., pp 195-6.

3Contrast Antonieta Jarne, L'Oposició al Franquisme a Lleida (Lleida: Pagès, 1998). The left was important because it dominated the resistance in Barcelona, and Barcelona dominated Catalonia. That did not mean the left dominated the resistance in the rest of Catalonia.

4Joan Crexell, Els fets del Palau i el Consell de guerra a Jordi Pujol (Barcelona: Edicions La Magrana, 1982).


lviii Interview, Manuel Milian Mestre, March 2001, Barcelona.

lix See the extraordinary Comissió Organitzadora XXV Aniversari Trobada de Lluçanes, La Trobada de Lluçanes: Anticipació a la transició (Barcelona: NOSTRUM, 1997).

lx The different networks come through in surveys a few years later of activists in Pujol’s embryonic party, and the left parties including the PSUC, detailed in Ismael E. Pitarch et al., Partits i Parlamentaris a la Catalunya d’Avui (1977-1979) (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1980).

lx Colomer, Cataluña como cuestión de estado: La idea de nación en el pensamiento político catalán (1939-1979). This section is based on interviews conducted in January-end April 2001 with Ramon Espasa. Antoni Gutierrez Diaz, Jordi Solé-Tura, Heribert Barrera, Josep Bricall, Rafael Ribó, Josep Benet and Isidre Molas.


lxii Daniele Conversi, The Basques, the Catalans, and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilization (London: Hurst, 1997) shows how important this simple fact is.
Colomer, Cataluña como cuestión de estado: La idea de nación en el pensamiento político catalán (1939-1979).

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J. Gol i Gurina et al., La Sanitat als Països Catalans (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1978).

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Solé Tura, Una Història Optimista: Memòries.


Ibid. p. 92.

David Ballester, Manuel Risques, and Jaume Sobrequès i Callicó, El triomf de la Memòria: La Manifestació de l'Onze de Setembre de 1977 (Barcelona: Editorial Base, 2002). Weeks later,
the Spanish prime minister would restore the Generalitat.