

Reconsidering Spanish nationalism, regionalism, and the centre-periphery model in the post-Francoist period, 1975–1992

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Abstract

Out of a desire to prompt a reconsideration of Spanish nationalism and regionalism in the post-Francoist period, this article seeks to use the example of Madrid to expose the inadequacies of the widely accepted centre-periphery model that is often used to explain geographical identity formation in the period after 1975. Contrary to this model, which posits regional identities forming in response to a strong national centre, an examination of Madrid finds no evidence of a unified national identity, or Spanishness, articulated in the capital during this period. At the same time, there is evidence to suggest that the local and regional administrations of Madrid articulated their own regionalist project between 1979 and 1986, which implies a more global process that escapes the constraints of the centre-periphery model of identity formation and points to the creation of a multiple, or postmodern, democratic identity after the dictatorship.

Keywords

nationalism
regionalism
Madrid
centre-periphery
model

While the strength of sub-national movements has varied across Spain since 1975, scholars typically highlight the fact that many of the same tools were used in different areas to construct new forms of identification. Both new regionalist projects, ranging from Andalusia to Cantabria, and the programmes of the three historical nationalities (Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia) have used propaganda, cultural promotion, educational policies and the claim of 'Madrid's guiltiness' to consolidate new democratic identities since the end of the dictatorship. This final aspect, that of using Madrid as the 'other', has been the focus of a great number of scholars wishing to explain the formation of sub-national, or regional, identities in Spain after 1975.¹ As a result of this reliance on Madrid as the 'other', the centre-periphery model of regional development has become, by default, the standard analytical model used to explain the creation of new regional identities after the end of the dictatorship.

Rather than attempting to answer all of the questions related to Spanish nationalism and regionalism in the post-Francoist period, the

1 Despite the foreseeable objections, I use the term 'regionalism' throughout this paper in reference to both the three historical nationalities (Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia) and the other projects to create a regional collective identity in other parts of Spain, for example in Valencia. This is done for clarity and consistency within the text.

2 The debates surrounding the definitions of 'nationalism' and 'regionalism' are extensive. Here and throughout the paper, as a member of the 'modernist school', I understand nationalism as a tool 'for autonomy, unity, and identity of a population deemed to constitute a nation' (Hutchinson and Smith 2000: 29). Likewise, just as I see nationalism producing nations and national identities, I use regionalism in this study to refer to the creation of an intrastate identity within the borders of a sovereign nation.

purpose of this article is to prompt a reconsideration of Spanish collective identity and geographical identity formation in the first two decades after the dictatorship. Specifically, this paper seeks to use the case of Madrid to expose some of the inadequacies of the widely accepted centre-periphery model. To accomplish this task, this article proceeds in three parts. Part one briefly discusses the origins of the centre-periphery model and its original application to Spain. Part two highlights the serious shortcomings of this model when applied to Spain in the period between 1975 and 1992. Part three, then, offers some possibilities for re-conceptualising regional and national identity formation in the post-Francoist period. Contrary to the centre-periphery model, which posits regional identities forming in response to a strong national centre, even a brief examination of Madrid finds no unified national identity, or Spanishness, articulated in the capital during this period. At the same time, there is evidence to suggest a more global process of regional identity formation that escapes the constraints of the centre-periphery model and points to the creation of a multiple, or postmodern, identity after the dictatorship.

Part I: Origins of the centre-periphery model

Starting in the 1970s, scholars began proposing different theoretical models to describe the apparently oppositional character of regionalism and nationalism.² The two most important models to develop in this period were the centre-periphery model and, a variation of that model, the internal colonialism model. In both models, regionalism or nationalism, on the 'periphery' of an nation or empire, creates a unique new identity in response to economic exploitation by the centre. Based originally on André Gunder Frank's dependency theory, Tom Nairn was among the first to employ the centre-periphery model in the 1970s to analyse the birth of nationalist movements on the periphery of the British Empire. Nairn argued that imperialist exploitation, based on modern capitalism, reduced overseas regions to a condition of dependency and underdevelopment. Faced with these circumstances, the political and cultural elite of such peripheral dependencies attempted to resist this imperialist exploitation through the 'mobilization of the masses'. In Nairn's analysis, mobilisation was based on a nationalist programme that was popular, cross class, and usually offered a romanticised view of local cultural traditions (Nairn 1977). Nationalism, and the invention of new and separate forms of collective identities, was thus used as a tool on the periphery to resist imperialism and to compete with the core for resources.

Around the same time, Michael Hechter offered the idea of 'internal colonialism' as a variation to Nairn's centre-periphery model. On the basis of England's relationship with Wales, Ireland and Scotland, Hechter argued that the rise of regional separatism was a response to internal colonisation and economic deprivation by the core. Although Hechter's

model stressed the importance of industrial capitalism in creating the economic dependence of the periphery on the core, his internal colonialism model also highlighted cultural discrimination. Hechter explained, "There is national discrimination on the basis of language, religion or other cultural forms" (Hechter 1975: 34). This discrimination, however, was based on aggregate economic difference due to unequal industrialisation, and not merely on cultural chauvinism. Nevertheless, regionalism on the periphery of a nation was understood as a response to perceived economic and cultural exploitation by the core.

Published in the mid 1970s, the works of Nairn and Hechter arrived on the scene at the moment when scholars were trying to understand the development of new sub-nationalisms in Spain, particularly in the Basque Country.³ While the centre-periphery model's new emphasis on 'internal colonialism' may have served the political ideology of many of the scholars employing the model, especially those on the left and the nationalists on the periphery who have undertaken most of the work on nationalism in Spain, the application of the model to the Spanish case has been problematic. Despite the fact that Nairn's and Hechter's models originally focused on underdeveloped regions in the first half of the twentieth century and earlier, both models have been applied to the case of Spanish regionalism and nationalism since 1975, including to the highly developed regions of Catalonia and the Basque Country. While Nairn's internal colonialism model of subordination neatly fits within the context of the former oppressive dictatorship, the fact that economic development and industrialisation were actually greater on the periphery than in the core has never been adequately explained. Likewise, the rise of regionalism around the country after the *end* of the repressive dictatorship contradicts the internal colonialism argument in the period after 1975. Moreover, the Spanish state's newly decentralised autonomous structure largely removed the dominant core from the model after 1978.

Rather than working out these contradictions, scholars tried to resolve these issues by adjusting the model in order to fit the specific Spanish context. By focusing mainly on the oppositional aspect of the model, the appearance of regional identities has subsequently been explained through a more generalised centre-periphery model. Thus, rather than concentrating on economic exploitation, sub-national identities came to be explained through cultural, economic or political conflict with the state. Or, in the words of one scholar, regionalism in Spain is caused by the 'inequitable distribution of economic or political power' (Corkill 1996: 157). While this generalised model appears, on the surface, to explain the formation of regional identities after the Franco regime, another major flaw has developed since the mid 1970s. That is academic emphasis has focused almost exclusively on the periphery, leaving the centre unexplored and undefined. A closer look at the notion of the 'centre' reveals the further inadequacies of the centre-periphery approach in the Spanish context.

3 Use of the centre-periphery model in Spain was also based heavily on the later work of Stein Rokkan and D.W. Urwin (1982). Other relevant works on the centre-periphery model in the Spanish context include those by Xavier Árbos (1987) and Michael Hebbert (1990).

Part II: Questioning the centre-periphery model in the Spanish context

The problem begins with the fact that both the centre-periphery model and the use of the term 'peripheral nationalism' in the Spanish context imply a core. However, as just mentioned, little work has been done on Spain's core. Specifically, neither 'official' Spanish nationalism in the post-Francoist period nor the specific collective identity of *madrileños* has been adequately researched or debated. As a result, the centre-periphery model of identity formation describes peripheral identities forming in opposition to something completely undefined in the period after 1975. To fully develop this key point, it is first necessary to look more closely at Spanish nationalism in the post-Francoist period, and then turn specifically to the formation of collective identities in the centre, or Madrid.

Turning first with the question of Spanish nationalism and Spanish national identity in the post-Francoist period, it is impossible to overstate the lack of research on the subject since the end of the dictatorship. So little work, in fact, that several years ago Juan Linz asserted that 'there doesn't exist one book about Spanish nationalism and I must confess that I am not able to think of anyone in Spain or abroad who, at present, may have assumed this project' (Linz 1993: 82–83). This trend has been more fully analysed separately by both Justo Beramendi and Xosé Núñez (Beramendi 1992; Núñez 1993). And, more recently, Núñez has succinctly summed up the state of the field: 'At present one of the least researched areas in Spanish politics is the ideological, political, and social presence of Spanish nationalism [as opposed to peripheral nationalisms]' (Núñez 2001: 719). In addition, this lack of attention extends beyond the specific arena of historical inquiry. Again, Núñez explains:

The purported non-existence of Spanish nationalism also constitutes a common belief which is currently reproduced by prominent intellectuals, politicians and the mass-media. Even for most Spanish opinion-makers, as well as for a large part of the Spanish academic community, Spanish nationalism is virtually a non-existent phenomenon, dissolved at the end of Francoism and the birth of the democratic Monarchy established by the 1978 Constitution.

(Núñez 2001: 719)

Of course, one of the major reasons that post-1975 Spanish nationalism has received less attention is due to the fact that the bulk of Spanish historiography on the national question has concentrated on the study of new peripheral sub-nationalist movements, and not specifically on Spanish national identity. Up until the mid 1990s, academic emphasis has been mainly on the three so-called peripheral national identities. Specifically, Catalan nationalism, followed by Basque and Galician nationalisms, has received the most attention (Núñez 1993). Other regions, such as Andalusia, Valencia and Aragón, have only recently started to receive

more limited attention. Much of this work on sub-national identities has been promoted by the respective autonomous communities, with universities in Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia in particular, sponsoring numerous studies of their respective autonomous communities.

In addition, scholars both inside and outside of Spain have neglected the core, or Spanish nationalism and national identity, because of what might be called 'the bad reputation of Spanish nationalism at the end of Francoism' and because of the desire to embrace a new democratic 'nation' of autonomies after the dictatorship (Núñez 1993: 138). In other words, the scholarly rejection of any kind of post-1975 'official' Spanish nationalism was rooted in the assumption that it could have no role in the new democracy.⁴ As a result, Spanish nationalism after 1975 – through its association with the delegitimised legacy of Francoist nationalism – was felt to be irrelevant by most scholars. Also, the obvious lack of regard for Spain's formal national symbols (e.g., the flag, national anthem, etc.) in the 1980s and early 1990s is another likely reason why Spanish nationalism has been discounted in the years after the dictatorship. These national symbols, decided upon during the transition, are too closely associated with Franco and the right to be valued by the majority of the population, especially those on the left. Finally, the only political parties and organisations that 'have adopted the label of "Spanish nationalist" have been Fascist-oriented parties (such as Albiñana's *Partido Nacionalista Español* during the 30s, or Calvo Sotelo's monarchist party *Renovación Española*)' (Núñez 1993: 148). Hence, the prevailing impression is that Spanish nationalism only manifests itself through reactionary or conservative ideological programmes, and is thus unlikely to be found in the period after the transition to democracy.

Developments during the transition to democracy are not typically understood as fostering national unity, or Spanish nationalism, either. After the forcible suppression of regional identities for nearly forty years, the Spanish territory was divided up into seventeen autonomous communities, each with its own statute of autonomy and regional assembly, making the unity of the Spanish nation even more problematic. In addition, because of Franco's official link to Spanish nationalism, opposition to dictatorship and democratic forms of identity became synonymous with regionalist politics. Most scholars have traditionally called on the combination of these factors to make the case for a weak Spanish national identity and its irrelevance to democratic consolidation in the period since 1975. In fact, Stanley Payne has even argued that Spanish nationalism after the dictatorship 'is weaker than ever and has for all practical purposes disappeared' (Payne 1991: 487).

Now returning specifically to the limitations of the centre-periphery model, it would seem that the perceived 'disappearance', or at least weakness, of Spanish nationalism after 1975 clearly poses a difficulty for the model: without the clear articulation of Spanish nationalism, the centre-periphery model describes peripheral identities forming in opposition to

4 While the post-1975 period continues to be overlooked, scholars have recently begun to examine the development and functioning of Spanish nationalism in earlier periods. For example, José Álvarez Junco (2001) has recently argued that the appearance of the national idea of Spain, based in part on a distorted history of the Reconquest and of the Latin American Empire, did not occur until the late nineteenth century. For a reappraisal of the intellectual origins and formation of Spanish nationalism under Franco, see Geoffrey Jensen (2002).

literally *nothing*. Mary K. Flynn has described the construction of peripheral identities in exactly this context as '*deus ex machina*, almost self constructing in the present day, perhaps in opposition or affiliation with the state, but with little consideration of the national identity at the state's heart' (Flynn 2001: 712). Again, in the centre-periphery model, regional identities in the Spanish context are created in opposition to something that does not exist, or at least to something that has not been clearly defined. Or, put another way, we have only seen one side of the centre-periphery coin. Flynn sums up this problem:

if it is accepted that the creation of national [or regional] identities is due, to a large extent, to the codification of difference – between the 'us' and the 'them' – then the near absence of the Spanish nation from the analytical equation of ongoing national [or regional] construction on its periphery provides, at best, a lopsided picture.

(Flynn 2001: 712)

In this quote, Flynn implies that the remedy to this 'lopsided picture' is located at the state's 'heart'. However, as was just discussed above, Spanish nationalism has received, and continues to receive, scant attention in the post-Francoist period. And, probably not coincidentally, questions regarding identity formation specifically in the capital of Spain have received little attention as well.

As the capital of the nation-state of Spain, and as the former centre of the dictatorship, Madrid *should* hold a special place of interest for scholars interested both in the creation of new forms of democratic identity and in the fate of Spanish nationalism after 1975. In addition to the capital's importance for the centre-periphery model, the region of Madrid is one of the most important in Spain in its own right. The city of Madrid is the largest metropolitan area in terms of population in the country, and the region of Madrid claimed 12.3 per cent of the country's population in 1987, while the Basque Country and Catalonia claimed 5.6 per cent and 15.6 per cent, respectively (Hebbert 1990: 133). Economically, it is one of the richest regions in the country. Madrid's political importance is even more obvious. As the capital of Spain, it is the focal point for both national and international politics. Finally, as the former centre of the dictatorship, the possible forms of collective identity of *madrileños* should hold a special interest for scholars interested either in the creation of new forms of democratic identity or in the fate of Spanish nationalism after 1975. Nevertheless, Madrid, both as a separate locality and as the centre of Spain, has almost completely escaped the attention of scholars interested in regional and national identity formation in the post-Francoist period.

It is curious that Madrid has been so neglected, despite its obvious significance. Perhaps scholars have been reluctant to investigate collective identity in Madrid because of its relationship to the centralism and repression of the Franco regime, just as there has been resistance to the

exploration of Spanish nationalism. It is also possible that Madrid's association with the 'nation' has created a kind of a blind spot for scholars interested in regional or sub-national identities. Regardless of the cause, Madrid remains one of the least researched regions in this area. Although there are quite literally hundreds of studies investigating the collective identities of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia, to my knowledge, there is not a single study related to the specific collective identity of the residents of Madrid.

In fact, in Xosé Núñez's masterful review of Spanish nationalism and regionalism, *Historical Approaches to Nationalism in Spain*, there is information related to works on every region of Spain, including Castile, but there is not a single reference to the region of Madrid: neither with regards the region's current identity, nor about the development of either nationalism or regionalism in the capital itself (Núñez 1993). The nature of Madrid's collective identity simply has not been seriously considered by scholars up until this point. However, similar to Flynn, Núñez does implicitly place Madrid at the 'centre' of Spanish national identity by calling on historians interested in the capital to tackle 'the national question from a Spanish point of view' (Núñez 1993: 144). Or, in other words, to investigate Spanish nationalism in the capital of Spain. And, again implicitly linking the capital with national identity, Núñez also states that 'Madrid-centered historiography . . . is still paying attention to the traditional thinkers of liberal nationalism in the XXth century, such as Ortega y Gasset', instead of working to develop a broader model of Spanish nationalism (Núñez 1993: 144). In both examples, Núñez consciously – or possibly more significantly, unconsciously – associates Madrid at the centre with Spanish national identity.

This assumption highlights the central difficulty of the centre-periphery model when applied to Spain. Taken together with the perceived weakness of Spanish nationalism since 1975, this tendency to link the 'center', or Madrid, with Spanish nationalism leads to what should be an obvious paradox. On the one hand, almost everyone agrees that there is no coherent national identity or Spanish nationalism after the end of the dictatorship.⁵ On the other hand, no one has identified a collective identity in Madrid that is separate from Spanish national identity.⁶ If both of these assertions are true, then what forms of geographical identification are found at the centre? In the absence of any concrete answer, 'Madrid' has simply been assumed to represent some kind of vague yet monolithic national identity against which peripheral regions define themselves.

Part III: Re-conceptualising identity formation after 1975

Contrary to this assumption, however, Madrid may not represent Spain's 'heart', at least not in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In sharp contrast to the Franco regime, the transition governments of Adolfo Suárez and, later, Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo were too preoccupied with ensuring the stable political transition from dictatorship to democracy to pay much attention to the specific management of Madrid. In addition, it was too early in the

- 5 Despite the fact that most scholars discount the existence of Spanish nationalism and some kind of a Spanish national identity after 1978, empirical data show that the percentage of Spaniards that declares itself to be opposed to a national Spanish identity has been very small. In fact, even in Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia, the majority of a region's population claims loyalty to both a regional *and* a national identity (Núñez 2000).
- 6 In addition to the works cited above, also see Miguel Platón (1994). In the realm of public opinion surveys, no one thought to ask the standard 'dual identity' question in the region of Madrid until 1990, even though this question had been asked in practically every other region since the late 1970s, including in Andalusia, Valencia and even Extremadura. For example, the question would read: 'In general, do you feel more Valencian than Spanish, as Valencian as Spanish, or more Spanish than Valencian?' Public opinion researchers must have assumed, at least until 1990, that everyone living in Madrid simply felt Spanish; see for example Luis Moreno (1997: 123–140).

7 For a further description of regionalist project to transform Madrid, see the forthcoming article, 'Just a Teardrop in the Rain? The *Movida Madrileña* and Democratic Identity Formation in the Capital, 1979–1986', in the *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* (Stapell 2007).

process of the transition to democracy for either of the two new moderate centre-right governments to articulate any kind of new democratic national identity for the country as a whole or specifically for the capital. Rather than embodying a kind of Spanish national identity, it is becoming increasingly clear that, in the first decade after the dictatorship, the capital saw the emergence of its own unique democratic regional identity. Evidence of this project in Madrid is located both in the implementation of an ambitious regionalism agenda by the capital's intellectual and political elite between 1979 and 1986 and in the creation of new forms of collective identity based largely on a culturally vibrant present.⁷ Specifically, in the period following the first local democratic elections of 1979, Madrid's new charismatic Socialist mayor, Enrique Tierno Galván, led a project to physically rehabilitate the capital and return a sense of pride to *madrileños*. This fostering of a renewed sense of pride for Madrid represented a conscious effort on the part of the capital's local political elite to create new feelings of collective unity and collective responsibility – two prerequisites for a successful democracy. While the refurbishment of the city's infrastructure and the restoration of its crumbling monuments constituted a major part of the programme to create a new kind of *madrileñismo*, the *movida madrileña* played an equally important role. The promotion of the colourful, and at times chaotic, cultural movement proved to be an essential piece in the development of a new regional sense of place based on inclusion and greater cultural participation.

While it is difficult to make a direct connection to the official regionalist project, there is evidence to suggest that *madrileños* were becoming more proud of, and identified more closely with, the place they lived. For example, as early as 1983, Miguel Gato, writing in the *Villa de Madrid*, observed that Madrid was 'recuperating a kind of *madrileñismo* whose existence was only just a memory' (Gato 1983: 3). Later, in the mid 1980s, Moncho Alpuente summed up the profound change in the attitude of *madrileños* towards themselves and towards Madrid that occurred under the administration of Tierno Galván:

It was the first time in many years that the people looked at themselves in the mirror, just like the city itself, and said to themselves: 'well we are not so bad; we are not so ugly; this is not so bad; we are not to blame'.

(Ripoll 1988: 20)

This notion of a new *madrileñismo* is also backed up by evidence found in sociological surveys from the period. In a Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS) survey from September 1986, when asked if they identified more or less closely with Madrid than in the past, 52 per cent of *madrileños* felt more identification with Madrid, while only nine per cent felt less (CIS 1986).

While these feelings reflected many of the changes – the greater cultural mobilisation shaped by the *movida madrileña*, a growing feeling of

peaceful coexistence, and increased pride for Madrid – that occurred within the city of Madrid, the effort to create a new inclusive and democratic sense of place resulted in the creation of something more than just a municipal identity. Due in part to the city’s domination of the region, and in part to the formal development of the system of autonomous communities, city and region blended more easily together. Specifically, the creation of a ready-made framework of regional government after 1983, along with the designation of Madrid as an official region, made it possible to form a more inclusive *madrileño* sense of place that was broader than a local or municipal identity.

Of course, this was something that not everyone identified with to the same degree, as feelings of identity are never uniform. Nonetheless, as an urban island – squeezed in-between two rural *Castillas* – the imagined community of Madrid represented something more than just a city or a capital. It symbolised a region that could claim its own unique features, its own history, its own regional festivals, its own regional cultural institutions, and its own active and inclusive way of life. It also represented a place where residents were encouraged to feel ‘*madrileño*’, and not simply Spanish.

This evidence of both a regionalist project and new feelings of regional affiliation in Madrid suggests that the process of defining new democratic forms of identity on a regional level occurred all across Spain in the 1980s. Put another way, every region in Spain appears to have experienced a period of regionalism after the dictatorship, including the so-called ‘centre’. Thus, in contrast to much of the existing scholarly analysis, I would suggest that there is no fundamental distinction between the three historical nationalities, the other examples regionalisms on the periphery (Andalusia or Valencia for instance), and the project to create a new democratic collective identity in the capital.⁸ While it appears that the same basic process occurred everywhere, the characteristics of each manifestation did, of course, vary from place to place. Some new regional identities were based on well-established historical artifacts, others invented a past, and at least one, Madrid, created a new identity out of symbols found mainly in the present. Nonetheless, in each case, the processes of democratisation, decentralisation, and social upheaval created a similar context in which new regional identities could be formed. And, in each case, these new forms of regional identification worked to mark an important break from the non-democratic past.

In addition, while the regionalist project in Madrid may not have been as strong or as well recognised as those in Catalonia or the Basque Country, it is nonetheless clear that the promotion of this new sense of place in the capital between 1979 and 1986 did not represent official Spanish nationalism, a monolithic national identity, or a new Spanishness. And, despite the ultimate failure of regionalism in Madrid,⁹ the disconnect between the interests and motivations of the capital – articulated as a unique region – and the interests of the national political elite, represented

8 By linking together the historical nationalities and newly created autonomous communities, it is not my intention to ignore some of the obvious differences between the two, nor is it to dismiss the claims for greater self-determination made by Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia. Instead, my purpose here is to highlight the broad similarities in order to question the application of the centre-periphery model in the Spanish context after the end of the dictatorship.

9 After the death of Tierno Galván in 1986, the national leadership of the PSOE was able to consolidate power on both the national and local level, and re-adopt Madrid as the capital of a ‘Europeanized’ Spain. As a result, the notion of Madrid as a mobilised and independent region had to be left aside by the end of the decade.

first by Suárez and Calvo Sotelo and later by the team of Felipe González and Alfonso Guerra in the mid 1980s, demonstrates that an official Spanish national identity and the 'center' are not naturally or inexorably linked. And, once again, evidence of regionalism in Madrid demonstrates that every area of Spain, not just those on the so-called periphery, sought to define new forms of democratic identification specifically on the regional level. In this way, the capital was part of a broad, parallel process that affected every region in the country, and that helped define a new series of democratic identities after the dictatorship.

In this light, the formation of Spanish national identity, or the perceived imposition of a national identity by some regions, is not specifically related to Madrid as the 'center'. It depends instead on the domination of institutions that yield power and, subsequently, the ability to articulate an overlaying national identity on all regions, including the capital itself. And no such programme was being articulated from above, say, between 1978 and 1986. Similarly, the differences in the way regional identities manifest themselves cannot be accurately described by a single model. Rather, regional difference depends on a variety of variables: the perception of geography, the ability to appropriate and reuse symbols and traditions from the past, the strength of local institutions, and the individual motivation of local or regional elites.

But why exactly were democratic affiliations promoted on the regional level during this period? Of course, the roots of regional identification and self-determination in the three historical nationalities reach back to the nineteenth century, with some arguing for their origins in the early modern period. And, certainly, both the motivations of regional economic elites and the decentralised framework of autonomous communities – created in part to satisfy the demands of the Catalans – contributed to the emergence of new regional identities after 1975. Nonetheless, I would suggest that new forms of democratic affiliation in Madrid, and elsewhere in the country, were created specifically on the regional level primarily because of the negative relationship between Spanish nationalism and the experience of the Franco regime. In fact, for almost forty years the dictatorship propagated a repressive and traditionalist version of Spanish nationalism. In addition, Francoism, with its repression of minority nationalities, served to associate authoritarianism with official state nationalism and, by extension, promoted a connection between decentralisation and democracy. Thus, the negative experience of the dictatorship, and especially the imposition of an official national identity, convinced Spaniards almost everywhere to define themselves as something other than the 'national' after 1975. In short, Spanish nationalism and national identity acquired anti-democratic connotations because of their association with the authoritarian regime.

Regionalism, on the other hand, was free of the legitimacy problems from which Spanish nationalism suffered. In fact, regionalism was closely associated with democracy in the Spanish context. The identification of

Spanish nationalism with authoritarianism and repression pushed almost all political parties to defend regionalist claims and to see decentralisation and devolution as the surest road to democracy during the transition. This linkage of nationalism with authoritarianism and regionalism with democracy had important implications for the creation of new forms of identity in the capital, and around the country, after 1975. In an environment where all forms of nationalism were seen as illegitimate, or at least suspect, and where regionalism was generally understood as a democratic phenomenon, the formation of new local and regional affiliations became the most practical path to a new democratic Spain.

As a result, the formation of democratic affiliations occurred on the regional level (as opposed to on the national level) everywhere in the country after 1975, not just in the three historical nationalities or on the 'periphery'. While the same process occurred everywhere, the characteristics of each manifestation did, obviously, vary from place to place. Rather than simply forming in binary opposition to an imagined 'center', new forms of identity and representation were dictated by the specific context in each region. Of course, in most regions new democratic affiliations were built upon a shared linguistic, cultural or historical tradition and were seen by local elites as a vindication of those formerly repressed traditions. However, this use of a shared past was not necessarily a prerequisite, as the case of Madrid suggests.

Clearly, though, geographical identification in Madrid, or in any of the other regions for that matter, was not exclusively 'regional' after the dictatorship. Instead, regionalism became one axis of a multiple set of overlapping geographical identities. Thus, rather than displacing all pre-existing forms of identifications in Madrid, a new regional sense of place made up one part of a multiple identity that included both community and national affiliations. In other words, the residents of Madrid came to identify with at least three distinct layers of geographically based identities in the early 1980s. So, like the rest of Spain, Madrid's new democratic regional identity coexisted with both local and national affiliations and, increasingly after 1986, with supranational sentiments.

Conclusion

This article, then, does not resolve the problem of the lopsided centre-periphery model by simply shining the spotlight on the centre or by uncovering a previously unidentified national identity at the core. Rather, evidence of regionalism around the country, including in Madrid, calls into question the validity of applying the model to Spain altogether – at least in the two decades following 1975. Instead of using the centre-periphery model to explain regional identity formation, I believe it is better to understand regionalism in Spain as a general response to the legacy of the Franco regime and to the pressures of 'modernity' at the end of the twentieth century. Specifically, social transformation, beginning in the 1960s and accelerating with the transition to democracy, and the discrediting of

10 Michael Keating has suggested that, rather than representing something inherently new, such multiple geographical affiliations actually hearken back to the past: 'these trends represent a step back in history, to an era of overlapping authority, multiple identity and complexity, before the rise of the modern state' (Keating 2000: 31). It also should be noted that along with geographical identities, class and gender affiliations often make up part of a plural identity as well.

11 In contrast to this argument, many scholars, beginning with Juan Linz (1973) in the mid 1970s, have linked the persistence of regional identities and weak Spanish nationalism in the late twentieth century to incomplete nation building in the nineteenth century. In this view, regional identities in Spain, especially those manifesting themselves in the twentieth century, are seen essentially as remnants of the past, mainly pre-modern, and opposed to a 'modern' national identity. Regionalisms thus represent a certain backwardness, caused by incomplete economic modernisation and political consolidation in the nineteenth century. This incomplete nationalisation thesis has been supported by a wide range of authors, including Borja de Riquer (1994), Stanley

Spanish nationalism generated a new series of plural identities across the country, which linked people together on a variety of geographical levels.¹⁰

From this perspective, I would suggest that Spanish identity after the end of the dictatorship might be understood as a group of overlapping circles of collective identity, produced through the process of constant contestation and negotiation, and not simply as a binary or 'dual' identity specific to some regions. These various circles of geographical affiliation, however, are not equal, nor have they been static. In some parts of the country, identification with the region has come to dominate, while solidarity with the nation is less important. In other regions, this relationship is reversed. And, since Spain's integration into the larger European community in the mid 1980s, supranational affiliations have increasingly been added to this mix.

Following the postmodern perspective, the coexistence of these multiple identities in Spain should not be seen as an impossible or contradictory phenomenon, for it has become increasingly clear that the local and the global are connected in complex ways. For Jo Labanyi, 'the two are not in opposition but are enmeshed through the processes of late capitalism, which have mapped onto the model of the nation-state (which still remains in place) new macro and micro groupings' (Labanyi 2002: 257). In the Spanish context, these regional and supranational loyalties have come to coexist alongside national sentiments after 1975 because the processes of modernisation, decentralisation, and Europeanisation have combined to wipe out the possibility of any monolithic form of geographical identity, be it regional, national, or supranational. Spain's postmodern identity at the end of the twentieth century is thus more a result of social change and disorientation than of historically weak Spanish nationalism or the resurgence of age-old ethnic antagonisms.¹¹

Formulated in this way, the creation of multiple identities is not a sign of failed nation-building or a flaw of the country's democratic consolidation. Furthermore, this development does not demonstrate Spain's exceptionalism, but instead its similarity with the rest of Europe. Following Eric Hobsbawm, I believe the emergence of multiple identities in Spain should be understood as a consequence of the refiguring of the Spanish nation-state – brought about by both the end of the dictatorship and rapid social change – at the end of the twentieth century, rather than as a cause of it. In this way, Spain's development between 1975 and 1992 very much coincides with the rest of the West. Likewise, the lack of a strong, unifying national identity in the period after 1975 should not be interpreted as a failure of Spanish nationalism or of the Spanish state.¹² Nor should the emergence of new regionalisms after 1978 be seen as a 'contradiction' within the new democratic system.¹³ Rather this is the expected, and possibly even desired, condition of European nation-states in the late twentieth century. As a result, those searching to find, or even resurrect, a singular Spanish national identity in this period will be disappointed. Because of political and cultural diffusion, revolutions in communication

and transportation, freer and more open markets and a global neo-liberal economic system, it is no longer feasible to create a single national identity, in the nineteenth century sense. A unified national identity is simply no longer viable within a context of such sub-national and supranational influences.

Finally, I would maintain that postmodern pluralism is both a more viable and a more desirable alternative to nineteenth and early twentieth century nationalism. Without question, though, problems have arisen with the creation of Spain's 'nation of nations': constant competition between regions for both resources and prestige, redundant layers of administration and bureaucracy, and ever greater demands for autonomy by some regions. Yet, with the exception of the radicalisation regional sentiment, as in the Basque case, plural identities and multiculturalism have the ability to create greater tolerance, openness and acceptance of democratic principles. Eric Hobsbawm again reminds us that 'cultural freedom and pluralism at present are almost certainly better safeguarded in large states which know themselves to be plurinational and pluricultural than in small ones pursuing the ideal of ethnic-linguistic and cultural homogeneity' (Hobsbawm 1990: 185). Measured by this standard, Spain's multiple democratic identity in the post-Francoist period must be considered as a success. Since 1975, both the nation and the state have developed in such a way as to satisfy almost all regional desires, preserve national unity, and allow for the integration of supranational affiliations along with the rest of Europe.¹⁴

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- 12 Juan Linz (1993) has characterised the lack of an exclusively national or regional identity as a failure of both Spanish nationalism and the various regionalist projects within Spain.
- 13 For example, Núñez (1996) has described the rise of new regionalisms (besides the three historical nationalities) after 1978 as a 'fundamental contradiction' within the structure of the Spanish state.
- 14 In his recent study of the 1992 Olympic Games, John Hargreaves (2000) offers a similar reading of the way multiple layers of identity – from the local to the national – can co-exist, and at times even reinforce one another, within the framework of a modern democratic nation-state.

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