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## When national symbols divide: The case of pan-Catalanism and the *Països Catalans*

**ABSTRACT:** Shared symbols are an essential element in nationalist mobilisation. National symbols provide perhaps the strongest, clearest statement of national identity and are socially constructed. The effectiveness of these symbols will determine the success or failure of a political and cultural project. The effectiveness of cultural and political symbols can be seen through examination of the project of pan-Catalanism, the *Països Catalans*, (the Catalan-speaking countries). This political project is rather unusual in the nationalist literature in being unable to advance beyond an embryonic stage. Whilst cultural affinity can be determined within the Catalan-speaking territories, a wider claim to pan-Catalan political identity has foundered. This article argues that the absence of a shared attachment to national symbols in Catalonia, Valencia, the Balearics and other Catalan-speaking areas, provides the principal explanation why successful nation building has not been achieved.

**Key words:** Catalanism, nationalism, cultural movements, Valencia, Balearics

Symbols serve multiple functions (Piercy 2013). In nation building processes symbols must be widely shared in order to craft a national subjectivity. They provide a connection to an imaginary past. Symbols serve an explicit function of nationalist legitimisation of group identity and convey “the crucial role of national symbols in the mythopoeia of the nation” (Geisler 2005, xxv). These symbols include territory, shared culture, often languages, shared national narratives, common national heroes, emblems and visual representations (Cerulo 1993; Elgenius 2011). Nationalism has multiple interpretations and can be read as cultural discourse that facilitates the social construction of identities that are deemed to be objective realities. Within this cultural discourse, historical memory, national heroes and heroines, victories and defeats, and sacred memories are given an idealised representation (Babadzan 2000, 131). National symbols provide

perhaps the strongest, clearest statement of national identity and are socially constructed. Although national symbols are rarely static, societal consensus is necessary in accepting revisions or renewal. This is because it is through national symbols that “members are reminded of their common heritage and cultural kinship and feel strengthened and exalted by their sense of common identity and belonging” (Smith 1991, 16-17). Successful nationalist mobilisation requires political communication which is in turn made effective by a shared symbolic imaginative space. Symbols facilitate nationalist convergence. However, their rejection, even in part, may determine the trajectory and resonance of these movements. The shared consciousness of a common national destiny is constructed historically.

With its emergence in nineteenth century Europe, nationalism encompassed an extensive range of political projects, including national unification and homogenisation, imperialism, state building and in some cases rebellion against colonial masters. The building blocks of these diverse movements included some or all of the following: language, religion, emancipation, shared history and national myths. Theories of nationalism have been wrestling with divergence and convergence in the movements ever since. Yet nationalism is a profoundly territorial phenomenon. National territory has a deep symbolic resonance. The boundaries of the nation are posited as natural and linked to a past that is constructed imaginatively. The land of the nation encompasses the geographical distribution of a culture (Penrose 2002, 284). The spatial claim of nationalism is a process of a territorial imagination (Özkirimli 2010, 209). Boundary formation has been central to the construction of the modern nation. During much of the latter half of the nineteenth century and continuing with varying degrees of intensity until the Second World War, nationalist movements of all types attempted to define their

ultimate territorial extent. However, frequently these territorialising processes encountered rival national projects, ranging from the island of Ireland as the national territory, challenged by Ulster unionism, to competing nationalist narratives in the eastern half of the European continent, where population and language groups frequently overlapped.

Nationalism is also an inherently creative enterprise, where writers, thinkers and scholars imagine and conceptually determine the very nature of the nation. Nationalists construct and the geographical extent becomes a natural character, found centuries if not millennia earlier. The nationalist imaginary and its symbolic projection is formed by mapping: the territorial representation of the homeland found in the map (Kaplan and Herb 2011, 356). This mapping is particularly important where the ascribed nation had little real representation or disappeared from view, for example, Poland 1795-1918. Thus the mapping of the homeland sought to affirm the nation (even one in the making) (Black 1997, 121-122). A further element in defining the extent of the nation is what has come to be termed pan-nationalism, in contrast to core national projects (Snyder 1984). Pan movements have their own internal variance, from the pan nationalist movements of Serbia, Germany and Albania, seeking to bring fellow “nationals” within the boundaries of an already existing nation-state, to the construction of a fragmented homeland for the Kurds. The principal but not sole category for membership within the pan-movements has been linguistic (Myhill 2006, 76-82). The pan national movements invariably can be explained by tension between greater national and core national projects. Compare Großdeutschland and Kleindeutschland, the former representing “a single, unified German *Volk*...from Neusiedler Lake to the North Sea, from the Karawanks to the Baltic Sea” (Hochman 2014, 3). Even in cases where the core project (usually) succeeded, strong

emotional attachment remained towards the greater pan-national enterprise. The internal tension found within nationalist movements and ideologies is also related to the fact that pan and core projects exhibit different political strengths and capacity for mobilisation. A relative weakness of the nation in the wider claimed territory often facilitates mobilisation against it.

The modern Spanish state has two examples of pan-nationalist projects: the Basque Country and the Catalan territories. Spain also has minor issues of irredentism in Galicia, Asturias and Castile-Leon. Whilst a sector within Galician nationalism has looked to a form of relationship with Portugal, including union, this has never been a majority strand within this national movement that not only developed late but has never been hegemonic in its territory. The projects of pan-Catalanism and pan-Basque organisation emerged in distinctive socio-cultural contexts. In the Basque Country, the greater territorial project has remained central within the broad nationalist movement. For most Basque nationalists, *Euskal Herria* is the Basque nation. The term *Euskal Herria*, describing the territories where the Basque language is spoken, emerged centuries before Basque nationalism, and includes three regions today found in France. The Basque descriptor *Zazpiak Bat*, (the seven are one) refers to the central notion of a territorial Basque homeland that transcends internal (Spanish) and international frontiers (Spain and France). Navarre plays a foundational role in Basque nationalist construction with resemblance to the place of Kosovo for Serbia in terms of its territorial centrality. Significantly, ETA sought the construction of a greater Basque community with its capital in Pamplona (Zabaltza 2017, 67). The claim to these wider Basque territories forms a common platform in Basque nationalist claims, shared by radicals and conservatives. The relative concentration of the Basque territories and a lower degree of social differentiation

has facilitated its central place in the national narrative. Whilst in practice the post-Franco construction of the Basque Country has been centred around the three provinces of Guipúzcoa, Vizcaya and Álava, this has not meant an abandonment of the wider Basque national community. Euskal Herria is the imagined national community (Beck 1999, 159)

Yet in the Catalan case, the claim to the wider territories, or pan-Catalanism, remained a marginal and minority strand within the Catalan national movement and was thus a more disperse national project. The territory claimed by nationalists as the *Països Catalans* (the territory where the Catalan language is spoken), the Catalan Countries, potentially comprises some fourteen million people, though the actual number of daily speakers of the Catalan language is half of this total. The Catalan language was exported to Valencia and the Balearics during the Reconquest. In contrast to the Basque movement and a vast range of European comparators, mainstream Catalan nationalism has concerned itself little with a greater national project. The core national idea was simply Catalonia itself, at times referred to as the principality and, whilst cultural affinity has been acknowledged within the wider Catalan-speaking territories, Catalan nationalism has remained overwhelmingly focussed on its core territory. The general absence of engagement in Catalan nationalism with the *Països Catalans* or pan-Catalanism requires explanation as it makes it quite atypical amongst nationalist movements. This is particularly notable given the deep influence of Herderian conceptions of language and nationalism in Catalonia as national identity was recrafted over the nineteenth century (Lladonosa 2013, 30-32). Simply put, this intellectual and Romantic contribution crafted a simple equation from its reading of Herder: language equates to nation (Spencer, 2012 144-147). German idealism was not the only influence. A racial component within the political narrative was also visible (Smith 2014, 154-159).

It was on the periphery of Spain that the earliest expressions of modernisation had taken place, in particular in the territory of Catalonia which, by the late nineteenth century was the most dynamic centre of industrial and cultural power in Spain. Cultural and political revival was more halting in the case of Valencia and the Balearics, and the centralising and homogenising processes in the French state led to the erosion of Catalan identity in the territory lost to France in 1659 and claimed as Catalunya Nord (northern Catalonia). An initial reformist programme for Spain, led by Catalonia, was federal republicanism. In the early construction of Catalanism, Valentí Almirall called for the revival of the Aragonese confederation, which by inclusion of the region of Aragon signified that language was not the primary element for membership. In the Pact of Tortosa of 1869, republican and federalist representatives evoked the territories of the Crown of Aragon: Aragon, Valencia, Catalonia and the Balearics. Following the failures of the First Republic and the installation of the Restoration Monarchy in 1875, Almirall responded by focusing on Catalonia alone. This choice of the principality as the core political space would be shared by all subsequent intellectual contributions in the construction of political Catalanism. The chosen nation was to be Catalonia alone. Whilst this was the dominant trend, other expressions can also be traced.

To craft a new national community, an act of naming, of self-identification must be undertaken (Leerssen 2006, 167). The first known reference to the term *païses catalanes* (made in Spanish) is in 1876, though four years earlier the Mallorcan intellectual Josep Tarongí claimed that “Mallorca, Catalonia and Valencia were [once] a powerful nation, or better said, a federation of peoples from the same race” (Llompart 1991, 21-22). Reference to *Països Catalans* (in Catalan) first occurs in 1886. The term

was not given a visual representation by mapping until 1906 which was presented at the First International Congress of the Catalan Language. Prat de la Riba, founding father of modern Catalan nationalism, spoke of the notion of a “greater Catalonia” for all of the Catalan countries. However, usage of this term remained highly circumscribed. The first known map of the *Països Catalans* to give it an explicit conception beyond language only appeared in 1947 (Butlletí 1947). All national movements are required to *choose*, and the significance of the construction of a conceptual, cultural and territorial pan-Catalanism is that its origins are deemed to be pre-modern and look back to the golden age of the Crown of Aragon in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a “profund reiteration of the premodern in the modern” (Weisl 2003, 29). In its selection process, emergent pan-Catalanism quietly abandoned the region of Aragon as its Spanish-speaking linguistic heritage falls outside of the Catalan language communicative space. Thus the mental mapping associated with the construction of the *Països Catalans* is an adaptive version of an imaginary late medieval heritage. King James I (Jaume I) and his reconquest of Valencia became the foundational myth of a new grand narrative (Viciano 2005, 23-25). Furthermore, the early reconstruction of a cultural Catalan space postulated a shared project between Catalan and Occitan, an alternative medieval revival, invoking the high status then obtained by Occitan-Catalan in Europe. Cultural figures, poets and linguists wrestled with the similarities and divergences between Occitan and Catalan (Rafanell 2006 117-125). This Catalan-Occitan project was periodically revived amongst small intellectual groupings at various points until the 1930s, but was displaced by greater cultural communication amongst the variants of Catalan. It was not revived thereafter. More lasting was the centrality of Barcelona, combining industrial modernity with medievalist nostalgia in Catalan nation making (Leerssen 2015, 9).



The twentieth century is marked by the variable strengths of movements of cultural and political autonomy with, throughout, Catalonia playing a leading role, achieving its own autonomy in 1932 and 1979. The political project of pan-Catalanism was unable to advance beyond an embryonic stage until the 1960s. Furthermore, the territories of Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands developed their own distinctive labour movements and traditions, which were usually unsympathetic to nationalist expression. Forums were regional or existed in a wider Spanish context. From the 1880s, Catalan bourgeois sectors began to break with the tutelage of Madrid. In both Valencia and the Balearics, this rupture did not take place. The Valencian cultural revival of the nineteenth century produced regionalism, not Valencian nationalism. Valencia was also marked by the failure to produce an autonomist industrial bourgeoisie, as much of its finance capital was invested in the agricultural export industry.

As part of the romantics' response to industrial society, reification of landscape was a major element in national revivals in the nineteenth century. Emotions, memory and imagery around landscapes contribute towards senses of belonging as they become part of the national consciousness (Sörlin 1999,105-106). Landscape emerged within the literary revivals of Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearics as subjective reality. Whilst the revived *jocs florals* (floral games) in the mid-nineteenth century demonstrated the linguistic unity of Catalan, divergence rather than convergence was the cultural pattern most in evidence. From Verdaguier and Catalan mountains, to the literary traditions of Blasco Ibañez focussed on the fertile hinterland known as the Horta and the city of Valencia, to the Mallorcan literary school, no pan-Catalan literary iconography emerged. The discovery and evocation of landscape through hiking, the *excursionista* tradition, remained focussed on the core territory. The *excursionistes*, whether Catalan, Valencian

or Mallorcan exhibited an inherently local relationship to landscape. The construction of an idealised landscape remained rooted within local identities. There has been no shared national symbol that has emerged across the territories of the *Països Catalans* to provide canonical status to landscape. Other cultural expressions, from dance to theatre to folklore, were regionalised and their emotional power has remained highly localised. No meaningful national culture of pan-Catalanism appeared. The development of divergent cultural projections found political expression with the development of a fully formed Catalan nationalism, with the region being the key point of articulation in Valencia and the Balearics.

Catalonia's advanced industrialisation directly impacted on its political culture, with new trends and expressions reaching Valencia later. Significantly, whilst by the 1920s Catalan republicanism had a strong national and Catalanist component culminating in the creation of Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya in 1931, in Valencia urban republicanism dominated. Blasquista republicanism repudiated Valencian-Catalan accommodation and remained politically influential into the 1930s. This political position had economic roots. Conservative Catalanism of the Lliga Regionalista advocated a protectionist industrial policy and was fiercely attacked by Blasco Ibáñez, where both the port of the city of Valencia and the region's agriculture were damaged. In an incident in 1918, Blasquista republicans intervened in a talk given by leading luminaries of the Lliga Regionalista in Valencia, shouting "Long live Spain! Death to Catalonia!". These tensions, which had their focus around rival ports, industry and agriculture (for export), periodically resurfaced over the course of the twentieth century (Colomer Rubio 2012, 382-383). Conflicting economic interests impacted in the political sphere and prevented the emergence of a pan-Catalanist political agenda.

Dichotomies in the political cultures of Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearics before the Civil War rendered political collaboration difficult. The leading role of Catalonia in the early adoption of new political expressions and their application to the principality alone, deepened the political mismatch between the territories of the imagined *Països Catalans*. Thus a correlation can be established between movements in Catalonia and Valencia. By 1910, the old order in the countryside, built through patronage and known as *caciquismo*, was broken in Catalonia yet continued in Valencia and the Balearics until the Civil War. In the case of the Valencian region, Carlism continued in rural areas into the 1930s. The *Unió Valencianista* emerged twenty years after the *Lliga Regionalista* in 1918, yet this regionalist project had little traction and was dissolved in 1933. Left Valencianism did not appear until the 1930s, decades after its appearance in Catalonia and also remained marginal. Even greater delays in the adoption or abandonment of political movements occurred in the Balearics, even in the most economically advanced island, Mallorca. The city of Valencia remained small, with a population of only 87,000 by the time of the Spanish Civil War. This can be contrasted with Barcelona, a city capable of rivalling Madrid in terms of cultural and economic projection. In Mallorca a pattern was exhibited of cultural revival without this being transferred into an authentic political expression, whilst *caciquismo* and profoundly conservative political forms retained their dominance on the island until the Civil War (Carrio i Trujillano and Marimon Riutort 2003, 41). Until the 1930s, pan-Catalanism attained little real political projection and achieved only minor cultural collaborations. The origins of a turn towards pan-Catalanism are found in the 1930s yet the rupture of the Franco regime prevented any further natural development of these movements (Gonzàlez i Vilalta 2006, 26-27). Francoism was particularly effective at destroying

republican culture though accommodation became possible with regionalism that remained subordinated to national unity.

The political expression of pan-Catalanism remained rudimentary yet a degree of cultural articulation became evident in the 1960s. This found expression in a variety of terrains. Cultural revivals and a shared culture of anti-Francoist opposition intensified intellectual cooperation between Catalonia and Valencia, as well as the Balearics. A key cultural component of the Catalan revitalisation of the 1960s, the Catalan language *Nova Canço* and its associated protest culture, facilitated this accommodation. With the influence of Valencian singers in this movement, for the first time a popular expression of pan-Catalan identity emerged. The *Gran Enciclopèdia Catalana*, begun in the late 1960s and completed in 1986, had an explicit pan-Catalanist projection. As the cultural activist Jordi Carbonell put it, “the use of maps from the linguistic domain reinforced the concept of the *Països Catalans* from the letter ‘A’ onwards” (Carbonell 2010, 106). A newly created symbol, the map of the territory was given increasing intellectual articulation. This was continued by the *Congrés de Cultura Catalana* between 1975 and 1977. In October 1976, the *Congrés* produced its millenarian declaration: “The *Països Catalans* constitute a cultural community that has developed over the course of a history of more than a thousand years.” (Fuster 1978, 156-157) This declaration embodies “the enunciatory ‘present’ marked in the repetition...of the national sign” (Bhabba 1990, 298) The mythical lineage of the *Països Catalans* can be contrasted with the signs, symbols and narratives associated with the *Assemblea de Catalunya*, the greatest political expression of Catalanism during Francoism. Strongly influenced by Catalan communism, the *Assemblea* declined to adopt any of the political postulates of pan-Catalanism. As the *Assemblea* was a cross-party and consensus-based political forum, this seemed to express

the fundamental, and in some respects unchanging priorities of political Catalanism. Pan-Catalanism continued to be a minority and marginal political expression, yet obtained increasing influence in the cultural world in late Francoism.

This increasing role in culture can be contrasted with its limited political communication. The primary articulator of a modernised Catalanist political project under the Franco regime was the Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya, which became close to being hegemonic in the Catalan opposition in the 1960s. Catalonia was the only territory in Spain which maintained its own communist party though general political orientation was shared with Spanish communism. The predominant influence of the PSUC became a major obstacle to the extension of the *Països Catalans*. The Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya explicitly opposed a pan-Catalanist project in a major theoretical contribution published in its journal, *Nous Horitzons*, in 1961. As the article noted, “history, language and culture” are one thing whilst “a nation is another” and it explicitly described a project of greater Catalonia as being one led by the Catalan bourgeoisie to dominate Valencia and the Balearics and to be viewed as simply a “reactionary idea” (Berenguer 1961, 22). This was repeated in the intellectually influential study produced by the party in the same year, *El problema nacional català*, which became the official position of Catalan communism on the national question. This described pan-Catalanism as an expression of “the imperialist nature of bourgeois nationalism” (El problema 1961, 72-73). Furthermore, the Catalan communists explicitly criticised the pan-Catalanists for playing into the hands of reactionaries in Valencia and challenged the idea that Valencia was or indeed could ever be a nation. In both Valencia and the Balearics, unable to produce their own internal communist movements, the Partido Comunista de España was the principal articulator of opposition to the regime

and, in contrast to the role of the PSUC in Catalonia, was much less involved in the language and cultural movements in these territories. Thus, orthodox communism did not contribute to national renewal in Valencia and the Balearics.

In 1969, partly inspired by the Basque and Irish struggles, in a context of radical leftism, a left-wing pro-independence strand emerged in Catalonia in a new formation, the Partit Socialista d'Alliberament Nacional, PSAN (Socialist Party of National Liberation). It was the first Catalan party to place the concept of *Països Catalans* as central to its political project, seeking also to craft an alliance of Marxism and nationalism. The PSAN, through its invention of its own pro-independence flag, the *estelada*, sought a new means of political communication. This symbol expressed the commitment to a socialist project of the *Països Catalans*. Flags command enormous visual power and this flag came to embody a new political conception and iconography of the movement. The PSAN represented a rupture in the Catalan national movement and its major theoretical contribution lay in its demand for the full political independence of the *Països Catalans*. This territorial dimension ensured that in the following decades, the marginal campaign of the radical left for Catalan independence went hand in hand with its application to the totality of the *Països Catalans*.

Nationalism has been shown to be imbricated in modernity (Conversi 2012). Catalanism itself was a political project intrinsically connected to projection of the modern (Cacho Viu 1998). A later industrialisation in Valencia (and weak industrialisation in the Balearics) ensured that Catalonia remained the mirror onto which were projected both hopes for cultural revival and also fears of cultural dominance. The turning point in all discussion of pan-Catalanism is the early 1960s, the period of a

reconfigured Francoism and an era that saw the launch or revival of a range of political responses throughout Spain. One Catalan nationalist intellectual noted how “the national movement has ceased to concern itself solely with Catalonia in a strict sense and is now turning to the rest of the *Països Catalans*” (Batista i Roca 1964, 17). *Nosaltres els Valencians* published by Joan Fuster in 1962 became the iconic text of the idea of the *Països Catalans*. Fuster sought to propose an essentialising pan-Catalan identity where language was the principle criterion for national membership. As we will see, this linguistic definition would prove to be highly limiting as the basis for a pan-Catalanist national movement. For Fuster, the future of Valencia lay in its integration with Catalonia in order to restore “the medieval splendour” that once marked the territory (Fuster 1962a, 26-27). A process of national rediscovery determined how national decadence might be overcome (Fuster 1962b). Fuster’s double headed Janus clashed with the internal socio-economic reality within Valencia. The explicitly pan-Catalanist project of Joan Fuster spread rapidly within intellectual, student and oppositionist social sectors yet was openly resisted in the major urban centres of the Valencian region and received little or no support amongst economic elites. In marked contrast to Catalonia, these elites in both Valencia and Mallorca have not interpreted rule from Madrid as a threat to their economic interests but have perceived the industrial power of Barcelona as a direct challenge and competitor. Conservative economic interests in Valencia formed part of the anti-Catalanist opposition and provided financial patronage to both cultural and media resistance to a perceived Catalan-centred dominance. Joan Fuster’s political project of modernisation clashed with the economic interests of a key sector of Valencian society as well as a conservatism that had been nurtured by state elites during the Franco regime. Fuster attacked traditional Valencian elites for their provincialism and subordination, and abandonment of the regional language (Fuster 1976 15 and 148). Furthermore, this

movement was influential in high cultural sectors of the population, yet it seemed incapable of constructing popular national idioms. It was often dismissive of certain manifestations of Valencian culture, whether cultural or religious, which did not fit into its enlightenment social and political project. For example, the *fallas* remained a space ignored by the Valencian pan-Catalanist movement yet mobilised tens of thousands.

The counter-reaction to pan-Catalanism culminated in what became known as the Battle of Valencia.<sup>1</sup> Symbols and the symbolic universe were profoundly represented in this struggle. Whilst we noted earlier the importance of symbols in nation making, symbols can also function as mechanisms of rejection and of counter-mobilisation. Symbols can unite but also divide (Kolstø 2006). The Battle of Valencia was a period when symbols were centre stage of a intense conflict over the representation of Valencian identity. By the early transition, much of the Valencian left expressed sympathy for the ideas of Fuster and the project of the *Països Catalans*. In the city of Valencia and its hinterland of the Horta, regionalist mobilisation emerged in defence of a Valencian identity. The spectre of pan-Catalanism was used to mobilise sectors of Valencian society against a Catalan domination, represented as homogenising and threatening (Bello 1988). This successfully portrayed left Valencianism as embodying an external loyalty that was close to treachery (Baulenas 2004, 205-206). As a local UCD publication put it in 1979, “it is essential to recognise that pan-Catalanism is not only organised but that many of our municipalities are facilitating our colonisation” (Centro 1979).

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<sup>1</sup> This term applies to the intense political conflict within Valencian society between 1976 and 1981.



The Battle of Valencia saw symbols used as part of a discursive battle over the nature of Valencian identity. This dispute over symbolic representation was also a conflict over the determinants of the new democratic layers of power. Anti-Catalanism was founded on a strong social basis of the traditional Valencian middle classes in the city and its surrounding areas (Flor 2011). The political myths and representations of this social sector received institutional support in the Valencian region and at state level. The extensive autonomy awarded to Catalonia and the violent conflict in the Basque Country entailed greater state control of the autonomy process. The battle of Valencia, multi-layered and dynamic, represented dispute within Valencia as to whether its society would look to Madrid or Barcelona as role models and political partners. The populist anti-Catalanist revolt was more effective at controlling public and symbolic space than Valenciast pan-Catalanism. This was a defensive mobilisation of those that feared that their social status might be affected if the “Catalanists” took power in Valencia. The battle was framed over legitimacy and illegitimacy. This was expressed in the street as rhetoric that verged on the contentious, combined with a series of violent acts including fire bombs of “Catalanist” entities and attacks on intellectuals. Catalanist sectors within Valencian society were portrayed as internal threats and loyal to an external entity: Catalonia. “Catalan” was constructed as a trope that included cultural, political and economic dominance as well as a movement that was determined to remove the essence of Valencia. The Valencian branch of the Spanish PSOE, though ideologically far from pan-Catalanist postulates, was also portrayed as being weak in its defence of Valencia. In this dispute, victory was attained by the regionalist right in terms of the chosen Valencian flag, the name for the regional language and even for the name for the new autonomous community. Symbols were used then to consolidate the identity of a regional subjectivity.

By the end of this conflict, an anti-Catalanist conservative populism had ruptured the Valencian left's embrace of Fuster's postulates through a successful process of othering of Valencians as non-Catalans (Viadel 2006). Since the resolution of this dispute in favour of Valencian-centric narratives, region building has constructed a counter-narrative in terms of its symbolic identity. The post-transition symbols in Valencia, including the flag and the region's name, represented complete defeat for a pan-Catalanist project. Simply being termed pro-Catalan carried with it intense cultural and political stigma, forcing a re-thinking of Fuster. The absence of the social reproduction of shared symbols can be seen as providing further difficulties to the crafting of wider political projects. Cultural cooperation between the wider territories of the Catalan speaking space has remained a highly partisan issue in Valencia and, to a lesser degree, the Balearics. The cultural and political victory of conservative, folkloric populism led to the permanent subordination by the Valencian left on questions of identity. As early as 1978, 88 per cent of Valencians expressed disapproval of the *Països Catalans* (VVAA 2005, 173). Valencian society has exhibited competing political imaginaries since the 1960s. The crisis of representation that occurred during the Battle of Valencia was resolved through the re-assertion of a regionalist conception of Valencian identity. This brought to an end the turn to pan-Catalanism which emerged in the 1960s as a cultural response to language decline within urban Valencian society. However, the Fusterian narrative did mean greater importance being given to the regional language, which facilitated the promotion of Valencian from the 1980s.

Historians and social scientists have been exponents of the discursive shifts revisiting standard historiographic narratives of Valencia written in the 1960s and 1970s. Discourses of decline and revival were more effective in the case of Catalonia as it had

developed a mature nationalist movement (Archilés and Martí 2004; Cucó 2002;). Only Catalonia moved from regionalism to nationalism. Fuster's project of Valencian nationhood within a wider *Països Catalans* was thus doomed to fail as Valencians had already constructed a sophisticated regional identity within a wider Spanish identification (Archilés 2012). Pan-Catalan Valencianism has been unable to dislodge the prevailing and deep rooted identification with Spain. In Mallorca and the other islands, relative economic underdevelopment preserved the usage of the Catalan language. The regionalist right in Valencia and in the Balearics in the form of the Partido Popular, reconfigured collective identity notable for its pro-Spanish sentiment (Marimon i Riutort and Nadal 2003, 54). A clear and unified political response has not emerged across the Balearic Islands (Marimon Riutort 2008, 47). Although the Balearic Islands have been more comfortable with identification within a wider Catalan linguistic and cultural space, this has not found political articulation. Identity expression within the islands is closer to that of Valencia in terms of strong identification with Spain, with 90 per cent terming Balearic identity as that of a Spanish region and barely 10 per cent of the islands defining island identity as that of a nation (Adán Mico and Payeras 2016). Fragmentation is further evident in the locally based political formations, reflective of island based identity.

During the transition to democracy in Spain in the mid-to-late 1970s, political pan-Catalanism remained extremely weak and was not supported by the main political forces in Catalonia: CiU, the PSC-PSOE or the PSUC. Pan-Catalanism was marginal and marginalised in the pragmatic Catalan nationalism led by Jordi Pujol. Whilst there were no representatives of any political party in Catalonia supportive of pan-Catalanism from the first elections to the restored Generalitat in 1980, Pujolist Catalanism adopted a policy of non-interference in Valencia (Mercadé et al. 1983 120). CiU's Catalanist project was

overwhelmingly centred on national reconstruction in the principality, though it did facilitate patronage for cultural activity in the wider Catalan territories. Whilst it established electoral alliances with nationalist parties in Valencia and the Balearics, these have been no more significant than those made with Basque and Galician parties in European elections. This can be usefully contrasted with the position of Basque nationalist movements with Navarre. Radical and mainstream Basque parties sought and obtained representation in Navarre's regional elections. The only political support for pan-Catalanism came from the extra-parliamentary radical nationalist left in the respective territories. Yet its cultural profile rose whilst its political profile declined. The immediate post-Franco period saw a range of new publications in Catalan, from the historical and cultural monthly *L'Avenç* to a daily newspaper *Avui*, all of which in the late 1970s gave an explicit commitment to a pan-Catalanist cultural space. Catalan television, TV3, daily asserts a symbolic unity of the *Països Catalans* in its weather reports.

Post-Franco Valencian identity remains closely identified with Spain, best defined as a shared patriotism. Furthermore, "most Valencians have shown little interest in these questions of identity" (Paniagua 2001, 119-120). The standardisation process in Catalonia and Valencia has proceeded separately, producing variations in grammar and morphology. Sixty per cent of Valencians consider Catalan and Valencian to be different languages (Bodoque 2009, 226-227). Valencia is a paradigmatic example of a territory where the political terms region and nation have been subject to repeated contestation, challenge and evolution. These regional and national variables have been formed by two key relationships: those towards the central state and secondly, the relationship with Catalonia. The fragmentation of Valencian political culture has been expressed in a variety of guises since the 1980s. By the end of Spain's transition, left-associated

Catalanism had been defeated and Valencianist regionalism became hegemonic. The pro-Catalanists and the anti-Catalanists have represented the impossibility of consensus and have been deeply fractured over the question of Catalan-ness and Valencia. In recent decades, this binary position has fragmented further through the internal development of a Valencianist movement that has sought to overcome the division around the relationship with Catalonia. This third sector has partly emerged from pan-Catalanism as well as Valencian regionalism and represents the late political construction of a Valencian nation (Solves 2003). However, for most Valencians, the nation continues to be Spain.

The theses of Joan Fuster have lost centrality in Valencia since the 1980s, yet their political prestige and presence has been revived in Catalonia. We see again how both Catalan and Valencian societies rarely converge in their political articulation. Due to the entrance of activists from the pan-Catalanist left in the 1980s, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, ERC, became the first party in the Catalan parliament to advocate a project of *Països Catalans*, which included the creation of its own branches in Valencia and the Balearics. ERC has its own secretariat for *Països Catalans* affairs and pan-Catalanism is given particular importance in the party's youth movement (Fundació Josep Irla 2012, 17). Thus, for the first time, *Països Catalans* now had a relatively mainstream political advocate but significantly only in Catalonia. This trend was further consolidated by the emergence of the radical leftist Candidatura de Unitat Popular, CUP, whose commitment to the *Països Catalans* was one of its central leitmotifs, as a party that traced its own lineage in part to the PSAN. The iconography, the map as logo, projected by the CUP is the most overt political expression of the *Països Catalans* that has yet emerged. From 2012, a fifth of Catalan parliamentarians and local councillors advocated pan-Catalanism. However, these formations, seeking representation in Valencia and the Balearics, have

rarely been able to obtain more than 2 to 3 per cent of the vote. Their presence is extra-parliamentary and marginal. In contrast, both the mainstream Partido Nacionalist Vasco and radical Basque party Bildu have substantial institutional representation in Navarre.

## Conclusions

The attempted construction of political pan-Catalanism, or the *Països Catalans*, is the story of division and tension within diverging political projects. During the 1930s, the political articulation of pan-Catalanism remained weak, in contrast to the strong articulation of greater Basque territories when Navarre narrowly rejected participating in the Basque autonomous project in 1936. The concept of *Països Catalans* was revived from the early 1960s but its political expression was negligible. In the post-Franco period, a proliferation in the cultural expression of the *Països Catalans* has taken place. Mass media, cultural bodies and political parties project an iconic image of the *Països Catalans*, in an echo of the view that “Maps serve as symbolic shorthand for a complex of nationalist ideas” (Harley 2001, 162). The map of the prospective nation, in the cases of the Basque seven provinces of Euskal Herria and the multi-territoriality of the *Països Catalans* are projected as alternative representations to those of the Spanish (and French) states. This territorial imaginary increasingly became part of political discourse. For nationalist activists and cultural producers, the map became reality: the flora and fauna of the *Països Catalans* now exist as do a vast range of literary, historical, cultural and geographical studies formed on this territorial basis. Political parties and others in the Catalan sphere that share an approach towards pan-Catalanism have sought to craft and promote subcultures that express commitments to pan-Catalanism. Since the early 2000s, new pan-Catalanist cultural and language groupings have also emerged, usually based in

Catalonia. Yet these renewed attempts to craft popular cultural idioms remain incapable of political expression across the desired national territory.

Effective identity construction requires consensus around symbols. The *senyera*, the widely recognised flag of Catalonia, has its origins in the medieval Crown of Aragon and is thus shared by Catalans, Aragonese, Valencians and those of the Balearic Islands. A language based project of the *Països Catalans* required the exclusion of Aragon from its national imaginary. Through close examination of the three territories of Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearics, we find that unitary and unifying symbols are absent. Catalonia is the only region to have developed a mature national movement, yet we can note that two visual symbols of the nation, anthem and national day, are not celebrated by other inhabitants of the *Països Catalans*. Both *Els Segadors* and *la Diada* of 11 September do not form part of the symbolic repertoire of Valencia or the Balearics, as each territory has their own separate national days and national hymns. There are no national monuments to heroes of a pan-Catalanist space or even museum of the *Països Catalans* able to craft a shared national narrative. Military heroes and annual commemorations are profoundly regional. This reveals the deep limitations of pan-Catalanism as nations can be termed “symbolic regimes” (Elgenius 2011). Successful nationalist movements often combine religious with national symbols and imagery. In the case of the Catalan-speaking territories, religious iconography is not shared, beyond a general Catholic heritage. Distinctive traditions of saints, madonnas and patrons are found in each region. This has particular resonance given the prominent and highly symbolic roles of the abbey of Montserrat and Sant Jordi in Catalanist culture. Valencia has its own patron saints and Mallorca its own Black Madonna. Whilst effective within the principality, language as cultural marker, or core value, has proven to be of limited

salience beyond the region. The pan-Catalanist movement has been unable to construct a narrative of common descent through its inability to construct a range of commonly valued repertoire of symbols. The cartographic symbol of the *Països Catalans*, though visually powerful and familiar, has been unable to represent a natural boundary. Whilst pan-Catalanism exists amongst writers and intellectuals, it has not achieved group expression, horizontal solidarities or collective action.

Within the standard tropes of nationalist theory, there is no pan-Catalan imagined community that has been politically articulated. The nation is not only a bounded community but it is “also sealed by the extent of a belief system” (Uzelac and Ichijo 2005, 215). Internal differentiation within Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearics exists on a number of planes and each region expresses a distinct expression of national consciousness. Affinity with a common linguistic heritage has not transcended historic variation in their respective societies. This differentiation has produced a range of regional and national symbols. The turn to secession in Catalonia is a further expression of this trend. There is no indication that any political culture capable of attaining representation will emerge that seeks independent nation-state status for the Balearics and Valencian region. It is notable that even the taking of power by the new Valencianist coalitions in 2015 at local and regional level has not led to Valencia participating in the Institut Ramon Llull, the body tasked with the international promotion of Catalan language and culture. Thus even cultural institutionalisation is fragmented. As we have seen, there is an ongoing contest for identity representation that provides little opportunity for a unified political project between diverse regions and territories. A reconfigured left Valencianism since the mid-1990s, has sought to construct a Valencian national project. It is an explicit and overt rejection of the classic formulation of Joan Fuster that “being



Valencian is our way of being Catalan”. Contemporary Valencianism is undergoing an intense process of renegotiation, shifting between regional and national definitions. However these social constructions of cultural and political identity do not include pan-Catalanism. Jacint Verdaguer’s *Pi de les Tres Branques* (the three-branched pine tree) interpreted and celebrated as a pan-Catalanist symbol, has limited resonance. An invented tradition, the national day of the *Països Catalans*, was created in 1955 and attempts at a pan-Catalan hymn failed to obtain little beyond the most marginal recognition. The project of pan-Catalanism remains limited to phase one of Miroslav Hroch’s taxonomy of nation-building: the activity of cultural figures and intellectuals (Hroch, 1985 23-24). The political project for a *Països Catalans* is overwhelmingly rejected by Valencians. Catalan nationalism and independence, Valencian nationalism and regionalism, Balearic regionalism, usually island based and fragmented Catalan identity in Catalunya Nord determine the parameters of the wider pan-Catalan project. The turn to secession in Catalonia has revealed that, rhetoric aside, the real national space for the Catalan sovereignty movement continues to be that of the core nation. Catalan independence is a new expression of a divergent national movement. The symbolic universe of pan-Catalanist identity remains highly limited. Pan-Catalanism or the *Països Catalans* has failed to achieve collective group consciousness, shared identity and its politicisation, the sine qua non for any successful nationalist project.

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