

**Explaining Variation in the Salience of Catalan Nationalism across the
Spain/France Border**

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1. Introduction

In 1659, the kingdoms of France and Spain signed a peace treaty by which a part of the Spanish territory inhabited by ethnic Catalans became part of France (the Treaty of Pyrenees). Since then, Catalan identity persisted on both sides of the France-Spain border. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries this identity was politicised and was converted into the basis of a nationalist movement that aimed at the political sovereignty of the Catalan nation; in other words, a national identity was created. However, neither in its origins nor today is the salience of this Catalan national identity homogeneous across the boundary: while Catalan national identity is politically and socially relevant in Spanish Catalonia, it is almost non-existent in French Catalonia. In this paper I analyse the historical evolution of the Catalan identity in these two territories, focusing on the pattern of incorporation of this identity into a political ideology: nationalism. My aim is to use this comparison in order to provide new insights in the large debate about the factors explaining Catalan nationalism, which has involved historians, sociologists, political scientists, and anthropologists during decades (e.g. Solé-Tura 1967, Vicen-Vives 1970, Linz 1973, Balcells 1991, Sahlins 1989, Termes 2000, Boix 2002), but where contributions can still be made. This is especially the case given recent theoretical developments in the study of nationalism.

The main argument defended in this paper is that the variation in the salience of Catalan national identity in these two regions is explained by the characteristics of the historical processes of spread of mass literacy in France and Spain, namely by the characteristics of the ‘scholastic revolution’ (Darden 2007). I refer mainly to differences in the *timing* and *content* of the process of mass literacy, but also in its public/private character. On the one hand, I argue that Catalan nationalism is not salient in France because ‘French Catalans’ were massively educated under French rule during the end of

the nineteenth century. This implied that they became ‘French patriots’, and that they never adopted a Catalan national identity, when the latter was mobilized. On the other hand, I argue that Catalan nationalism exists and it is salient in Spain because Catalan people were never massively educated under a strong and well-organized Spanish state (Linz 1973), which allowed the assimilation of a Catalan national identity at the beginning of the twentieth century. Additionally, the fact that Catalan nationalist ideology could be partially spread through schools and other types of associations (e.g. popular associations, newspapers) at the beginning of the twentieth century –when the first generation of mass literates was attending school- determined the endurance of this national identity. The emphasis in the differences in the *timing* and *content* of mass literacy differentiates my argument from theories uniquely based on the weakness of the Spanish state (Linz 1973, de Riquer 1993), as well as from economic development arguments that have conceived nationalism either as a consequence of industrialization (Gellner 1983, Solé-Tura 1967) or of the spread of mass media (Anderson 1983).

Unfortunately, the change in the borderline between France and Spain does not provide us with a ‘natural experiment’ setting: we cannot assume that the two regions (namely, Spanish and French Catalonia) have exact characteristics except for their belonging to different states.¹ Among other things, these two regions have different sizes, demographic structures, economic and social characteristics, and political statuses within their respective states.² Yet, with a historical tracing type of analysis, we can perform a well-grounded comparative analysis permitting to observe how very different state-building processes (and, in particular, schooling policies), undertaken by quite

¹ See Miguel (2004) for an example of such an experiment, applied to a similar question, in Kenya and Tanzania.

² While Spanish Catalonia has the status of Autonomous Community in the Spanish quasi-federal system, French Catalonia roughly corresponds to a province within the highly centralized French state.

similar political entities (the Spanish and French states) have had enduring consequences on the salience of Catalan nationalism within their respective borders.

The paper is structured as follows: in the next section, I present evidence on the variation in the salience of Catalan national identity in French Catalonia and Spanish Catalonia. I measure this variation using indicators of the present era. In section 3, I review the history of Catalan identity on both sides of the France- Spain border. In section 4, I present the theoretical argument of the paper, and I show empirical evidence supporting it. In section 5, I discuss the caveats of the argument and I conclude the article.

2. Variation in the salience of Catalan National Identity

The dependent variable in this paper is salience of Catalan national identity in two particular territories: 1) The Spanish region of *Catalunya* (from now, S-C); 2) The French counties of the *Rosselló*, *Cerdanya*, *Vallespir*, *Conflent* and *Capcir* (from now, F-C).³ Measuring ‘salience of national identity’ is by no means straightforward, and this is especially the case when we are referring to territories (as aggregates), and not about individuals. I assume that a national identity is salient in a territory when this identity has an incidence in the political and social events taking place within it. The two indicators I use, in order to proxy this variable, are: *use of Catalan language*, and *support for Catalan nationalist and/or secessionist parties in elections*. These proxies are not optimal and they convey a number of measurement issues: on the one hand, political parties such as ERC and CiU in Spanish Catalonia are programmatically very different than nationalist parties such as “Les Régionalistes”, in France. The former are

³ This region corresponds roughly to the Département 66: *Pyrenées Orientales* (also Département de *Languedoc-Roussillon*) within the French state. Even if the correspondence with the French department is not exact (there is a county, ‘La Fenolleda’, included in the French Dep.66 which is considered ‘Occitan’, not Catalan). In this paper, I will consider these two entities (F-C and Dep.66) as equal: this is the most plausible way to proceed in order to be able to study the region analytically.

clear-cut nationalist parties, while the latter has a weaker nationalist discourse (it takes a more 'regionalist' stance). Also, while ERC is a clear secessionist party, CiU is not.⁴ On the other hand, while the use of the language is a quite strong indicator of national identity (Laitin 1998), speaking Catalan does not make anyone automatically a nationalist.⁵ Yet, since all this evidence intends to provide empirical grounds for an insight that is 'common knowledge', namely, that Catalan identity is salient in Spain and not in France, it should be taken on the positive side.

Use of Catalan: We can rely on representative surveys in order to get an idea about the patterns of use of Catalan language by all the people in the territories under consideration.⁶ In **Table 1** I have summarized the data on the degree of use of Catalan in different types of relationships/communication between individuals. The columns contain data on the percentages of people who declare speaking: *only Catalan, more Catalan than Castilian/French, both languages equally, more Castilian/French than Catalan and only French/Castilian*, for the two regions (S-C and F-C). The table depicts the results for different type of communications: with family members, with friends, and with neighbours.

⁴ Some have argued that PSC is a nationalist party. Yet this highly questionable as this party does not have a regional basis -it is a subset of the state-wide political party PSOE- and it does not have a fundamentally nationalist discourse.

⁵ It could even be argued that voting for a nationalist party is not a pure expression of nationalist feelings, although recent evidence (Hierro 2008) indicates that there is such a connection.

⁶ The 'Survey of Linguistic Uses 2003' of Catalonia was undertaken in 2003 and consisted of telephone interviews with 7257 individuals (older than 15) distributed across the territory of S-C. The 'Survey of Linguistic Uses in North-Catalonia 2004' was based on telephone interviews with 400 individuals (older than 15) in the territory of F-C.

Table 1. Patterns of use of Catalan as Language of Communication

	Family		Friends		Neighbours	
	S-C	N-C	S-C	N-C	S-C	N-C
Only Catalan	37.2	0.5	24.5	1.8	29.5	2
More Catalan than Castillian/French	7.1	0.5	17.8	1.2	10.6	0.2
Both	9	1.7	18.4	3	17.2	1.7
More Castillian/French than Catalan	9.9	7.2	11.9	4.1	8.4	4.8
Only Castillian/French	34.4	87.6	25.6	88.1	32.7	89
Other	2.4	2.7	1.9	1.6	1.5	2.1

Personal Compilation. Source: Generalitat de Catalunya

The differences between the two regions are remarkable: while in S-C Catalan is the main language of communication between members of the family for 37.2 per cent of the population (plus, 7.1 per cent that say that Catalan is not the only language, but that it is more usual than Spanish), in F-C, this happens only for 0.5 per cent of the population: French is the main family language for 87.6 per cent of the population (note that Castilian is the main family language of 34.4 per cent of the population in S-C). This pattern is similar for communication with friends and neighbours. While in S-C, Catalan is used by a large share of the population in this type of relationships (sixty per cent of people use Catalan in their communications with friends), in F-C it has a very limited use.

Support for nationalist and/or secessionist parties in the elections: since the two regions I am analysing are part of two different countries, the comparison of electoral results is not straightforward. Countries vary in their electoral systems and forms of representation, and this affects the way people cast their votes. For this reason, I compare electoral results for the Elections at the European Parliament in these two regions. The characteristics of the European Elections allow for comparison of the

results obtained by nationalist/secessionist parties in each country.⁷ The last European Elections were held in June 2004 (10-13 June). The main parties labelled as Catalan nationalists were *Convergència i Unió* (CiU), and *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC), in S-C, and *Les régionalistes* (OC-CAT-ESK), in F-C. As I said, these parties are quite different to each other, but they all share the commonality of conveying some sort of expression of Catalan nationalism.⁸

Table 2 summarizes the results of the 2004 EU elections for these parties. For each of the territories, I have added the number of votes obtained by any party coded as Catalan nationalist, and I have calculated the percentage that they represent of the total of votes cast in the territory. We can see that the differences between S-C and F-C are striking: while the sum of votes to nationalist or secessionist parties amounts to almost thirty per cent of the votes cast in the territory of S-C, this sum amounts to less than one per cent of the votes in the territory of F-C.

Table 2. Results of European Elections 2004. Nat/Sec Parties

	Spanish Catalonia		French Catalonia	
	Total Votes	% over Census	Total Votes	% over Census
Census	5,228,861	-----	295,380	-----
Number of Voters	2,104,744	40.25%	123,440	41.79%
Vote for Nationalist/Secessionist Parties	623,972	29.64%	933	0.76%

Personal compilation. Source: Generalitat de Catalunya and Republique Francaise, Ministere de l'Intérieur.

In a nutshell, the two indicators I have used to measure the salience of Catalan national identity in the two territories under consideration provide us with consistent evidence: while Catalan national identity is salient in Spanish Catalonia, this is remarkably weak in French Catalonia. In the former territory, Catalan is a commonly

⁷ Elections in the European Parliament take place simultaneously in all EU countries (with two or three days of lag, at maximum), and the electoral system (PR) is the same across countries. Yet, the number of constituencies varies across countries: in Spain, there is a single constituency, while in France there are 8 constituencies. There is also variation in the number of deputies for the EU Parliament chosen by each country (France chooses 78 deputies and Spain chooses 54 deputies).

⁸ I will not provide here a distinction between what some people call 'regionalism', nationalism and secessionism: this would require a different research project.

spoken language (sixty per cent of the population uses it on a daily basis); in the latter, Catalan is a marginal language, only used by a very small segment of the population (and known by its inhabitants to a much lesser extent than in S-C). Further, nationalism is an important instrument of political and social mobilization in the former territory, while this is not the case in the latter. Catalan nationalist parties are relevant in the S-C's political arena: they obtain an important share of votes even in elections with a supranational character, such as the European elections. The opposite happens in France: Catalan nationalist parties are almost invisible, and their share of votes in the elections is negligible.

3. Brief History of Catalan Identity and Catalan Nationalism in France and Spain

3.1. Timing of Catalan Nationalism

The emergence of Catalan nationalism is generally said to have taken place at the end of the nineteenth century. Jacobson says that it was launched as a political movement in 1890's and as an electoral one in 1901. In the twentieth century, 'its principal accomplishments consisted first of the foundation of *La Mancomunitat* (1914-1923), an administrative entity, and later *La Generalitat* (1931-39: 1977-present), an autonomous body with parliamentary capacities' (Jacobson 1998:2). Catalan nationalism had its base in a regionalist movement (*Catalanism*) that started in the nineteenth century in Spanish Catalonia. Historians seem to agree that even if Catalan ethnic identity had existed before, it was during this period that it became politicised. However, some authors disagree with this periodization: Boix (2002), for instance, says that a 'fight' for the redefinition of the Spanish state had taken place in Catalonia before the politicisation of the language and the culture at the end of the nineteenth century. In other words, he argues that nationalism existed before this phase. What seems clear is that a Catalan ethnic identity existed from medieval times, and that it persisted in France

and in Spain after the division of the Catalan territory in the 17th century. For example, by referring to the *Cerdanya* county, which became divided with the Treaty of the Pyrenees, Sahlins (1989) explains:

“Despite the decline of the institutional and judicial framework of the medieval Catalan state, Catalonia continued to represent a linguistic and ethnic unity, a unity that persisted well after the political division of Catalonia and the Cerdanya between France and Spain. After 1659, the Cerdans, political subjects of the French and Spanish kings and eventually citizens of France and Spain, remained Catalans (...)” (1989:23).

Thus, the current differences between these two regions should have more to do with differences in the process of politicisation of the Catalan identity in the centuries following the Treaty of Pyrenees than with differences in the original existence of this identity.

The process by which Catalan identity became politicised and transformed into a national identity (instead of a mere ethnic identity) can be thought of as the result of a ‘movement of national revival’, in Hroch’s (1999, 2000) terminology.⁹ Hroch postulates that national revival processes are characterized by three phases: a Phase A of ‘scholarly interest’ in the identity (past language, culture, etc.), a Phase B of ‘patriotic agitation’, and a Phase C of ‘mass national movement’ (Hroch 2000: 23). I would argue that there were differences between S-C and F-C in each of these phases that conditioned the contemporary pattern. For instance, there were differences in ‘Phase A’: Sahlins says that when the nationalist movement started to grow in S-C, it found little support in F-C: ‘(...) the claims of Catalan nationalism found little resonance in the Catalan counties north of the border, where the nation remained France’ (1989:287). The most important differences seem to be found in Phase B, and in the conditions under which this phase

⁹ In Hroch’s framework, Catalonia would be a nation of the type (b): ‘a group of nations which did indeed constitute political entities in the Middle-Ages, had their own sovereign feudal class, but lost their political independence or its essential attributes before they developed into modern nations’ (2000:9).

of ‘patriotic agitation’ took place; while French nationalism had been spread through literacy in French Catalonia, Spanish nationalism had not been spread in Spain, and this determined the adoption of Catalan nationalism by the masses in each of these territories.

3.2. Precedents of Catalan nationalism: *La Renaixença*

‘The beginning of every national revival is marked by a passionate concern on the part of a group of individuals, usually intellectuals, for the study of the language, the culture, the history of the oppressed nationality’ (Hroch 2000:22). While some seem to disagree (i.e. Marfany 2004), this depiction seems to match perfectly the Catalan case: historians have outlined the relevance of a cultural and historic movement that started in Spanish Catalonia in the mid-nineteenth century for the ‘onset’ of Catalan nationalism. This movement, *La Renaixença* (1830-1880), intended to recover the Catalan language and culture on the basis of the romantic conception of the medieval past of the nations.¹⁰

‘The Catalan Romantic writers of the decade of 1830 expressed by means of the prose and the poetry their love to the Catalan nation and sought myths and legends of the medieval history of *Catalunya* that could help them fix their identity’ (Díez Medrano 1999:11). Balcells (1991) says that *La Renaixença* played a crucial role in the preparation of the atmosphere in which Catalan nationalism was to be born, and he underscores that this movement succeeded in converting the vernacular Catalan language into a modern literary language. This was important because (as I will later show) illiteracy was widespread in Catalonia prior to the nineteenth century. Thus, at the same time that the number of potential readers was starting to increase at the end of

¹⁰ Marfany argues that the objective of the movement was not to revive Catalan, but quite the opposite: it was a gesture from the Catalan elites in order to compensate for their deliberate suppression of a fully functional language (2004: 138). Yet, this hypothesis is questionable and it does not seem to be validated by historical evidence provided by authors such as Balcells (1991) or Termes (2000), among others.

the nineteenth century, the maternal and popular language had the possibility of becoming, once again, a literary language (Balcells 1991: 21). Interestingly, the will to have Catalan literature generated the need to *catalanize* the school (Balcells 1991: 23), and this, in turn, encouraged the nationalist movement: Catalan elites thought that the only way to have a Catalan school was to achieve a certain degree of political autonomy or independence.

La Renaixença was mainly a movement of S-C, but it also took place in F-C. In fact, when one of the main celebrations of this period, *Els Jocs Florals*,¹¹ were prohibited in Spanish Catalonia in 1901, a French bishop of North Catalonia, Juli Carsalade du Pont, organized them in Perpignan (the capital of the region). Also, there is a record of several Catalan patriotic writings in F-C during this period. Yet, no one challenges that the movement was less prevalent in F-C than in S-C, and that –in general- it was not as successful in bringing Catalan up to the stature of a literary language. “In Roussillon, a literary renaissance of the Catalan language appears belatedly in the 1880s and 1890s but had virtually no political significance” (Sahlins 1989: 247).

3.3. Politicisation of Catalan identity and emergence of nationalism

Hroch’s period of patriotic agitation (phase B) links the period of ‘scholarly interest’ with the ‘rise of a mass movement’, which takes place in the concluding phase of national revival.¹² During phase B, ‘patriots’ try to influence members of the nationality and make them to consider their membership in the nation as more than a simple natural fact (Hroch 2000). This is the phase of fermentation of the national

¹¹ These were poetry and prose festivals and contests.

¹² In the rise of the mass movement ‘(...) national consciousness has become the concern of the broad masses (even if still by no means the whole of the nation’s members) and the national movement has a firm organizational structure extending over the whole territory’ (Hroch 2000: 23).

consciousness. In Catalonia, it started at the last third of the nineteenth century -during the last years of *La Renaixença*-, and took place in a more obvious way during the first decades of the twentieth century.

While *La Renaixença* had a literary and cultural character at the beginning, it had become political by its end. With the Monarchic restoration in Spain in 1875, some sectors of the Catalan society started to demand the political recognition of *Catalunya*. A Catalanist movement started to organize, very slowly, and started to solidify its demands. In 1880, the First Catalanist Congress (*Primer Congrés Catalanista*) took place. In 1892, the Catalanist Union (*Unió Catalanista*), which united different catalanist associations, met in the town of Manresa, where they approved the bases for a Catalan constitution (*Les Bases de Manresa*): they asked an autonomous government for *Catalunya*. Later on, a Catalanist political party, *La Lliga Regionalista* –of a conservative character- was created, and this party became hegemonic between 1901 and 1923. In 1914 the first Catalan self-government institution was created (*La Mancomunitat*). This institution performed an important task of building of infrastructures (roads and bridges), railroad systems, telephonic systems, and similar. Furthermore, it created a number of cultural and scientific institutions aimed to give more prestige to the Catalan language and culture (e.g. *Institut d'Estudis Catalans*, *Biblioteca de Catalunya*). In the public sphere, Catalanism became quite prevalent during the first three decades of the twentieth century: Catalan newspapers were created, and different sort of popular associations (e.g. youth associations, cultural associations, etc.) joined the nationalist discourse (Termes 2000; Balcells 1991). At the same time that these political changes were taking place in S-C, F-C was living in a relative 'political calm'. The patriotic agitation did not have the same characteristics as in S-C. In fact, during that time there were no political appeals by French-Catalans

intellectuals similar to the appeals made by Spanish-Catalans, and F-C never achieved any sort of political autonomy within the French state.

4. Characteristics of the ‘Scholastic Revolution’ in France and Spain

According to the ‘scholastic revolution’ framework (Darden 2007), the origins of nationalism lay in the development of mass schooling, literacy, and standardized and centrally controlled curricula, which provided the means for establishing shared ideas across large, geographically dispersed populations. The creation of a national identity that took place along with the scholastic revolution was not only due to mass literacy, which facilitated the transmission of ideas across time and space, but also to the existence of centrally-controlled curricula, which facilitated the transmission of homogeneous ideological messages. Furthermore, “the ideas initially introduced through schooling were more enduring as they became accepted as commonplace truth and instilled in the popular culture” (Darden 2007).

Following the framework of the ‘scholastic revolution’, Darden and Grzymala-Busse (2006) show that nationalism (and anti-communism) was strong in the late Soviet period in those territories in which the scholastic revolution took place prior to incorporation into the USSR. In contrast, nationalism was not salient in those territories in which the scholastic revolution took place under Soviet rule. In the former territories the (pre-Soviet) national identity was transmitted across generations, despite the later soviet invasion and ‘Sovietization’. Pre-Soviet national identities were enduring because the first generation of readers in a family (that is, those affected by the scholastic revolution) introduced the national sentiment (with which they achieved literacy) into the family in a way that was retained by ulterior generations. In other

words, these authors demonstrate that the family is the main vessel of transmission of national identity once their members have become literate.¹³

All this is relevant for the Catalan case because the main difference between France from Spain at the beginning of the twentieth century is that in France there had already been a nation-building process, which relied quite strongly on the schooling system and on the literacy of the citizens -that is, it was strongly based on the scholastic revolution-, while in Spain not. State-promoted nation-building impeded the fermentation of the Catalan nationalist ideas in France because people had been already socialized as French patriots. In Spain, the process of nation building had more or less failed, and so had the scholastic revolution; in consequence, nationalist ideas could ferment well within the Catalan population. In sum, the scholastic revolution can explain that “In Spain, Catalan nationalism made its appearance: the nation became Catalonia, and it became politicised. But the claims of Catalan nationalism found little resonance in the Catalan counties north of the border, where the nation remained France” (Sahlins 1989:281).

4.1. Education and the Building of the French Nation

In the aftermath of the French revolution, the French state started a nation-wide public school system, which achieved its maturity during the 3rd Republic. “There were about thirty-six thousand schools in France by 1829, and twice that many in 1906” (Grew and Harrigan 1991: 31). This system aimed at bringing literacy to people across

¹³ The ‘scholastic revolution’ theory differentiates itself from other modernization theories in the following way: “Although education is typically seen as part of a bundle of developments—urbanization, industrialization, income growth—due to the legacy of modernization theory, the role of education is causally and empirically distinct. Schooling provides the one clear channel for the *deliberate and systematic* inculcation of a set of values. And the critical aspect of mass literacy is its timing: the national ideas instilled in a population during the *first round of mass schooling*—when a community first shifts from an oral to a literate mass culture—are durable, and the first schooled generation will transmit those values in ways that previous or subsequent cohorts do not.” (Darden and Gryzmala-Busse 2006: 90).

the territory, and also at educating the children under the values of the French Republic, which they had to consider their own nation. In other words, the scholastic revolution encouraged the mass assimilation and endurance of French national identity across the territory of the state. This process took place in France despite the previous existence of ethnic identities, and it happened because the implantation of this scholastic model was accompanied by strong repressive measures against the use of *patois* and against the maintenance of regional cultural traits (Weber 1983). Further, the scholastic revolution was accompanied (and facilitated) by other type of nation-building measures: “The Republic furthered the policies of road and railway construction begun under the Second Empire and introduced new laws of mandatory military service and universal compulsory primary schooling, thus making the technological and cultural assimilation of ‘peasants into Frenchmen’” (Sahlins 1989: 280). The schooling laws of 1881-1882 (also called the *Ferry Laws*) were the main legal support of a process of cultural and linguistic homogenisation of the country (Weber 1983: chapter 18; Camps 1995).

As Weber (1983) says, the schoolteacher had a very relevant role in the task of spreading literacy, and also channelled the cultural homogenisation of France. “Students must get used to use the French, to speak French between them, and the teachers must teach in the official language” (Camps 1996:346). Camps explains that, in 1886, 34.5% of teachers of French-Catalonia were not indigenous of the region, and that this permitted a greater introduction of French within the schools because teachers did not know Catalan (in addition, Catalan was prohibited in schools). A state-wide structured system promoted the ‘homogeneous’ formation of schoolteachers, and this was to help spreading the same type of education across the country.

“The French elementary school was, on the whole, a mass school. It was also a much more uniform school. From the earliest days of the Empire, the ‘departmental regulations for State schools’ (...) worked towards a standardisation to which everything was in any case contributing at

once: the growing importance of the teaching college graduates- with their identical cultural background –within the teaching profession’ (Furet and Ozouf 1982:147).

Thus, ethnic Catalans of France were totally subjected to this process of mass schooling and induced cultural homogenisation by the French state. We can assume that the main effect of this wave of mass education, by which children with illiterate parents were taught in French and in the values of the French Republic and *Patrie*, was their adoption of a French national identity. Thus, French Catalans became national French by the end of the nineteenth century; following Darden (2007), we would think that this French identity endured and reproduced within the families because it is the one that emerged with the scholastic revolution.

4.2. Education and the (Failed) Attempt to Build the Spanish Nation

What happened in Spain during the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century? Was the ‘Spanish nation’ built? If not, why not? How did this fact influence the creation and mass assimilation of Catalan nationalism? Several authors have tied the advent of Catalanism to the weakness of the Spanish state (Linz 1973, De Riquer 1993, Jacobson 1998). Sahlins says about the divided Cerdanya: ‘The two Cerdanyas were definitively tied to the historical trajectories of their respective polities: the French Cerdagne experienced an economic assimilation and cultural integration into France, whereas the Spanish Cerdanya partook of the structural underdevelopment of Spain and of the claims of Catalan nationalism’ (1989: 276). However, what is the exact mechanism that links ‘weakness’ (or underdevelopment) of the Spanish state with the relative success of Catalan nationalism? I argue that it is not state weakness *per se*, but rather the absence of a scholastic revolution during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Spain that permitted the assimilation of the Catalan national identity by the

citizens of Spanish Catalonia at the beginning of the twentieth century. Thus, during Hroch's phase B of the movement –patriotic agitation, Catalan people were likely to adopt a Catalan national identity because they were not massively literate, and they had not assimilated a Spanish national identity. Had they been submitted to a process of mass schooling in Castilian and imbued with the values of the Spanish nation, they would have been less likely to adopt this national identity.

García de Cortázar and González support this idea when they argue: “If in France the educational reform was crucial in the development of the national unity by abolishing the ‘particularities’ and the regional languages, in Spain the deficient schooling truncated this possibility, permitting the persistence of the local languages” (1994: 464). However, it is not the case that the Spanish state was more tolerant with minorities' languages than the French state: since the 18th century, the Spanish state had also enacted regulations prohibiting the use of Catalan (and other minority languages) in education. These regulations were intended to increase the cultural homogenisation across the Spanish territory (*Real Cedula de Aranjuez*, 1768; *Ley Moyano*, 1857; *Real Decreto* 1902). The most important of these Laws was the *Ley Moyano*: until then, Catalan was still the language of education in schools. This law regulated the education in all its levels and planned a universal, centralized, free and public schooling. It also planned the obligation to teach the Castilian grammar and orthography as a unique language. However, at end of nineteenth century, the Spanish state school system was in extremely bad conditions (Guereña and Viñao 1996). Why was the educational system so underdeveloped in Spain? Some authors argue that the liberal reforms of the nineteenth century are to blame: especially, the *Desamortización de Mendizábal* (1836-1837) and *Madoz* (1855), which dismantled the apparatus of elementary education sustained by local governments or the Catholic Church. The lack of resources of the

state, and a quite violent century (i.e. with three civil wars: *Carlist* wars; different transitions from a monarchy to a liberal system, and the wars against US on Cuba and the Philippines) are also explanatory of this. Finally, the rural character of the Spanish state (combined with the economic underdevelopment) also hindered the creation of a structured school system: ‘It was mainly in the rural areas of our country where the constraints and resistances for schooling were created; the school institution was considered imposed, costly and useless’ (Guereña and Viñao 1996: 206).

In addition to the weakness of the Spanish state (and the absence of a proper scholastic revolution), I would argue that the fact that the spread of mass literacy took place in *Catalunya* during a period in which Catalanism was prevalent at the political level (the first two decades of the twentieth century) had important consequences for the mass assimilation and endurance of a Catalan national identity. First of all, with the creation of the autonomous institution of *La Mancomunitat* (1914-1925), a process of public schooling in Catalan set off: ¹⁴ ‘With *La Mancomunitat*, (Catalan) became once again an official language (...); new schools were created and institutions where it was the main or the exclusive language’ (Martí 1992: 47).¹⁵ Second, the private sector had an important role in education in Catalan during the first decades of the twentieth century. The weakness of the Spanish school system allowed a process opposite to the *spanishization*: that is, it took place a process of education in a general framework of suspicion against the state, expressed in some form of apoliticism or with anti-system proposals -republicans, Catalanists, or traditionalists (Duran 1997:21; Termes 2000). This process was led by the ‘private’ educational sector, which had an increased relevance in elementary education –again, due to the weakness of the state school

¹⁴ Following the demands of Catalan politicians, the Spanish Congress of Deputies presented a Law proposition in 8 July 1916 in favor of “the free usage of the Catalan language within Catalonia”.

¹⁵ It must be noted that this happened in a moment when Castilian was becoming more common as an oral language due to the arrival of economic immigrants from the rest of Spain.

system. Very often, this private sector was religious (Dard 2001); for example, *Els Escolapis*, which had an important network of schools in *Catalunya* from the 18th century, were the most important Catholic congregation in elementary education.¹⁶ But in other occasions private schools were secular –these schools were especially confrontational with the state. For example, the anarchist movement started to develop an alternative educational project at the beginning of the twentieth century, *La Escola Moderna* (Modern School) of Ferrer i Guàrdia. The Catalanist movement did the same, and created the first ‘Catalan’ school in Barcelona in 1898 (school *Sant Jordi*); more Catalan schools were created later, and the 'Association for the Protection of the Catalan Education' (APEC) was formed. This association (also called *La Protectora*) promoted the publication of books for Catalan schools (i.e. geography, history, etc.), which aimed at teaching the students the history and geography of *Catalonia*. This association observed a spectacular increase during the first two decades of the twentieth century: it went from 93 collective associates (schools) in 1910 to 121 in 1920. Third, schoolteachers had an important role in the socialization of the students with the values of the ‘Catalan nation’. In other words, schools became one of the sites of contestation of the national identity during this period. Even if schooling was conducted in Castilian most of the time (in non-Catalan schools), children were not generally instructed on the basis of Spanish patriotic values. That is, they did not link their learning of Castilian with a loyalty to a Spanish ‘nation’; very often, they linked the language with a ‘foreign’ power or -like in the past had happened with the learning of Latin- they thought of it as a mere instrument of written communication (Ferrer and Pujades 2000). The role of the teachers would have been crucial, since they were somewhat responsible for linking the will of the state (the creation of loyalty to the Spanish nation) with the

¹⁶ The church had been supportive of Catalan since early times. In 1727, at a moment when the public forces were pursuing measures against Catalan, the Ecclesiastic Council of Tarragona agreed on doing predication in this language (Solé i Sabaté and Villarroya 1995).

society. But since teachers were not instructed in a homogeneous basis, neither they felt themselves linked to the Spanish state, they were unlikely to instruct on the basis of Spanish patriotic values.

In a nutshell, Catalan public schools (of the periods of political autonomy), ‘anarchist’ schools, and private ‘catalanist’ or religious schools made an important contribution to the existence of a somewhat *alternative* scholastic revolution in *Catalunya* at the beginning of the twentieth century. They socialized first generation of literate citizens with values of either suspicion against the Spanish state or values for love to the Catalan nation. All this happened at the same time that a national movement was growing at the political and societal level. This determined the spread and endurance of Catalan nationalism.

4.3. Data on Timing of the ‘Scholastic Revolution’ in France and Spain

In **Tables 3** and **4**, we can see data on literacy in France and F-C in the nineteenth century, and data on literacy in Spain and S-C in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The data is based on the records of signatures on the acts of marriage.¹⁷ Following practice in the literature, the rate of illiteracy is measured by ‘number of individuals not able to write their name in the marriage acts among 100 married’. In **Table 3**, we can observe data for France and the region of F-C during the nineteenth century for three different dates: 1855, 1885 and 1894.¹⁸ We can observe the rate of illiteracy for the *Département des Pyrénées Orientales* and the mean rate of illiteracy of all the *Départements* of France, as well as the standard deviation and the median of the illiteracy rate of all *départements* (a total of 80).

¹⁷ Following the historical literature, it is assumed that literate people are capable of signing the acts of marriage with their name (and not making a design or a cross).

¹⁸ The data on France have been obtained from the ICPSR Study Num. 48. This study compiles data from: 1) *Statistique Generale de la France*, (2) *Mouvement de la population, 1801-1868*, (3) *Statistique Annuelle, 1869-1897*, and (4) *Statistique de l’enseignement primaire*.

Table 3. Illiteracy in France and French-Catalonia at the Nineteenth Century

		1855	1885	1894
French Catalonia	Mean	56.37%	38.2%	21.43%
France (all Dép.)	Mean	42%	16.45%	8.5%
	St.Dev.	20.97	12.3	8.1
	Median	54.4%	15.6%	6.6%

Source: ICPSR Study Num. 48. "Social, Demographic, and Educational Data for France, 1801-1897". Datasets: 95, 162, 165.

The level of illiteracy in the French Catalonia (the *Département des Pyrénées Orientales*) decreased from 56.37% in 1855 to 38.2% in 1885. This implies a difference of 18.17 points in this thirty-year period. For all the *départements* of France, the differences between these two periods are even more striking: in 1855, the mean level of illiteracy in all the territory was forty-two per cent; in 1885, the mean level of illiteracy in all the departments was of 16.45%—with a standard deviation of 12.31 (this is much smaller than in 1855, so the variation between regions diminished). Thus, between 1855 and 1885, the mean level of illiteracy of all France decreased 25.55 points (this means a growth of minus forty percent in the illiteracy rate). In 1894 the median of illiteracy in France was 6.6%. The average of all departments was 8.5% (the standard deviation was 8.1). As for the F-C region, the rate was 21.43%. This can be considered a low rate of illiteracy for the end of the nineteenth century; as we will see, it is much lower than in S-C during the same period. Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century, a spread of mass literacy seemed to have taken place in F-C. As I argued, this ‘mass literacy threshold’ was achieved with the scholastic revolution that took place in the territory of France during the last decades of nineteenth century.

In **Table 4**, we can see data on level of illiteracy in Spanish Catalonia from 1887 to 1981 (in decades). Levels of illiteracy were much higher than in F-C at the end of the

nineteenth century. In 1887, the level of illiteracy was 60% (note that in F-C it was 38.2% in 1885). In 1900 it continued to be much larger than in F-C: 53%. In fact, we can observe that in S-C there was not an important decrease in the levels of illiteracy until the decades of the 1910s and 1920s (S-C did not get a ‘moderate’ rate of illiteracy, 21%, until 1930).¹⁹

Table 4. Illiteracy in Spanish Catalonia at the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

	1887	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1981
% Illiteracy	60	53	42	29	21	14	10	7	6	5

Personal Compilation. Source: Vilanova and Moreno (1992: 218)

In a nutshell, the data on literacy support our hypothesis. The spread of mass literacy took place in F-C much before than in S-C. By the end of the nineteenth century, eighty per cent of the population in F-C were literate. People in F-C had been exposed to the scholastic revolution led by the French state during the last decades of the nineteenth century by which the citizens acquired a French national identity. At the beginning of the twentieth century, when the ‘phase B’ of Catalan national revival took place, people in F-C already had a French national identity. This explains why this phase B was not successful in this region, that is, that Catalan national identity was not assimilated by the masses. In contrast, at the end of the nineteenth century, only forty percent of the population of S-C were literate. That is, when the ‘phase B’ of the Catalan national revival movement started to take place, most of the people in Spanish Catalonia did not have a national identity (neither a Spanish nor a Catalan one). These people were therefore likely to assimilate the Catalan national identity. The three decades of maximum increase in literacy rates in *Catalunya* (1900-1930) were precisely those decades in which Catalanism was strong in the political arena, and in which the

¹⁹ A country is considered to have achieved mass literacy when more than 80% of its population is literate (Darden 2007).

education was partially undertaken in Catalan. During this period, a sort of Catalan scholastic revolution took place: this helped the assimilation of a Catalan national identity, which had the potential to endure. This identity indeed persisted, and this likely explains why today Catalan nationalism is salient today in S-C.

5. Conclusions and Caveats

This paper has addressed the question of what explains the variation in the salience of Catalan national identity across the France/Spain boundary, aiming at providing further insights on the origins of Catalan nationalism. I have bound a recent theory on the origins of nationalism (Darden 2007) to a particular periodization of ‘national revival movements’ (Hroch 1999, 2000), and I have introduced historical evidence on these two regions, which supports the theoretical framework. In general, I have shown that current patterns may be explained by historical differences on the processes of state building in Spain and France, and in particular of mass schooling policies, which affected the creation and assimilation of a mass Catalan national identity. On the one hand, in Spanish Catalonia mass literacy took place somewhat later than in French Catalonia, and this was never completely controlled by the Spanish state. This explains the different levels of support for the Catalan national movement in F-C and S-C when this movement arose at the end of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, in S-C, the process by which the majority of the people became literate during the first half of the twentieth century was dominated by ‘Catalanist’ sectors, which taught in Catalan language and linked the language to a Catalan nation; by libertarian sectors that educated while demonstrating a great hostility against the state; or by religious sectors that did not feel especially attached the Spanish state. By contrast, in France, the process of mass literacy was commanded by the State, and it linked literacy to the teaching of patriotic values. All this explains that in S-C a Catalan national identity was assimilated

by the masses and endured, -so that national identity is salient nowadays, while in F-C, the French national identity is the one that persisted.

Hroch depicts the 'state of the art' of nationalism studies in the following way:

“Every historian of national movements agrees there are numerous data gaps in our understanding of them. In this sense, all defensible conclusions remain no more than partial findings, and all ‘theories’ should be taken as projects for further research. Polemically, one might say that at the moment we have an overproduction of theories and a stagnation of comparative research on the topic” (1999:78)

This paper thus has the merit of not intending to introduce a new theory in the literature, but rather testing two complementary theories of nationalism in a comparative analysis of the Catalan case. By empirically observing that a theory explaining variation in the former Soviet Union (Darden and Gryzmala-Busse 2006) can also be partially explanatory of the Catalan case, a quite different setting, I am able to make a substantial empirical contribution to the literature.

In addition, the framework hereby presented is not trying to frontally challenge well-established explanations of Catalan nationalism; rather, it intends to nuance them in the light of new theories and empirical evidence. For example, I am not taking a stance on which the agents of nation-building were: I do not discuss whether these were members of the Catalan industrialized bourgeoisie intending to obtain economic benefits from the Spanish center (Solé-Tura 1967, Vicens-Vives 1970) or not. Rather, I scrutinize the outcomes of different historical processes (state and nation-building), which I somewhat take as given, and I test for their long-term consequences.²⁰ I do however take a side on the existing theoretical debates by supporting a constructivist standpoint: instrumentalist perspectives give an overestimated weight to the economic

²⁰ In addition to 'agency', causality is extremely hard to establish in these types of historical arguments. In reference to his “Phase B”, Hroch argues that the reasons why ‘patriots’ converted their aims into the objectives of a social movement seeking cultural and political changes are still an open question: “Why did scholarly interests become emotional attachments? Why should affection or loyalty to a region pass into identification with an ethnic group as a nation-to-be?” (1999: 85).

incentives of Catalan elites (Solé-Tura 1967, Díez Medrano 1999), and on their role in promoting a particular national identity among rank-and-file citizens. Yet, instrumentalism cannot explain why Catalan national identity was politicised only in Spain and not in France, and it cannot explain why Catalan national identity has persisted along time (i.e. after decades of systematic repression during the Primo de Rivera's²¹ and Franco's dictatorship in the twentieth century). The evidence in this paper is thus supportive of the idea that the building of a successful national identity is a prolonged process, and that it does not only hinge on short-term motivations of politicians.²² As we have seen, the reaction of the masses is also explanatory of nationalist outcomes. In sum, the evidence in this paper supports the idea that the way national identities are constructed -in other words, the circumstances surrounding the process of national building- are not superfluous, and that they determine the nature and longevity of nationalism.

²¹ Primo de Rivera enacted measures against Catalan the day after its coup. He prohibited Catalan in schools, suspended teachers using books in Catalan, imposed sanctions to those not using Castilian, and promoted the displacement of teachers from non-Catalan speaking areas to Catalan speaking ones (Solé i Sabaté and Villarroya 1995: 31).

²² Indeed, Hroch seems to get it right when he argues: "Nation-building was never a mere project of ambitious or narcissistic individuals, and ideas could not flow through Europe by their own inspirational force. Intellectuals can 'invent' national communities if certain preconditions for the formation of a nation already exist" (Hroch 1999: 79).

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