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NOU ESTAT D'EUROPA – CATALONIA'S QUEST FOR INDEPENDENCE

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## ABSTRACT

The Catalan independence question has moved to the center of Spanish politics in recent years, as support for an independent Catalonia has steadily grown. This thesis explores the history and agenda of the Catalan independence movement and critically evaluates the Catalan case for independence. A key question is how Catalan “independentists” have constructed a historical narrative to advance their political goals. Independentists focus on four significant time periods in Spanish and Catalan history to support their case. The thesis seeks to examine whether the historical narrative supporting an independent Catalonia is accurate and legitimate. The first time period is the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when Catalonia was given significant political autonomy and freedom. Catalan autonomy was lost at the end of the Spanish War of Succession in 1714. The third time period begins with the Spanish Civil War in 1936 and extends through General Franco’s dictatorship of Spain. Finally, the fourth time period is the Spanish constitutional settlement and the democratization process of Spain.

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## PROLOGUE

During the fall semester of my junior year of college, I studied abroad in Barcelona, Spain. I left home excited for this extended overseas trip as I yearned to explore new cultures and people. I did not expect this cultural immersion to have such a sudden or significant impact on me. As early as my trans-Atlantic flight to Barcelona, I was already hearing about an independence movement in the region to create an independent Catalonia. Within days, I found myself engulfed in a massive phenomenon that truly transcends politics and boundaries. I quickly discovered the Catalan independence movement has infected pop culture and has spread to every aspect of Catalan life. From the use of the striped Catalan flag, to speaking Catalan instead of Castilian, to the type of food one eats, and even to the stores people shop at, almost every aspect of Catalan life is somehow related to the independence movement. As I experienced this, I tried to understand it.

After listening to both sides of the independence argument, it struck me just how much of the pro-independence argument is based on historical claims. This thesis explores the historical argument behind the Catalan independence movement. Another goal is to examine why this argument has garnered much public support. This thesis argues that “independentists,” political activists supporting independence, have created a narrative using several historical events and time periods to make a claim for independence. Four periods and events in particular have long been accepted by most Spaniards as justification for a politically autonomous Catalonia, but as of very recently, there is a widening belief that these periods justify independence.

The first chapter discusses the origins of a national Catalan movement. Chapters 2 through 5 explore these four historical periods and how independentists are using them for their

political agenda. The first time period is the Medieval Catalonia, when according to independentists Catalonia was an independent state. The second time period is the War of Spanish Succession and the oppressive Bourbon rule of the Catalans. Chapter 4 covers the third time period, the Spanish Civil War and Franco's 36-year dictatorship of Spain. And Chapter 5 chronicles the Spanish transition to democracy and the difficulties independentists face in seceding from a democratic nation. The final chapter provides a short discussion of recent developments.

There is little existing research to date on the topic of Catalan independence. Much of Spanish news is focused not only on Catalan independence but Basque independence as well. There are many opinions on this topic, and this thesis synthesizes historical fact and political opinion in order to understand a massive public movement. Much of the research on the first two time periods comes from secondary sources, while the last two time periods occurred within the last 100 years. I used newspaper articles and journal articles for historical background history, and to better understand how that narrative of the independence movement has changed and is perceived today.

I have many people to thank. First, I would like to thank my parents and family who have supported me through not only this project, but all my endeavors. I believe that this thesis is a testament to their ability to trust me and allow me to accomplish anything I work hard at.

I would also like to thank Dr. Tobias Brinkmann, who has helped me along this process every step of the way. His patience and guidance was paramount to the success of this thesis. I also want to thank Dr. Mike Milligan and Dr. Kathryn Salzer, my two honors' advisors. Both played important roles in the completion of not only my thesis, but all the work I accomplished while at Penn State and Schreyer Honors College.

I would like to thank Penn State, Schreyer Honors College, the Paterno Fellows Program, and the History Department for giving me so many incredible opportunities and experiences during my time here.

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## Chapter 1 – The Catalan Independence Movement

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the government of the Spanish state of Catalonia held a non-binding referendum on the future of Catalonia in Spain. The ballot asked two questions: “Do you want Catalonia to be a state?” And: “If so, do you want Catalonia to be an independent state?”<sup>1</sup> Of those that responded, 81% supported the yes-yes option, voting in favor of an independent Catalonia. However, only 37% of the Catalan electorate showed up to vote.<sup>2</sup> Current polls indicate that Catalans are roughly split on the idea of independence, with 50% supporting it and 50% rejecting it.<sup>3</sup> The Spanish federal government outright dismisses the idea of an independent Catalonia as illegal and unconstitutional, and many Spaniards outside of Catalonia also reject the idea. But, in Catalonia, support for independence has steadily grown in recent years. In 2014 parties supporting Catalan independence for the first time reached a majority in the 135-seat Catalan parliament.<sup>4</sup>

The shift from autonomy, Catalonia’s current legal status, to an independent nation begins with the 2006 Statute of Autonomy. The Statute gave Catalonia political autonomy from the Spanish federal government as it had done since 1979. In the preamble of the document, the Catalans speak of their historical legitimacy to autonomy by mentioning four key historical

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<sup>1</sup> Catalonia president signs independence referendum decree. (2014, September 27). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29390774>

<sup>2</sup> Yes and no. (2014, November 10). Retrieved June 29, 2017 from <http://www.economist.com/blogs/charlemagne/2014/11/catalonias-independence-vote>

<sup>3</sup> Catalonia vote: 80% back independence - officials. (2014, November 10). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29982960>

<sup>4</sup> Catalonia's push for independence from Spain. (2015, November 11). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29478415>

events. The first is the creation of a Catalan General Council, or Generalitat, in 1359, representing the importance of the Generalitat to promoting Catalan self-governance. The second key event mentioned is the Spanish War of Succession and its aftermath in 1714, when self-governance was wrongfully terminated. The Generalitat was recovered in 1932, only to be dissolved during the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) and Franco's dictatorship, which represents the third historical era in which Catalans were oppressed, and finally, the fourth period the 2006 Statute of Autonomy refers to is the transition to democracy in Spain and the reestablishment of the Generalitat along with the 1978 Spanish constitution.

These four moments are crucial in Catalan history because they represent moments in which Catalans gained or lost political rights. Today these historical events are interpreted as legitimate claims to autonomy. Autonomy however, is not unique to Catalonia and is guaranteed by the Spanish constitution to every state. There are 17 autonomous communities that make up Spain. Madrid serves as national capital and seat of the federal government and parliament. The backers of Catalan independence reject the federal Spanish system, still led by the King of Spain, and instead demand to form their own nation state. Their historical argument for independence is based on the same four historical moments that were used to justify Catalan autonomy. The leaders of the independence movement, colloquially known as independentists, have created a historical narrative in which these events do not just promote autonomy, but complete independence. This thesis explores the validity of these claims as related to each of these historical moments.

The independentists' historical argument is their best method of pushing their political agenda. In effect, the Statute of Autonomy already makes these events significant, and they are widely agreed upon in Catalonia as important events in defining Catalan culture and history. All

the independentists had to do was to tweak the discourse surrounding these events from one of autonomy to one of independence. In their eyes, these events promote an independent Catalonia because of the chronic persecution Catalans have endured and the cultural differences that exist between Catalans and the rest of Spain because of these events.

### **The Origins of Catalanism and the Catalan Independence Movement**

The modern supporters of Catalan independence are not the first to advocate independence and are influenced by previous independence visionaries. The first effort to politicize Catalan history to achieve independence can be traced to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when Catalans faced political pressure from Madrid. By the time of the Industrial Revolution, Barcelona and Catalonia as a whole thrived, changing the social climate of the entire region. Major industry sprung up along the coast and Catalans quickly began reaping the benefits of industrial growth, and as the city grew and became more profitable, Madrid tightened control over Barcelona. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Spain's American colonies slowly fell away in revolt. The Cubans, for example, had been in revolt for 10 years, and this placed a tremendous economic and social pressure on the government to maintain the colony. Madrid then turned to Barcelona as not just a source of taxation and revenue, but as an area where they could continue to flex their political muscle, as it waned elsewhere in the world.

Passed in 1889, the Spanish Civil Code was applied both within mainland Spain and throughout the three remaining colonies of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Cuba as the Spanish government's way of reemphasizing their power. Members of the small independence movement felt that Catalonia was under political and legal siege. Many elements of the Spanish Civil Code

were inherently at odds with Catalan traditions and customs, but most significant was the abolition of universal inheritance. Rural and urban Catalans depended on the transfer of property to a single heir. This provided the ability for a family to pass wealth down a single line and helped generations of Catalans not only accumulate wealth, but provide the foundation necessary to engage in industry and commerce.<sup>5</sup> This was a Catalan practice supposedly dating back over a thousand years to the very first settlers of the region. As Catalonia benefited economically, many Catalans viewed this system as superior to the rest of Spain, who divided property among heirs “which made it impossible to consolidate wealth.”<sup>6</sup> Under the newly imposed Spanish Civil Code, property was to be broken into thirds, with two-thirds of that being equally distributed among heirs, leaving only a third to be distributed freely.<sup>7</sup>

It then became the work of Catalan lawyers to explicitly codify Catalan traditions to save them. This was not easy. Spelling out the customs and traditions of ones’ society faces inherent challenges, especially from within. But the Catalan lawyers had two advantages on their side. First, the Spanish Civil Code was so at odds with Catalan traditions and culture that it made public support easy to rally, and second, they were the first to define what it meant to be a Catalan national.<sup>8</sup> This codification is the foundation on which the Catalan independence movement would develop, because it channeled a nationalist ideology that was anti-Madrid and pro-Catalonia.

“The creation of a nationalist movement in Catalonia was a twenty-year process that began in 1881 with a social movement for the defense of Catalan culture and culminated in 1901

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<sup>5</sup> Harty, S. (2002). Lawyers, Codification, and the Origins of Catalan Nationalism, 1881-1901. *Law and History Review*, 20(2), 349-384. pg. 361.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pg. 362.

<sup>7</sup> Beckford, W. (1901). The Spanish Civil Code. *The American Law Register (1898-1907)*, 49(2), 89-97.

<sup>8</sup> Harty, S. “Lawyers, Codification...” pg. 371.

with the founding of a nationalist political party for Catalan political autonomy.”<sup>9</sup> The first half of this process, simply known as “Catalanism,” was “a specific articulation of Catalonia’s position within the Spanish state, independent of what was going on in other [Spanish] regions.”<sup>10</sup> The emergence of Catalanism came in response to the Spanish declaration of a civil code, and was started by elites who saw a threat to trade and business. The second half of this movement became political in 1885, when businessmen and lawyers met at *La Llotja*, Barcelona’s stock exchange, to draft *Memoria en defense de los intereses morales y materiales de Cataluña*, marking the first public Catalan anti-Spanish political statement.<sup>11</sup> They organized themselves politically as *Lliga de Catalunya*, which initially focused on the promotion of Catalan culture and identity.<sup>12</sup> In May of 1888, the Spanish government released a draft of the Civil Code, which included Article 15, the provision to do away with the Catalan’s coveted universal heir law. Led by *Lliga de Catalunya*, Catalans were able to mobilize and apply enough pressure to defeat Article 15.<sup>13</sup>

With the defeat of Article 15 in 1889, the Catalanism movement had successfully been validated. The political and legal goal now was not just to retain their rights, but work towards political autonomy.<sup>14</sup> Led by young university students, discourse started focusing on independence, using nationalistic terms in local newspapers like *La Veu de Catalunya* and *La Renaixensa*.<sup>15</sup> This nationalistic sentiment was too extreme at this time however. Catalans rejected talks of political independence, so leaders of the movement, like Enric Prat de la Riba,

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pg. 372.

<sup>10</sup> Llorens I Vila, J. (1992). *La Unió Catalanista I els orígens del catalanisme politic: Del orígens a la presidència del Dr. Martí I Julia (1891-1903)*. pg. 28.

<sup>11</sup> Harty, S. “Lawyers, Codification...” pg. 373

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pg. 376.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pg. 376.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pg. 376-377.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pg. 377.

began a deliberately slow process.<sup>16</sup> It culminated in 1897, when Prat de la Riba spoke in front of local cultural and intellectual elites, where he declared, “if there is a collective spirit, a Catalan social spirit that has known how to create a Catalan language, legal system and art, I have said that which I sought to say, I have demonstrated that which I sought to demonstrate: that is, that there exists a Catalan nation.”<sup>17</sup>

This cultural pride became a political voice in 1901 with the founding of *Lliga Regionalista*.<sup>18</sup> It was a largely conservative party that drew its inspiration from the *Bases of Manresa*, a Catalan constitution drafted in 1892 that established legislative, executive, and judicial powers for Catalonia. *Lliga Regionalista* came out of the remnants of *Lliga de Catalunya*, but recognized their shortcomings as a party that was too radical. *Lliga Regionalista* was not a secessionist party and respected the legitimacy of the Spanish monarchy, however they were steadfast in their belief that “each nation must have its state ... no, more: each nation must have a single state that translates its collective aspirations into action.”<sup>19</sup> Through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, *Lliga Regionalista* was the dominant political voice, and independence was never seriously considered.

Whether they intended to or not, these legal elites were able to harness Catalan identity and translate it into a political movement that spoke to Catalans. It would also set the precedent and tone for Catalonia going forward with respect to Madrid and the national government. Perhaps most importantly, this movement showed that political unity is possible in Catalonia, and when done correctly, can defeat political aspirations of Madrid. Catalan intellectuals who

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pg. 378.

<sup>17</sup> Prat de la Riba, E. (1906). “El fet de la nacionalitat catalana,” in Prat de la Riba, *La nacionalitat catalana*, pg. 93.

<sup>18</sup> Harty, S. “Lawyers, Codification...” pg. 380.

<sup>19</sup> Prat de la Riba, E. “El fet de la...” pg. 98.

recognized a common Catalan history and identity, and translated that into a political movement made the political accomplishments of this era possible. This is the same tactic independentists pursue today.

### **The Importance of Memory and History**

Modern independence leaders see these lawyers and politicians from the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the founders of the Catalan independence movement. The creation of Catalanism was the most important legacy of these 19<sup>th</sup> century visionaries, as it created a unique nationalism solely for Catalans by using historical and cultural arguments to unify Catalans against centrist Madrid policies. What the 19<sup>th</sup> century lawyers and politicians failed to accomplish however, was gaining independence for Catalonia. Modern independence leaders are attempting to use the techniques from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to unify Catalans through historical and cultural arguments by equating Catalanism with independence.

The historical claims to independence are powerful because they attempt to give legitimacy to the argument. This is why the 19<sup>th</sup> century lawyers and politicians used a historical argument to defend their property rights against the Spanish Civil Code and the modern independence seekers are using these four historical moments to legitimize independence today. Yet, as Pierre Nora points out, history is not what it seems. In the rapid progress at which society advances, history becomes an idea.<sup>20</sup> History is constantly revisited and reevaluated, and therefore subjective and open to critique.<sup>21</sup> It is in this evaluation of history that “memory” is

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<sup>20</sup> Nora, P. (1989). *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire. Representations*, pg. 7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 8.

born. By using the historical facts that suit it and ignoring the ones that do not, memory is the collective societal remembrance of history, and is never wrong because it is never questioned. Above all, memory, or lack thereof, is the binding of a common people. While history is open to everyone, its remembrance is what unites people.

The remembrance of these historical events is what the independentists focus on. “Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting ... vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation” writes Nora.<sup>22</sup> It is this very manipulation of memory that the independentists are working towards. By honoring the Generalitat, a respect for a longstanding tradition of self-governance is created. By creating *La Diada* and *El Fosal de los Moreres*, Catalans remember their struggle against authoritarian rule at the end of the War of Spanish Succession. By leading marches through the streets, brandishing their Catalan striped flags, and speaking Catalan, Catalans cherish the freedoms taken away by Franco, since restored by democracy and their Statute of Autonomy. Through the monuments, the flags, and the public declarations of Catalan identity, these take on what Nora calls the “*lieux de mémoire*”, which is the concrete and tangible crystallization of what comes from memory and history. Events, monuments, and images are open to public discourse and interpretation as “they mark the rituals of a society without ritual,”<sup>23</sup> implying that they may be devoid of their true historical meaning and significance. Instead, they are vacuums in which historical analysis and commentary are filled, and are publicly accepted as the truth. The Catalan independentists successfully filled this vacuum, attributing historical significance to objects to achieve their political goals, and changing the remembered history of events to suit their own goals. This is how these four

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pg. 8.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pg. 12.

historical events are being changed from ones that promote autonomy to ones that promote independence.

## Chapter 2 – Origins of Catalan Political Identity

The basis of the independence argument is that at one point Catalonia was its own independent state. To uphold this argument, independentists point to the Middle Ages and the origins of Catalonia, its expansion, and its status as a self-governing territory in Spain as a whole. Catalonia's autonomy culminated with the establishment of the Generalitat in 1359; but according to independentists several events, which resulted in the Generalitat, prove that Catalonia was independent. As this chapter shows, many of these historical arguments are flawed because Catalonia was never an independent nation. It is necessary to discuss the historical significance of the *Aprisios*, the original settlers of Catalonia, and the role King Jaume I played in expanding his empire, which included Catalonia. His role as a patron of Catalan culture and supporter of Catalan political rights is important to understanding why it is so easy for independentists to push the narrative of an independent Catalonia.

### **The Aprisios**

Independentists point to Catalonia's first settlers as proof that Catalonia has historical claims to independence. While there is validity in the argument that the first settlers of this northeastern region of Iberia were an autonomous group, they were still subjects of the Frankish crown of Frankia, and were therefore not independent. This narrative begins at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century with the invasion of the Moors from North Africa and the perceived threat of Islam on a Christian Europe. In response to the Moorish invasion of Iberia, Charlemagne, the Carolingian king of the Franks, began a southern campaign to expand his Christian empire against the Moors.

He was successful in carving out a small portion of Christendom in northern Spain and southern France that would be known as the Marca Hispanica (the Hispanic Borderland or Spanish March). It was from this area that Catalonia was able to first define itself.<sup>24</sup>

This new “Marca Hispanica” was a buffer zone between Christianity and Islam, defined as a *terra de ningú*, or a no-mans-land.<sup>25</sup> Those who would come to inhabit these lands were called *aprisios*, both a legal designation and a colloquial term for those who would settle there between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. *Aprisios* all shared characteristics, such as “a process involving the clearance of wasteland; that its holders were entitled to special privileges of exemption which originated with the kings of the Franks; and that it was a crucial tool in the opening of the frontier and the slow advancement of Christian control.”<sup>26</sup> Their intentions for leaving their homes and settling in this land is still up for debate. Were these people *Hispani*, Spanish Muslim refugees looking for salvation in Christian lands? Did a Visigothic statute that gave inhabitants land rights after thirty years of working the land inspire them? Or were they simply small local farmers, looking to expand their holdings from the rocky terrain of the Pyrenees into more fertile land?

Loosely, the *aprisios* were all these things. To say that *aprisios* were entirely Muslim immigrants from the south is not entirely correct. Most *Hispanis* who applied for refuge from the Frankish kings were denied.<sup>27</sup> As for those invoking the “Thirty-Year Law,” there is scarcely any historical support for this. The term first appears in a court document from 812, which notes “Per triginta annos abuerunt per aprisionem,” meaning “for thirty years this land has been held as

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<sup>24</sup> Freedman, P. (1988). Cowardice, Heroism and the Legendary Origins of Catalonia. *Past & Present*, pg. 5.

<sup>25</sup> Jarrett, Jonathan (2010); Settling the Kings’ lands: Aprisio in Catalonia in perspective. *Early Medieval Europe*, Vol. 18.3 (2010), pg. 321.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 321.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 323.

*aprisios*.”<sup>28</sup> This term appears in various court documents throughout the 9<sup>th</sup> century, but as Jonathan Jarrett argues, it is doubtful that a thirty-year clause applied.<sup>29</sup> Instead, these settlers must have operated under a different code and norm, one that relied significantly less on the rights and laws of a far-off northern king, but instead depended more on regional governance and mutual respect.<sup>30</sup> Finally, the idea that *aprisios* were self-driven, individual farmers with their families, looking for greater opportunities in this uninhabited area is also flawed. The settling of this frontier would have been a long process, and not one that any individual could endure on their own. To abandon a home in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and find a new area to clear, sow, and harvest would have been implausible. Nor is it the case that Christian kings sponsored migration to this abandoned area. While Kings and nobility certainly had a vested interest in supporting Christian migration to the frontier through the early parts of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, Charles the Bald however, abandoned this policy in the middle of the century.<sup>31</sup> Instead, it appears that “frontier settlement and land clearance was autonomous, locally resourced and in many cases no more than expansion, under semi-official auspices, of the endeavors and properties of pre-existent populations.”<sup>32</sup>

As Jarrett shows, such long-held beliefs surrounding the first settlers of Catalonia are false. Nonetheless, they contribute to the overall Catalan psyche that is important in shaping Catalan views on property rights. The idea of the Visigothic thirty-year law was central to the growth of Catalonia and its original inhabitants. While overstated in its factualness, the law shows the value of land and property ownership to Catalans. It also underscores the importance

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pg. 327.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pg. 327.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pg. 327-328.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pg. 330.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pg. 341.

of the transfer and inheritance of land, which is at least as old as the nation itself. The idea of universal property inheritance is hugely important to Catalan identity, and draws its roots from this perceived tradition dating back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century. This thirty-year law was part of the basis for the historical and cultural argument used by the lawyers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to strike down Article 15 of the Spanish Civil Code.

The narrative of the thirty-year law also gives legal ownership of the land and property rights to the people that live there, and not some far-off despot. This makes it easier to believe that Catalonia was independent, because neither the Carolinians, who had replaced the Franks in France, nor the Moors ever had true political control over Catalonia or its people. This belief continues today, and the idea of familial land ownership leads to strong feelings of nationalism. A 2015 poll in Catalonia found that 49.7% of the population felt more Catalan than Spanish, or only Catalan. Those that identify as more Catalan than Spanish make up 26.2% of the population while 23.5% say that they are only Catalan. On the other end of the spectrum, only 4.2% of the population feels more Spanish than Catalan, and 4.7% feel only Spanish, making up a total of 8.9% of the population.<sup>33</sup>

Independents like to reflect on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century as a time when Catalonia was independent, but that is not entirely accurate. Independence in the 10<sup>th</sup> century had a different meaning than today. There was no Catalan nation at this time and the territories of what would become Catalonia were sparsely populated farmlands. Politically, this area was still nominally under Carolingian rule, with real power held by a local count. While local rulers had a great deal of autonomy, they were not officially independent. This changed in 985 when Moorish ruler Al-

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<sup>33</sup> Sallés, Q. (2015, January 30). NacióDigital: Només el 9% dels ciutadans se senten més espanyols que catalans. Retrieved June 27, 2017, from <http://www.naciodigital.cat/noticia/81830/nom/dels/ciutadans/se/senten/espanyols/catalans>.

Mansur sacked Barcelona. Borrell II, the count of Barcelona at the time, received no aid from the Carolingian king, and the Moors easily overran Christian Spaniards.<sup>34</sup> Al-Mansur passed away in 1002 leaving his newly acquired territory in disarray.<sup>35</sup> The fall of the Carolingian dynasty shortly after the sacking of Barcelona meant that the count of Barcelona no longer had to swear allegiance to them. By denouncing Carolingian rule, Barcelona had in effect become independent. The surrounding territory of what would become Catalonia was still under feudal rule however, with the Capetians in France nominally kings of the region.

For this short period of time in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Barcelona was its own political entity, and a slow process began to consolidate the surrounding area. Ramón Berenguer I (1035-76) was the first of the Barcelona rulers to attempt to do and promote the growth of the region. By avoiding the conflicts of local rulers and winning the respect of neighboring nobles by suppressing a rebellion by his cousin in 1059, he “was able to maneuver all of the Catalan barons into formal recognition of his overlordship.”<sup>36</sup> Ramón Berenguer gave himself ultimate judicial power, and between 1064 and 1068, gave himself legislative powers as well, setting a lasting legacy of the powers of the Count of Barcelona.<sup>37</sup>

This continued through the early 12<sup>th</sup> century as Barcelona counts imposed their will on surrounding Muslim territories, extracting tax and claiming land.<sup>38</sup> In 1134, Alfonso I the Battler (1104-34) declared war on the regional Islamic rulers, militarizing the community and claiming Tortosa in the south, and Lerida in the west by 1149.<sup>39</sup> These militarized efforts also changed

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<sup>34</sup> Freedman, P. (1988). Cowardice, Heroism and the Legendary Origins of Catalonia. *Past & Present*, (121), pg. 6

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 6-7.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 7.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 7.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 8.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 9.

the Catalan countryside from one of agriculture to a more urbanized environment, complete with castles and local communities. In an effort to extend their rule from Barcelona, the counts encouraged Christian settlement in these areas and gave considerable power to the local rulers in conducting their own affairs, as long as they swore loyalty to the count.<sup>40</sup>

### **The Crown of Aragon and King Jaume el Conqueridor**

For this roughly 150-year period, Catalonia was independent in the sense that no feudal lords fully controlled the territory. The count of Barcelona did not answer to a higher authority, and he was the ruler over these newly acquired lands, but it was never recognized as a kingdom. This changed in 1137 when the Ramón Berenguer IV married the princess of Aragon. This formed the Crown of Aragon, of which Catalonia became a part.<sup>41</sup> Catalonia's ruler was now the King of Aragon, and any territorial gain or advances were done in the name of the Aragon.

One of the great, if not the greatest Aragonese monarch was King Jaume I. The greatest advancements in the conquest of Catalonia were made under his ruler, as King Jaume expanded his power into the Mediterranean by means of Barcelona, Valencia, and the Balearic Islands. The islands were of particularly crucial importance at the time. The Moors had controlled the Balearic Islands for centuries because they were the key to unlocking the economic benefits of the Mediterranean. Understanding their potential, King Jaume set out to accomplish “the best thing man has done in the past hundred years” in taking the islands.<sup>42</sup> Putting together the “most

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pg. 9.

<sup>41</sup> Rodriguez, V. (n.d.). Aragon. Retrieved June 29, 2017 from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Aragon-region-Spain#ref169835>

<sup>42</sup> Hughes, Robert. (1992). “Going to the Fair” from Barcelona. The Harvill Press. London. pg. 107.

impressive naval force that had ever been seen in the Western Mediterranean,” King Jaume established dominance for the Catalans and Aragonese over the region, allowing an unchecked expansion of economic power.<sup>43</sup> By pushing eastward, King Jaume set a precedent. Sicily, for example, came under Aragonese rule in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, and Sardinia was incorporated in 1320.<sup>44</sup>

King Jaume was also a patron of Catalan culture, preserving and cultivating the language while also taking significant steps to decentralize his own power.<sup>45</sup> In 1258, King Jaume brokered the renunciation of feudal control over Catalonia with the Treaty of Corbeil. The treaty cut the Catalan border off at the Pyrenees and officially absorbed the county into the Kingdom of Aragon where King Jaume gave them the power of self-governance.<sup>46</sup> In the era of the divine right of kings, King Jaume stuck out from the norm by establishing the Consell de Cent, or Council of 100 as an oligarchy to govern over Catalonia. The Council was a place where “a leather worker, a tailor, a cooper, or a smith might sit in session with a trading banker or the biggest spice importer in Barcelona on terms of voting equality”<sup>47</sup>, and was a place where all classes and such rivalries were able to meet and diffuse. Political power had been given to the people by means of the Council and allowed for some degree of Catalan self-governance.

It is then easy to see why it would be so easy to promote the narrative that Catalonia was independent in the Middle Ages and why so many people would believe it. It was only when Ramón Berenguer IV married Petronela, the princess of Aragon in 1137 that he gained a royal

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pg. 107.

<sup>44</sup> Rodriguez, V. “Aragon”...

<sup>45</sup> Chaytor, H. J. (1933). Chapter Six: James the Conqueror . In *A History of Aragon and Catalonia*. pg. 88.

<sup>46</sup> Sanders, I. (1951). The Texts of the Peace of Paris, 1259. *The English Historical Review*, 66(258), 81-97.

<sup>47</sup> Hughes, R. “Going to the Fair” pg. 122.

title, as up until that point he was just a count. Even the great King Jaume did not recognize Catalonia as its own independent entity given his self-proclaimed title: “King of Aragon and Mallorca and Valencia, Count of Barcelona and Urgell”.<sup>48</sup> This is a minor, yet significant, historical fact that the Catalan Generalitat website chooses to overlook. In 2013, the website described how “in 1137, King Ramiro II of Aragon ceded sovereignty of his kingdom and the hand of his daughter, Petronela, to the Count of Barcelona, Ramón Berenguer IV.”<sup>49</sup> The website also describes the relationship between Catalonia and Aragon as a “confederation” and describes it as the “Catalonian-Aragonese Crown”. None of these things are factually true. As noted above, Catalonia was absorbed into the Crown of Aragon and was only recognized for its status as a county.<sup>50</sup>

### **Establishment of the Generalitat and Catalonia’s Political Culture**

The establishment of the Generalitat in 1359 is seen as a significant moment in which Catalonia was able to create a true institution that reflected the autonomous and democratic tenants of Catalan culture. Even though they had their own Generalitat, they were still not independent as they were still under the Crown of Aragon.

Since the establishment of the Council of 100, Catalans had a history of having a voice in the financial and legal policies of their land. By 1359, the financial strains on the entire kingdom were so great, that a larger and more permanent governing body was needed. “The estates

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<sup>48</sup> Pérez, R. (2013, October 08). La Generalitat catalana fabrica su «reino» vapuleando la historia. Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.abc.es/local-aragon/20131007/abci-generalitat-catalana-mentiras-201310070522.html>.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

viewed the creation of the General Council (Generalitat) as a necessary evil that would prevent the extraordinary taxation from falling under the control of the royal authorities ... and hoped to dissolve it as soon as possible”, but the pressing need for continued raised taxes meant the council had to remain.<sup>51</sup>

The Generalitat remained in place until 1714, and in that time, was crucial to the establishment of distinctly Catalan customs and traditions. The main purpose of the Generalitat was to collect revenue from the three different estates of Catalan society: the nobles, the Church, and the military. The Generalitat provided opportunities for these three estates to have a political voice in the legislative process and allowed them to reach consensus on important decisions regarding taxes, land allotment, and defense.<sup>52</sup> When independendists speak of Catalonia’s political culture, they are speaking of this nearly four centuries worth of self-governance from not just their own monarch, but their own estates as well. Catalan resentment of centralized rule can be seen in what is known as the Oath of Aragon, the verbal contract council members swore to the king. “We, who are as good as you, swear to you, who are no better than us, to accept you as our king and sovereign, provided you observe all our liberties and laws, but if not, not,” the Oath reads.

The wording of this Oath is peculiar and gives unique insight into the foundation of Catalan politics. It is both respectful yet defiant, and the final part, “if not, not,” connotes some sort of rebellious or militant undertone. What is particularly interesting about this statement is that there are multiple accounts of the Oath being spoken at coronations, official meetings with

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<sup>51</sup>General Council (14th-17th centuries). (n.d.). Retrieved May 17, 2017, from [http://web.gencat.cat/en/generalitat/historia/historia\\_1/](http://web.gencat.cat/en/generalitat/historia/historia_1/).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

the king, and meetings of the Council, yet each time it is said differently.<sup>53</sup> This perhaps implies that the actual wording of the Oath was not of importance, but rather what the Oath signified and how it was spoken was important. Half a millennia later, Catalans still adhere to this political philosophy.

The Oath however, does not actually come from Catalonia. It is Aragonese and comes from Valencia. Like Catalonia at the time, Valencia was a principality under the Aragon king, and like Catalonia, was given a degree of autonomy and respect. By the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, Valencians drafted the *Regiment de Principes*, or more colloquially, the *Dotzé*, which was a treaty, drafted by political philosopher Francesch Eximeniç, that claimed the Valencian right to resistance and autonomy.<sup>54</sup> The political reality of Valencia, and other principalities, Eximeniç argues, is that they are not under one uniform king. Therefore, this delicate balance between subjugation and autonomy lies in a verbal compact. According to Eximeniç, while men are free in society, politically they must subjugate themselves to the rule of a monarch, only inasmuch as the king agrees to uphold the laws and protect the rights of men in society.<sup>55</sup> If a monarch does not do this, then the people may overthrow him and replace him with a new one. Inspired by this political philosophy, it would not be long before the Catalans would attempt to do just that.<sup>56</sup>

In 1460, the Crown of Aragon faced a succession crisis, as King John II of Aragon tried to pass power to his son Ferdinand. Ferdinand, of course, would ultimately take the throne, marry the Queen of Castile, Isabella, and formally connect their two great kingdoms, but the Catalans rejected Ferdinand as the rightful heir. Instead, Guerau Alemany de Cervelló, a

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<sup>53</sup> Giesey, R. (1968). Royal Oaths in Aragon and the Oath of the Aragonese. In *If Not, Not: The Oathe of the Aragonese and the Legendary Laws of Sobrarbe*, pg. 159.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 166.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 167.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 172.

nobleman, speaking on behalf of all Catalans to Charles of Viana, John II's eldest son, professed how this transfer of power violated the laws of the principality of Catalonia, thus sparking an uprising.<sup>57</sup> Alemany de Cervelló's wording and his conduct when speaking to Charles of Viana is particularly telling and important. A record of the account was documented:

“We pray to your Majesty that you observe our liberties, as you have promised ... Therefore, in the name of the entire Principality of Catalonia, I ask that you return things to their pristine state.” The King remained silent, and de Cervelló's pressed him to go further. At this point, de Cervelló placed his hand on the hilt of his sword, in a symbol of rebellion and repeated what he said. Thrice he urged the king to respect Catalan wishes, and yet the king remained silent. Finally, de Cervelló unsheathed his sword and declared, “All of Catalonia reminds you of the oath you took, and will obey you not at all as long as you do not uphold what you swore.” With that, the King responded in his disdain for the traitorous Catalans, and stormed out of the room.<sup>58</sup>

The events that transpired that moment were important for a number of reasons. First is Alemany de Cervelló's wording when addressing the king. While not verbatim of the Oath of Aragon, it still conveys all of the sentiment and emotion in the Oath. In essence, this event was a nobleman, speaking for an entire principality, defying the king of Aragon by invoking the tradition and custom that laws are not being followed and respected. The king of Aragon has broken his oath with the Catalan people, so now the Catalan people will break their oath with him.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., pg. 172.

<sup>58</sup> Vicens Vives, J. (1953). *Juan II de Aragon*, pg. 226-227.

<sup>59</sup> Giesey, R. “Royal Oaths in Aragon...” pg. 176.

De Cervelló's actions led to the outbreak of civil war in Catalonia and the victory of John II's loyalists, but these ideals of defiant centralized rule transcended centuries and set the political foundation of Catalonia. The idea of an absolute king, which subjects serve is antithetical to Catalan ideology and culture. As Robert Hughes put it in his book *Barcelona*, "the Catalans' sense of otherness – the separation, cultural and institutional, from the rest of Spain – comes through loud and clear in their oath of allegiance their leaders swore to the Aragonese kings."<sup>60</sup> It also shows that while this political sentiment may not have been born in Catalonia, the Catalans quickly adopted it. The story of Alemany de Cervelló shows how defiance by the Catalans for political rights dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

There is no question that Catalans have a long history of self-governance and that autonomy is a right they deserve. But an objective historical view of the origins of Catalonia shows that at no point was it an independent kingdom, nation, or state. While the County of Barcelona may have been independent for a short period of time, it was quickly absorbed into the Crown of Aragon. Catalans were allowed to govern themselves, speak their own language, and practice their own customs, but that does not change the fact that they were not independent for the overwhelming majority of their history. Furthermore, efforts by Catalans to describe the relationship between Catalonia and Aragon as a "confederation," or calling the king the "Catalan-Aragonese monarch", as the Catalan Generalitat does so today, is misleading and promotes a false narrative. This is not to say that Catalans do not deserve to be recognized as a culturally different region with their own unique history, because they certainly do. Catalans also have a tradition of self-governance and respect for a ruler that respects them back, as

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<sup>60</sup> Hughes, R. (1992, July 27). The City Homage to BARCELONA. *TIME*. Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,976110-3,00.html>.

evidenced by the Oath of Aragon. The justification for independence does not end here however, and continues with the War of Spanish Succession.

### Chapter 3 – Independence Lost

The year 1714 is a key historical date for independentists because it marks the end of the War of Spanish Succession and therefore the loss of Catalan autonomy. As discussed in the previous chapter, Catalonia was never truly independent, but the territory did enjoy a significant degree of political autonomy. When the War of Spanish Succession ended in 1714, that autonomy was abolished. This war and this date are important for two reasons. First, it is remembered and consecrated as a military defeat. Many Catalans lost their lives defending their homes and political rights in this war, and these people are remembered as Catalan martyrs. Second, it is significant for the political sentiment. The Catalans lost their autonomy rights to the victorious Bourbons with the passage of the Nueva Planta Decrees. This historical event has been consecrated in two ways and is being used by the independentists to advance their agenda. Several physical monuments in Barcelona commemorate the war and its victims. The date 1714 has taken on political significance attributed with independence in popular culture. The culmination of the remembrance of the war is La Diada, the annual celebration on September 11<sup>th</sup> that embraces Catalan identity and culture, and in more recent years, had been used to promote independence.

## War of Spanish Succession

In 1700, a great conflict sprung up over who would take over Spain's vast empire with the passing of King Charles II. The war itself was essentially a proxy war fought by all of Europe's great powers as the Bourbon coalition of the French and Bavarians vied for control against the Hapsburg coalition of the Austrians, Dutch, and English. The Bourbons and the Hapsburgs were diametrically opposed to one another, and had been for a long time. The Bourbons, led by King Louis XIV of France, stressed the importance of Catholicism and centralized, totalitarian rule. The Hapsburgs on the other hand were much more sympathetic to the autonomous rights of all the different regions and principalities.

It should come as no surprise then that the Crown of Aragon, especially Catalonia, sided with the Hapsburgs and rallied against the French. Unlike other parts of Spain, every class in Catalonia opposed the Bourbons and fought against them.<sup>61</sup> The war, which began in 1701 ended in 1714, was played out all over Europe and in the Americas as these two coalitions fought for control of the Spanish Crown. The Bourbons would eventually be victorious and King Phillip V would take the throne, but the Catalan resolve to hold out and fight, as well as the aftermath of the war, is both a point of national pride and national tragedy for them. Catalonia was the last region in Spain to hold out against the Bourbons, and even facing insurmountable odds, held out for months against siege.<sup>62</sup>

Barcelona fell to Bourbon forces on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1714. When Castilian and French troops invaded the city, they proceeded to massacre many inhabitants, burn down buildings and homes and lock up nearly 4,000 of Barcelona population of 30,000. Bodies were thrown into

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<sup>61</sup> Payne, S. G. (1976). Chapter 16: The Eighteenth-Century Bourbon Regime in Spain. In *A History of Spain and Portugal* (Vol. 2) pg. 353.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 354.

mass graves in the streets and around churches like Santa María del Mar, known as the people's church.<sup>63</sup> Catalans fled to countries like Italy or Austria for fear of retribution. The occupying Castilian army executed Catalan General Josep Moragues and his chief officers, and their heads were hung outside the city gate until 1727.<sup>64</sup> September 11<sup>th</sup> and 1714 have become important dates in Catalonia because they commemorate these tragic events. Even though the Catalans were defeated, the defeat is celebrated and remembered today as a marker of Catalan pride and identity.

### **Nueva Planta Decrees and Bourbon Rule**

The Catalans were defeated both militarily and politically in the War of Spanish Succession. While the military defeat was devastating in its own right, the political defeat meant the end of Catalan autonomy, and therefore Catalan culture. This manifested itself as the Nueva Planta Decrees, implemented between 1714 and 1716.<sup>65</sup> In order to establish complete rule and control over all of Spain, the decrees issued by Phillip V abolished Catalan laws and institutions, strengthening centralized Castilian rule. A harsh tax system was imposed on Catalonia.<sup>66</sup> The local language of Catalan was outlawed and schools were to be taught and business was to be conducted in Castilian alone. It also meant that the Generalitat was to be dissolved. Since 1359 the Generalitat had existed in varying capacities, yet remained a constant in Catalan politics. The Generalitat promoted Catalan identity through a local taxation system and the use of the Catalan language. The cultural restrictions Philip V placed on the Catalans were unique to

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<sup>63</sup> Harris, S. (2014). *Catalonia is not Spain: A historical perspective*.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Payne, S. G. "Chapter 16: The Eighteenth-Century Bourbon Regime in Spain" pg. 352.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 356.

Catalonia. Regions like Navarre and the Basque Country were allowed to keep a certain degree of cultural autonomy because they surrendered so quickly to the Bourbons. Catalonia was not allowed to maintain cultural autonomy precisely because they resisted the Bourbons for so long.<sup>67</sup> Catalonia did not have representation in the new Spanish Cortes until 1724, but the Cortes itself was nothing more than for show, never accomplishing a legislative or political initiative.<sup>68</sup>

As part of the new Bourbon reforms, the Spanish military was reorganized to consolidate resources and power. Military was might for the Bourbons and in order to implement these rules and changes in Catalonia, the Castilians left an occupying military force. They housed themselves in locals' homes and in *La Ciutadella* on the outskirts of the city.<sup>69</sup> Local officials were either imported from Madrid or were nobles who swore loyalty to the Crown and were implemented to govern the country as faithful to the Castilian crown. Barcelona's shipyards were turned into barracks and the city walls were built up and strengthened to keep Barcelona's citizens in. Author Simon Harris likens these fortified walls to the Berlin Wall, saying "perhaps no symbol until the Berlin Wall has been hated as much as Felipe V's city walls were in Barcelona."<sup>70</sup> The walls around the city were constructed to keep the citizens of Barcelona trapped inside and provided a vantage point from which the Castilian soldiers could keep an armed watch over the city.

Walls have held an important role in Barcelona, as over the many centuries were used primarily for defense of the city against invaders. Walls protected the people of Barcelona and their interests. The original city walls, dating back to the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century, designated the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., pg. 355.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pg. 356.

<sup>69</sup> Harris, S. "Catalonia is not Spain..."

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

city limits of Barcelona. Immediately outside the walls was fields and farmlands, while inside the walls was a bustling urban environment. Today, walls dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century still stand and mark the old city from the new city. The Council of 100 commissioned renovations to the wall in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and the walls continue to represent Barcelona's unique history.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, the walls constructed by Phillip V in the aftermath of the war were not only seen as imprisoning the citizens, but as an example of Barcelona's culture and pride being stolen by the Bourbons.

While the citizens of Barcelona were trapped inside their city through the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, outside of Barcelona, Catalan guerrilla fighters were still active.<sup>72</sup> *Mossos d'Esquadra* was formed in 1721 in the Catalan countryside as an armed guard of Catalans. They protected vulnerable trade routes and conducted their business in Catalan. Today, *Mossos d'Esquadra* is the name for Catalonia's police force, established in 1983 under the same pretenses as the original *Mossos d'Esquadra* were.<sup>73</sup> This promotes the idea that even during the oppressive Bourbon rule, Catalans were able to protect and police themselves. This is partially true. Catalans did police and monitor themselves through *Mossos d'Esquadra* in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, but the Captain General of Catalonia, a Bourbon political figure, commissioned them. They were used in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as somewhat of a civil guard, to complement the army in fighting resistance fighters, specifically the *Miquelets*.<sup>74</sup> When Catalans today

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<sup>71</sup> Barcelona's medieval wall. (n.d.). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://museuhistoria.bcn.cat/en/barcelonas-medieval-wall>.

<sup>72</sup> Payne, S. G. "Chapter 16: The Eighteenth-Century Bourbon Regime in Spain" pg. 357.

<sup>73</sup> Història de la PG-ME. (n.d.). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from [http://mossos.gencat.cat/ca/els\\_mossos\\_desquadra/historia\\_de\\_la\\_pg-me/index.html](http://mossos.gencat.cat/ca/els_mossos_desquadra/historia_de_la_pg-me/index.html).

<sup>74</sup> Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). "Miquelets". *Encyclopædia Britannica*. **18** (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press. pg. 566.

remember the guerilla fighters and “outlaws” who fought the Bourbons, they are really thinking of the *Miquelets*, and not the *Mossos d’Esquadra*.<sup>75</sup>

## Monuments

For Pierre Nora, “modern memory is, above all, archival. It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image.”<sup>76</sup> Therefore, the remembrance of the War of Spanish Succession is perhaps the most significant event for independentists in distinguishing Catalan identity and legitimizing their claims of independence. From the Catalan independentist perspective, the war pitted two clear-cut sides against each other. The difference between the Castilian-backed Bourbons and the Catalan-backed Hapsburgs was as black and white as could be. The Bourbons favored a centralized state while the Hapsburgs were sympathetic to Catalan autonomy. The subsequent defeat of the Hapsburgs and the Catalans brought about one of the most powerful forms of remembrance. The memory of the martyrdom of not just the Catalan people, but individuals as well, led to the hero-like remembrance of Catalans after the defeat of the war.

Throughout Barcelona, there are two places in particular where the war is remembered. The first of these, *La Ciutadella*, was constructed in 1716 by the Bourbons to house their soldiers. It was a massive 150-acre area and nearly 15,000 Barcelona homes were destroyed in the neighborhood of La Ribera to build the fortress that housed the soldiers upholding the Nueva

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<sup>75</sup> Loucaides, D. (2014, September 16). This Year's National Day of Catalonia Was a Big Independence Blowout. Retrieved June 29, 2017, from [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/national-day-of-catalonia-catalan-independence-839](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/national-day-of-catalonia-catalan-independence-839).

<sup>76</sup> Nora, P. “Between Memory and History...” pg. 13.

Planta Decrees.<sup>77</sup> *La Ciutadella* became a representation of the oppression and tyranny from the Bourbons for years to come. From 1827 to 1832, Charles d’Espagnac was the governor of Barcelona, using *La Ciutadella* to imprison, torture, and murder dissidents in the city.<sup>78</sup> In his book *La Ciutat Captiva 1714-1860*, Romul Brotons says of Charles d’Espagnac “all the chroniclers of the time coincided in describing the Count of Spain as a sadistic madman.”<sup>79</sup> The fortress stood until 1868, when a successful revolution in Barcelona took it from the government. “The Parc de la Ciutadella was the prize in a struggle against the symbol of oppression,” Patricia Gavancho explains in her book on the parks of Barcelona. “The military fortress was knocked down by groups of volunteers, and that tells us everything. The aim was to undo, not rebuild.”<sup>80</sup>

In 1888 the area was repurposed for the city’s Universal Expo. Now a large park, *La Ciutadella* contains a magnificent fountain, and is home to a botanical garden, the city’s zoo, and the Catalan Parliament, all a far cry from its original military purpose. There is little recognition of the war or what this space used to be and represent. An outsider would simply remark at the magnificent green area preserved in an urban setting. Sculptures and artwork can be found throughout the park, all done by Catalan artists. The park pays tribute to various different groups, such as gays, lesbians, and transgender people who have lost their lives to hate crimes. There is also a monument dedicated to the lives of Catalans who fought on the side of the Allies during the Second World War. The park is now a tribute to Catalan excellence, covering up the long, dark history this location has for this city.

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<sup>77</sup> Harris, S. “Catalonia is not Spain...”

<sup>78</sup> La Ciutadella, a military installation which the city turned into a park. (2016, April 7). Retrieved May 26, 2017, from <http://lameva.barcelona.cat/barcelonablog/en/unknown-city/la-ciutadella-a-military-installation-which-the-city-turned-into-a-park>.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

While *La Ciutadella* reflects Catalonia's ability to forget and move on from the events and aftermath of the war, the second location, *Fossar de les Moreres* seeks to commemorate them. Built in the port next to Santa María del Mar, a torch with an everlasting flame hangs over the gravesite of the thousands of city defenders who were killed during the siege. Inscribed on a plaque at the torch are lines from a poem entitled *El Fossar de les Moreres*, by Frederic Soler, which reads "In the graveyard of the mulberry trees no traitor shall be buried; even if our flags are lost, it will be the urn of honor."<sup>81</sup> The monument was only recently built in 2001, but has become a spot of "homage" for Catalans.<sup>82</sup> A number of independence protests and events have taken place at this monument, organized by political activists. Every September 11<sup>th</sup> during *La Diada*, government leaders say a few words at the monument and lay a wreath to remember those lost in defense of the city. Unlike *La Ciutadella*, *Fossar de les Moreres* confronts the past head on. It is a monument to martyrs that commemorates a time when Catalonia had autonomy, and reflects on the many people who died trying to defend it. The independendists use this monument for this very reason. They see themselves as the successors to those killed at the hands of the Bourbons and believe all Catalans owe it to those lost to continue their fight.

### **1714 in Popular Culture**

*La Ciutadella* and *Fossar de les Moreres* are physical locations representing the war, yet the remembrance of this war has also infected modern Catalan popular culture. Inspired by the independentists, the date 1714 has a powerful political connotation. At FC Barcelona soccer

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<sup>81</sup> Soler, F. "El Fossar de les Moreres."

<sup>82</sup> The Fossar de les Moreres - Visit Barcelona. (n.d.). Retrieved May 26, 2017, from <http://www.barcelonaturisme.com/wv3/en/page/1216/the-fossar-de-les-moreres.html>.

matches, when the game clock strikes 17:14, 60,000 people begin chanting for independence. For nearly a minute, they chant “in-, inde-, independència!” while the striped Catalan flag is proudly waved. Similarly, when the clock strikes 5:14 in the afternoon, one can often hear the sound of cheering, pots banging, and car horns blaring in Barcelona. It is a simple, yet effective way of promoting the ideal of independence, because it is widely believed that the year 1714 marked the end of Catalan independence. But, as has been established, Catalonia was never actually independent. Chanting for independence at 17:14 perpetuates this myth and this is exactly what the independentists intend. Unlike the monuments, which commemorate true events and terrible acts of violence against the Catalan people, the celebration of 1714 promises the fictional return of independence. If independence were to ever truly be secured, it would be for the first time.

## **La Diada**

The remembrance of the War of Spanish Succession and 1714 culminates annually on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Known as *La Diada*, September 11<sup>th</sup> is regarded and celebrated as Catalonia’s National Day, because it was on that day in 1714 that Barcelona fell to Bourbon forces. The first celebration of *La Diada* took place in 1886, organized by the same political activists that challenged the Spanish Civil Code and created Lliga de Catalunya.<sup>83</sup> They started the celebration as a celebration of Catalan history and identity, and these origins influence the massive festivities that take place today. The celebrations of *La Diada* were outlawed in 1939

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<sup>83</sup> Tallantyre, S. (2016, September 09). La Diada: Five things you need to know. Retrieved June 29, 2017 from <https://www.thelocal.es/20160909/5-things-you-need-to-know-about-catalonias-la-diada>.

when General Franco took control of Spain, but since 1980, the day has been celebrated annually in the streets of Barcelona and all across Catalonia.

Today, massive crowds fill the wide avenues and streets of Barcelona every September 11<sup>th</sup>. With no school or work on that day, seemingly everyone takes place in the festivities, peaking at an estimated 2 million people in attendance during the tercentennial celebration in 2014.<sup>84</sup> Dressed in red and yellow, men, women, and children take to the streets in celebration. Catalan flags are proudly waved, as a massive *estelada* hangs from the Arc de Triomf, the entrance to *La Ciutadella*. There are some somber events, such as those at *Fossar de les Moreres*, where politicians give speeches to the bravery and sacrifice of those killed defending the city, and lay flowered wreaths on top of their symbolic grave. There are also less historically specific events that take place, that are more focused on celebrating Catalan culture and identity. In some plazas, *castellers* are built on this day. More than just the common human towers, this is a uniquely Catalan sport dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>85</sup> Requiring strength, balance, coordination, and above all, bravery, the building of a *casteller* embraces the cooperation of men, women, and children and years of practice. *Castellers* are built to the tune of a *gralla*, a type of wooden Catalan flute. Unesco declared *castellers* a World Heritage in 2010, seen by many Catalans as international validation of a uniquely Catalan practice.<sup>86</sup> *La Diada* a day of excitement and positivity. It is a celebration of reclaiming the rights and culture lost at the end of the War of Spanish Succession, more than it is a remembrance of those lost.

*La Diada* has become the most important day of the year for independentists. It is a day that celebrates Catalan history and identity, and those advocating for independence, have

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<sup>84</sup> Loucaides, D. "This Year's National Day of Catalonia..."

<sup>85</sup> Los 'castells', Patrimonio de la Humanidad. (2010, November 16). Retrieved June 29, 2017 from [http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2010/11/16/actualidad/1289862002\\_850215.html](http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2010/11/16/actualidad/1289862002_850215.html).

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

attached political significance to it. Aside from the wreath laying and the *castellers*, *La Diada* is now best known for the massive independence political demonstration that takes place on this day. The first demonstration in 2012 drew between 600,000 and 1.5 million people, all advocating for independence. Writer Liz Castro describes this as a “true grassroots movement,” led by Catalans “frustrated with political infighting” and insistent “on having their say in their own political future.”<sup>87</sup> These demonstrations are not an outright demand for Catalan independence, however. Independentists recognize that this is too radical of a position and would immediately be condemned, just as Lliga de Catalunya lost support in the 19<sup>th</sup> century because of their pro-independence stance. Instead, independentists advocate for the right to vote. In 2014, at 17:14 on *La Diada*, the crowd slowly coalesced into a massive red and yellow-clad “V”.<sup>88</sup> In 2015 a massive yellow “V” was carried through the crowd, down the major avenues to the Arc de Triomf, and in 2016, cards were distributed to protestors in order to form a mosaic.<sup>89</sup>

The “V” in this instance stands for “vota,” showing the independentists’ desire to hold a referendum vote. By doing so, independentists have repackaged the political issue. Instead of making it about independence, they have made it about democratic rights. Catalans want the right to vote. Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy has denounced any sort of referendum as unconstitutional, which is equally supported by the Spanish Constitutional Court.<sup>90</sup> Efforts to hold a Catalan referendum go as high as Catalan President Carles Puigdemont, who in a letter to

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<sup>87</sup> La Diada: Why are Catalans marching for independence? (2016, September 10). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <https://www.thelocal.es/20160910/diada-why-are-catalans-marching-independence-from-spain>.

<sup>88</sup> Loucaides, D. “This Year's National Day of Catalonia...”

<sup>89</sup> Guía de la Diada 2016 de la ANC: tramos, cómo apuntarse y camiseta. (2016, September 06). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/politica/anc-diada-2016-5363155>.

<sup>90</sup> Pous, L. (2017, May 25). Rajoy's answer to Catalonia: referendum negotiation "impossible". Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.catalannewsagency.com/politics/item/rajoy-s-answer-to-catalonia-referendum-negotiation-impossible>.

Prime Minister Rajoy described how “the Catalan Government has expressed its utmost willingness to find a political and negotiated solution to the demands of the Catalan people to decide their own future.”<sup>91</sup> The issue is now no longer one of independence, but political rights. Independentists have galvanized Catalans into believing that the Spanish government is taking away their democratic rights, just as the Bourbons did in 1714.

The War of Spanish Succession is well remembered and celebrated throughout Catalonia as the loss of Catalan independence, even if it was just the loss of their autonomy. It is true that the Bourbons were excessively cruel towards the Catalans and the Nueva Planta Decrees did away with their cultural sovereignty. Today, the war and 1714 are remembered for these reasons through monuments, popular culture, and *La Diada*. In more recent years, the war has been used to justify claims for independence as independentists argue that this was unfairly lost in 1714. As the next chapter will show as well, 1714 is not the only time Catalans lost rights. When General Francisco Franco became dictator of Spain in 1939, he implemented the same kind of oppressive policies all over Spain, with particular disdain for the Catalans as well. Independentists have since compared Franco’s rule to that of the Bourbons, while also noting some very important distinctions.

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 4 – Rise of a Dictator

During General Francisco Franco's dictatorship, Catalans who were calling for more political and cultural autonomy were brutally oppressed. The memory of Franco's rule and of its brutal persecution remains an important reference point for the Catalan independence movement today. Leading Catalan independentists argue that Franco created a cultural wedge between Catalans and the rest of Spain, in order to maintain his rule. The Spanish Civil War and the failure to commemorate that war are seen by independentists as proof that Catalans are not welcome in Spain. They place the war in the greater context of Franco's rule and oppression of Catalans, arguing that decades of oppression cause too much conflict between Catalonia and the rest of Spain today.

### **Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)**

The Spanish Civil War is remembered by the Catalans as a singular event, and the failure by the Spanish government to appropriately commemorate is seen as evidence by independentists that they are not a part of Spain. The war was fought between 1936 and 1939 as General Francisco Franco led a military coup against the Second Spanish Republic. Franco fought to end democracy in Spain and crush Catalonia's autonomy, which had been implemented following the creation of the Spanish republic in 1931. Waging totalitarianism against socialism, the Spanish Civil War was not just about political power, but cultural identity as well. At the outbreak of the war, Spain quickly divided along long-standing geopolitical lines, very similar to those of the War of Spanish Succession in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Again, Catalans found themselves

fighting not just for their political freedom, but cultural freedom as well, and they were willing to give everything to preserve it.<sup>92</sup>

The war began as a military coup on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1936, with the military initially occupying about a third of the country. Their conservative roots gave them strength in the northern and central countryside, while they struggled to gain traction in urban and industrial areas, like Catalonia. Sticking to their conservative roots, the 'Nationalist' rebel group drew support from the Catholic Church. The 'Republican' group was initially the existing democratic government, but also included anarchists, socialists, and communists. The immediate breakdown of the democratic government did not allow them to coalesce into a single political group, which severely hurt military efforts as they fought a unified and well-supported Nationalist military. It was not until September of 1936, over a month after the war began, that the Popular Front government, led by Prime Minister Francisco Largo Caballero, was formed to combat the rebels. This initial political vacuum allowed communist revolutionaries to advance their own agenda. Initially, socialist forces prevailed as the political voice of the Republican group and the ability to form a functioning military gave the communists tremendous power. Through Soviet support, communists were able to form an army of nearly 50,000 people, known as the International Brigades.

While the Republican groups struggled to find an identity, the Nationalists were certain in theirs. They stuck to the conservative Spanish principles of Catholicism, superiority of the Castilian language, and the absolute rule of a monarch. As they were a military faction, a young general by the name of Francisco Franco rose to the top of the newly founded National Defense Committee and he immediately set about consolidating Nationalist power through the use of the

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<sup>92</sup> Esenwein, George, "The Spanish Civil War", in José Álvarez Junco and Adrian Shubert, *Spain History since 1808*, London: Arnold, pg. 238.

military.<sup>93</sup> Franco's military benefitted greatly from support of Mussolini and Hitler. The German and Italian regimes provided munitions and supplies to Franco along with air support. By establishing air dominance, Franco could direct German and Italian aircraft to inflict terror on cities around Spain. Pablo Picasso's famous painting *Guernica* depicts the horrific bombing of the defenseless city in the Basque region by the German air force. The Republicans relied on of small local militia forces. The ultimate goal of the Nationalists was capturing Madrid and seizing political power, but as the Republicans thwarted an early attack on the capital, Franco turned his attention towards taking the rest of the nation.<sup>94</sup>

### **Revolution in Barcelona**

Franco's victory marked the end of democracy in Spain and the end of autonomy for Catalonia. Independentists blame Franco and the Nationalists for the loss of the Generalitat and claim that independence is justified because Franco never respected Catalan autonomy. In reality however, the Catalans ended the Generalitat themselves during a communist revolution in Barcelona. Led by militant communists and anarchists in the city, the working class overthrew the wealthy business class in Barcelona in order to create an independent communist state beginning in 1936. The social divide between a blooming upper class and a struggling working class developed during the Industrial Revolution in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Class differences were compounded by political changes at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>95</sup> The Spanish-American War of 1898 destroyed the once great Spanish Empire, and the financial

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., pg. 241.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., pg. 249.

<sup>95</sup> Seidman, M. (1982). Work and Revolution: Workers' Control in Barcelona in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-38. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 17(3), pg. 411.

burden of the war strained the relationship between the Crown and its subjects. Uprisings in Spanish Morocco throughout the 1910s and 1920s culminated in the rise of Spain's first dictator, General Miguel Primo de Rivera. The Great Depression at the end of the 1920s forced Spanish King Alfonso XIII to remove Primo de Rivera as the country slid back into bankruptcy and poverty. The revolution was in response to the oppression the working class felt from the upper classes.<sup>96</sup>

Catalans not only rebelled against the upper class, but the lavish conservative lifestyles they expected the political class in Madrid to protect. The origins of the Barcelona revolution can be traced to the Industrial Revolution and the growth of Barcelona's economy as a result of a booming textile industry.<sup>97</sup> An upper class quickly developed in Barcelona, but economic stagnation in the rest of Spain, particularly Castile, hindered their growth.<sup>98</sup> The Catalans also struggled to compete in the international textile market as their means of production simply could not compete with the United States. As a result, the Catalans looked to Madrid to place protective tariffs on their textiles.<sup>99</sup> This "demand ... resulted in a 'pact' at the end of the nineteenth century with conservative agrarian and traditionalist elements of Castile and Andalusia," and so the Catalans were left selling "high-priced textiles to a poor but protected market in which the level of consumption was very low."<sup>100</sup> Outside of the centers of wealth in Spain, the country was desperately poor. It was in these areas, especially central and southern Spain that conservative values flourished, and it was in these areas that Franco found success. In

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., pg. 413.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., pg. 410.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., pg. 410.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., pg. 411.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., pg. 410.

the cities such as Santiago, Valencia, and Barcelona, they held much more liberal ideals, largely due to their relative economic success.

Political splits were not just geographical, but in the case of the Catalans, also social. As large conservative landowners outside of Catalonia backed protective tariffs with wealthy Catalan businessmen, the latter “moved closer to the values of the aristocratic and Catholic centre.”<sup>101</sup> The Catalan upper classes married into the Spanish aristocracy, turned towards faith and the Catholic Church, and began to turn away from their Catalan roots. Even when the Barcelona textile industry profited during World War I, the industrialists lacked social and economic commitment. Instead of reinvesting their profits to modernize their factories, help their work force, and rebuild the port and infrastructure of Barcelona, the elites spent the money on themselves, buying foreign cars and speculating in the German real estate market, or building luxurious houses.<sup>102</sup> Things improved slightly in the 1920s and 1930s while the world economy flourished, but Spain remained an agricultural country, with low literacy rates, little to no technical education, and very poor working conditions.<sup>103</sup>

Wealthy Catalans also made political gains for themselves by advocating for political autonomy from Madrid. The upper classes were the dominant Catalan political voice through the 1920s with one of their great political accomplishments being the establishment of the *Mancomunitat Catalana* (Commonwealth of Catalonia) in 1914, which coordination among Catalonia’s four provinces.<sup>104</sup> Huge advancements in economic organization, education reform, and the promotion of Catalan language and culture were accomplished through the

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., pg. 411.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., pg. 411.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., pg. 413.

<sup>104</sup> Medrano, J. (1994). Patterns of Development and Nationalism: Basque and Catalan Nationalism before the Spanish Civil War. *Theory and Society*, 23(4), pg. 550.

Manocomunitat. Most significantly, for the first time since the end of the War of Spanish Succession in 1714, Catalonia was recognized as its four provinces by giving limited administrative authority to a uniquely Catalan group. Members of the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia were the main benefactors of the Manocomunitat. The working classes cared little for the advancement of Catalan poetry while they remained illiterate. By the 1930s, when the anarchist *Confederación Nacional de Trabajo* (CNT) took political control, they were more focused on addressing the industrial issues that plagued Catalonia and less on the cultural cultivation.<sup>105</sup>

On July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1936, the Barcelona revolution began CNT militants defeated the rebel military in Barcelona, shot the local general, forced many citizens of Barcelona out of the city, and took control of the government and police.<sup>106</sup> The CNT, along with the *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT) seized and collectivized industries and businesses, and voted in their own councils.<sup>107</sup> The goals of the CNT and UGT were to organize labor and create a communist society.<sup>108</sup> They recognized the failures of the middle class in modernizing technology and improving infrastructure, which left them desperately outmatched on the global economic market, and blamed a failing political apparatus for not addressing their social needs.<sup>109</sup> “The unions made it clear that the workers had to build a new society based on work” and rejected art and science, which they saw byproducts of capitalism.<sup>110</sup> “We want to make a new society in which work and worker will be everything,” a UGT coal miner’s journal stated.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., pg. 550.

<sup>106</sup> Seidman, M. “Work and Revolution: Workers’ Control...” pg. 416.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., pg. 416.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., pg. 417.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., pg. 415.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., pg. 428.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., pg. 428.

Revolutionary spirit filled air. When the British writer George Orwell reached Barcelona in 1936, he remarked on “the red flags in Barcelona, the gaunt trains full of shabby soldiers creeping to the front, the grey war-stricken towns farther up the line, the muddy, ice-cold trenches in the mountains.”<sup>112</sup> The “working class was in the saddle” and had seized nearly all the buildings, cars, and land.<sup>113</sup> The people themselves were eager to accept these changes. Everyone was treated and talked to as an equal. The formal “Señor” and “Don” were replaced with “Comrade,” and tipping, for example, was outlawed.<sup>114</sup> Orwell reflects on the state of things with disdain, but as an outsider is nonetheless overwhelmed with the sensation that this was something “worth fighting for.”<sup>115</sup> Throughout the city, militant communists seized businesses and government offices and pushed out members of the economic and political ruling class. They collectivized these industries, and when the Franco offensive of Catalonia began, they were the ones to organize militarily. The communists pooled their resources and inspired Catalans to dig air raid shelters, fight on the front lines, and not give in to Franco.

Independenstists like to remember these revolutionaries for their valiant defiance of Franco and defense of Catalonia. But what most independentists fail to recognize is that the Catalan revolutionaries in were not fighting for a free Catalonia. They were the ones who also revolted against the democratic system and seized power from the Generalitat. The communists were not fighting for a democratic Catalonia, but a communist one. The Catalan revolutionaries went against the democratic principles that the Generalitat established as they seized control of industry and businesses. For example, today many independentists celebrate the Manocunitat

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<sup>112</sup> Orwell, G. “Homage to Catalonia” pg. 2.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., pg. 2.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., pg. 2.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., pg. 3.

as a major political achievement for the Catalan cause, but at the time, these revolutionaries rejected it because it advanced the agendas of the upper classes.

## **Remembrance of the Spanish Civil War**

Even though the communists mainly were the organizers of the war efforts against Franco, every Catalan, including the women and children, fought to defend their home. Therefore, commemoration of this war is extremely important for the Catalans, who already hold the War of Spanish Succession and 1714 in such high regard. While that war and 1714 has a collective Catalan national identity however, the Spanish Civil War does not. This issue is compounded by the fact that the Civil War literally pitted Catalans against their Spanish countrymen, and many Spaniards all over the country either lived through the war, or lost close family members that their parents and grandparents told them about as children. One of the Spanish government's great failures is that they have failed to effectively commemorate the civil war. Both Franco's government and the current republican government have not addressed emotional wounds on both sides. After the war there needed to be a culturally significant commemoration of the war that respected those that fought the fascists, like the Catalans, while welcoming them back into Spain. This never happened. The failure to commemorate the Spanish Civil War has driven a wedge between Catalans and the rest of Spain, while also causing resentment towards the Spanish government.

Even to this day, the national remembrance of the Spanish Civil War is a delicate subject. Now 80 years ago, the country still struggles to appropriately commemorate and remember the

war, marked by the fact that there still does not exist a truly nonpartisan national memorial.<sup>116</sup>

For so many who lost family and loved ones both during the war and during Franco's rule, this is a daily reminder of the differences that exist between Catalans and the rest of Spain.<sup>117</sup> The war, and the taboo surrounding it, still occupies large swaths of Spanish pop culture.<sup>118</sup> Books, movies, and songs speak to the national tragedy and embarrassment of the war and how the government has failed to honor those lost during the war.<sup>119</sup>

This is not to say that there are no relics and reminders of the war in Barcelona. Many buildings still bear the scars of aerial bombings, of which there were nearly 200 during the war.<sup>120</sup> For nearly two years, the city lay prone to aerial assault, with very little military defense, truly exposing all citizens to the cruelty of war. In response, Barcelona citizens established the Passive Defense Board, which mobilized people to construct nearly 1,400 air shelter bunkers.<sup>121</sup> Josep Roig, an eyewitness at the time was quoted as saying, "it was a general and fast phenomenon. In four days, we built 1,200 shelters!"<sup>122</sup> These shelters still stand today. One of the most notable and famous of these is Refugi 307. Built into the base of the mountain Montjuïc, 400 meters of tunnel measuring just 1.6 meters wide and 2 meters high, complete with water fountains, toilets, and even a fire place, Refugi 307 served as a shelter for thousands of the

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<sup>116</sup> Coman, J. (2016, May 29). Eighty years on, Spain may at last be able to confront the ghosts of civil war. Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/29/national-museum-spanish-civil-war-barcelona>.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Aychaudhuri, A. (Ed.). (2013). *The Spanish Civil War: Exhuming a Buried Past*. University of Wales Press, pg. 159.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., pg. 160.

<sup>120</sup> MUHBA - Refugi 307 - Visit Barcelona. (n.d.). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.barcelonaturisme.com/wv3/en/page/760/muhba-refugi-307.html>.

<sup>121</sup> Pennell, H. (2008, March 01). When the bombs fell. Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.barcelona-metropolitan.com/in-the-city/when-the-bombs-fell/>.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

citizens of Poble Sec.<sup>123</sup> The shelter is still accessible today, and serves as a sobering reminder of the cruelty of war, while also standing as testament to the bravery and resolve of the Barcelona people to survive.

While Refugi 307 is a source of Catalan pride and survival, there are still places in Barcelona that bring back haunting memories. Located right on Via Laietana, the main downtown avenue in Barcelona, is the modern-day federal police headquarters. It is an unassuming building that does not warrant a second glance on a street with so much glorious architecture, yet for years the building was a Franco outpost where those who were outspoken of the dictator were brought, and often never seen again. As one online review of the building reads: “A shame – a headquarters where a few years ago gays and those who did not think as they did were abused and tortured”.<sup>124</sup> Written in 2016, the review demonstrates just how contentious and prevalent Franco’s legacy is today.

The largest national monument to the Spanish Civil War however can be found a short drive outside of Madrid. The Valle de los Caídos, or Valley of the Fallen, is a massive monument, built under Franco’s orders in 1940 and completed in 1958 largely through the labor of prisoners of war, complete with a 150-meter high granite cross on top.<sup>125</sup> The monument itself intended to commemorate all those who died on both sides during the Spanish Civil War, with nearly 40,000 soldiers, both Nationalist and Republican, buried there along with Franco

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<sup>123</sup> MUHBA – Refugi 307.

<sup>124</sup> Only Oficial. (2016, August). Re: Jefatura Superior de Policía de Cataluña [Web log comment]. Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <https://goo.gl/maps/fEcGgVEAjtD2>.

<sup>125</sup> Hedgecoe, G. (2015, March 31). Controversy over monument to fascism’s fallen. Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/controversy-over-monument-to-fascism-s-fallen-1.2160494>.

himself.<sup>126</sup> The project was to create “a place of rest and mediation to perpetuate the memory of those who have fallen in our glorious Crusade,” Franco said of the monument in 1940.<sup>127</sup>

But the monument is not just to remember those lost, and this haunts all those who fought against Franco. Valle de los Caídos is also a testament to Franco’s power. On the opening day of the monument, the 20<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the end of the war, Franco declared, “our victory was not a partial one, but a total victory, one for everybody.”<sup>128</sup> This has led to tremendous controversy regarding the monument. “It’s a hot potato for any government, regardless of political stripe,” Pablo Linares, President of the Association for the Defense of the Valley of the Fallen said, “and is one that is far from over.”<sup>129</sup> This is because for Catalans like Alfons Vázquez Obiols, Valle de los Caídos is not just a political talking point; it is humiliating and disrespectful. “That place is a scandal. It’s simply a fascist memorial. It’s unacceptable,” he says of the monument.<sup>130</sup> Manuel Boehm, a young German student recognizes its connection to fascism, hypothetically equating it to a monument to Hitler in his native Germany.<sup>131</sup> This is because the monument, and all other tributes to Franco and his Nationalist party were by their very nature anti-Catalan. Franco recognized the deep political and social divisions in Spain, and rather than heal them, he tried to force them together through violence and oppression. During the early years of Franco’s rule, as Valle de Los Caídos was being constructed, there were more monuments being placed all over Spain. Along with the physical destruction of their political

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<sup>126</sup> The Valley of the Fallen. (n.d.). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.feelmadrid.com/valleyofthefallen.html>.

<sup>127</sup> León, P., Alvarez, C., García, B., & Álvarez, C. (2015, January 23). The Valley of the Fallen - the problem that won't go away. Retrieved June 29, 2017, from [http://elpais.com/elpais/2015/01/16/inenglish/1421412080\\_290015.html](http://elpais.com/elpais/2015/01/16/inenglish/1421412080_290015.html).

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Coman, J. “Eighty years on...”

<sup>131</sup> Hedgecoe, G. “Controversy over monument...”

enemies, their purpose was to create a “cultura del olvido,” a “culture of forgetfulness,” when it came to the Republicans and their political legacy. Franco forcibly tried to create a unified Spanish nationalism, focused on the conservative principles the fascists fought for, which did not allow for sub-nationalities like the Catalans. Rather than pay tribute to his fallen Spanish brothers, Franco’s regime left thousands of bodies in unmarked mass graves, which still dot the Spanish countryside today.

Valle de Los Caídos serves as a physical reminder of the devastation of the Spanish Civil War. The war took a tremendous physical and emotional toll on all Spaniards, but was particularly difficult to the Catalans who endured months of siege and air raids. Their stories of bravery and heroism are still not widely acknowledged in Spain because there are no monuments dedicated to them. This makes Catalans feel ostracized from Spain and ashamed of their recent history. Independentists use this as justification for an independent Catalonia. They argue that they are not culturally or politically welcomed into Spain, so should not be a part of it.

### **Franco’s Early Years**

Valle de Los Caídos gives some insight into the kind of ruler Franco was, and what his rule meant to the Catalans. Franco’s dictatorship was a long 36-year time period that meant different things for different people. As a whole Catalans were persecuted, their civil liberties lost and their culture outlawed. These restrictive policies were often harshly enforced through violence and torture. Many Catalans remember this time period, and if they were not the victims of Franco themselves, they all knew someone who was. This is important for the independentists because so many people remember this dark time in Spanish history, and similar to the Spanish

Civil War, this time period lacks closure. As the independenstists argue, Franco was never removed from power. He simply died in 1975, and the government today is a remnant of Franco, and the Spanish Constitution embraces many elements of Franco's ideology.

As a ruler, Franco was everything a totalitarian dictator strives to be. Franco ruled with an iron fist, but he was dynamic and savvy enough to understand that compromises needed to be made. At first Franco embraced Hitler and Mussolini, only to shake hands with U.S. President Eisenhower on the same airfield he shook hands with Hitler. At home he pursued a hard line against Catalans and other national minorities. Catalan language and culture was outlawed, and Franco appointees filled positions left vacant after the dissolution of local governments and the imprisonment, torture, and killing of dissenting politicians. Franco attempted to unite the country through a common culture and identity, even if by force. Madrid would be the crown jewel of the country, with the other cities and states working to support the capital. Independentists look to Franco's rule and oppression as justification for independence, particularly because they argue that Franco's legacy continues today.

Franco's rule can be examined through the Spanish Law of Succession. "Vote in" on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1947, the Spanish Law of Succession appointed Franco the Chief of State of the Spanish Kingdom, and constituted Spain "a Catholic, social, and representative state," and gave Franco the power to appoint any successor.<sup>132</sup> The law and the vote demonstrated Franco's "complete grip on the government and all its agencies."<sup>133</sup> The law passed with 80% approval rating. Even in Barcelona, 548,215 voted in favor of the law, out of 699,081 votes cast.<sup>134</sup> This was the only option for Spaniards as the only way to dispose of Franco and the Falangists was through another

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<sup>132</sup> Franco's Law of Succession Endorsed By Spanish Vote. (1947, July 7). *The Stanford Daily*.

<sup>133</sup> Brewer, S. P. (1945, July 27). Franco Gains In Strength - But Not in Popularity: Internally, His Grip Has Never Been Stronger, But His Regime Is Ostracized Abroad. *The New York Times*.

<sup>134</sup> España se constuye en Reino católico, social y representativo. (1947, July 8). *La Vanguardia*.

bloody war that no one had the appetite for.<sup>135</sup> There were still those who dissented however. In the Basque Country, there were reports of “incidents” on the day of the vote, and in Madrid, fliers were distributed urging workers to vote down “Franco’s tyrannical maneuver.”<sup>136</sup> But overall, the people of Spain wearied of war and political uncertainty. This law, for better or worse, gave Spaniards security and ease in knowing that there was a legal framework for appointing a next ruler, even if it meant doing away with democracy.<sup>137</sup>

The vote on the Law of Spanish Succession demonstrated and solidified Franco’s power. In order to effectively enforce this power, Franco relied on violence and terror directed at the Catalans. Alfredo González-Ruibal describes Spain as “an immense prison” between 1936 and 1952.<sup>138</sup> Over this time period, nearly half a million people were sent to concentration camps set up by Franco to punish political opponents, with thousands dying in in the camps.<sup>139</sup> They were used not only to silence political prisoners, but discipline and punish them as well. Particularly after the war, prisoners were used for public works projects such building bridges, roads, and railroads, while also being rented out to businesses.<sup>140</sup> “Political prisoners made for extremely good workers,” writes González-Ruibal, “because the reduction of their sentence depended on it, as did their relatives’ survival.”<sup>141</sup> 20 to 30 year prison sentences were issued for crimes such as “supporting the rebellion,” being a “member of the Young Socialists,” “member of the General Union of Workers,” “deputy mayor [with the leftist Popular Front],” “pilot of the Republican air force trained in Russia,” “member of the local revolutionary committee,” or simply supporting

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<sup>135</sup> Brewer, S, P. “Franco Gains In Strength...”

<sup>136</sup> The Stanford Daily. “Franco’s Law of Succession Endorsed By Spanish Vote”

<sup>137</sup> La Vanguardia. “España se constuye en Reino católico, social y representativo”

<sup>138</sup> González-Ruibal, A. (2011). The Archaeology of Internment in Francoist Spain (1936–1952). *Archaeologies of Internment*, 53. doi:10.1007/978-1-4419-9666-4\_4.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 53.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 57.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 57.

the existing Republican government at the outbreak of Franco's coup.<sup>142</sup> These crimes and sentences were particularly poignant in Barcelona because of the nature of their communist revolution. It was not just the men that fought against the Nationalists, but women and children as well. Even those in the middle and upper classes who were not sympathetic to the communist revolution were forced to participate in the revolution in fear of retribution from the new ruling party. Therefore, nearly everyone in Catalonia was at the mercy of Franco's rule.

Life was nightmarish inside the prisons. Miguel Garcia, a Barcelona resistance fighter captured when the city fell in 1939, was held in Barcelona's Cellular Prison.<sup>143</sup> Built to hold only 1,000 people, nearly 16,000 were imprisoned there, with fourteen to sixteen people occupying the same sleeping and sanitary space made for one.<sup>144</sup> Garcia wrote about his experience, describing how Franco's totalitarian power allowed him to get away with such inhumane treatment: "When we lost the war, those who fought on became the Resistance. But to the world, the Resistance had become criminals, for Franco made the laws, even if, when dealing with political opponents, he chose to break the laws established by the constitution; and the world still regards us as criminals. When we are imprisoned, liberals are not interested, for we are 'terrorists.'"<sup>145</sup>

Garcia was one of the lucky ones, leaving prison in 1952 after a commuted sentence.<sup>146</sup> Many of his friends did not survive. The morning after he was released from prison, many of Garcia's friends were marched to the *cuarta* to face a firing squad and were executed. This story was all too common for enemies of Franco. After the war, Franco executed nearly 50,000

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., pg. 57.

<sup>143</sup> Christie, S. (2003). *General Franco made me a 'terrorist': the Christie file*. Hastings, East Sussex: S. Christie. pg. 157.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., pg. 157.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., pg. 157.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., pg. 157.

people.<sup>147</sup> 20,000 of these were killed immediately following the war by firing squad.<sup>148</sup> Death and imprisonment were not the only tools of oppression used by Franco however. Women were particularly terrorized by Franco's troops, who engaged in gang rapes and murder of women.<sup>149</sup> Troops branded the Falangist symbol on the breasts of women, or would force-feed them a powerful laxative, shave their heads, and make them parade through the streets while soiling themselves.<sup>150</sup> In Toledo, there were reports of troops executing 20 pregnant women from a hospital's maternity ward. One of Franco's senior general declared, "It is necessary to spread terror. We have to create the impression of mastery, eliminating without scruples of hesitation all those who do not think as we do."<sup>151</sup>

The independentists have had to do little to remind Catalans of the oppression they faced under Franco. This was unequivocally a dark time for Catalans in which they had their civil rights and liberties taken away, and unjust laws enforced harshly. It was not constant oppression and certainly eased up in Franco's later years, but even in 1966 students were still being arrested as political opponents of Franco. By the 1960s however, the political climate had changed, and Catalans could dissent more openly. That still did not change the fact that the Catalans faced decades of political violence and oppression at the hands of Franco. Today, independentists promote the use of the Catalan language because it was outlawed under Franco. This message resonates with many Catalans, to the point where they feel like they are more Catalan than they are Spanish. This is a big step for independentists as they make the argument that Catalans

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<sup>147</sup> Spanish Civil War. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10008214>.

<sup>148</sup> Hochschild, A. (2012, May 12). Process of Extermination. Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/13/books/review/the-spanish-holocaust-by-paul-preston.html>.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

culturally differ from the rest of Spain. They point to the harsh treatment the Catalans by Franco and his followers, and point to the lack of commemoration of the Spanish Civil War as proof that they are not welcomed in Spanish society. The Franco era allows independentists to make case for independence rather than autonomy because Spain is still influenced by Francoist ideology. What the independentists do not make clear however, is that Catalans were not the only group persecuted by Franco. The Basques and the Galicians also faced oppression not to mention many Spaniards who opposed his rule for political reasons. Given the independentists' line of reasoning, Basques and the Galicians could make a similar claim for independence.

## **Chapter 5 – Democracy Restored**

Perhaps the most difficult obstacle for independentists to overcome in gaining support for their cause is the fact that since 1978 Spain has been a democracy. The days of oppressive rule from the Bourbons or Franco appear to be long gone, and the loss of cultural and political rights experienced during these time periods is now outlawed by the Spanish constitution. Catalonia also had its Generalitat and autonomy restored in 1979, but independentists argue that neither the Spanish constitution nor the Statute of Autonomy go far enough in protecting Catalans. Independentists claim that Spain's democracy is influenced by Francoist ideology and does not allow for enough Catalan autonomy. As explained in the third chapter however, independentists are asking for the right to hold an independence referendum, and they portray Madrid's refusal to capitulate as an act of political oppression.

### **The Spanish Constitution**

For the independentists, the 1978 Spanish constitution is the largest obstacle they must overcome in achieving independence for Catalonia. Understanding the history behind it, as well as the contents of the document itself, reveal why independentists refuse to accept the constitution.

The constitution is progressive in regard to social rights. It preserves a large number of civil and personal liberties, and guarantees democracy in Spain. In its preamble alone, the Spanish constitution establishes “justice, liberty, and security,” and guarantees “democratic

coexistence.” The constitution also defends trade unions and employers’ associations as defending and promoting economic and social interests.<sup>152</sup> Like political parties, which are also guaranteed in the constitution, they must be democratic in organization and conduct, further promoting the constitutions’ commitment to democracy. The constitution recognizes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the guideline to “fundamental rights and liberties.”<sup>153</sup> It also guarantees equality, “Spaniards are equal before the law and may not in any way be discriminated against on account of birth, race, sex, religion, opinion, or any other personal or social condition or circumstance.”<sup>154</sup> The constitution goes on to list a wide number of “fundamental rights and public liberties”, including, freedom of worship, criminal rights, petition, peaceable assembly, and education, to name a few.<sup>155</sup> The Spanish constitution also protects the “rights and duties of citizens” such as rights to private property, healthcare, fair taxation, marriage and divorce, and the right to work and organize labor.<sup>156</sup>

In addition, the constitution addresses national identity, culture, and political autonomy. Written into the preamble, the constitution protects all Spaniards in their exercise “of their culture and traditions, languages and institutions.” While Castilian is declared as the official language of Spain, “the other Spanish languages shall also be official in the respective Self-governing Communities in accordance with their Statutes. ... The wealth of the different linguistic forms of Spain [as] a cultural heritage which shall be especially respected and protected.”<sup>157</sup> National flags, like the Catalan red and yellow striped flag, are allowed in public

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<sup>152</sup> Constitution of Spain § 7.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid*, § 10.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid*, § 14.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid* § 16.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid* § 20.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid* § 3.

places and for official ceremony.<sup>158</sup> This respect towards regional culture and heritage, and the commitment towards protection of regional languages represent a significant departure from Franco's totalitarian policies.

The constitution defines the process of creating and maintaining self-governing communities, or Comunidades Autónomas. Breaking from Franco's unitary policy of centralized government answering to Madrid, Chapter 3 of the Spanish constitution allows for the creation of regional provinces "with common historical, cultural and economic characteristics, insular territories and provinces with a historical regional status may accede to self-government."<sup>159</sup> Today, Spain is made up of 17 of these communities, one is Catalonia. Under the constitution, these communities are given considerable autonomy when it comes to regulations of local matters. Self-governing Communities have the right to regulate their own housing and zoning laws, control their ports and harbors, regulate their roads and railways, and their own economies.<sup>160</sup> Comunidades Autónomas also safeguard cultural life: fairs, cultivation of museums, libraries, and music, construction of monuments, teaching of their community's language, and the promotion of sport.<sup>161</sup> Self-governing Communities still answer to the Cortes General, the Spanish Parliament, and the Constitutional Court however.

The constitution was ratified by popular vote on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1978. Over 88% of Spaniards supported the new constitution. This number was even higher in Catalonia, where 91% of the population voted in favor.<sup>162</sup> Spaniards were voting for a new hope on that day, with

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., § 4.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., § 143.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., § 148.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., § 148.

<sup>162</sup> España, Gobierno de España, Ministerio del Interior. (n.d.). *Consulta de Resultados Electorales Referéndum Diciembre 1978*. Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.infoelectoral.mir.es/infoelectoral/min/busquedaAvanzadaAction.html>.

an estimated 70% of the population turning out to vote.<sup>163</sup> “Tranquility and civility characterized the day,” *La Vanguardia* wrote, but more than that, there was also a sense of security and calm. The army, which was still very much loyal to Franco, accepted the outcome of the vote, and any suspected terrorism coming from the northern part of the country was nonexistent.<sup>164</sup> The country, it seemed, was finally at peace.

### Criticism of the Constitution

While the nation seemed to overwhelmingly support the constitution, there were notable critics. In the Basque Country only 70% of the voters supported the constitution;<sup>165</sup> an overwhelming majority, but much smaller than the national average. In Catalonia at this time, a small group of militant independence seekers noted that the constitution made the possibility of complete independence impossible.<sup>166</sup> Known as the *Comité Catalá Contra la Constitució Espanyola*, the committee gained momentum between the vote on the constitution and the passage of the statute of autonomy because of their anti-constitution stance.<sup>167</sup> They looked to Section 2 of the constitution, which states that while regions may have their own governance, all Spaniards are part of an indivisible homeland as restrictive. These independentists saw the

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<sup>163</sup> La Constitución, aprobada. (1978, December 7). *La Vanguardia*. Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://hemeroteca.lavanguardia.com/preview/1978/12/07/pagina-1/33751686/pdf.html>.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Gobierno de España. “Consulta de Resultados...”

<sup>166</sup> Lluch, J. (2014). *Visions of Sovereignty: Nationalism and Accommodation in Multinational Democracies*. University of Pennsylvania Press. pg. 50.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 53.

constitution as merely a continuation of Franco's oppression, as the King retained the throne, the military still held considerable power, and Francoist institutions were left in place.<sup>168</sup>

Those opposed to the constitution felt this way because of the circumstances regarding the creation of the constitution. Franco was never removed from power. He passed away on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1975 after 36 years of uninterrupted rule, and per the Law of Spanish Succession, only he was allowed to appoint a successor. There was much worry and anxiety at the time of Franco's death because no one was sure of the political future of the country.<sup>169</sup> On the day of Franco's passing, *La Vanguardia* headlined: "Spain At a Political Crossroads."<sup>170</sup> The death of Franco meant the "beginning of a distinct time and a new era", but what that time and era was to be was still unclear.<sup>171</sup> The only certainty was that Juan Carlos I was now the King of Spain.

As grandson of Alfonso XIII, the King of Spain before the birth of the Second Spanish Republic in 1931, Juan Carlos was appointed King of Spain by Franco, yet his political role was still in question. This concerned those seeking political reform, because Franco took great measures to ensure the longevity of his political legacy before his death. He declared, "Everything is tied up, and well tied up," referring to the political apparatus he created.<sup>172</sup> The army was still very much in control, and Franco appointees still held powerful political positions. For example Aldofo Suarez, Franco's Minister Secretary General was appointed Head of State, and with Juan Carlos was responsible for the democratization of Spain.

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid., pg. 53.

<sup>169</sup> Encrucijada Decisiva Para España Francisco Franco ha Muerto. (1975, November 20). *La Vanguardia*. Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://hemeroteca.lavanguardia.com/preview/1975/11/20/pagina-1/34198366/pdf.html>.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> The Spanish Transition to Democracy. (n.d.). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <https://tavaana.org/en/content/spanish-transition-democracy>.

This raised red flags with independentists. The *Comité Catalá Contra la Constitució Espanyola* worried whether the constitution could withstand political opposition from Franco's supporters. These fears were at least partially alleviated when Miquel Roca Junyent, a Catalan, was one of the seven men appointed to draft the constitution. Roca was born in Barcelona right at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and grew up as a proud Catalan during Franco's rule. As a law student in the early 1960s, Roca was politically active in his fight against Franco as a member of the Workers' Front of Catalonia. He became a law professor at the University of Barcelona only to be fired in 1966 for his connections to the Democratic Student Union.<sup>173</sup> In 1974, Roca was among those who founded *Convergencia Democrática de Cataluña* (CDC), Catalonia's democratic political party led by Jordi Pujol. Roca went on to win a seat in the 1977 Spanish general elections as a representative of Catalonia before being selected as one of the seven Spanish Founding Fathers.<sup>174</sup>

Roca worked hard with the six other committee members to draft a constitution that supported all Spaniards. Even though nationalist groups in Catalonia and the Basque Country opposed the constitution for not going far enough, an overwhelming majority of Spaniards supported it while Catalan independence was still regarded as a radical idea. *Bloc d'Esquerra d'Alliberament Nacional* (BEAN) was formed as a Catalan independence party in time for the March 1979 elections, but only received 46,800 votes, while the victors of the election received 754,000 votes.<sup>175</sup>

Independentists parties like BEAN emerged as not just anti-constitution parties, but were also vocal in their disdain for the purposed Catalan Statute of Autonomy, organizing “a

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<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> Miquel Roca i Junyent. (n.d.). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from [http://www.biografiasyvidas.com/biografia/r/roca\\_i\\_junyent.htm](http://www.biografiasyvidas.com/biografia/r/roca_i_junyent.htm).

<sup>175</sup> Lluch, J. “Visions of Sovereignty...” pg. 54.

considerable sector of the independentists” to protest the proposed statute of autonomy during La Diada in 1979.<sup>176</sup> They saw the statute as a document drafted with Spanish interests in mind, and not Catalan, because the Catalan government at the time was made up of large national Spanish parties. Unión de Centro Democrático (UCD) and Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE), were large Spanish political parties that succeeded not only in Spanish general politics, but early Catalan politics as well.<sup>177</sup> In the 1977 elections, PSOE teamed up with Partit Socialista de Catalunya (PSC) to win 880,000 votes and fifteen of the forty-seven seats in the Catalan Cortes.<sup>178</sup> “As the leading vote-getters, [PSOE and PSC] could rightfully aspire to a decisive role in the drafting of an Autonomy Statute and in the formation of a provisional regional government.”<sup>179</sup> This presented challenges that the independentists were quick to point out. PSOE had presented itself as a Catalan party during the election of 1977, but simply could not escape the fact that they were still a national Spanish party, that had interests throughout the rest of the country. The statute then, walked a fine line between Catalan pride and respect for the Spanish constitution. The preamble of the Statute of Autonomy begins by declaring, “As part of the process for recovering their democratic freedoms, the people of Catalonia are recovering their institutions of self-government.” However, the statute also states, “This Statute is the expression of the collective identity of Catalonia and defines its institutions and its relations with the Spanish State in the context of free solidarity with the other nationalities and regions. This solidarity is the guarantee of the genuine unity of all the peoples of Spain.” While the statute proudly declares the autonomy and right to self-governance of the Catalan people, it also

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., pg. 53.

<sup>177</sup> Mujal-Leon, E. (1980). Catalanismo, the Left, and the Consolidation of Centrism in Spain. *World Affairs*, 143(3), 298-317 pg. 299. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20671866>.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., pg. 300.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., pg. 299.

recognizes the legitimacy of the Spanish constitution, and acknowledges Section 2 of the constitution is the unity of all Spanish peoples. The Catalan's own statute now made independence legally impossible.

Independents portray the events surrounding the ratification of the constitution and statute of autonomy as working against Catalans. The history shows however that Catalans were given substantial political and cultural autonomy. The constitution and the statute of autonomy allowed Catalans to form their own government and reestablish the Generalitat. Roca also represented Catalan interests while drafting the constitution, allowing for the creation of autonomous communities and the cultural freedoms Catalans now have. Nonetheless, independents still raised concerns over Franco's legacy and what that would mean for Catalans in a newly democratic Spain. In hindsight, it appears that Catalans fit almost seamlessly into Spain aided by an economic boom that coincided with the reemergence of Barcelona as a major international city. For example, in 1992 Barcelona hosted the Summer Olympics, bringing much needed infrastructure renovations, tourism, and international attention to the city. Today, Barcelona tourism accounts for 12% of Catalonia's GDP, indicating that the Catalan capital is one of the most popular destinations for visitors from outside of Spain and Spanish tourists.<sup>180</sup>

### **Movement Towards Independence**

Catalonia's status as an autonomous community was the unquestioned political reality for quite some time. The issue of independence in Catalan politics all but disappeared following the

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<sup>180</sup> Tourism boom in Barcelona: strengthening the economy or troubling local residents? (2014, October 7). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.catalannewsagency.com/life-style/item/tourism-boom-in-barcelona-strengthening-the-economy-or-troubling-local-residents>.

ratification of the Statute of Autonomy in 1979 as *Convergència i Unió* (CiU)—a left-wing, pro-democracy and pro-Catalan party—won the 1980 elections. CiU was anti-independence, mainly because they recognized that the Catalan Statute of Autonomy prohibited it. Nonetheless, CiU won every election in Catalonia for 23 straight years, with CiU founder Jordi Pujol serving as the Catalan president until 2003. Catalonia’s economy continued to expand as Barcelona became not only a tourism hotspot, but as the Spanish leader in industry and commerce. When Spain joined the Eurozone in 1999, Catalonia benefited from the greater price stability and low unemployment. By 2014, Catalonia accounted for 20% of Spain’s entire GDP.<sup>181</sup>

The Catalans not only sought to push their economic luck, but improve their political standing as well. The 2006 Statute of Autonomy pushed the constitutional boundaries of Catalan political and cultural rights. The Spanish conservative party, *Partido Popular* (PP), challenged elements of the statute in the Spanish Constitutional Court, and after four years of deliberation, the Court found over a dozen articles in the statute as unconstitutional. This set off a firestorm in Catalonia as the political defeat was compounded by the harsh economic reality of the time. After decades of economic growth, the 2008 financial crisis left all of Spain in a crisis. Wages dropped as prices and unemployment soared, and to many Catalans it seemed that the arguments of the independentists from the late 1970s were finally being legitimized. The rest of Spain was weighing the Catalans down.

The Court’s ruling went beyond economics however, as nationhood and language were also at the forefront of the Catalan’s legal battle. For example, one of the most contentious issues in the statute, was the use of the word “nation.” “In reflection of the feelings and the

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<sup>181</sup> The Catalan Economy: Crisis, Recovery and Policy Challenges: 145th mBank-CASE Seminar. (2016, October 7). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.case-research.eu/en/the-catalan-economy-crisis-recovery-and-policy-challenges-145th-mbank-case-seminar>.

wishes of the citizens of Catalonia,” the statute reads, “has defined Catalonia as a nation.”<sup>182</sup>

This was a major step for Catalans and the independence movement; an independent nation could not be accomplished without legal recognition of statehood. In their ruling however, the Constitutional Court found a political way around the question of statehood. They recognized the right for Catalonia to be called a nation, because the term held “no legal value.”<sup>183</sup> Basically, the Court told Catalans that they could call themselves whatever they wanted, but that it did not mean anything tangible in terms of their political goals.

The Court was more vindictive in other areas of the statute, particularly when it came to taxation, judicial structure, and language. The statute makes Catalan the “preferential” language of Catalonia, with article 33 spelling out a number of linguistic rights for Catalans, including the right to communicate with government officials in any official language. The statute also grants Catalans the right to communicate with any Spanish “jurisdictional bodies” in Catalan, and mandates that “these institutions shall attend to and process written communications in Catalan.” Article 35 of the statute also mandates the teaching of Catalan in education. Nearly all Catalans know how to speak Catalan, and about half use it in their daily life, but Castilian still remains the dominant language in Catalonia. Nonetheless, the Court struck this part of the statute down, citing it as discriminatory against those who do not speak Catalan, as it “affects the free development of personality.” The Court does not deny the usage of Catalan, however they do

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<sup>182</sup> Catalan Statute of Autonomy, Preamble. 2006.

<sup>183</sup> Madrid, F. G. (2010, June 29). Catalonia can call itself a 'nation', rules Spain's top court. Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/spain/7861118/Catalonia-can-call-itself-a-nation-rules-Spains-top-court.html>.

cite the legal inability for a Statute of Autonomy to monopolize the use of a language, saying, “Statutes cannot impose the official exclusivity of the own language.”<sup>184</sup>

Catalan politicians were furious following the Court’s ruling. José Montilla, the president of Catalonia, expressed his “disappointment and indignation” over the ruling, and called for a full implementation of the original statute. Other leading Catalan politicians joined in. Artur Mas, head of CiU and future president of Catalonia, said that the ruling cuts back the statute’s “vital organs.” Joan Puigcercós, leader of Esquerra Republica de Catalunya echoed President Montilla’s sentiment that they would not comply with the Court’s ruling.<sup>185</sup>

There were also calls for public protests. Organized by Muriel Casals, Òmnium Cultural organized one of Catalonia’s largest protests in history on July 10<sup>th</sup>.<sup>186</sup> Over one million people demonstrated in center Barcelona on this day to protest the Court’s ruling.<sup>187</sup> Casals explained that the demonstration was not in defense of the statute, but rather was “to defend the will of the Catalan people.”<sup>188</sup> After all, when the statute was drafted in 2006, it was put to a general vote, with 74% of voters voting in favor.<sup>189</sup> Less than half of the electorate in Catalonia turned out for the vote perhaps showing Catalan’s relative apathy at the time. Four years later however, the scene was hardly apathetic as Catalans filled Barcelona’s major squares and avenues in protest.

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<sup>184</sup> Documento BOE-A-2010-11409, 1-491 (Tribunal Constitucional July 16, 2010).

<sup>185</sup> Spanish Constitutional Court cuts back Catalan Statute of Autonomy. (2010, June 29). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.nationalia.info/new/9216/spanish-constitutional-court-cuts-back-catalan-statute-of-autonomy>.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Catalan protesters rally for greater autonomy in Spain. (2010, July 10). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.bbc.com/news/10588494>.

<sup>188</sup> “Spanish Constitutional Court...”

<sup>189</sup> 20Minutos. (2006, June 18). Reacciones políticas al "Sí" de los catalanes al Estatut empañado por el bajo índice de participación. Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.20minutos.es/noticia/132031/0/estatut/referendum/reacciones/>.

To uninformed outside observers it may appear that the Catalans are the victims of an oppressive Madrid government. Yet, the truth is, the Catalans themselves prevented their own independence by accepting the Spanish Constitution which prohibits any sort of secession. The independentist's message still strikes a nerve with Catalans however, because the perception of oppression is engrained into Catalan identity, dating back to the Bourbons and Franco's regime. Today the oppression is likened to these other time periods by the independentists because of the nature of the restrictions. When Madrid restricts the Catalans from holding a binding independence referendum, it is interpreted as Madrid restricting the Catalan's right to vote. And when Madrid challenges elements of the 2006 Catalan Statute of Autonomy, that is seen as the oppression of Catalan language and culture.

## Chapter 6 – Inching Towards Independence

In 2015 Catalans went to the voting booths to make one of their largest political statements yet. Over one million Catalans cast votes for Junts Pel Sí (JxSí), a pro-Catalan independence political coalition made up of many smaller parties, winning the party 62 seats in the 135-member parliament, putting it just shy of the majority. CiU, the party which controlled Catalan politics for 23 uninterrupted years, was forced to dissolve and take a more pro-independence stance.<sup>190</sup> JxSí found success in Catalan politics because the party was willing to take on the enormous fight for independence, announcing just before the election that if they secured the majority, “the Catalan parliament will solemnly declare the start of the independence process.”<sup>191</sup> JxSí and other independentists are not afraid of taking on the Spanish government, and use the restrictions to support their historical narrative. Even though the historical evidence for claiming independence is at best shaky as has been shown in this thesis, independentists have found huge success in promoting the message of a Catalan right to independence. Their message resonates with many Catalans because they focus on four crucial historical moments that are seen as defining moments for Catalan culture and identity. Between the establishment of the

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<sup>190</sup> March, O. (2016, January 28). Convergència enterra la federació: "El projecte polític de CiU s'ha acabat i cal una separació amistosa". Retrieved June 29, 2017, from [http://www.ara.cat/politica/Josep\\_Rull-comite\\_de\\_direccio-CDC-Unio-federacio\\_0\\_1378062345.html](http://www.ara.cat/politica/Josep_Rull-comite_de_direccio-CDC-Unio-federacio_0_1378062345.html).

<sup>191</sup> "If the majority is there, the Catalan Parliament will solemnly declare the start of the independence process", states Romeva. (2015, July 20). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.catalannewsagency.com/politics/item/if-the-majority-is-there-the-catalan-parliament-will-solemnly-declare-the-start-of-the-independence-process-states-romeva>.

Generalitat in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the War of Spanish Succession in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Franco's rule, and the Spanish constitution, there is no question that Catalans deserve autonomy and respect from Madrid, but independentists take a step further and argue that these four moments merit an independent Catalonia.

The independentists have done what other Catalan independence visionaries have failed to do. They have created a historical narrative advocating for independence, and not just autonomy. This narrative builds on the legacy of the independentists from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the 1930s by making a case for a cultural difference between Catalans and Spaniards. "We are not worse or better than the other, but we are different ... we want to bring our diversity to Europe" says Muriel Casals, president of Òmnium Cultural, a Catalan political group advocating for self-determination and independence.<sup>192</sup> Any restriction by the Spanish government in blocking a Catalan referendum or ruling against the Statute of Autonomy is seen as a continuation of a long legacy of Catalan oppression. Independentists like Raul Romeva argue that a majority of JxSí in the Catalan parliament would represent a democratic justification for Catalan independence. Therefore, any subsequent efforts by the Spanish government to block Catalan independence efforts go against the democratic wishes of the Catalan people, and Romeva has pledged to continue with the process of secession anyway. Catalan president Artur Mas echoed this sentiment when he said that "we want to do things right", which means "putting ballot boxes on the street when needed to allow people to decide."<sup>193</sup>

The Spanish government now finds itself in a difficult position. Continuing to deny the requests of the independentists to hold a referendum adds fuel to the independentists' argument, pushing more Catalans to support them. If they grant the wishes of the Catalans, they legitimize

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

the independentists, go against the constitution, and risk the referendum actually passing. Even though polls indicate that Catalans are roughly split on the issue, there is still the very real possibility a referendum would pass, because the Catalan independence movement is not an isolated case. Independentists are quick to point out that secessionist movements are active all over Europe. They specifically look at the Scottish independence movement and “Brexit,” the United Kingdom’s decision to leave the European Union, as international justification of their actions. Catalonia is also not the only area in Spain that is looking for independence. The Galicians in the northwest have similar historical claims to independence. The Basque country in the north, witnessed the rise of the terrorist group ETA whose members killed 829 Spanish officials and bystanders between 1968 until its declaration of a truce in 2011.<sup>194</sup> Therefore, Catalan independence would have enormous ramifications for Spain. This could echo to places like Scotland in the United Kingdom, or Flanders in Belgium. As it stands, the Spanish government says it will not bend to the independentist’s wishes. Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy has openly rejected the demands of the independentists, stating “we won’t allow the holding of a referendum that’s forbidden by our constitution, seeks independence in Catalonia, and the break of Spain.”<sup>195</sup> Rajoy also added that “it is not possible to hold a referendum that will do away with national sovereignty and the equality of Spaniards.”<sup>196</sup> This is

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<sup>194</sup> Eta and Basque separatism: data over the years. (2011, January 10). Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2011/jan/10/eta-basque-sepratists-ceasefire-victims-over-time>.

<sup>195</sup> Duarte, E. (2017, February 12). Spain's Rajoy Pledges to Stop Catalan Referendum, Restore Links. Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-02-12/spain-s-rajoy-pledges-to-stop-catalan-referendum-restore-links>.

<sup>196</sup> White, S., & Dowsett, S. (2016, December 30). Catalan independence referendum 'not possible' - Spanish PM. Retrieved June 29, 2017, from <http://www.reuters.com/article/uk-spain-catalonia-idUKKBN14J1DC>.

precisely why Catalans feel like their rights are being taken away; a government official in Madrid is once again denying Catalans their political rights.

It is difficult to objectively determine whether or not Catalans democratic rights are being violated. Many Catalans feel they should have the right to decide their political future rather than the Spanish government. As the Spanish Constitutional Court has ruled however, Catalans made that decision when they accepted the Spanish Constitution. Yet, the voting restrictions and Spain's dire economic circumstances are defined as oppression by independentists who liken it to other time periods in Catalonia's history. Independentists argue that Catalan rights to sovereignty is a tradition going back to the establishment of the Generalitat in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. These rights were then restricted by the Bourbon's in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century during Franco's rule and again by the 1978 Spanish constitution. By denying the right to choose their own political future, independentists believe that Madrid is once again restricting their democratic rights and not respecting this long tradition of Catalan autonomy. The path to Catalan independence will not be easy, both politically and legally. But these modern independentists have accomplished something that generations of Catalan visionaries have tried and failed at before, in generating a complete historical narrative to back their case, or Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire*. These independentists are reinterpreting historical moments that unquestionably support Catalan autonomy to moments that support independence.



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## ACADEMIC VITA

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### Academic Vita of Benjamin Haspel

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#### Education

Major(s) and Minor(s): History and Political Science; Spanish

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Awards: Schreyer Honors Scholar, Paterno Fellowship, Dean's List

Professional Memberships: Phi Alpha Theta National History Honors Society

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