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Els Catalans Són Diferents: Catalan Independence through a Cultural Lens

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Els Catalans Són Diferents: Catalan Independence through a Cultural Lens

By

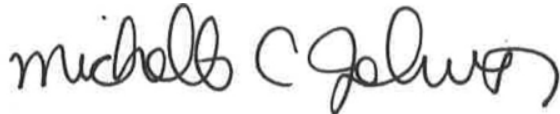
Maren Burling

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Introduction

Background

Barcelona, Spain, is the cosmopolitan capital of Spain's northeasternmost region, Catalonia. Known for its beautiful landscape, like the beaches along Mediterranean or its mountainous views, and its impressive architecture, like the Sagrada Familia or any of Antoni Gaudí's other works, Barcelona is a destination spot for world travelers. What most people don't know, however, is what makes Barcelona unique, and what sets Catalonia apart from Spain.

I studied abroad in Barcelona in Spring 2018. For five months, I lived with a host family, attended classes with local professors, and took every opportunity to engage with the city. Travelers from around the globe seek out Barcelona for its vibrant beauty and Mediterranean climate, but I wanted to learn more about the people and the region's long history of difference in Spain. When I chose to study in Barcelona, I knew I was interested in Catalan independence, a movement with a long and ongoing history. The pursuit of the Catalan Republic has roots in the 19th century - and some say it began before then. Recently, on the first of October 2017, Catalonia held an independence referendum that won with overwhelming majority, but was immediately squandered by centralist forces. After the vote, the Spanish government suspended Catalan autonomy under the constitutional Article 155. The article states that "if an Autonomous Community... acts in a way seriously prejudicing the general interests of Spain, the Government... [may] take the appropriate measures necessary in order to compel the latter forcibly to meet said obligations" (Spanish Const. 1978. Article 155. Translation by the author). Since regional demand for national self-determination is in conflict with Spanish state

sovereignty, Spain suspended the referendum, refused to recognize Catalonia's declaration of independence, and asserted direct rule over the region.

Argument

As a student of anthropology, I wondered how Catalan culture connected to the separatist movement. While in Barcelona, I often heard from my host-parents, my professors, and each new person I met that Catalonia was *different* from Spain. According to many Catalans, living and learning within Catalonia constitutes being *Catalan*, not *Spanish*. Identity matters to these people, and cultural, traditional, and linguistic practices are fundamental to how they perform and preserve it. With this observation, I wondered, how do Catalans use culture to distinguish their identity and support independence on the basis of *difference*? How do they qualify *difference*?

In the pages that follow, I explore this question. My thesis analyzes the Catalan separatist movement and how it is uniquely influenced by cultural identity. I draw on three sources: 1) published works on Catalonia and the separatist movement; 2) informal observations from my semester abroad in Barcelona, Spain, in Spring 2018; and 3) formal follow-up interviews I conducted in Fall 2018. Together, these sources reveal that there are many cultural differences between Spain and Catalonia, and the fact that a majority of Catalans do not identify as Spanish because of a different official language (Catalan), distinctive history, and unique cultural practices. The voices within the independence movement differ. Some sources claim that Catalonia must become independent from Spain because the region is limited by the central government's direct rule and deserves political autonomy (Benito and Roller 2002). Others who

defend Catalan secession are frustrated by the unbalanced fiscal relationship between Catalonia and central Spain: indeed, accusations of the central government's corrupt economic control have become increasingly salient (Jordi and Tormos 2015). While I do not dismiss the political and economic factors that contribute to the secessionist movement, focus primarily on the perspective that claims Catalan identity as shaped by unique cultural and linguistic practices. Catalan identity has always been distinct from Spanish identity, and many Catalans feel that overbearing control from Spain stifles preservation and celebration of their language and culture, as their past conflicts with centralist powers demonstrate. So, while there are many motivations behind Catalan separatism, in my thesis I will argue that Catalan identity, shaped by language, culture, and tradition, is the principal motivation for Catalan independence. My thesis will contribute to the anthropological study of language and culture by underscoring the importance of identity within a cultural community through a close examination of the case of Catalonia.

Methodology

While living in Barcelona for four months during the spring semester of my junior year (2018), I studied with the IES (Institute for the International Education of Students) Liberal Arts and Business in Barcelona study-abroad program because I knew that in order to understand Catalan culture and separatism, I had to live in the region for a significant period of time and take classes with an institution that valued cultural immersion and community engagement. As an anthropology and Spanish double major who has always been interested in language and culture, the Catalan separatist movement fascinated me and I was compelled to further my understanding of it. Studying in Barcelona was the perfect opportunity.

When I arrived in Catalonia, my status as an outsider seemed like a barrier to my study. I wondered: to what extent could I understand Catalan separatism from a local perspective? After all, I was an American student inserting myself in a centuries-old conflict in a country I had never visited before. After only a few days in Barcelona, however, I learned that I did not have to be Catalan to appreciate and comprehend my interlocutors' feelings of difference from Spain. Catalan culture infuses both everyday lived experiences and separatist actions and symbols; even for someone who had never visited the region, it was easy to see just how interwoven the independence movement and cultural identity are. What's more is that Catalans were eager to share and discuss their culture with me. Victor Turner, a symbolic and interpretive anthropologist, claimed that social participants are influenced by their own structural position within their culture, which prevents them from objectively understanding their own rituals and symbols (1967:27). Since I was not a participant in Catalan life before my semester in Spain, I was able to separate myself from the Catalan structural perspective and interpret displays of culture and identity from an outsider's perspective.

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz defined culture as a human-spun web of significance whose analysis is not an "experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (1973:311). Cultural systems are cohesive given their shared system of significance, and anthropologists dive into such systems to better understand the values that hold them together, as well as the conflicts that threaten to tear them apart. My intent as an American anthropologist in Spain was to discover the meaning of Catalan culture and the separatist movement by analyzing the social discourses and symbolic displays of regional identity that

surrounded me, including (but not limited to) the Catalan language, holidays and traditions, sports, and food.

As an American student, I accessed many experiences through my study-abroad program. I listened carefully to local people and observed analytically acts of culture all around me, such as protests I passed on my walk to class, or meals I shared with my IES host family. With no preconceived notions of Catalonia, which both Catalans and the Spanish have, I separated ideas from the structures they inform (and that also inform them) and drew my own conclusions about what it means to be Catalan, how local people create and perform identity, and how this identity influences Catalan separatism. As Geertz and Turner put it, it was my goal as an outsider and anthropology student to elucidate local perspectives and meanings. I drew on my anthropological knowledge and experience as I observed the deeper implications of and desires for secession in Catalonia.

Through a thorough synthesis of published works on Catalonia, I examine in this thesis the history of the relationship between Catalonia, Spain, and the separatist movement. These sources, many of which I read through my study-abroad program, and others I accessed when I returned to the U.S., assisted me in my synthesis of Catalan symbols and their meanings by allowing me to contextualize Spanish history and culture and the ongoing dialogue surrounding Catalan independence. In addition to synthesizing scholarly works, I support my argument with the ethnographic fieldwork I collected while living in Barcelona for five months. Conversations with my host family and classmates, coursework associated with my study-abroad program, and my own participant observation of public Catalan culture, such as holiday traditions or street demonstrations, placed me directly in the “webs of significance” (Geertz 1973:214) I propose to

untangle. Finally, I conducted follow-up interviews in Fall 2018 with several of my informants in Spain to update my perspective on Catalan culture and developments of the independence movement since I returned to the United States.

Throughout all of my experiences in Barcelona, Spain, I took detailed fieldnotes. My study-abroad program, IES, required students to engage with the local culture, and my classes took me to different local sites, such as neighborhoods, protests, and public markets, and necessitated conversations with Catalans about independence. I was enrolled in four courses with IES: *Spanish Through Theatre, Sports and Society in Spain, Catalan Cultural Studies, Catalan Language, and Language, Culture, and Communication: The Spanish Perspective*. These classes, which focused on language and culture in Spain and Catalonia, were experience-learning courses. We often left the classroom to observe local protests, visit different field sites, and engage with people passing by on the streets. During my time in Catalonia, I spent twelve hours a week in classes and an additional twenty hours a week engaged in fieldwork outside of the classroom. With IES, I kept a culture blog (<https://catalanculturalstudies2018.blogspot.com>) and recorded separate fieldnotes from various political and cultural demonstrations, such as independence marches or FCB (*Futbol Club Barcelona*) soccer games, describing particular interactions, symbols, and rituals as expressions of culture. Independent from IES, I also kept a personal fieldnotes journal in which I detailed my interactions with people and observations I made of my surroundings over the course of the semester. These fieldnotes informed my reading of secondary sources as well as the interviews I conducted and served as data supporting my argument.

While in Barcelona, I engaged with academic professionals and pro-independence individuals. In Fall 2018, I reconnected with those I met to conduct formal interviews on the separatist movement, which allowed me to fully understand cultural connections to the movement. I asked questions that encouraged these informants to explore their own identities and opinions on Catalan separatism. Their insightful responses informed my own interpretation of how Catalan cultural identity relates to feelings of independence today. Some examples of questions I asked include:

- What is your position on the independence movement?
- Do you identify more as Catalan or Spanish?
- What is Catalan culture?
- How is the Catalan language important to your identity or to those living in Catalonia?
- Is Catalonia a nation?

In Fall 2018, I completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program for ethical research with human subjects. I also submitted my proposal to the International Review Board and it was approved. Then, I reconnected with various individuals in Barcelona in order to conduct my formal interviews. The data from my conversations with professors, my host family, and others supplemented my informal observations through IES to support my argument that Catalan culture motivates the desire for Catalan independence.

Supporting Literature

Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner were both symbolic and interpretive anthropologists. A complete understanding of my thesis requires taking a closer look at these pioneers and other theorists who have contributed to the study of anthropology. Both symbolic and interpretive anthropology, as well as linguistic anthropology, heavily informed my research and writing and

support my argument for the importance of language and other cultural symbols to Catalan identity and separatism.

Clifford Geertz was an American anthropologist in the mid-to-late twentieth century who was long considered “the single most influential cultural anthropologist in the United States” (e.g. Good 2005). Geertz defines culture as a human-spun web of significance and explains that anthropology is the “sorting out of the structures of signification” (1973:214). Culture as defined by Geertz, is public, not private. He uses the example of a “burlesqued wink” to explain how meaning and culture are concurrently public. A person can contract their eyelids, but to understand what the gesture implies is to publicly interpret and mutually understand the meaning attached to the action (Geertz 1973:314-15). Geertz says that culture reaches beyond the mind of the individual. He encourages anthropologists to search for its meaning guided by the “answers of others” (1973:323).

Geertz adds that ethnography, the systematic study of peoples and public culture, is a “thick description” that captures the symbolic actions of human nature through detailed observation. The act of recording perishable social discourse in a written, ethnographic description of cultural practices and their meanings fixes the symbolic dimensions of a culture in recognizable terms. To continue the analogy of the wink, Geertz explains that an ethnography that only analyzes the twitching of the eye, the purely physical observed action, is “thin description.” An ethnography that tries to understand the meaning behind the twitch, i.e., the “burlesque wink,” is an example of “thick description” because it attempts to understand the social nuance to the movement (1973:314-15).

Geertz combines the discourse of symbolic anthropology with interpretive anthropology, which he believes shapes the contestable nature of anthropology, i.e., that culture, and its symbols of significance, are up for interpretation. He defines interpretive anthropology as “a science whose progress is marked less by a perfection of consensus than by a refinement of debate” (1973:322). The “data” collected by anthropologists is a subjective analysis layered with local interpretations of culture, and so I want to take a look at not just how anthropologists create ethnographies based on their own abstractions of meaning, but also how people understand and share cultural symbols and practices within their own culture.

Roger M. Keesing was a linguistic anthropologist who contributed to the discourse of symbolic and interpretive anthropology during Geertz’s popularity. He cautioned anthropologists who used these modes of ethnographic telling, warning of the risk of misinterpreting significance in cultural symbols or patterns in an observed society (1987:161). Keesing argues for the sociology of knowledge, which claims that public symbols are distributed and controlled by the culture containing them. The sociology of knowledge suggests that interpretive ideologies are born and understood differently by the anthropologist and by those within the culture being observed. Keesing recognizes the subjectivity of looking at cultural symbols, and therefore sees cultures as texts that need to be interpreted for their different reverberations, however each “reader” interprets them (1987:161-62). According to Keesing, anthropology as an interpretive quest should be “clearly and carefully connected to the real humans who live out their lives through [cultural meanings]” (1987:169).

Following Keesing, in my own fieldwork and ethnographic writing I married my interpretations of the Catalan culture with the lived experiences and opinions of those who taught

me so much about why their identity, language, and traditions were important to them. Inspired by symbolic and interpretive theory, I consider my informants' subjectivity as central to my thesis. My ethnography looks at social knowledge that creates and preserves Catalan symbols, but also, at the people who define them and the connection those individuals feel to Catalonia. The body of my thesis will be based on Geertz's thick description, and as I work to untangle the "webs of significance" (Geertz 1973:214) in Catalan culture, I analyze public symbolic displays of culture, and locals' understandings of those symbols.

Victor Turner, a British symbolic anthropologist, claimed that while the informant's subjectivity is significant, their position within their own culture can be a barrier to a complete understanding of their everyday lived experiences. Turner sees symbols as the connective tissues to the narrative structure to ethnography, and argued that anthropology needed to better articulate the symbolic makeup of a cultural system (1980:167). And so, for my own research, I relied partly on my own anthropological knowledge and analysis, aided by the opinions of my informants, to untangle the "webs of significance" (Geertz 1973:214) in Catalan culture.

The symbolic nature of culture comes from certain patterns and themes woven into a society that are fundamental to human interaction. They orient individuals to values that create distinguished cultural conceptions. Symbols - whether they are images, practices, or ideas - all carry meaning (Ortner 1973:338). In his field of symbolic and interpretive anthropology, Victor Turner defined symbols as "building blocks" of rituals. He discussed the difference between dominant and instrumental symbols, the first which is the most recognizable in a cultural ritual and the most representative of key values of a society, the second which is taken in a wider context, a smaller "building block" to more general cultural practices (1967:30-32).

In the chapters that follow, I explain key symbols (Ortner 1973) in Catalan culture. I argue that language, for example, is a dominant cultural symbol in Catalonia because it represents the perseverance of a minority language (and its corresponding culture) against the majority language in Spain, Castilian Spanish. Language as a dominant symbol is used in a variety of different rituals and cultural practices in Catalonia to express pride in Catalanism. Following this example, I show that education of the Catalan language is an instrumental symbol of Catalan identity because it must be understood within a wider cultural context; education as a instrumental symbol allows Catalans to teach one another about identity and work towards the goal of cultural preservation, and even for some, of independence from Spain.

In my thesis, I analyze the symbols in Catalan culture from an emic, or insider perspective, of my informants, and my own etic, or outsider perspective, as an American student, in order to create a narrative ethnography of Catalan culture as it influences the separatist movement. Considering the “sociology of knowledge” (Keesing 1987) that shapes my informants’ perspectives, and the subjectivity of my own interpretations, I present a comprehensive ethnography of Catalan culture. The symbols I observed while in Catalonia are the daily practices of art, food, and sport, and the spreading of knowledge through festivals/holidays, language, and history/nationalism.

In addition to symbolic and interpretive anthropology, my thesis also draws from the field of linguistic anthropology, especially as I analyze the cultural symbol of Catalan language as it contrasts with the ideological and dominant national language of Castilian Spanish. The characterization of “Spanish-ness” developed in the mid 1900s by Spanish dictator Francisco Franco still subordinates minority languages and cultures to this day by emphasizing the

importance of a united Spanish nation. Threatened by the imposition of Spanish identity by the state, the Catalan language is losing authenticity, that is, space for genuine expression, and autonomy, both in public and private spaces, to Castilian Spanish (Woolard 2008).

Language constructs the world, and the study of linguistic anthropology frames its construction by understanding language as a cultural resource and the act of speaking as a cultural practice. This field of study claims that by speaking a language, an individual demonstrates belongs to a speech community. They are “social actors” who create their surrounding world by how they “perform” speech (Duranti 2013:2-5). Indeed, languages are arbitrary, each comprising of a different set of meanings that organize the speaker’s ways of understanding through concepts and categories (Foley 1997:97). However, the organization behind and the meanings within language are demonstrative and significant to understanding the culture that envelopes it. Language is one of the many cultural symbols I discuss in this thesis because linguistic forms reflect cultural images of people and societies. Characteristics of language, such as speech patterns or ideological representations, are easily iconized, meaning they are linked to social images and expectations (Irvine and Gal 2009:37).

Iconization is one of the three ways in which people construct ideological representations of linguistic differences. Divisions also come from fractal recursivity, the projection of a conflict onto another social level. Fractal recursivity in language use provides speakers with the discursive resources to claim a language and thus, “attempt to create shifting ‘communities,’ identities, selves, and roles, at different levels of contrast, within [that] cultural field” (2009:38). Erasure, the third common component of language ideologization, happens when sociolinguistic

ideologies render some speakers or sociolinguistic phenomena insignificant and unseen (2009:38).

According to anthropologist Alessandro Duranti, “the social, collective, and distributed quality of speaking - does not assume an equality shared knowledge or control of [language] resources” (2013:21). In Spain, language is not a resource equally accessible to Catalan citizens. Since Franco’s regime, the Spanish government has had varying levels of control over language use in Spain, and has consequently subordinated minority languages like Catalan through legislation and religious and educational control. Thus, the study of linguistic anthropology is helpful to understand how a language spoken widely in Catalonia has been impacted by ideological representations of language.

Another addition to the field of linguistic anthropology surrounds the ideas of language acquisition and socialization. According to scholars, an individual’s command of a language constitutes their cultural competency, and how well they understand a language’s contextual functions, distribution, and interpretations determines their socialization (Ochs and Schieffelin 2001:264). If language is a tool, a speaker must acquire its practices from the community in which they choose to belong, or otherwise fail to socialize. While my thesis will not look at the act of socialization itself, it is important to understand its role in the creation of identity through a linguistic anthropological lens. Examining social actors within speech communities is vital to understand not only the identity of an individual, but also the overall cohesion of a particular group of people.

Both linguistic anthropology and symbolic and interpretive anthropology frame my ethnography. I discuss different cultural symbols (art, food, sport, festivals/holidays, language,

and history/nationalism) that create Catalan identity, and locate their significance within these two fields of anthropology. There are differing opinions on the role of ethnography in untangling the “webs of significance” (Geertz 1973:214) in a cultural community, yet I have decided to combine my informants’ perspectives and my own to achieve a “thick ethnographic description” (1973:314-15) of Catalan cultural identity.

Specifically analyzing language as a cultural symbol, linguistic anthropology explains the meaning of words, which reflect attitudes and values of the society from which they come (Bonvillian 2004:7-25). Catalans are social actors belonging to their own speech community, but Spanish imposition opposes Catalan linguistic ideologies by promoting their own. As linguistic anthropologists Judith T. Irvine and Susan Gal put it, “linguistic differentiation is embedded in the politics of a region and its observers [and] identifying a language presupposes a boundary or opposition to other languages with which it contrasts in some larger sociolinguistic field” (2009:35).

The fields of symbolic and interpretive anthropology and linguistic anthropology create my argument in this thesis. Drawing from past anthropologists and their conclusions, I can better understand how culture is created and interpreted, and how it relates to identity. These two fields are prolific in ethnographies and other accredited works, and it is my hope that my ethnography builds upon the understanding of the importance of culture and its properties and practices in an ever-changing world.

Chapter 1

The History of Catalonia: From the Neolithic to the Present Day

United States history education teaches us about King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain, but only as much as pertains to the journey of Christopher Columbus and his “discovery” of the New World. We know less about the Crown of Aragon, the royal house of King Ferdinand, which covered the region of modern Catalonia. Important as well is the history of Francisco Franco, dictator of Spain, as it relates to Catalan oppression. Franco silenced all minority cultures and identities in Spain that were not “Spanish” for much of the 20th century, and Catalan culture was no exception. This chapter looks back in time to reveal the history of this region in Spain to shed light on the tension between Catalonia and its nation-state. Beginning with the Neolithic period from the first known signs of sedentary life in Catalonia, to the present day independence movement, I provide general historical knowledge to frame my ethnographic chapters and expose the struggle for representation that Catalans have faced for hundreds of years.

Indigenous Peoples and the Beginnings of Imperialism

While Catalonia is unique in that it has a pattern of autonomy and secession throughout the history of Spain, the area began and progressed much like other parts of Europe: with an indigenous base transformed by the arrival of outside peoples. Catalan indigenous culture is unrelated to Catalan culture today, in fact, it wasn’t until the 10th century that the Catalan identity even began to take shape.

Prehistory, that is, the time before recorded history, traces Catalan origins to sedentary people living off the land during the Neolithic period of agricultural and livestock revolution in 5000 BCE (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:14). In 600 BCE, Greeks settled on the Mediterranean coast of Catalonia and accelerated life of the indigenous living in the region by colonizing trading settlements and contributing to the growth of agriculture. However, the Greeks brought very little change overall. They had no effect on the characteristics of the sedentary people. Rather, it was their presence that contributed to the emergence of the Iberian world and arrival of the Romans in later centuries (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:15-16).

“Iberians,” as the Greeks called them, were indigenous peoples with their own distinct culture. Between the 7th century BCE and 60 AD, Iberians maintained their governance while also receiving influence from the Greeks and other outside empires, like the Phoenicians. They lived under oligarchic individual power, and had well-defined social classes and military organization. At the same time, they traded with Greek colonial centres to advance their agricultural economy. In the 4th century BCE, Iberians developed their own system of semi-syllabic writing. They also constructed towns that are still around today: *Tarragona*, *Montjuic* (in Barcelona), and *Ullastret in el Baix Empordá* (Girona) (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:17-20).

In 218 BCE, the Roman Empire violently invaded the Iberian Peninsula and claimed political hegemony by the year 195 BCE. They named the peninsula *Hispania* and ruled for many years until the 4th century AD. During this time, Romanization was more apparent than previous Greek influences because Iberians were forced into Roman citizenship and were gradually shaped by centuries of cultural shifts. Romans created an extensive transportation

network based on a provincial organization plan, and cultivated cereals, oil, vines, and fruit throughout all of Hispania. In 100 BCE, the empire founded the towns *Gerunda* and *Barcino*, Girona and Barcelona today, and in 27 BCE, Roman emperor Augustus Caesar created the town of *Tarraco*, which is now Tarragona, the capital of the imperial province (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:21-24).

Germanic invasions interrupted Roman rule. One Germanic tribe, the Visigoths, entered Hispania from the Baltics, and established residence in Barcino (Barcelona) through royal marriage. The Visigoths and Romans lived in war and peace during the 4th and 5th centuries AD, but the establishment of the Visigoth state never truly took root in the region of Catalonia. Defeated by the Franks, another invading Germanic tribe, the Visigoths moved from the northeastern region of Hispania to what is now Toledo, Spain. Given that the era was short lived and that the Visigoths were highly influenced by the Roman Empire, they left little to no cultural legacy (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:27-28).

The Middle Ages

The first signs of Catalan independence began in the early 8th century. In 711, the Berber Muslims came from North Africa, crossed the Gibraltar Strait, and invaded the Iberian Peninsula. They occupied Catalan territory until the Franks took the land. Part of the development of Catalonia, along with other peninsular states, was a result of the struggle of this reconquest of Catalan territory. The French monarchy of the Carolingians took over the region and repopulated the land with new colonists, which created diversity and led to the eventual demarcations of separate counties within Catalonia. The law of 877 legalised the hereditary succession of these

counties, and French Count Wilfred the Hairy brought together the central counties of the Catalan territory under his control. United under one ruler, Catalonia began to take shape. Then, in 987, Catalonia took its first step towards independence when the Count of Barcelona refused vassalage to the French king and the counties were freed from the dynasty. This is the year that most Catalan historians agree Catalonia became a sovereign state (Harris 2014:31). Despite the diversity of the counties, a national consciousness began to emerge. The Catalan language developed, kinship ties between counties strengthened, and the terms *Catalan* and *Catalonia* formed to designate the people and the land governed by the Count of Barcelona (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:31-35).

In 11th century Catalonia, feudal society developed. Mediterranean and Peninsular trade flourished, and consequently the merchant class grew. The phenomenon of national belonging spread across the region due to territorial origin, defined economic life and social systems, one shared language, and common law to regulate collective behavior. On top of emerging national characteristics that shaped Catalonia in the 11th century, there was a shared appreciation of these features, which only deepened the roots to a budding Catalan identity (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:35-36).

The next couple of centuries of the region were characterized by feudal expansion. In collaboration with the Crown of Aragon, the region of Catalonia spread to more southern lands. The Catalan ruling class capitalized on the growing peninsular markets and used the newer territories to sell and circulate goods. By the 14th century, Catalonia was the most prosperous mercantile region in the Mediterranean (Read 1978:20). Catalonia's close combination of market interests strengthened ties of national solidarity and by the late Middle Ages, the community had

the characteristics of a modern nation-state. As the famous French Hispanist Pierre Villar put it, “Language, territory, economic life, psychological make-up, community of culture: the fundamental conditions of the nation have been complete [in Catalonia] since the 13th century” (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:39). In later years, Catalan institutions began to take shape, such as the *Consell de Cent de Barcelona* (Council of One Hundred), which organized upper-class municipal life. The Catalan Parliament was fully established by the 13th century and acted as a legislative body to regulate the actions of the Aragon monarch. And finally, there was the *Diputació del Generalitat*, a smaller commission of the Parliament that defended Catalan law for centuries to come (2012:40-42).

In 1469, the heir to the Crown of Aragon, Ferdinand II, married the future queen of Castile, Isabella I. The marriage of the Catholic nobles conjoined the powerful states of Castile and Aragon-Catalonia, but it did not go so far as to achieve political unity. Both regions and their prospective dynasties retained their own institutions and languages: Castilian and Catalan. They established separate political, military, and economic frontiers, and even used different currencies. The marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella did not create modern Spain, in fact, both monarchs continued to rule their respective kingdoms separately (Harris 2014:79-82). Catalans and Castilians were, for all intents and purposes, foreigners in one another’s lands. After the discovery of the “New World” in 1492, Castile gained more international political power. Then, the Catalan viceroy, a representative of the absent king in Catalonia, and the Supreme Court of Aragon, an advisory court for the monarch, eventually disintegrated powers previously held exclusively by Catalan authorities. This series of events contributed to budding conflict between Catalonia and the central monarch (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:51-54).

For the next two centuries, the House of Austria, also known as the Habsburg monarchy, ruled Spanish lands. First to inherit Castile and the Crown of Aragon from Ferdinand and Isabella was Charles I of Habsburg, then his successor, Philip II of Habsburg, who was the first Castilian king to the Crown of Aragon. During this period, Catalonia was still a sovereign state, yet relations between the monarch and Catalan institutions were steadily becoming more rancorous. First, Castile was emphatic in its support of the the Crown's imperialistic behavior in international politics. Catalonia's economy was weaker than that of Castile's, and according to French historian Pierre Vilar, Catalonia had "no human or financial reserves sufficient to participate greatly in the colonial game" (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:57), that is, the conquest of the Americas. As a result, Catalonia increased its participation in Mediterranean trade and quickly became a merchant empire. Then, in the second half of the 16th century, voices in Castile began to cry out against Catalan independence. By the end of the 16th century, the Spanish Inquisition, a judicial institution to combat heresy in Spain, imprisoned three Catalan officials over a court dispute. The Crown supported the punishment, and the Court of Madrid nearly ordered execution of the officials.

The antagonistic attitude of the Court and the central Hispanic monarch towards Catalonia only grew, and by 1640, Catalonia revolted. Vexed by the financially restraining and centralist tendencies that undermined their own authorities and institutions, especially the Catalan Parliament, the people protested. The Revolt of 1640, also known as the *Guerra dels Segadors* (The Reaper's War), was an uprising by the Catalan peasant class against the Habsburg monarchy and their very own ruling class. Castile responded to the bloody peasant uprisings by sending armies to invade the Catalan Principality. On January 17, 1641, the *Diputació del*

Generalitat declared Catalonia as a Republic, but the proclamation only lasted a few short days before the French monarch, who was also feuding with Castile, claimed the country as its own. All of this resulted in the Peace of the Pyrenees of 1659, a treaty that ended the war between the French and Castile and returned Catalonia to the Hispanic Crown, but not without significant territorial loss (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:55-65).

The War of Succession

During the 16th and 17th centuries, the Habsburg monarchy only addressed the Catalan Parliament on twelve occasions, and of those, many were threats. During the thirty-five years of the last of the Austrian kings, Charles II, the Parliament did not meet once. In candor, the relentless politics of the central monarchy against Catalan institutions needed little to finish off the Catalan constitutional order completely (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:66-68).

The French House of Bourbon entered Spain when Charles II, the last Habsburg monarch, died in 1700 and left the crown in his will to the grandson of the Bourbon monarch of France, Philip V. At first, Catalans liked Phillip V because he swore to support the Constitutions of Catalonia. Eventually, however, his absolutism prevailed. A treaty emerged among the Netherlands, England, Holland, and Austria, all of whom disliked Philip V, to proclaim Austrian Archduke Charles as King of the Hispanic monarchy to take Philip V's place. In 1705, Bourbon Barcelona surrendered, Archduke Charles I entered the city, and the House of France was excluded from Catalonia and all kingdoms of the Hispanic monarchy (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:69-72).

The War of Succession lasted from 1701-1714 between the French House of Bourbon and the Austrian House of Habsburg to determine the fate of the Spanish territory. Philip V fought back against Archduke Charles I viciously with the help of the powerful French army. Catalonia, abandoned by its outside allies, faced Philip V's Franco-Castilian army alone, and in July 1713, Barcelona was besieged. The city endured over 70,000 bombs and hardly a single home was left standing. Philip V wanted to eliminate Catalan political independence and punish those waging war against Castile and his reign (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:71).

On September 11, 1714, the Principality of Catalonia fell. Philip V commanded to the Bourbon army that "Those [Catalans] who defended themselves must be made to hang, for as well as deserving this punishment as obstinate rebels and thieves, execution will serve as a warning to others" (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:73). One execution stands out: that of Catalan General Josep Moragues. After dying from extreme torture in 1715, his body was quartered and his head displayed in cage for all to see. After the Bourbon victory, Catalonia's *Diputació del Generalitat*, Parliament, and *Consell de Cent* all dissolved. The Bourbons removed supporters of Austrian Archduke Charles I from office and seized books published during the Habsburg House of Austria. The period following the War of Succession was characterized by extreme militarization. Universities repressed cultural expression and new orders from Madrid forbid all Catalan features, especially the Catalan language (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:73-76).

The Age of the Bourbon Monarch

Despite Bourbon repression in Catalonia, the region experienced economic prosperity during the 18th century. Capitalist society in Catalonia emerged from industrial beginnings with

the agricultural revolution and increased international trade. From the 18th century to the 19th century, the region grew from 400,000 to 900,000 inhabitants (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:82).

War was commonplace in Spain by the end of the 18th century. The Hispanic monarchy was feuding with England and Revolutionary France, Catalonia experienced internal struggles, and at the start of the 19th century, Napoleon's army occupied Catalonia for six years. Still, economic success persisted throughout the Principality. The Catalan Bourgeoisie class emerged from a rapidly growing Capitalist society, and a more liberal and adaptive mentality spread across the region. Material progress had its disadvantages, however, and as the wealthy, ecclesiastical class maintained relations with Madrid for economic privileges, their sense of Catalan identity faded. They spoke less Catalan and turned away from the region; it was later the Catalan working class, the Proletariat, who kept the use of the language alive (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:83-85).

During 18th and 19th century Spain, the central government was determined to dismantle the Catalan state. Thus, they repealed Catalan penal law, removed all Catalan currency, prohibited writing of public deeds and theatre performances in Catalan, mandated teaching of Castilian, dissolved Catalan trade legislation, and created a Supreme Court that acted from Madrid. In response to these unifying policies, Catalan citizens assembled in 1736 and anonymously wrote to the king of Great Britain protesting the oppression of Catalonia. In 1760, representatives from Barcelona Valencia, Zaragoza, and Palma de Mallorca sent a document to the central government, *Memorial de Greuges* (Grievances Report), advocating for decentralization of Spain (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:87-88).

Catalonia slowly reclaimed regional autonomy yet again. The industrial revolution fueled the economy, and the rise of Romanticism, reminiscent of the Middle Ages, revived images of Catalonia as a sovereign state. The Carlists, a political movement that sought to dispose of the Bourbon dynasty and advocated for traditionalism, contended for a new Catalan political structure. The Revolutionary Period in Spain, which lasted from 1868 to 1875, granted the most freedom to the country and heightened decentralist motives of Catalan political parties. The *Renaixença* (Renaissance) brought newspapers and multiple organizations focused on Catalan regional character. And finally, by the end of the 19th century, *Modernisme* (Modernism) sparked a new cultural movement that reacted against the traditionalist movement and created new, imaginative, *modern* art. The famous architect, Antoni Gaudí a prolific artist of this period. He produced the Sagrada Família (1882), Park Güell (1900-1914), La Pedrera (1906-1910), and many more architectural masterpieces that are still symbols of Catalan culture today (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:88-92).

The Industrial Revolution had a lasting effect on Catalan regional identity. From the 1830s on, it transformed Catalonia with the formation of two social groups: the Bourgeoisie middle (and Capitalist) class, and the Proletariat working class. In 1898, when Spain lost governance of the last of its colonies, Cuba and the Philippines, the bourgeoisie was outraged. They supported the colonies and felt disillusioned and deceived by Spanish politicians for losing an international market that benefited them greatly. As the Bourgeoisie class turned away from Madrid, more political parties organized separate from central dynastic parties. The idea that Catalonia could participate in Spanish politics through their own regional politicians quickly gained popularity, and in 1901, the first pro-Catalan conservative political party emerged: *La*

Lliga Regionalista (The Regionalist League). This party produced distinguished leaders in the Catalan independence movement and was the driving force of Catalan political life until 1923 (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:93-94).

La Lliga Regionalista created a constitution in 1914 through the *Mancomunitat de Catalunya* (Commonwealth of Catalonia). The document itself had no political power, but it was symbolic in that it managed services and united the four provincial areas of Barcelona, Tarragona, Lleida, and Girona. In 1918, the *Mancomunitat de Catalunya* took the initiative to present Catalonia's first Statute of Autonomy. While the *Lliga Regionalista* rigidly defended the document, Spanish authorities refused it. Determined, Catalan representatives suggested to the Spanish Parliament that the whole matter be put to a referendum, a general vote to decide if the public wanted to reconsider relations between Catalonia and Madrid through the Statute of Autonomy. Again, the Spanish government said no (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:95-96).

Repeated rejection birthed a more radical Catalan nationalist sentiment. The party *Estat Català* (Catalan State) formed with the sole objective of declaring the Catalan Republic. Another party, *Acció Catalana* (Catalan Action), was a liberal, pro-Catalan centered-left group. As these pro-Catalan Republic groups and others continued to put pressure on the Bourbon monarch and the central government, violence ensued. In 1921, the appointed Field Marshal of Catalonia, Miguel Primo de Rivera, launched a military coup with the support of Spanish central powers. In justifying his violent actions, Primo de Rivera stated: "[My] aim is to open a brief parenthesis in the constitutional life of Spain and to re-establish it as soon as the country offers us men uncontaminated with the vices of political organization" (Robinson 1970:28). Primo de Rivera was dissatisfied with political unrest and established an authoritarian and nationalist dictatorship

over Spain. During his rule, he expunged the *Mancomunitat de Catalunya*, prohibited use of the Catalan language, declared political parties illegal, and attacked Catalan symbols such as the national anthem, *Els Segadors*, and the Catalan flag, *la senyera*. By 1930, the dictatorship ultimately failed due to a lack of support from the bourgeoisie and the monarchy, and the reign of Primo de Rivera ended. In its wake, it left Catalonia more distrusting of the central government and stronger in resistance than ever before (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:96-98).

The Second Republic

One year later, on April 12, 1931, municipal elections took place in Spain. The newly elected viceroy of republican parties made the continuation of the monarchy untenable, so the king at the time, Alfonso XIII from the House of Bourbon, faced exile. The viceroy of Catalonia went to a political party: *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* - ERC (Republican Left of Catalonia). Their leader, Luís Companys, declared the Republic in Barcelona only two days following the elections. Another member of ERC, Francesc Macià, declared the Catalan Republic:

In the name of the people of Catalonia, I proclaim the Catalan state under the system of a Catalan Republic that freely and cordially desires and requests the cooperation of the other peoples of Spain in the creation of a Confederation of Iberian peoples and is prepared to do whatever necessary to liberate them from the Bourbon monarchy. At this time, we raise our voice to all the free states of the world in the name of Liberty, Justice, and International Peace (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:99-100).

Macià was partially successful. Though he did not secure independence, he compromised with the central government in Madrid, and Catalonia became an autonomous state with its own institutions, as it was in the 13th century. The new established system of self-government in

Catalonia, named *Generalitat de Catalunya*, quickly drafted a Statute of Autonomy to present to the Spanish Parliament. Unlike the first attempt in 1918, this one passed. Once again, Catalonia had its own political structure: a president, a government, and a Parliament that discussed laws specific to Catalonia (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:100-01).

The Catalan self-governing system was slow to integrate its powers, but quick to anger opposing parties. Frustrated by the political aggression towards Catalonia, Luís Companys declared the “Catalan state, under the system of a Catalan Republic” and tried to form a Confederation of Iberian Peoples with other regions of Spain (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:101).

The right, the fascists, and the Spanish army were irate over this proclamation. As a punishment, the Spanish Constitutional Court sentenced Luís Companys and other members of the Catalan government to prison. The central government suspended Catalonia’s Statute of Autonomy, removed many Catalan town council members from office, and revoked the agricultural act, one of the most progressive agricultural laws of Europe (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:102).

The divide between the left and the right deepened over the next few decades, until it eventually became an abyss. The ERC won the electoral majority in the elections of 1936, freed Luís Companys and his authorities, and reinstated the Catalan Parliament again. But before Catalonia could regain stability, a military revolt arose in the Spanish territory in Morocco, resulting in a reverberating conflict that would send Spain into its greatest civil war (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:102-03).

The Spanish Civil War

In 1936, influential generals from the Spanish army stationed in Morocco executed a *coup d'etat*, or a military uprising, led by General Francisco Franco, and Spain broke into a civil war. For the next three years, the country was engaged in an internal conflict between supporters of Spanish Republic and allies to the coup. The first, named the Republicans, were a group organized by the central government together with unions, communists, anarchists, workers, and peasants. The latter were the Nationalists, the Bourgeoisie, the landlords, and, broadly, the upper classes. Francisco Franco was their leader, with strong ties to Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and the Catholic Church as a whole.

George Orwell, a British writer drawn to social justice issues, was living in Catalonia when the war broke out. From his experiences as a soldier with the Republican army, he wrote the book *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), telling of his first-hand observations. He also wrote an article for the Workers Educational Association (WEA), in which he reflected on the war's revolutionary character:

Spain at that time was a strange and moving experience, because you had before you the spectacle of a people that knew what it wanted, a people facing destiny with its eyes open. The rebellion had plunged the country into chaos and the Government nominally in power at the outbreak of war had acted supinely; if the Spanish people were saved, it had got to be by their own effort. [...] The country settled down to a long war; there were internal political struggles which resulted in power passing from the hands of the socialists and anarchists into the hands of communists, and from the hands of communists into the hands of radical Republicans; conscription was imposed and censorship tightened up - two inevitable evils of modern war. (1939)

Orwell's description of Catalonia was fitting; the region was exploding with zealous revolutionary cries. Internally, conflict in Catalonia erupted around the same time as the Spanish Civil War. A Catalan Civil War took place in the late 1930s over the issue of whether to exploit

Spain's vulnerability and lead a social revolution or wait to take action until the war had ended (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:110). Catalonia did not revolt, but violence ensued nonetheless. By December 1938, Franco and his army, consisting of 1,000 pieces of artillery, 300,000 men, and 600 planes, forcefully occupied the entirety of the Catalan territory. By January of the following year, the cities of Tarragona, Reus, and Barcelona fell. Less than a month later, Franco's army besieged the city of Girona with relentless bombings. By the end of February 1939, all of Catalonia had fallen victim to the control of Francisco Franco and his rebel army. The Nationalists invaded Madrid, Valencia, and Alicante, and fought the last of the Republican bastion until the war was won (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:111- 12).

Francisco Franco's Dictatorship

In April 1939, Franco and his nationalist army triumphed over Spain, and thus began his fascist regime. All right-winged parties merged into one under his rule, and Republicans and their allies were persecuted mercilessly for their resistance. Franco expelled thousands who stood against him into refugee camps in southern France. Over 440,000 Spanish and between 80,000 and 100,000 Catalans were forced to leave their homes (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:114-15). In exile, Catalans created safe centres called *casals* throughout different countries around the world. They published 200 magazines and periodicals and many books in their own language of Catalan. This helped to create *Joc Florals*, a literary movement which promoted high Catalan culture, one that Franco continuously tried to silence during his rule (Pradilla 2001:62).

While Spanish and Catalan refugees were in France, Nazi Germany occupied the region. They sent 8,700 Spanish Republicans to concentration camps and over 5,000 died. A majority of

the deaths were Catalans. The Nazis also captured Republican Luís Companys of the ERC after he escaped to France, and returned him to Spain. For his resistance and flight, Franco sentenced Companys to a firing squad execution. Just before he was shot to death, his last words were “*Per Catalunya!*” (For Catalonia!) (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:113-14).

Pro-Catalan groups received Company’s death as a terrible tragedy, and Josep Tarradellas became the new President of the *Generalitat*. During the following years of Franco’s dictatorship, Catalan self-government quietly persisted. Still, Franco and his authorities outwardly rejected Catalan expressions of language and culture. They especially repressed students and workers, and continued to show acts of violence towards opposition groups. Franco imprisoned thousands, so much that the *Modelo* prison in Barcelona, meant to accommodate 800, held 15,000 prisoners. Franco’s government reported 270,719 prisoners in 1940, but the real numbers were, without a doubt, much higher. In Spanish concentration camps at the time, the figures are even more alarming. Some historians report 400,000 people in 200 camps in the country, others up to 700,000 people. Officials and honest citizens were taken from their homes and forced to live in terrible conditions, facing torture and the fear of death with each new day (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:115-17).

Under Franco’s rule, Catalonia was no longer autonomous, and the use of the Catalan language and even Catalan names were forbidden. The dictator systematically suppressed any indicators of Catalan national distinctiveness. It could even be said that Francoists had a particular hatred for the region; discussion circulated about removing all industry from Catalonia and reducing the economy to an agrarian one. The regime interpreted any signs of Catalanism,

such as the Catalan language and culture, as separatism, and quickly smothered them (McRoberts 2001:46).

In 1960, Franco launched an international campaign to promote Spanish identity. In doing so, he intended not only unify all of Spain by constructing a singular Spanish identity, but also to broadcast this representation to the global community. Franco created an unrealistic image to market to foreign tourists that was not an accurate depiction of the country's cultural diversity. As Dorothy Kelly from the University of Granada puts it:

When in the 1960s the tourist slogan 'Spain is Different' was launched, the intention was to attract tourists to an 'exotic' destination, with interesting local customs and traditions differing from the European norm. [...] This slogan fits well with the Franco regime's deliberate effort to promote, both internally and externally, positive constructions of Spanishness as opposed to negative versions [...] the corrupting influence of foreign ideas imported by the internal "other," the left, the working classes, and other opposition groups (2000:30).

Franco's campaign emphasized Spanish cultural symbols, such as bullfights, Flamenco dancing, and *siestas*. It marketed the Mediterranean sun and sea to encourage foreign investments and advance the tourism economy. The only permissible political party, The General Secretary of the National Movement, also used international sports as a platform to show Spanish "passion" and virility (Krüger 2003:128). While the "Spanish is Different" campaign was successful, it was an inaccurate representation of Franco's authoritarian regime; it veiled the oppression and reclusion the country endured over 20 years of an isolating dictatorship.

As they have done for centuries, Catalans continued to preserve symbols of their identity during Franco's regime. The Catalan sense of ethno-nationality was intentional and resilient. While speaking Catalan was against the law, families kept the language alive behind closed

doors. Many Catalans also kept their own private libraries and continued to read and share Catalan literature. Organizations emerged to promote their culture, many under the governance of the Catalan Catholic Church. There were excursionist clubs, choral groups, literary movements, cinema organizations, alumni associations, and more. The variety of social, professional, cultural, and intellectual groups that succeeded despite authoritarian rule contributed to the preservation and affirmation of Catalan identity during a time of intense Castilianization (Llobera 1996:193).

Post-Francoist Spain

Spain and Catalonia survived Franco's rule. When the dictator died on November 20, 1975, Catalan culture, language, and identity were still in use, and many Catalans even believed that Catalonia was its own nation. New leaders emerged to replace the leaders of the Spanish Second Republic, and democracy took hold.

A general election held by the Spanish Parliament in 1978 legitimized the first democratic Constitution of Spain. The document decentralized the Spanish state by recognizing nationalities and regions throughout different "autonomous communities." These communities, each with their own national identity and geographic region, were granted the "right to autonomy," but this definition was ambiguous (McRoberts 2001:60). In 1979, Catalonia passed its second Statute of Autonomy. This version governed relations between Spain and the *Generalitat de Catalunya* and established institutions that would pave the way for the country's future. Years later in 2006, the Statute passed a referendum and the *Generalitat* secured even more authority (Krüger 2003:131).

Since the start of post-Francoist era and the rise of democracy in Spain, Catalan has been the official language (along with Castilian) in Catalonia. The *Generalitat de Catalunya*, re-established by the Catalan Statute of Autonomy, protected and encouraged the use of Catalan after the language was suppressed for so many years. The governing institution passed two acts regarding language differentiation in Catalonia (Gore 2002:92-3). The first, the Linguistic Normalization Act, passed in 1983 and intended to increase the legality, public knowledge, and practice of Catalan. The second, the Linguistic Policy Act of 1998, focused on use of the language. Its goal was to “normalize” Catalan in public and private areas such as education, media, administration, cultural, and economic enterprises (*Generalitat de Catalunya* 2001:11)

As a result of these two laws, Catalonia saw many improvements. In 1990, the well-known Pompeu Fabra University opened in Barcelona as a public university dedicated to democracy, equality, plurality, and other pillars of civic engagement. Later that year, Ramon Llull University, named after the famous 14th century Catalan writer, opened as the first private university in Catalonia (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:130-131). Catalan language media also advanced. Two broadcast stations surfaced in the 1980s and quickly became popular to Catalan listeners: The *Corporació Catalana de Ràdio i Televisió* and the *Catalunya Ràdio*. In the sports world, Barcelona hosted the 1992 Summer Olympics, and received the most global attention since Franco’s “Spain is Different” campaign. This reintroduction to the international community encouraged the city to place more emphasis on sports and continue to improve its cultural infrastructure. The Olympic-Ring complex was named after *Sant Jordi*, the patron saint of Catalonia. Other important cultural inaugurations at this time included the Barcelona Contemporary Art Museum (1995), the Museum of the History of Catalonia (1996), the Teatre

Nacional de Catalunya (1997), and the National Art Museum of Catalonia (2004) (Sobrequés and Callicó 2012:131-32).

As an autonomous region of Spain, Catalonia not only had a president, Parliament, and government, but also more expansive government entities, such as its Advisory Board and Committee, Catalan High Court, and Public Defense offices. Democracy in Spain led to improved municipal life in Catalonia. Media, institutions, and cultural enterprises were on the rise, and by the 21st century, the Spanish state fully integrated successful democratic practices after the end of Franco's regime.

Contemporary Catalonia

September 11 is the National Day of Catalonia, a date that commemorates the fall of Barcelona during the War of Succession and the resulting loss of Catalan institutions and laws. Since this day in 1714, Catalonia has been a part of the national Kingdom of Spain. On the national day (also called the *Diada*) in 2012, a massive pro-independence demonstration flooded the streets of Barcelona. One and a half million people stood behind a banner that read *Catalonia: New State in Europe*. This historic march was coordinated by the Catalan National Assembly, an organization formed in 2011 with the single goal of Catalan independence (Castro 2013:14).

After one-fifth of Catalonia's population demonstrated for independence from Spain, Catalonia held what it hoped would be its last "Autonomous Community" elections on November 25, 2012. The elections were an opportunity for Catalan political parties to clearly distinguish their positions. Around 60% of eligible voters cast their ballots, and results showed

that a majority of Catalans wanted a sovereign state. As quoted in *What's Up with Catalonia? : The Causes Which Impel Them to the Separation*, Carme Forcadell Lluís, the President of the Catalan National Assembly at the time, described the regional objective:

Catalans are excited and hopeful for the future, because, for the first time, we are in reach of a dream that so many Catalans share: that we can recover the freedom that we lost almost 300 years ago. The Spanish state has said that we cannot hold a referendum, that we cannot decide our own future because it is illegal, because Spanish laws don't allow it. Indeed, many of these Spanish laws, the Constitution included, were made expressly so Catalans could not decide our own future. They were created to suppress the minority (2013:16-17).

Catalonia started to gain momentum, and after the *Diada* celebration on September 11, 2012, the date became an annual day of demonstration among Catalan separatists. Two citizen associations worked to coordinate marches for the following years. In 2013, protestors created a human chain that spread across Catalonia; the chain alluded to a similar one formed when Baltic republics of the Soviet Union called for independence from Moscow years ago. During the 2014 *Diada*, the Catalan demonstration formed a seven-mile-long *V* for “vote” in Barcelona. In 2015, the march took the form of an arrow. In 2016, the *Diada* protests expanded to take place in five other cities in addition to Barcelona. These recent marches were all coordinated by two popular citizen groups. The first, Òmnium Cultural, was established in 1961 with the goal of protecting and promoting the Catalan language and culture. The second, the Catalan National Assembly, formed in 2012 and supports the Catalan Republic (Minder 2017:4-5).

Despite the history of the modern Catalan separatist movement, unionist groups and politicians have not been swayed by their demonstrations. One such group, *Societat Civil Catalana* (Catalan Civic Society), positions themselves as an organization against Catalan independence, but for negotiations and cooperation between Spain and Catalonia. Their motto is

juntos y mejor, “better, together.” Many politicians believe that Spain’s infrastructure and economy need improvement, but that the solution is not separatism, rather, unity. Still, since the pro-independence *Diada* on September 11, 2012, the Spanish agenda considers Catalan secession a top priority (Minder 2017:19).

On October, 1, 2017, the Catalan government held its most recent referendum for independence, and the events that followed laid the foundation for the modern movement. The Spanish Constitutional Court deemed the vote unconstitutional, but Catalonia was steadfast. Only of 43% of eligible voters (2.02 million Catalans) turned out to vote, however, 90% of them backed independence. Since the Spanish Court banned the referendum, authorities flooded the voting polls. Riot police charged crowds with batons and rubber bullets and shutdown 92 polling stations. By the end of the referendum, around 800 civilians needed medical attention due to police brutality. Carles Puigdemont, the President of Catalonia at the time, responded to the acts of Spanish police by stating, “The Spanish government has today written a shameful page in its history with Catalonia. Sadly it is not the first. Too often repression and violence have been the state's response to Catalan aspirations.” President Puigdemont proclaimed the Catalan Republic, but the central government in Madrid, including the Spanish Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy, refused to recognize the referendum, or the proclamation, as legitimate (*The Local* 2017).

Ten days after the independence referendum, Puigdemont and his pro-independence political allies signed a declaration officially claiming Catalonia as its own, independent, state. Puigdemont suspended the implementation of independence until the October 27, 2017, when the Catalan Parliament approved the motion to declare a republic in a narrow majority of 70 to 10 votes. Immediately, the Spanish Senate granted Madrid permission to impose direct rule over

Catalonia. According to Article 155 of the Spanish Constitution, “if an Autonomous Community... acts in a way seriously prejudicing the general interests of Spain, the Government... [may] take the appropriate measures necessary in order to compel the latter forcibly to meet said obligations” (Spanish Const. 1978. Article 155). So, Spain had direct rule over Catalonia and its institutions; again, Catalan autonomy ceased.

Mariano Rajoy dissolved the Catalan Parliament and formally removed Carles Puigdemont and other executives from their positions. Leaders of the movement faced imprisonment or exile, and Puigdemont fled to Brussels after facing charges of rebellion against the Spanish State. The Spanish government called for snap-elections, but pro-independence parties still won the majority.

After the October 2017 referendum, Catalonia was irate at how the central government disregarded their democracy and was arguably the most active in decades of the secessionist movement. Nearly a year later on the 2018 *Diada*, Catalans gathered once again, but this time in commemoration of the referendum. Since then, Socialist Pedro Sánchez replaced Mariano Rajoy in the central government, and Catalonia found a new Nationalist head: Republican Quim Torra. When the new leaders were sworn in June 2018, Spain lifted its direct-rule over the region, leading to a less tense relationship between Spain and Catalonia (Fotheringham 2018).

Conclusion

We may not know for decades to come whether the unionists and separatists can ever reach a solution on which they can both agree. In recent history, pro-independent parties went against the Spanish Constitution to declare independence unilaterally, an unarguably illegal

action. Despite this, the violent and imposing responses taken by Spanish officials to squelch self-determination, both of a region and of its civilians, leaves the Catalan people feeling stripped of their humanity and right to democracy.

The consequences of continued disagreement and cluttered dialogue will only continue to deepen division between the Spanish and Catalans, and in the next chapters, I discuss the cultural expression of these divisions. As the situation continues to develop in real time, multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism, as a result of globalism, both influence how the Catalan identity exists in an ever-changing society. I do not focus on the causes of the disagreement between unionists and separatists, however, but rather on the cultural symbols that create a Catalan identity, which is, and has been for much of history, different than Spanish identity. As I have shown in this chapter, this identity has emerged from these historical moments, lasting through hundreds of years of oppression by the dominant, overbearing forces; first of *Hispania*, then of feuding monarchs, now of the Spanish nation. By looking deeply at this Catalan culture, its components, and its present-day performance through cultural symbols, we can understand more than just the reasons for independence, but also why Catalan identity remains important.

Chapter 2

Key Symbols of Catalan Identity I: Art, food, and sport

It is by no means a novel idea that each culture has certain key elements which, in an ill-defined way, are crucial to its distinctive organization...[they] include not only formal, usually named events, but also all those cultural sequences of action which we can observe enacted and reenacted according to unarticulated formulae in the normal course of daily life... key symbols may be discovered by virtue of a number of reliable indicators which point to cultural focus of interest. (Ortner 1973:1338).

In her article *On Key Symbols*, cultural anthropologist Sherry Ortner points out that different reoccurring themes run through each society. These themes, which she calls “key symbols,” but have also been named “focal values” (Albert 1956:221), or “dominant orientations,” (Kluckhohn 1950:376) are fundamental to human social life. Symbols, Ortner argues, represent social values and are essential to the construction of cultural conceptions (1973:338). Meaning attached to key symbols, whether such symbols are images, practices, or ideas, makes up the greater culture which they belong to. Symbols create the “web of significance” Geertz defines as culture (1973:311).

In my fieldwork, I noticed several key symbols within Catalan culture. Publicly, I saw people carrying out their lives in ways that were rich with significance and uniquely expressive. Victor Turner believes symbols help anthropologists draw connections in an ethnographic narrative, and that anthropology is the articulation of a culture’s symbolic systems (1980:167). In my ethnographic research, I clung to these symbols, and dug into *why* they were significant. I observed how Catalans lived them, taught them, and discussed them with one another and with outsiders like me - all in search of an ethnographic narrative that captured the voices of Catalan

identity to frame the present independence movement. What I realized after five months in the field, was that Catalan cultural symbols are distinct, having little to no resemblance to the cultural symbols that most people identify as representing the modern nation-state of Spain.

My search for common was simple because they were public and easily accessible. My fieldwork revealed six key symbols that I observed, and my informants felt, were unique to Catalonia. The first three I will address in this chapter, as they correspond to one another as daily cultural symbols that are practiced or experienced by an individual in society. They are food, art, and sports in Catalonia. In the following chapter, I will discuss symbols of knowledge, and reveal how Catalan culture is intentionally preserved and taught through tradition, language, and nationalist displays. The key symbols I describe in these two chapters create an identity that is uniquely *Catalan*, not *Spanish*.

Catalan Food Tradition

Catalonia has a great culinary personality inspired by its history. Catalonia is Mediterranean and has been influenced by the passing of the Greeks and Romans, and also of Italy and France, and has managed to absorb the best of each. Our cuisine has common ingredients, including a variety of garden products: tomatoes, garlic, vegetables, onions, legumes and all kinds of fruits. There is a great variety of products from the sea and the mountains. The kitchen is geography, history and culture. To taste our local food is the same as walking through the customs of all of Catalonia, of which we are very proud (Mercè 2018. Translation by the author).

When I envisioned my time in Catalonia, Spain, I thought I knew the food and drink I should expect: *paella*, *churros*, *sangría*, and plenty of *jamón ibérico* (Iberian ham). In my mind, I imagined Catalan cuisine would be similar to Spanish cuisine. Was this because of Franco's "Spain is different" campaign, when the dictator tried to group an entire country under one cultural umbrella (Kelly 2000:30)? Perhaps. Before my fieldwork, I only anticipated expanding

my palate to these few foods that I thought represented the whole of Spain. But Barcelona had much more than that. While the cosmopolitan city offered foods from all around the world, I quickly discovered several local dishes my host mother prepared that were different, more typical Catalan plates originating from a unique agricultural society.

Fideuà amb allioli

Fideuà was my favorite Catalan dish. Deriving from the catalan word *fideuada*, meaning "large amount of noodles," this plate is similar to *paella* in that it is cooked in a wide, flat frying pan and often served with seafood. The difference is that it is served with pasta noodles instead of rice. *Fideuà* originates from Valencia, Spain, which is not a part of Catalonia but an adjacent coastal region that also fell under the crown of Aragon when Spain was divided into monarchs. Valencia's cultural proximity lead to Catalonia adopting the dish, and while it is served in other areas of Spain, my informants felt that it was symbolic of Catalonia. My host mother, Mercè, made *fideuà* often, sometimes without seafood and just with *allioli*, a local Mediterranean garlic and oil sauce, sometimes called "Catalan ketchup" (Andrews 1997:23). When we had guests, my host mother prepared the meal with seafood, like in the second picture below, and served it in a wide pan in a decorative fashion.



Figure 2.1: *Fideuà* dishes prepared by my host mother. Left, without seafood. Right, with seafood and fixed for guests. 2018. Photographs by the author.

Calçotada

Within the first few weeks of my study abroad program, my class traveled to Tarragona, Catalonia, the old Roman capital of Spain. There, we ate a traditional Catalan dinner, a *Calçotada*. The name of this culinary custom derives from *calçots*, a large type of scallion that originates from Tarragona. The meal began with these white onions, charred to perfection. We peeled back the stalks of the *calçots* and dipped them in romesco sauce, a paste of nuts, garlic, oil, and peppers, also from Tarragona. Then, trays filled with grilled meat, potatoes, and artichokes emerged. As we enjoyed the assorted trays, we drank red wine from a *porrón*, a glass bottle shaped like a watering can. We tilted the spout towards our mouths, as per tradition, and slowly increased the distance, creating a fountain of wine to drink.



Figure 2.2: Part of the *Calçotada* served to study-abroad students in Tarragona, Catalonia. Left is the plate with grilled meat, potatoes, and artichokes. Right is the *porrón* used to pour the wine. 2018. Photographs by the author.

Cava

Cava is Catalan sparkling wine. It essentially tastes like Champagne (which has French origins), but its production takes place exclusively in Penedès, a small coastal region in Catalonia. *Cava* is a celebratory and traditional drink that I only drank on occasion while in Barcelona. The picture below shows my host father with a bottle of *cava* on a night when we had guests for dinner. On a different evening, I had *cava sagnia* (cava sangria), a similar drink to Spanish sangria, except with a Catalan twist. *Cava sagnia* is white, not red like Spanish sangria. Red is a color used to represent the Spanish state.



Figure 2.3: My host father pours a glass of cava for guests. We pair the drink with *fideuà* with seafood (See Figure 2.1). 2018. Photograph by the author.

In *Catalan Cuisine: Europe's Last Great Culinary Secret*, Catalan culinary author Ferrán Agulló highlights the distinctive nature of Catalan food culture. He writes:

Catalonia, just as it has a language, law, customs, its own history, and a political ideal, has a cuisine... Catalonia does have [a cuisine], and it has something else besides: a great power to assimilate the dishes of other cuisines, like the French and the Italian, making them its own and modifying them according to its own style and taste... Catalan cuisine is essentially natural; it is not expensive, and it is easy (1997:iix).

Catalan cuisine is, as Agulló puts it, open to external influences and still rooted in historic authenticity. Its origin dates back to Roman occupancy of the region, which lasted almost seven centuries. When the Visigoths and Moors invaded, and years later, the French and Italian merchants arrived, they brought with them culinary cultures that influenced traditional dishes

with different culinary characteristics (Andrews 1997:1-2). Today, Catalans boast about their fresh and raw materials, whether seafood right off the coast, or local vegetables and grains. The food is accessible because it contains many basic ingredients. However, Catalan cuisine often uses unique pairings, such as salt cod with raisins, or chicken with prawns. Combinations such as these and plates that are specifically a part of tradition (like *calçots*) or celebration (like *cava*), or even large dishes that resemble Spanish cuisine but are uniquely Catalan (like *fideuà*) are what make the food culture in Catalonia a key symbol of the region.

Catalan Artists

Architects: Antoni Gaudí and Lluís Domènech i Montaner

The first artistic figure that most people think of when they think of Barcelona is Antoni Gaudí, the famous Catalan architect who designed *La Sagrada Família*. Gaudí was a highly unique and stylized Catalan Modernist artist who spent most of his life in Catalonia and established the majority of his work in Barcelona. *La Sagrada Família*, perhaps his most internationally renowned work, remains unfinished to this day. The original progress made by Gaudí before his death in 1926 is a depiction of the architect's concept of organic Gothic, with spires shooting to the sky like rising tree trunks. Towers added after Gaudí's death, however, do little to remember the famous Catalan figure. Because of new gnarled crucifixions and lack of detail, the church has fallen into recent criticism, becoming a symbol of the erasure of Catalan identity (Payne 2004:147-149).

When I first saw *La Sagrada Família*, the difference between the old and new was stark. Sharing the opinions of many of my informants, I agreed that Gaudí's original portion of the church looked more authentically Catalan, adhering to the traditional gothic style reminiscent of

the Romans. However, authenticity is not absolute, but rather up to individual interpretation. As Edward Bruner puts it, authenticity is not “inherent in an object, forever fixed in time; it is seen as a struggle, a social process, in which competing interests argue for their own interpretation of history” (1994:408). And so, *La Sagrada Familia* evokes feelings of authenticity as communicated by local Catalan people, who feel an attachment to their Roman past and the styles associated with it. The figures in the Nativity facade of the church reflect Gaudí’s connection with Roman Catholicism, and the nature and animal imagery demonstrate his appreciation for the landscape. *La Sagrada Familia* compels a strong connection to Catalan culture. In the context of the Catalan Gothic, Gaudí’s works are a part of a “continuing regional tradition which valued the internalization of static forces, an economy of materials, and a clear conception of pure geometric forms” (Beddall 1975:58-59). In addition to *La Sagrada Familia*, these characteristics are recognizable in many of Gaudí’s other buildings in Barcelona.

Casa Batlló is located in the city center, only a few blocks from *Plaza Catalunya*. The building is one of Gaudí’s most famous accomplishments, redesigned from a regular home by the artist in 1904. The flowing stone work and mosaic facade of this masterpiece evoke feelings of fantasy, and a famous “reading” of the building sees the design as a symbolic representation of a tale of *Sant Jordi*, the patron Saint of Catalonia. The green, “bulging roof” becomes the back of a dragon that the saint has slain; the gaping window balconies of the building are the skulls of the dragon’s victims (Payne 2004:139). By associating his architecture with a traditional Catalan legend, Gaudí connects artistic culture to Catalanism. *Casa Batlló* is an example of how his work merges playful structural symbolism with the Catalan identity.

Casa Milà, also called *La Pedrera* (The Quarry), is another notable building by Gaudí. Its design motif is of a wave, and the uneven shape of the complex reflects *Modernisme*, a Catalan modernist movement that emphasized dynamic curvature and asymmetry over traditional views of art at the time (Payne 2004:146-147).



Figure 2.4: Two of Gaudí's most recognized architectural works. Left is the *Casa Batlló* decorated with red roses on *Dia de Sant Jordi*. Right is the *Casa Milà*, lit up at night. 2018. Photographs by the author.

Lluís Domènech i Montaner is another *modernisme* architect whose works are well known in Barcelona. Two of his structures, *Hospital de Sant Pau* and *Palau de la Música Catalana*, are now recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and during my fieldwork I had the opportunity to visit the astonishing *Hospital de Sant Pau*. While the building is no longer used for medical purposes, it is open for visitors to walk through its halls, imagining what it might have been full of doctors and patients. The face of the hospital looks regal (pictured

below) with separate pavilions surrounded by gardens and connected through underground passageways. Like Gaudí, Domènech i Montaner used decorative stone, ceramic, and mosaic. The *Hospital de Sant Pau* leaves its visitors with a feeling of comfort, which was likely intentional given the building's original purpose.



Figure 2.5: Front entrance to the *Hospital de Sant Pau* designed by *modernisme* architect Lluís Domènech i Montaner. 2018. Photograph by the author.

Painters: Salvador Dalí, Joan Miró, and Pablo Picasso

In addition to the monumental architecture of Gaudí and Domènech i Montaner, there are also globally acclaimed painters who called Catalonia home. Salvador Dalí, Joan Miró, and Pablo Picasso were all 20th century artists who were either born or spent most of their lives in this region. In Barcelona, there are entire museums dedicated to Picasso and Miró, and just a short train-ride outside the city Salvador Dalí's museum is open in Figueres, Catalonia, the artist's hometown.

Pablo Picasso was born in southern Spain, but discovered in Barcelona. His first exhibit opened in a small cafe named *Quatre Gats* (Four Cats), and from that moment he was characterized as painting “to the most exaggerated *Modernisme*” (Robinson et al. 2006:80). *Quatre Gats* was tucked away tavern that served as a meeting place for progressive artists and intellectuals. It is still open today, and as I walked by one evening, almost missing it, I saw that it was crowded with people.



Figure 2.6: Sketch by Pablo Picasso of artist and intellectuals gathered around a table at *Quatre Gats*. Picasso placed himself in the foreground. (Read 1978:199)

The Picasso Museum was inaugurated in Barcelona in 1963. Years later in 1974, Salvador Dalí helped to create the museum in Figueres that now houses his most influential works. Dalí was a surrealist painter who was known for the striking and sometimes unsettling images in his art. Today, both his and Picasso’s museums are two of the most popular museums in Catalonia, with over a million visitors each year (Sobrequés i Callicó 2012:123).

One year after the opening of Dalí’s museum, Joan Miró began the Miró Foundation to display the artist’s own impressive works. Miró, a Barcelona native, was another universal

Catalan artist, famous for his painting and sculptures and his abstract use of shape and color (2012:124). Picasso, Dali, and Miró are significant to Catalan identity because their work contributes to the cultural infrastructure that grew out of a post-Francoist era. During the second half of the 20th century, during democratic Spain, these artists and many others thrived under a less restrictive state.



Figure 2.7: One of Joan Miró's work on display in the Miró Foundation: *Tapis de la Fundació* (1979). 2018. Photograph by Owen Parent.

Music and Separatism

Modern music, another form of artistic expression, is what I expected it to be in Barcelona. Popular artists and American music reflect the cosmopolitan nature of the city. Reggatón is mainstream in Barcelona nightlife, and most of the music I heard was either in English or Castilian. One weekend it was different, and I finally heard music in Catalan. When my roommate and I traveled to Girona, a city and major province in Catalonia, we saw a live performance of a local Catalan band.

The group calls themselves *CUITS*. The concert had a smaller crowd but everyone was invested; the band was playing to benefit local organizations. The square where *CUITS* performed was named *Plaça 1 d'Octubre* in homage to the disputed 2017 independence referendum.

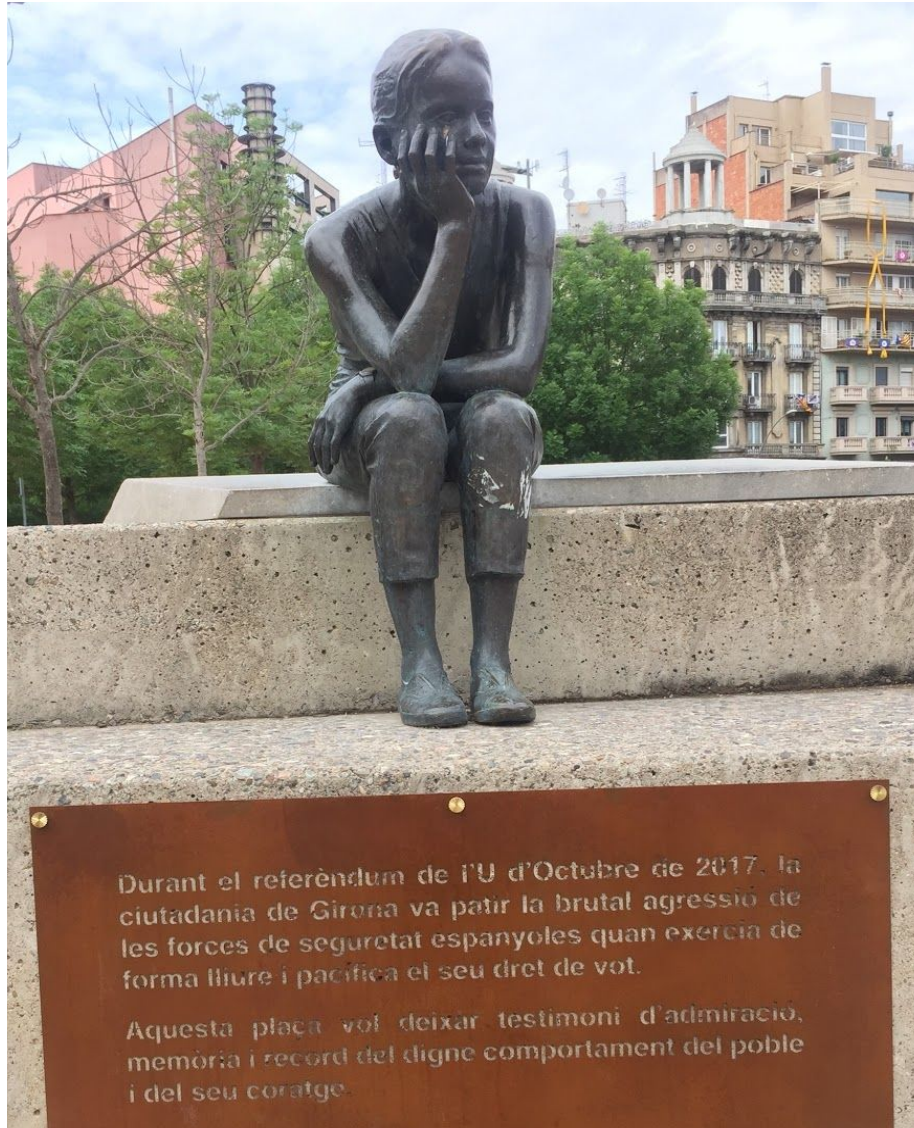


Figure 2.8: A statue and plaque renaming the plaza in Girona *Plaça 1 d'Octubre*. The new name symbolizes rejection to police repression and support of democracy and the Catalan Republic. 2018. Photograph by the author.

As I listened to the lyrics in Catalan, I was moved by a resonant feeling of Catalan pride in the plaza, and also a feeling of positivity and inclusivity. When I returned home, I connected with the band on social media and asked if they stood with the Catalan independence movement. I wanted to know how their music as an art form represented not just their own Catalan identity,

but also the message they were sending to their fans and all who may hear them, even two young Americans who just happened to be passing by. This was their response:

Most, if not all, of our members of our band are separatists and we try to convey, though sometimes not always directly and concisely but with metaphors or other lyrical forms, our full support to Catalan independence for various reasons, whether social relevance, cultural, economic, etc.

Yet not all of our lyrics speak of independence, since we are a band that always tries to convey a message of social criticism either in the Catalan countries or anywhere in the world because we believe in democracy, equal justice for all, and human dignity.

As to whether we explicitly perform acts of support for independence, yes, no doubt, we have participated in independence party acts, and given voice to those individuals who need it through the means we have... Although as I've mentioned before, independence itself it is not the main concern of the group nor the only motive. We want democracy, social improvement, dignity and justice for the people (*CUITS* 2018, translation by the author).

Whether Catalan art takes the form of paintings by influential locals, architectural masterpieces that fill the streets with vibrancy and movement, or modern musical groups with separatist ties, it is an expressive medium that creates and celebrates Catalan identity. Art as a key symbol takes many different shapes in Catalonia, yet no matter its origin or intention, the mediums and styles are unique to Catalonia and connected to Catalan identity.

Sports in Catalonia

Sports are related to the idea of a nation (Sergi 2018).

When analyzing cultural symbols, sports traditions and origins play a key role in the creation of contemporary Catalan identity. If you ask any Catalan what sport matters the most to them, chances are they will tell you *futbol*, or as Americans call it, soccer. More than just the

sport, however, they will tell you *Barça*, referring to the *Futbol Club Barcelona*. F.C. Barcelona represents Catalanism and garners strong local support, especially during waves of separatism. The Olympics are also significant, as the Olympic Games of 1992 were held in Barcelona and marked an important day in history for the city, and more importantly, for Catalonia, to be noticed by the emerging world. Additionally, before F.C. Barcelona and even before the Olympic games, there was a traditional sport form in Catalonia known as the *castells*, or human towers. In Catalonia today, teams of *castellers* perform publicly at festivals or in the streets, climbing on one-another's shoulders to form towers up to 50 feet in height.

Castells: Human Towers

The *castells* are the oldest of the notable sports-forms in Catalan society. *Castells*, literally meaning castles, are deeply rooted in Catalan tradition and have been practiced by Catalans for over 200 years. The exact date is unknown, but they developed in Tarragona, Catalonia, sometime in the 1800s (Kammerer 2014:62). For the formation of each *castell*, members of the troupe climb on one another and stand on shoulders; they add people to the human "castle" layer by layer while collectively balancing and supporting the structure. To hear about such a feat was unbelievable, and I never imagined I would see it in person, much less be a part of one. During my fieldwork, I participated twice in building a *castell*.

The first time was with my study-abroad program. We traveled to a training facility in Tarragona, a city in Catalonia that was once a Roman capital where the cultural performance originated. In a recreational practice room, my peers and I watched as the base formed and bodies stacked effortlessly. The formation of the base started as a cluster of individuals standing

on a padded floor, then with each layer the size of those climbing got smaller and smaller, until the top of the castell was a child who could not have been more than 5 years in age. The youngest troupe members wore helmets, but I still felt nervous as they scaled the tower to heights of five storeys. The first time I was a part of the base. One Catalan man pulled me into their troupe and I felt bodies press firmly against mine. The participants instructed me to keep my head down and use my arms and shoulders to secure the base member directly in front of me. With my head to the floor, I saw nothing and only felt the wavering energy pulsing through the tower as we all did our parts to find balance and strength. It wasn't until I heard cheering that I knew the child had made it to the top and completed the tower.

My second experience with *castells* was three months later. Near *Plaça de Catalunya*, the city's main plaza, was a cultural celebration that included four troupes of *castellers*. The street was packed with spectators as I slowly made my way towards the base of the towers. There, I met my friend Pere, who was a member of the troupe *Els Minyons*. He invited me to join their tower, and before I realized what was happening, I found myself once again surrounded by strangers, head tucked and feet planted, using all my strength to keep a sturdy base as members of *Els Minyons* cinched their way to the top.



Figure 2.9: Left is a team of *castellers* forming a human tower on the street *Portal de l'Angel* near the main plaza, *Plaça de Catalunya*. The celebration took place after a political demonstration during which half a million people marched the streets earlier that day. 2018. Photograph by the author.

Pere invited me to observe a practice later that week so I could better understand the technique and purpose of *castells*. I traveled outside Barcelona to the east central region of Terrassa, where I walked through smaller city streets to meet Pere at a large, traditional theatre. Near the theatre, I saw a sticker on a stop sign that was a symbol of protest.



Figure 2.10: The numbers “155” refer to Article 155 of the Spanish Constitution, the article the Spanish government enacted after the 2017 referendum to assert direct rule over Catalonia and end Catalan autonomy. The sticker placement on a stop-sign evokes the reading: “stop Article 155.” 2018. Photograph by the author.

Pere took me inside the theatre and the space transformed. It looked similar to the recreational area in Tarragona, only this time I was the only American student among some 100 Catalans. I observed all the activity while Pere explained to me how *castells* are built. He said that in order to complete a tower successfully, the *castellers* must assemble and disassemble completely without any falls. To signal completion, the topmost *casteller*, often a young child, raises his or her first in the air. In the theatre, I saw children climbing the towers who were as young as 4 years old. Older adults, some who were in their 70s, made up the base, called the *pinya*. There was an indoor practice area with padded floors and two layers of netting 4-5 meters up. Pere told me that this was to practice the top few layers of a tower without a large *pinya*. As we kept walking, he took me to the outdoor practice space. The open-air studio had the same padded floors and there were *castellers* practicing different towers. One man was calling out different formations and guiding the *castellers* as they assembled the towers. This was the band

leader, the *cap de colla*. Pere told me that the same *castellers* practice the same formations so they get used to doing it together. He said they only make mistakes and/or fall every 4 out of 100 times.

Over the sounds of the *cap de colla* calling out formations, Pere leaned to me and shared that the *Els Minyons* troupe do not participate in *castells* competitions. He explained the reason being they do not think that building human towers is a sport, but a display of Catalan culture. The troupe call practices *ensayos* (essays) instead of *entrenamientos* (trainings) and after each tower, they call the attempt a *prueba* (test). By these linguistic choices, *Els Minyons* creates a refined culture that values the tradition as a part of Catalan identity to be respected. Other *collas*, however, do compete with their *castells*.

In an analysis of Catalan cultural festivals, Nina Krammermer calls a group of *castellers* a “troupe” instead of a “team” to capture the “essential performance dimension of [the] spectacles” (2014:62). I have adopted this term to describe the *collas*, but do not entirely dismiss the sport element of the building of the towers. Certain *collas* choose to compete, while others, like *Els Minyons*, do not. In my interpretation, the distinction between Catalan sport as a competition versus a cultural celebration is arbitrary because the sport itself, the object of interest, is symbolic of Catalan identity and representative of the region and its culture.

Regardless of whether or not a *colla* competes, they all have have the shared goal of preserving a long-standing tradition. During an interview in Fall 2018, Pere elaborated on how *castells* are symbols of Catalan culture:

Maren: What do you think is important for Catalan culture and for its preservation? How do *castells* represent this?

Pere: Above all, the *castells* are born from the people of the town. It is the people who participate in the towers and make the culture and tradition of them continue.

Maren: Do you think there is a risk of losing this tradition?

Pere: I think at the moment, no. Because it is passed on from older people to young people, from parents to children. It is a part of *Festa Major* (Barcelona holiday) and I cannot imagine the *Festa Major* without *castells*.

Maren: Besides the *castells* and other symbols of culture and tradition, what is the significance of Catalan identity?

Pere: Cultural roots. When, for example, a tree is rooted, it is strong. And when I say rooted, I put this idea at a social and cultural level, of [Catalan] society as a whole. In each area of Spain, there are different cultural symbols that are specific to those areas. Here in Catalonia, we value the practices of our own tradition and culture (2018, translation by the author).

In February 2019, *Els Minyons* participated in a demonstration to protest a trial in Madrid for the political prisoners who were arrested after the 2017 referendum in, twelve Catalan politicians who have been awaiting trial for over a year, or fled Spain in exile. This public rejection represents Catalan frustration with the treatment of their people. The act of participation by a *colla de castellers* is a display of Catalan tradition and a celebration of key cultural symbols during a period in history when their autonomy and rights to democracy are in question.



Figure 2.11: This photo demonstrates that Catalan culture and independence are inextricably linked in Catalonia. The troupe *Els Minyons* built human towers to protest the imprisonment of Catalan officials charged with rebellion. 2019. Photograph by *Terrassa Digital*.

Pere contacted me one week after the protest to tell me the *Els Minyons* headquarters were attacked. Only the outside of the building was damaged, but Pere was upset that their peaceful demonstration was met with targeted violence. My host mother told me that the independence movement in Catalonia is named *la revolució de sonrisas*, “the revolution of smiles.” Violence is not an inherent trait of Catalan opposition to the Spanish state. Catalans pride themselves of this, unlike the Basques, who are known for violence. The ETA, *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* (Basque Homeland and Liberty), is a Basque opposition group that launched a terrorist campaign against Western Europe in pursuit of Basque independence from Spain (Paddy 2001:1). While Catalan separatism is not immune to extremist individuals, their movement has long been a peaceful protest and is understood by its supporters in that way.

Futbol Fans

Over seventy years ago, Catalan sports traditions (among other key symbols) were silenced and controlled under Franco's dictatorship. In 1941, Franco signed a decree that created the Nationalist Sports Delegation to the Traditionalist Falange, a fascist party in Spain that joined Franco's movement. This decree had one primary goal: to use the scope of international sports in Spain to promote the virility of the nation, a characteristic of Franco's "Spain is different" campaign. Real Madrid was a team of centralist superiority meant to broadcast unity. However, *football* (soccer) was regionalist, and as Real Madrid gained global acclaim as a vehicle for Francoist Spain, regional teams, such as *Athlétic Bilbao* or *Futbol Club de Barcelona*, developed and emerged with political gestures of opposition (González Aja and Stumm 2003:127-130).

Still today, *Futbol Club de Barcelona* (FCB) is symbolic of more than just the regional soccer team of Catalonia. As their motto states, they are: *mes que un club*, "more than a club." On the team's official page, the institution presents itself as a professional, stylistic, and value-driven organization of over 144,000 members, that, "without forgetting [their] roots in Barcelona and [their] Catalan identity and culture, [is] open to the world" (Fcbarcelona.com 2017, translation by the author).

FCB is a key symbol of Catalan cultural identity. Publicly and privately, many Catalan citizens follow and support the soccer team as they compete in Spain's two main leagues, *La Liga* and *Copa del Rey*, the European Champions League, and other minor leagues. My host parents were devout fans, and every game night, we took our dinner to the television room to watch Lionel Messi, Luís Suárez, Gerard Piqué, and others play for the regional team. My host

mother was too anxious to watch with us, so she would sit quietly in her room until the game ended. If FCB, also called *Barça*, scored, my host father would rush to the other room to share the news. This was ritual for the two of them every evening the team played.

For my sports class, I visited the F.C. Barcelona museum, which is attached to *Barça*'s home stadium, *Camp Nou*, and gained insight into the origins and successes of the team. Born out of a Catalan soccer school named *La Masia*, or "The Farmhouse," FCB has local roots that go back for centuries. *La Masia* began as a simple farm in 1702 and years later, in the late 1980s, it became the youth soccer academy of Barcelona. The philosophy of play adopted from *La Masia*, called "tiki taka," is characterized by short passing and movement and has led to many successes for the FCB. Over the past 40 years, *La Masia* has trained well over 500 youth in Catalonia, some of whom go on to play for FCB, like the legendary Lionel Messi (Chopra 2013:47). Today, it is considered one of the elite training academies of the world and is symbolic of the Catalan athletic and regional pride.

Supporters of F.C. Barcelona feel loyalty to the club in the same way they feel loyalty to their Catalan identity. FCB promotes Catalanism. The official language of F.C. changed from Castilian to Catalan early in its development (Spaaj 2006:279), and the Catalan national flag appears on both the team crest and certain jerseys. It is also proudly displayed in the museum and by fans during games. When I attended a game at *Camp Nou*, the home stadium of FCB, the seats rippled with hundreds of *senyeres* - the Catalan flag with four red and yellow stripes, based on the coat of arms of the Crown of Aragon. I also saw independence flags, in Catalan named *esteladas*, which are flown to support Catalan nationalism and separatism.

In this game, FCB faced an opponent from Spain's northern region, *Athletic Bilbao*. The entire stadium, which seats 100,000 people, was packed. I sat next to a man speaking Catalan, and asked him (in Castilian) if he supported Catalan independence. He said of course. I paused, then asked why, and he responded with a list of reasons: the economy, different cultures and languages, and the history of treatment from central Spain. When I asked if he thought the economy played the leading role in the separatist movement, he paused, and affirmatively said: *it's more than that*.

I stood for the entire game and rooted for FCB, feeling a sense of belonging and unity as I joined in those around me supporting the Catalan national team, and chimed in with the chants that echoed through the stadium. There were three main cheers that came from the crowd. My translations of them are as follows:

Most common cheer:

*Blaugrana al vent
un crit valent
tenim un nom el sap tothom:
Barça, Barça, Baaarça*

Blue and claret blowing in the wind
one valiant cry
We've got a name everyone knows:
Barça, Barça, Baaarça!

Independence cheer:

In-de, Independencia!

In-de-, Independence!

Anti-Madrid cheer:

*Madrid, cabrón, Saluda al campeón!

Boti, Boti, Boti!
Madridista qui no boti
eh, eh! eh, eh!*

Madrid, bastard, say hi to the
champions!
Jump, jump, jump! (fans jump)
Madridista, whoever doesn't jump,
eh, eh! eh, eh!

While F.C. Barcelona never explicitly makes anti-centrist political statements, they have expressed support of fair treatment of Catalonia and respect of their democratic rights. In September 2017, just before the Independence Referendum, the club released this statement:

In the wake of the events that have transpired in recent days and, especially, today, with regard to the current political situation in Catalonia, FC Barcelona, in remaining faithful to its historic commitment to the defense of the nation, to democracy, to freedom of speech, and to self-determination, condemns any act that may impede the free exercise of these rights. Therefore, FC Barcelona publicly expresses its support for all people, entities, and institutions that work to guarantee these rights. FC Barcelona, in holding the utmost respect for its diverse body of members, will continue to support the will of the majority of Catalan people, and will do so in a civil, peaceful, and exemplary way (Fcbarcelona.com 2017, translation by the author).

Not long after the referendum in October, I was traveling in Spain outside of Catalonia when I saw breaking news televised that an ex-director of FCB was suggesting the Club remove itself from the *Copa del Rey* tournament in an act of protest against the Spanish government enacting Article 155 and arresting Catalan politicians.



Figure 2.12: Sitting in a small cafe while traveling outside of Catalonia, I saw the headline: *Controversial Copa del Rey: An ex-director of Barça proposes [the team] doesn't play in the Copa del Rey final.* Though FCB is not political, this statement demonstrates how as a key symbol of Catalan identity, the team is used as a tool to defend Catalan autonomy. 2018.

Photograph and translation by the author.

FCB is not aligned with any particular political party, but they do express pride in Catalanism, as shown by management, self-branding, and fan-following. F.C. Barcelona has been a continuous key symbol of Catalan culture for over 100 years and has established itself as a marker of Catalan identity. Today, those who follow FCB feel a sense of belonging in the Catalan community; their support of *Barça* and dedication to its successes are inextricably connected to Catalan nationalism. Even for migrants who may not speak the Catalan language, the soccer team has been an “essential factor for social integration” (Minder 2017:270). As César García puts it, “to be a Barcelona fan you just have to say you are a Barcelona fan; you do not need to become a member or go to *Camp Nou*. And yet, at the same time, you are linked with what is arguably the main symbol of Catalonia” (2015:10).

1992 Olympics in Barcelona

Beyond the realm of European soccer, Catalonia was further introduced to the international sports stage during the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona. The first and only Olympic games hosted in the nation, this remarkable event was a chance for Catalonia to be seen by the world, and to define itself as a unique and autonomous region in Spain.

The Olympics of 1992 were one of the most successful modern Olympics, and after winning 22 medals, Spain established itself as a nation of athletic elitism. While soccer was and still is very important to the country as a whole, the achievement of hosting and winning so many games gave recognition to other sports in Spain and equally elevated levels of achievement (González Aja and Stumm 2003:133-35).

For Catalonia, a global and cultural culmination such as the Olympics drew attention to the modern resurgence of Catalanism. The Olympics are a display of globalism, yet the Olympics of 1992 in Barcelona, Catalonia was not superseded by the symbolic identity of the Spanish nation-state, as presuppositions about globalism may lead us to believe. Global divisions, like national competing Olympic teams, cause resurgences of minority cultures and what John Hargreaves calls “peripheral nationalisms” (2000:41). So, while athletes were representing the nation-state of Spain at the ‘92 games, Catalonia and Catalan culture emerged as the other, “peripheral,” local culture. The Olympics, which act as a “forum for intercultural communication and exchange on an unprecedented scale” (2000:53) became a spotlight on Catalan culture and identity, stimulating Catalan nationalism.

During the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, many people in the audience carried *senyeres* (Catalan flags) and displayed “freedom for Catalonia” slogans on T-shirts and banners during the inaugural ceremony (Hargreaves 2000:82). In the opening ceremony, performers invoked local traditions by building *castells* and dancing the national dance: the *sardana*. Catalan separatists appropriated the Olympic torch with even more symbols of Catalan identity, capitalizing on global media coverage.

My anthropology professor, Sergi, was involved with the organization of the 1992 Olympics, and he shared how global recognition at the event allowed Catalonia to redefine itself in the post-Franco era. In an interview in April 2019, he explained how the 1992 Olympics were symbolic of Catalanism:

Sergi: Barcelona took the [Olympics as an] opportunity to enter the global world after the bombings in the Spanish Civil War and more than 50 years of silence. Media and sports were the thing. Under the socialist government [Catalonia saw] a more democratic and tolerant society, [a more] accepting multicultural country. It seems that now fear and intolerance are taking us back to Franco times.

Maren: What role did you have in planning the ceremonies?

Sergi: I was on my mid twenties. Not a big role to be honest... Just organising, visiting sports facilities with TV crew in RTO (Radio Television Olímpica). And dealing with the world television companies.

Maren: I read that the world television covered the opening ceremony where there were many displays of Catalan culture/nationalism, like the *senyera*. Did you see this?

Sergi: Of course! There was a long debate about protocol. The kings were also there... And you know they are not welcome by lots of people. There were Catalan flags, but not many Spanish flags.

Conclusion

Key symbols of Catalan culture define the Catalan experience and shape public and shared practices of the Catalan people. Drawing on Ortner (1973:1338), I have shown that several reoccurring themes are central, and these images, practices, and ideas reflect the values and framework of conceptions that are important to a culture and its community - in this case, to Catalan culture and separatism. Key symbols carry meaning and in Catalonia they are linked to the independence movement. To Catalan communities, symbols of culture are significant to separatism because Catalans believe they were worth defending and they feel that their cultural expression differentiates them from Spain. Whether its a *calçotada* feast with sparkling *cava* to drink, the imaginative works of Gaudí and other *modernisme* artists that makeup the Barcelona landscape, or a F.C. Barcelona match against Real Madrid in Camp Nou, Catalans find ways to celebrate their own origins and traditions from day to day.

The key symbols I have discussed in this chapter - food, art, and sports - are examples of how the everyday expressions of culture create community that can be linked to feelings of

succession prevalent in Catalonia. Eating, appreciating, and supporting these Catalan symbols provide a sense of togetherness that strengthens Catalan identity. In the following chapter, I explore three additional symbols of knowledge to understand how Catalanism is taught, learned, and differentiated from Spain. Specifically, I discuss Catalan festivals/traditions, language, and nationalism.

Chapter 3

Key Symbols of Catalan Identity II: Knowledge of Festivals, Language, and Nationalism

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952:47).

Culture...consists in those patterns relative to behavior and the products of human action which may be inherited, that is, passed on from generation to generation (Parson 1949:8).

Cultural practices that derive from a shared history are important to the shaping of identities. They represent a sort of ancestral *belonging* to a unified collective; they give the individual a past to look back on and to purposefully preserve. Sherry Ortner defines key symbols as reoccurring themes and icons, and Kroeber and Kluckhohn place the center orbit of these cultural patterns around core values rooted in time. Attributing the key symbols of culture to a traditional past gives the culture a sense of security, and as Parson puts it, longevity. While Kroeber, Kluckhohn, and Parson predate the post-structuralist anthropologists that inform this ethnography - Geertz, Turner, Ortner, and others - they present a historically derived assemblage of culture that is reflective of how Catalans view their own culture and identity.

Cultural preservation is key to contemporary Catalan society, and much like many other distinct social groups, Catalans have their own traditions, language, and teachings that they want to preserve. However, unlike all other groups, Catalonia has a history of losing ownership and autonomy of its customs to outside or invading forces and most recently, to the Spanish state. Because of this, Catalans hold onto what makes them different and pass it on to future

generations. Catalan people communicate their knowledge and understanding of their cultural difference through the celebration of traditions and holidays, the preservation and use of the Catalan language, and the sharing of a national history and goals. Here, I will discuss these three practices as both key symbols and educational tools to promote the Catalan identity.

Catalan Festivals and Traditions

During my five-month stay in Barcelona, I participated in a number of Catalan traditions, including holiday celebrations. In this chapter, I will focus on the traditional practices of these holidays, demonstrating how they are constructed as uniquely Catalan. Social institutions such as the government and education recognize these holidays and festivals, so their significance reaches multiple layers of Catalan society and teaches the general public about Catalan identity.

Catalans do not celebrate holidays and festivals in a private way. As Dorothy Noyes explains in her chapter “Festivals Past and Futures in Catalonia,” the Catalan people are intentional and public in their performance of traditions. Since their cultural practices were banned under Franco’s regime, Catalan holidays are glorious displays of Catalan pride and preservation of culture. She writes, “Festival is a labor and participation is obligatory: a small culture cannot sustain itself through the quiet identification of individuals in a private space” (2016:227). Noyes describes the practices of Catalan festivals as obligatory because while having a minority culture in Spain, Catalans view their customs as an intentional method of self-preservation. The public and intergenerational nature of Catalan festivals nature makes this so.

Festivals are a primary vehicle of pedagogy in Catalonia. They teach children about tradition at a young age and engage the community's connection to ancestral practices. Holiday traditions are recurring, public, and shared practices that make Catalan culture available to everyone, aiding in its preservation within a Spanish nation with a dominant Spanish culture.

Carnaval and Festa Major

Two extremely popular Catalan holidays are *Carnaval* (Carnival) and *Festa Major* (Major Festival), winter and summer traditional processions. While these two holidays occur during different seasons, they are similar in that they are joyous celebrations of Catalan culture and involve public parades.

In Catalonia, *Carnaval* is also referred to as *Carnestoltes* after the shameless King of the Fools, *Carnestoltes*. For a week in late February or early March, general merrymaking precedes the renewal of Lent - similar to the tradition of Mardi Gras. One of the most popular celebrations of *Carnestoltes* takes place on the coast of Villanova, Catalonia. Here, activities last a full week before Ash Wednesday. The King *Carnestoltes* arrives and reads a satirical and often politicized "sermon," then for four straight days, music fills the streets as masked dancers and processions perform. On the Wednesday before Lent, the King of Fools is "buried" and his "will" continues the comical narrative from his "sermon." Then, Catalans celebrate the season of Lent with feelings of new beginnings (Payne 2004:182-183).

The *Festa Major* is another widely recognized holiday in Catalan culture. During August and into September, nearly all Catalan communities participate in this traditional celebration, which originally accompanied preparations for a successful harvest. The two particular rituals emblematic of this endeavor are the *sardana*, the *gegants*, and the *castellers* (2004:185).

Castellers, which I discussed in Chapter 2, are perhaps the most significant part of any *Festa Major* procession because the human towers dramatically ascend well over the crowds of spectators. My informant Pere, who has performed in *La Merce*, the *Festa Major* of Barcelona, insisted that the holiday is “not considered a *Festa Major* without a performance of *castells*” (translation by the author). The *sardana* is the traditional national dance of Catalonia, characterized by an “energetic ‘pointing’ of feet” that attests to Catalans “classical spirit of order and good sense” (Noyes 2016:225). *Gegants*, or “giants,” are large figurines that represent Christian nobility. The *sardana*, *gegants*, and *castellers* all have traditional roots and have resurged since the 19th century to become key symbols of the celebration today (Payne 2004:185-186). According to Pere, the tradition of the *Festa Major* is so rooted in Catalan society that he does not believe it will ever end. He told me this is because “it is a thing that is moving from older people to young people, from parents to children” (translation by the author). The passing on of traditions such as these is one way in which Catalans teach their culture and preserve their identity.

Dia de Sant Jordi

Dia de Sant Jordi is the Catalan equivalent of Valentine's Day. Much like the Valentine's Day celebrated in the United States, this holiday is associated with love. *Dia de Sant Jordi*, however, is celebrated on April 23, rather than on February 14, and has its own traditions. My informants explained to me that *Sant Jordi* (Saint George) has been the patron saint of Barcelona since the 15th century under the crown of Aragon. As legend has it, Saint George rescued a princess from the jaws of a dragon and out of the slain dragon's blood a rose bush grew, from which Saint George picked a single rose to give to the princess. *Dia de Sant Jordi*

commemorates this tale, and ever since the day became an official Catalan festival in 1496, Catalans have celebrated love and passion in the name of their patron saint.

It is custom on this holiday for men to give women gifts of roses, and women to give men gifts of book, although today both men and women receive books. When I walked the Barcelona streets on April 23, 2018, I could barely make my way through hundreds of tents selling books and roses. Gaudí's *Casa Batlló* was adorned with red roses, a sight to behold. Isabel, a woman who worked at a local school where I volunteered, told me that on *Dia de Sant Jordi*, students write poems and riddles, so even those who are too young to appreciate romance celebrate the day and learn the importance of this local tradition.

Even as a day of love, *Dia de Sant Jordi* has been suppressed and politicised. In the 18th century when Barcelona fell to the Spanish throne, the festival lost popularity. It was later revived in the late 19th century but shortly after completely was prohibited under Franco's regime. Nevertheless, as is the case with all symbols of Catalan resilience, the holiday survived and continues to be celebrated today (British Library 2018). When discussing Catalan traditions, my Catalan language professor, Carles, told me how the color of the rose is now sometimes used as a political symbol for Catalonia. Roses were traditionally red, but in 2018 vendors sold yellow roses because the color yellow represents freedom for the political prisoners-and for Catalonia. Since red has also been known to represent Spanishness, this evoked anger. Carles explained:

The other day, on Sant Jordi's, I watched a woman explaining the reason of the colors of the roses on T.V., you know, one red one for Sant Jordi, and one yellow one for the liberation of the political prisoners. When you see the unionists talking, you just see *anger*: 'Roja, *por supuesto*, no amarilla!' (Red, *of course*, not yellow!)

La Castanyada

The *Castanyada* is a Catalan festival that celebrates the end of summer and the beginning of colder nights. During this time, it is typical to eat *castanyes*, or roasted chestnuts, a symbolic food to commemorate the dead. There is a traditional figure in Catalonia of an old woman, *la castanyera*, dressed in tattered clothes who sells chestnuts. When my informant, Isabel, described her, *la castanyera* seemed like a character from children's folklore. She explained how the school celebrates the *Castanyada*:

We try to celebrate the Catalan festivities, especially, for example, in September we start with *La Castanyada*, and the students learn songs about *la castanyera*, the person who sells chestnuts. We have Catalan songs that talk about this season and this old woman and we sing them and do things like that.

Isabel also mentioned that the celebration of this Catalan holiday is losing popularity among youth, many of whom prefer the more widely celebrated holiday, Halloween. She explained that this creates conflict in the school:

We celebrate *la Castanyada*, then we have Halloween as well, and it's very tricky because nowadays Halloween has become really popular. Children love Halloween, but it's not a Catalan tradition so, [the school] doesn't want to celebrate it. So I celebrated Halloween in my own lessons in my English class. But the school doesn't want to celebrate it because they say that it takes away from the importance of *la Castanyada* since children prefer Halloween.

Education plays a major role in the formation of cultural competence in youth, as demonstrated by the cultural curriculum in Isabel's school. By celebrating the local traditions of the *Castanyada*, the education system demonstrates the value of Catalan culture.

Nadal

Catalonia has unique Christmas (*Nadal*) traditions. One is the *Tio de Nadal*, a Christmas character for children that gives gifts. During my fieldwork, I saw images the *Tio de Nadal*, a log with a smiling face, stick legs, and a blanket covering its back end, but I did not understand its purpose until Isabel explained in an interview how they follow the holiday tradition at the school.

We feed the log for one or two weeks and we make the log to “grow up” and then the last day we have school children go and hit it with a stick and sing a song, and then they get presents from the log. This is an important Catalan tradition and we celebrate it in the school every year.

People say that if the children take good care of the log in the days leading up to Christmas, it will defecate presents on this special day. This was not the only tradition involving defecation, however, as there is another aberrant Catalan cultural symbol around Christmas time: the *Caganer*. The *Caganer* is a defecating Christmas figurine, considered by many to be an essential part of any traditional nativity scene. The *Caganer* is said to be a symbol of good luck, essentially fertilizing the ground for a successful harvest. My informants could not explain this tradition, so drawing on Victor Turner’s claim that the anthropologist can make their own interpretations of cultural symbols when their informants are unable to do so (1980:167), I consider the *Caganer*, and the *Tio de Nadal*, as satirical figures that poke fun at the hegemonic culture that they simultaneously belong to, that is, Spanish culture and society. The *Tio de Nadal* and the *Caganer* are both light-hearted traditions that reflect the sarcastic nature of Catalan culture, in the same way as the King of Fools during the week of *Carnestoltes*. Children learn this comedic mimicry at a young age through traditions such as these.

The Preservation of Catalan in a Multilingual Society

While studying in Barcelona, I took a Catalan language course. When I interviewed my Catalan language professor, Carles, we spoke about the value of speaking Catalan. Catalan is an official language in Catalonia, alongside Castilian Spanish, but it has a long history of oppression and having to defend its own legitimacy. Spain's fear of multilingualism, he explained, is difficult to comprehend:

I think people see [Catalan] as a threat. But that threat has been there for the past 300 years. Catalan was a private language. My dad went to school in the 1950s [during Franco's rule] and there was a ring children would have to wear if they spoke Catalan in class. So whoever was wearing the ring by the end of the day on Friday after class received a physical punishment. Languages, as I said, are used for segregation. Every now and then we get threats to the Catalan system, but it has been working very well. There are no riots in the streets, there is no segregation because of the language. So why [does the central government] want to change it? Is it because they are threatened by a minority language? It seems that people who have the power to change the policy are scared of the mouse.

In Catalonia there are four official languages: Catalan; Castilian Spanish; Aranese, a dialect of Occitan spoken in the Aran Valley; and Catalan Sign Language. The official language in Spain is only Castilian Spanish, or *castellano*. Castilian Spanish is often referred to as Spanish, but Catalans always say *castellano*, not *español* because it originates from central Spain, or Castile. Castilian Spanish is the official language spoken in Spain, but not in Catalonia. When I first asked my host mother about her use of language and I used the term *español*, she quickly corrected me with *castellano* because as she said, there are many languages in Spain, so why should one represent the entire country?

When attempting to understand the key symbol of language, it is important to explore why and how a language becomes authoritative, who gets to use it, and in what contexts. Linguistic authority, in the words of anthropologist Kathryn Woolard, is the virtue of language

that allows “speakers [to] command and convince an audience, whether that language has institutionally-recognized legitimacy or not” (2005:1). The Catalan language has struggled for acceptance in the past; in 1979 it officially became the co-official language of Catalonia, but that was after years of oppression under Franco’s rule. Linguistic authenticity is the genuine expression of a language and how it is used for socialization of a group of people. It reflects the value of an individual’s community and its roots (Woolard 2005:2). Linguistic anonymity has to do with how language exists in public domains. If a language is recognized as hegemonic, it has linguistic anonymity; it rests on the assumption that most individuals in a community speak it, and that it has authority in the public sphere. Linguistic anonymity is idealistic, and often ignores the private in pursuit of a unified voice (Woolard 2005:4). In many parts of Spain, Castilian Spanish is thought to have linguistic anonymity. There exists a saying, *hable en cristiano*, or “speak in Christian,” which really means: “Speak Spanish.” This figure of speech uses Christianity, the primary religion in Spain, to push linguistic anonymity by associating Castilian Spanish with Christian predominance. This saying backs monolingualism in Spain. However, many Catalans believe in multilingualism. As my anthropology professor in Barcelona, Sergi, insistently told me, “One nation does *not* equal one language!” While native Catalan speakers value and protect their language, they also speak Castilian Spanish, and often many other European languages. Catalan is a minority language throughout the whole of Spain, but in Catalonia, it is one of the officially recognized languages with a large base of speakers. It holds its own linguistic authority in the private and public sphere, and is an authentic language for the Catalan people.

C704. Pot indicar-me quina és la seva llengua? Ens referim a quina és la llengua que vostè considera com a pròpia.		
B: Total entrevistes M Pond	1500	100
B: Total entrevistes M Real	1500	100,0
Català (valencià / balear)	646	43,1
Castellà	592	39,4
Totes dues igual: català (valencià / balear) i castellà	223	14,9
Aranès	0	0,0
Altres llengües o altres combinacions	34	2,2
No ho sap	1	0,1
No contesta	4	0,3

A recent survey in the Catalan Center for Opinion Studies gives us an estimated measure of language use in Catalonia. The survey, conducted in November 2018, had a sample size of 1,500 Spanish citizens above the age of 18 living in Catalonia. The question in the survey asks: *Can you tell me your language? We are referring to the language you consider your own.* Results reveal that of those surveyed, 43% chose Catalan, 39% chose Castilian Spanish, and 15% said they speak Catalan and Castilian Spanish equally.

The sample data demonstrates a slight margin of more Catalans who consider Catalan “their” language than Catalans who consider Castilian Spanish “their” language. The question was asked in such a way that defined language as a part of one’s identity, belonging to the individual who has ownership of it. Asking about “your own” language, rather than, a language “you speak” implies a singularity that conflicts with multilingualism. However, ownership of Catalan as a language that belongs to Catalonia has always been important to the preservation of Catalan culture; this is reflected by not only the phrasing of the survey question, but also by the higher percentage of Catalans who consider Catalan as “their own.”

It is important to note, however, the relatively small margin size. While Catalan speakers are the majority, there is also a high percentage of respondents who chose Castilian Spanish or both languages. These results demonstrate that Catalan speakers, and their corresponding

identities, are not exclusionary. Like my professor who advocated for multilingualism, this survey suggests that Catalans are not *anti-castellano*, necessarily, but simply, *pro-catalan*. By speaking both Castilian and Catalan, locals are pluralistic but still speak and defend “their” language, often in tandem with separatist viewpoints.

As I discussed in Chapter 1, Franco’s regime emphasized Spanish nationalism and repressed other cultures. He silenced minority languages, and Catalan was no exception. Catalan names were forbidden, so citizens had two names, one in Castilian, and another in Catalan. They could never use their Catalan names for anything official or public. Today there is no longer regulation on naming in Catalonia, but those who were alive during Franco’s rule still have their Castilian names, like my host parents. They go by their Catalan names, Bernat and Mercè, but their Castilian names during Franco were Bernato and Mercedes. Education and media was entirely in Castilian, and speaking in Catalan was restricted to the private sphere. As a result of an oppressive climate that did not permit the use of Catalan, local people took ownership of the language, as the above survey and modern linguistic preservation politics suggest.

A few years after the *Generalitat de Catalunya* was re-established in 1977 following the end to Franco’s rule, legislation surfaced to protect the Catalan language. In 1983, the *Llei de normalització Lingüística de Catalunya* (Act for Linguistic Normalization) passed in the Catalan parliament with 105 votes in favor, none against, and one abstention. The preamble of this act states that “the Catalan language is the fundamental element of the Catalan entity” and sets the precedence of overcoming “the current linguistic inequality by spurring normalization of the use of the Catalan language throughout the territory of Catalonia” (McRoberts 2001:143-144). It

acknowledges Catalan as the *llengua pròpia*, or Catalonia's "own language," and sets the following objectives:

1. To support and encourage the use of Catalan by all citizens.
2. To bring about the official use of Catalan.
3. To normalize the use of Catalan in all means of social communication.
4. To extend knowledge of Catalan (*Llei 7/1983* Art. 1, translation by the author)

This linguistic normalization law addressed language use in the public sphere.

Catalan became the official language used in municipal institutions, education, and corporate communication.

The Act of Linguistic Normalization was a milestone for preserving Catalan in schools and other public institutions in Catalonia, but many felt that in order to standardize the language, there needed to be focus on its everyday use. (McRoberts 2001:150-156) So, the Linguistic Policy Act of 1998, also known as the "Catalan Law," emerged with four new objectives:

1. To encourage the use of Catalan by all citizens
2. To establish the official use of Catalan and Castilian
3. To normalize and encourage the use of Catalan in the administration, teaching, mass media, cultural industries, and socio-economic world
4. To extend knowledge of Catalan by all citizens (*Llei 1/1998* Art. 1, translation by the author)

The third objective is compelling because it frames language as a cultural enterprise.

While still recognizing Castilian Spanish as a co-official language, the Linguistic Policy Act of 1998 encourages the use of Catalan in social and cultural spaces as a mode of linguistic preservation. It shifts the dialogue of language use from finding a means of municipal and educational practice, to everyday linguistic practices. As my Catalan professor, Carles, explained, "Catalan language has been the main way to preserve Catalan identity for the past hundred years."

During my fieldwork in Catalonia, I volunteered at a public school in Cornellà de Llobregat, 30 minutes by train outside of Barcelona, where I observed language use in the Catalan education system. While there, I volunteered as an English teacher and formed a relationship with one of the teachers who coordinated the native English volunteer program, my informant Isabel. In an interview, Isabel explained how primary education begins with Catalan, then students learn Spanish, followed by English. We spoke during the students' recess hour one day:

Isabel: The whole school is taught in Catalan. Then, from first grade to sixth grade, everything is in Catalan too but we start with the Spanish subject. In first grade they have a class that is about Spain and that is taught in Spanish. . . . The rest of the subjects are in Catalan. And then, it depends on the grade, but they have different subjects in English. So, dance and art are in English in fourth grade. Science is in English in fifth and sixth grade. And the rest of the subjects, music, math, science, physical education, everything is in Catalan, so the teachers always speak in Catalan.

Maren: So, since the school goes until 6th grade, in sixth grade are a majority of the classes still in Catalan or are more in English?

Isabel: Most of them are in Catalan. Then the Spanish language and geography is in Spanish. Then they have, once a week, dance, once a week, science, and three times a week English language. So they have five sessions of English during the week, but they still have more hours in Catalan than in English.

Maren: And there are more hours in English than in Spanish?

Isabel: Yes.

Maren: Is the primary language taught in schools Catalan? For public and private?

Isabel: Yes, it's the educational law. The Catalan Educational Law states that the main language in the schools should be Catalan. In the future, I don't know what's going to happen because of this problem with independence. The Spanish government has started to say, okay, maybe we gave them them...educational, um, we call it competency. So the Spanish government gave different competencies to any region. For example, in Catalonia, the Catalan government can be in charge of education and health care. They are always depending on the Spanish

government but they were able to make different laws related to education and healthcare. The Spanish government gave this competency to them.

In our interview, Isabel mentioned the Catalan Educational Law, a body of legislation written in 2009, that recognizes education as a fundamental right of Catalan citizens and mode of establishing Catalan identity. The President of the *Generalitat* at the time, José Montilla, promulgated the law, which states:

The cultural and civic reasons [of personal progress] are driven by the desire to shape a Catalan citizenship identified with a common culture, in which the Catalan language becomes a basic factor of social integration... Catalonia is a country with a culture and a language that make up an identity of its own. The Catalan education system must allow unraveling and strengthening the roots in Catalonia. Only by knowing what is proper is it possible to open up to other realities and recognize their singularities (Catalan Educational Law 2009).

This law and those that preceded it supports Isabel's explanation of how education prioritizes the Catalan language in the public school system. It teaches Catalan first, as it is recognized as a foundational root of Catalan identity, then Castilian, as a second official language, then English, to prepare the students for the global world while still establishing the Catalan language as a key symbol of identity. Education was an oppressive tool during Franco's regime, yet today, it supports inclusive linguistic practices, further demonstrating Catalonia's non-exclusive separatist attitude, as the region is more cosmopolitan than isolationist.

Isabel sounded uncertain when she mentioned "this problem with independence." At the time of this interview, Catalonia's autonomy was suspended because the Spanish government enacted Article 155 of the Spanish constitution after the Independence Referendum on October 1, 2017. The Catalan Parliament passed the Act of Linguistic Normalization under Statute of Autonomy, therefore its legislative power rests entirely on the autonomy of the region within Spain. Article 155 revoked Catalan's autonomy, so Isabel felt unsure whether Catalonia would

continue to govern its education, or whether Spain would change the laws. Since the referendum in 2017, Spain lifted Article 155, so Catalonia is an autonomous region again and education is conducted in Catalan.

During five months of studying and conducting fieldwork in Barcelona, Catalonia, I observed language as a strong symbol of Catalan cultural identity. Even before I left the airport in January, I noticed that directional signs were in Catalan, with Castilian in smaller letters underneath. In the cab on the way to my homestay, the street signs looked the same. When my host parents, Bernat and Anna, came to the door, they greeted me in Castilian, but let me know that to one another and to guests, they speak in Catalan. As I began to pick up Catalan from my classes and public immersion, I could hold short conversations with Bernat and Anna, and they were thrilled.

Bernat and Anna's reaction was a clear example of the pride Catalan speakers have for their language. My ethnographic research demonstrates how language is closely related to public and private constructions of Catalan identity; through education, municipalities, and everyday life. As I have argued here, language as a key symbol of Catalan identity is not singular or exclusive. As the earlier survey and my interview with Isabel both demonstrate, a part of Catalan identity is this acceptance of other languages besides Catalan. Therefore, while I connect efforts of preserving the language with the modern separatist movement, Catalan separatism does not imply monolingualism. Rather, it highlights the view that Catalan should continue as one of many languages spoken, and that Castilian Spanish is not the only, or the dominant, language in Catalonia.



Figure 3.1: Children's shirts in a storefront window near my homestay. The shirts are small, meant for infants. 2018. Photographs by the author.

In fact, multilingualism in Catalonia can be used as a tool of language preservation.

These two shirts were front and center in a storefront window on my block. They were small, intended for children too young to even understand the words on them. So, the parents who buy these shirts are not only making a statement about language choice and identity, they are making that statement for their children and teaching them the importance of speaking Catalan at a young age. The fact that these shirts are in English gives agency to language protection in Catalonia that extends beyond Spanish borders to reach English-speaking tourists. By advocating for the use of Catalan in English, the shirts have the potential to reach a wider audience and therefore educate not just the children that might wear them and local Catalan speakers, but also to English-speaking audiences, such as study-abroad students, like myself.

Josep Maria Ganyet, a Catalan professor, was the originator of the phrase *Keep Calm and Speak Catalan*. The words that Ganyet tweeted in 2012, based on the original British saying, quickly caught on and became symbolic of the independence movement. Media interpreted the phrase as a reaction to an oppressive Spanish government, but I argue that it goes beyond that. It is also a justification of the *worth* of Catalan, of its linguistic authenticity. The phrase *hable en cristiano* is essentially saying the same thing, but its intention is to position Spanish over other languages in Spain, to increase its linguistic authority and anonymity. My informants felt that advocating for a language for an already majority language is totalitarian. However, the phrase *Keep Calm and Speak Catalan* finds itself on fertile ground because Catalonia is a multilingual society (Castro and Gaynet 2013:68-74). As Isabel explained to me, the school system is primarily in Catalan but also teaches English and Spanish. Carles, my Catalan professor, also believes strongly in multilingualism. In our interview he asserted:

Everyone understands here that you have to be trilingual (English, Castilian, Catalan). I don't understand how anyone would say, I only want to speak Catalan. I would be demonstrating in the streets if one day we gained independence and then they want to ban Spanish or anything from education - that's so stupid. You have to teach Spanish, Catalan, and English. I don't think from the other perspective it seems like that. Most countries that have one main language, among Europe: Holland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, they are amazing in English and many other languages. Monolithic cultures with a strong state behind it - and when I say that I don't mean people, I mean *state*, the army, judges, all the civil servants - those kind of states, including Spain, Italy, Germany, they don't have the need of learning other languages because they have everything they need within their culture. They have powerful media, they have literature, they have everything they need. Small countries understand that they cannot survive and be globally relevant without learning multiple languages. I think that people are aware in Catalonia that learning more languages is better. Puigdemont (President of the Generalitat '16-17) speaks English, Spanish, French, Catalan. And Mariano Rajoy (Spanish Prime Minister '11-18) does not speak a word of English, *just Spanish*.

Although Catalonia is a multilingual region, the Catalan language is key to Catalan identity. Personal and legislative feelings of ownership come from an effort to preserve a language that, in Spain as a whole, is minoritized. It is a reflection of Catalan identity, and a key symbol of Catalan culture. The linguistic authenticity of Catalan speakers derives from linguistic roots, and pluralistic views on language use in Catalonia do not threaten its importance.

Kathryn Woolard argues that the term *llengua propia* suggests that Catalan exists in a space of privacy and particularity. She notes that recent campaigns have emerged as an effort to modernize and normalize speaking in Catalan, that is, to transfer it to the public sphere. The Generalitat introduced a campaign in 2005 called *Dóna corda al català*, “Wind up Catalan.” The Generalitat distributed thousands of toys it named *la Queta*, (short for *la Boqueta*, the little mouth). The toy sings in a childish, non-native Catalan vernacular: “Speak without shame, speak with freedom, and for a start, speak Catalan” (2005:23-24). Although the campaign was not successful, it is suggestive of how Catalan as a cultural symbol could be changing. Its attempt to make Catalan “playful” and public, rather than just authentic and private, could be a reaction to the hidden nature of the Catalan language during Franco’s regime.

In my experience, Catalan was also a public language. I watched people interact with one another on my walk to class, and almost always, they spoke Catalan. On one occasion, while I was standing at a bus stop, a woman approached me and asked me a question in Catalan. More notably, public advertisements were in Catalan. *REBAIXES* (my first and favorite Catalan word) was written on every store-front window - *SALES*. The language was, and still is, one of the cultural symbols at the forefront of the independence movement. With a history of subordination, it is now fundamental to Catalan social life, as demonstrated by Catalan legislation, education,

and everyday experiences. While Catalonia is accepting of all languages, it challenges the hegemonic nature of Castilian Spanish and advocates for multilingualism alongside current feelings of separatism. It is unclear how Catalan will progress as the region continues to strive for independence, but in my fieldwork, language was a clear symbol that added to Catalan cultural distinction.

Teaching Catalan Nationalism in the Independence Era

Feelings of nationalism and demands for separatism in Catalonia come from a strong and boastful narrative of Catalan difference. This exultant tone is voiced by Catalans themselves; those who defend Catalan identity and those who rally behind independence are the same individuals who support the spread of knowledge of Catalanism. I observed in my fieldwork Catalan people explaining the Catalan experience, or as Clifford Geertz puts it, the “story they tell themselves about themselves” (Geertz 1972:26).

Before discussing how Catalans teach and learn about their national identity, I want to clarify that in my field research and in the experiences shared with me by my informants, Catalan nationalism and the education that informs it all were celebrations of cultural roots, not a rejection of other national identities or peoples. Although the idea of a nation can conjure up an image of geography and borders, Catalanism is not an exclusionary identity in the same way that speaking Catalan is meant to subordinate other languages. One of the characteristics of Catalan national identity, as I have argued here, is the accepting of other identities, languages, and origins. Many of my informants were proud Catalans, but also self-identified as Spanish, or European. They had the ability to maintain multiple identities, a distinctive Catalan trait, yet also practice and preserve Catalan culture (McRoberts 2001:162). Sergi, my anthropology professor,

spoke to me often about the illusion of nationalism and borders. He was critical of Spain because he said it had an “old decaying attitude of the unity of the [Spanish] nation” and was ignorant to individual states (such as Catalonia) and emerging global connections and identities.

Catalanism protects and appreciates Catalan identity while also accepting other people and ideas. In his examination of Catalan nationalism in his book, *Catalonia: Nation Building Without a State*, Kenneth McRoberts notes that “the coherence of the idea of a Catalan nation derives less from the geography than from culture” (2001:161). My Catalan professor, Carles, echoed this by sharing how important he felt it was that people who move to Catalonia try to learn the language and customs to integrate into Catalan society. Much of the attention on Catalan nationalism is on the daily practice and reminders of its distinct culture rather than on geographic borders. The *voluntat de ser*, or “will to be,” is an inclusive concept used by Catalans, one that “[emphasizes] the way in which Catalonia has become a nation thanks to the daily efforts of its inhabitants... [and] encourages all residents to participate fully in the future of Catalonia” (Gore 2002:93).

How, then, is Catalan culture maintained? How do people in Catalonia remain conscious of their symbols of identity and how do they express those in an autonomous state desiring independence? These were questions I asked throughout my fieldwork, and as I have demonstrated in this chapter, I found that in addition to the daily experiences of key cultural symbols, like those I discussed in the previous chapter, symbols that are connected to the history of Catalan identity are critical in the teaching of what it means to be Catalan, and how contemporary culture emphasizes historical significance.

The History of the Land

One example of this was *el Museu d'Historia de Catalunya*, the Catalan History Museum. On a class trip to the museum, my professor pointed out how the display of neolithic artifacts creates a false sense of prehistoric origins for the Catalan people. The exhibit was titled “Birth of a Nation” and told the story of the ethnic base of the Catalan people, which I covered in Chapter 1. While it is true that sedentary people lived on the same land that was home to the Romans, the kingdom of Aragon, and now modern-day Catalonia, there is no actual relationship between the indigenous people who lived in northeastern Spain in 5000 BCE and modern-day Catalans. In the same way that Native American cultures are still distinct from contemporary cultures in the United States, the neolithic people living Catalonia before the arrival of the Romans and other outside influences had different cultural practices that are unrelated to present-day Catalan identity. It is interesting how *el Museu d'Historia de Catalunya* emphasizes a historical connection that some argue is nonexistent. This narrative is an example how education of Catalan nationalism has a historical, even ideological, component.

As I stated earlier, Catalonia consists of four major provinces: Barcelona, Girona, Lleida, and Tarragona. Girona, known for its medieval architecture, is the hometown of Puigdemont, the former president of Catalonia, who has been living in Belgium in exile after the October 2017 referendum. Tarragona was once the old Roman capital of Tarraco, so ruins of the empire can be seen throughout the port city. The province of Barcelona is in the center of Catalonia, and of course encompasses the capital city of Barcelona, a cosmopolitan cultural center. As for Leida, my host mother was raised in Lleida and jokingly said nothing of importance comes from where she grew up. While I first thought the history of this geographic region was important to the

creation of Catalan identity, my host mother's statement challenged my assumption. Therefore, I argue that the narrative of Catalanism and regional identity comes from deeply rooted cultural practices, rather than strictly geographic location.

Nationalism and the Role of Formal Education

I asked my informant Isabel about the role of education in furthering the narrative of difference. She told me about how her school's educational curricula favored teaching about Catalonia over Spain. She explained:

My daughter is in fifth grade so I know the one thing she has learned up until now is geography. And just Catalan geography, for now. Another thing she learned last semester was Catalan government. She learned about the city councils, then the Parliament in Catalonia, then the European Parliament as well. They didn't say anything about the Spanish [government], and that was something that shocked me. Something is missing here... But the school told me not to worry, that we are going to do it in sixth grade. So it seems that in sixth grade, in the books, we have the Spanish [history].

Institutionalized education is a tool for spreading ideas. As Isabel pointed out, Catalan school systems emphasize Catalan history and culture over Spanish history and culture, which leads students at a young age to identify with Catalonia. Children learn the Catalan National Anthem, with lyrics that tell the first time Catalonia declared independence from the Spanish monarchy. They also learn about the Catalan flag, which consists of four red bars on a gold-yellow background, based on the crest of Aragon. The red bars represent blood from a tale of Catalan conquering - a legend youth are taught early on (Hargreaves 2000:90). Yellow is symbolic of the independence movement, and it has become the color that represents freedom for Catalan political prisoners.

Catalan education laws in place emphasize the importance of a strong national (Catalan) identity, and within the past ten years they have closely tied education to social and cultural cohesion within the region. As the preamble of the 2009 Education Law states:

Education is a fundamental reality of every national community, since it becomes the main factor in the generation of human capital, it contributes to the growth of social capital and is an element of social and cultural cohesion through equal opportunities...Catalonia is a country with a culture and a language that make up an identity of its own. The Catalan education system must allow unraveling and strengthening the roots in Catalonia. Only by knowing what is proper is it possible to open up to other realities and recognize their singularities (*Llei 12/2009 Preàmbul*, translation by the author).

The preamble to the Catalan Education Law calls Catalonia a “country” and associates it with a “national community” that depends on education as a promising factor for its future. Many of my informants, too, felt that Catalonia was its own nation, not just an autonomous region in Spain. Here, I return to my earlier idea of nationhood and to Catalonia as a national community in a cultural sense. While education in Catalonia does intentionally teach Catalan history before Spanish history, the focus of this national identity is on its roots as a distinct language and culture. Like McRoberts writes, Catalan cohesion derives more from culture, less from geographic borders (2001:161).

Pro-Independence Organizations and Nationalist Symbols

Beyond education, the teaching of nationalism takes another shape in the Catalan separatist movement. Individuals and organizations associated with Catalan Independence are vocal about Catalan difference. The most dominant symbol in the discourse of protest is arguably the independence flag, the *estelada*. When I was in Barcelona, Girona, and Tarragona, I saw the

estelada hanging from nearly every window front. It looks like the national Catalan flag, but with a five-pointed star at its hoist. Public display of the *estelada* and *senyera* are not necessarily ubiquitous, however, as some homes choose to display the Spanish national flag as well. These pluralistic views are what make the independence movement significant for those who are vocal about the Catalan separatist movement, while still self-associating with the Spanish identity.



Figure 3.2: Two adjacent buildings in Girona, Catalonia. Both are decorated with *esteladas* and banners for independence. 2018. Photographs by the author.

The public display of the *estelada* and other symbols of independence is one way in which Catalans broadcast their discontent surrounding current politics - whether over the initial imprisonment of the political prisoners or their recent trial - and spread knowledge about Catalan identity. Messages in public spaces written in English are meant for outsiders, to educate them on the injustices that Catalonia faces.



Figure 3.3: American tourists sit on Spanish Civil War bunkers overlooking the city. Spray painted on the cement wall is the phrase, in English, “Free Catalan Prisoners.” 2018. Photograph by the author.



Figure 3.4: A banner hangs from a window balcony on *La Rambla*, the busiest tourist street in Barcelona. The words on the sign, in English, demand the return of the Catalan political prisoners. 2018. Photograph by the author.

Additionally, independence marches are ways for local people and foreigners to gather in protest. During my fieldwork, I witnessed many Catalans take to the streets in peaceful demonstration. One of the first things my host mother mentioned about the independence movement was that it was a *revolució de somrisas*, a “revolution of smiles,” because violence rarely broke out. In my experience, I only saw joyous celebrations, masses parading the streets with *esteladas* and other symbols of Catalanism while chanting songs of resilience. People were angry after the referendum for independence was disbanded and Catalonia lost autonomy, and they were furious when the political prisoners remained behind bars week after week. But instead of reacting with violence, the majority of Catalans marched in peace. Public protest is another way to spread awareness of unity and feelings of nationalism behind such a powerful cause.

On April 14, 2018, students in my study abroad program received the following advisory email about a protest that was scheduled to take place the following day for the Catalan political prisoners:

Subject: April 15th DEMONSTRATION ADVISORY

The SECOND event is a demonstration in support of the politicians that have been incarcerated; In this instance the demonstration is quite transversal, all pro-independence parties and some of the pro-status quo parties are also demonstrating along with trade unions and civil groups, that think that the Spanish Government and Courts have acted wrongly.

This demonstration is supposed to be large and it will take place along Avinguda Parallel from Plaça Espanya to the Port Area. there will also be 42 “Colles” of human towers performing in the demonstration. As all demonstrations before the gathering is supposed to be peaceful.



Figure 3.5: Half a million people attended a protest for the freedom of Catalan political prisoners. 2018. Photograph by Amanda Hunt.

As the email suggests, many Catalan groups show their support for demonstrations such as these. Two pro-independence organizations collaborated on this march, the *Assemblea Nacional Catalana* (ANC, National Catalan Assembly) and *Òmnium Cultural*. ANC is a grassroots organisation dedicated to the Catalan Republic. In their words, they bring together “all parts of the Catalan society, including different ideologies, religions and nationalities...to win Catalan independence in a completely peaceful and democratic way” (ANC 2019, translation by the author). *Òmnium Cultural* was founded during Franco’s dictatorship to “combat the censorship and persecution of Catalan culture.” In Catalonia, they defend the peoples rights to self-determination and protect their language and customs (*Òmnium Cultural* 2019, translation by the author).

Political parties have a hand in promoting Catalanism and supporting the independence movement, as well. Those campaigning for independence obtained a marginal majority in the Catalan Parliament in 2017. They are *Junts per Catalunya* coalition, the *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC), and the Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP). Four other parties make up the Parliament with varying degrees of separatist support. (The People's Party outwardly rejects the movement, with the slogan "Spain is the solution"). These parties and organizations that facilitate movements of separatism and/or preservation of culture contribute to the body of knowledge surrounding Catalanism today.

Culture is *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977), meaning it creates a field of given values and attitudes adopted by the individuals operating within it. The Catalan cultural field overlaps with other identities, but stands out because of its relation to the roots of the region. Ideas in this cultural *habitus* area influence lifestyles and affect social, political, and economic thinking (Eagleton 2000:115). In *Catalonia: National Identity and Cultural Policy*, Kathryn Crameri argues that because of the way in which culture is tied to other institutions, background and identity are interwoven with governance, and cultural competence becomes congruent to nationalist predisposition. (Crameri 2008:11). Visualizing education, public protest, and political and cultural organizations as a means to awareness of Catalan cultural and historical significance provide a sense of unity for Catalan people. In the narrative of independence, historical symbols such as these teach Catalan nationalism.

Conclusion

In my ethnographic work, I have shown that key symbols of Catalan culture are dramatically different from those of Spain. The symbols from Chapter 2 reflect everyday attitudes and lifestyles of Catalan people, but the cultural patterns I have discussed in this chapter are rooted in both the present and the past. The historical connection that many Catalans feel to their identity plays out in holidays, language, and national education that connect to centuries of history in a singular region.

Many Catalan holidays come from Christianity, which reaches across the world. The traditions and practices of Catalan holidays, however, are unique to the *paisos catalans*, the Catalan countries. The Catalan language has undergone years of repression, moving cautiously between private and public spheres, but now claims legitimacy in education and legislation. National symbols like the Catalan anthem and flag provide a sense of belonging, and those that identify strongly with Catalanism in an era of independence take leadership and form coalitions to claim and defend their nation. With an identity that is not exclusionary, Catalans celebrate their culture and continue its preservation through education and long-lasting traditions. Catalonia has a history separate from Spain and its own customs, language, and culture to prove it.

Conclusions

During my daily commute to IES classes, I passed through Barcelona's city center, *Plaça Catalunya*, and daily, I saw Catalans sleeping in tents as a demonstration against the central government. Some camped for Catalan autonomy and basic freedoms of democracy (since Article 155 was still in place); others spoke out for Catalan independence. One group of protestors knit yellow hats and scarves and gave them to passers by with yellow ribbons to support the political prisoners and to ask for donations for their cause.



Figure 4.1: Under a Catalan flag, protestors distribute yellow pins and other items to protest the injustice of the political prisoners and to accept donations for the independence movement. A sign counts the number of days since the start of the protest. In the background are rows of tents where they sleep and escape the sun. 2018. Photograph by the author.

The protestors were a constant symbol of Catalanism throughout my fieldwork. They were peaceful, representing Catalan *seny*, or “level-headedness,” and they were unified. Not all demonstrators belonged to the same opposition group, but they shared a community by participating in an expression of Catalan pride in the same place at the same time.

The individuals in *Plaça Catalunya* were a sign of unrest I noticed at the outset, on my very first day in Barcelona. They were also one of the last. While passing by the city center nearly five months after I first saw the tents, I was swept up in sea of *esteladas*, the Catalan independence flag, and a demonstration singing the Catalan anthem and independence chants. I will never forget how the largest *estelada* in the crowd rippled over the dozens of people as they shouted “Visca la República Catalana!” *Long live the Catalan Republic.*

Catalonia is unique, as the cultural symbols in my ethnography demonstrate. Key symbols contribute to the preservation of an identity that has historically been subordinate to the Spanish state and has undergone years of opposition. Food, art, and sports in Catalonia, now everyday occurrences, are connected to the identity of the region. Festivals and holidays, language, and nationalist teachings, still struggle for equal representation since the suppression of Franco’s regime. Now, Catalans express pride in their distinct identity by celebrating unique customs and by broadening knowledge of their experiences. The Catalan identity has always been, and continues to be, different from the Spanish identity. By sharing their traditions with Catalan youth to instill the value of their cultural roots, and by telling their story to visiting tourists, the Catalan people successfully broadcast this powerful message of difference.

I have argued in my thesis that key symbols construct an identity that is principally Catalan. However, my informants did not define that Catalan identity, or culture, as

exclusionary. Catalonia is a multilingual region in Spain. Authority figures, such as the past president Puigdemont, are fluent in many languages. My informants were multilingual as well, and as Isabel shared, Catalan education, while prioritizing Catalan language and customs, is pluralistic in that it accepts and teaches languages (Castilian Spanish and English) and histories other than strictly those of Catalonia. Feelings of nationalism are not tied to closed borders, or a singular culture, like Spanish dictator Francisco Franco believed with his isolationist ideologies and “Spain is different” campaign. Rather, national sentiment in Catalonia comes from a shared sense of dignity of cultural roots, contemporary celebrations of identity, and the *voluntat de ser*, or “will to be,” Catalan by learning and continuing their customs.

My informants and most Catalans I met during my fieldwork claimed their identity with authority. They shared their stories generously with others, such as American anthropology student like myself. Because of this, I did not encounter much difficulty in entering the community and conducting research. Public displays of Catalanism, as well as my IES coursework which took me into the field, granted a me an in-depth look at the creation of the Catalan identity. Then, once I returned to Bucknell University’s campus in Fall 2018, the relationships I formed with my professors, those I worked with, and others I met, allowed me to continue the conversation, conduct follow-up interviews, and dig deeper into the construction of a culture that is so unique in Spain.

Today, Catalonia is an autonomous region of the Spanish nation, governed by its state institutions, embedded in its economy, and enclosed within its borders. However, years of mistreatment and feelings of difference created an ample community in Catalonia that seeks complete independence from Spain and the creation of the Catalan Republic. Considering these

feelings in relation to the modern separatist movement, would separatists say *difference* from Spain is justification for this goal? My aim in this thesis has not been to take a position on this debate, but instead to offer an anthropological perspective and show how a shared culture, though it may not be everyone's primary reason for separation from Spain, plays a vital role in the separatist movement.

Since culture, which Geertz has defined for us as a "web of significance" (1973:311), cannot be quantified in the same way as, for example, economic arguments for independence, we should pay closer attention to how cultural identity either unifies or creates division in a nation as a whole. There are not always numerical figures to point to when examining and interpreting culture, and so we rely on qualitative ethnography, anthropology's hallmark method, to tell stories and offer perspectives give agency to individuals and highlight local identities and practices.

As my fieldwork and thesis demonstrate, culture plays an important role in modern Catalan Independence. Resilience constructed the idea of the Catalan nation, and cultural and social practices throughout the autonomous region continue to shape its relevance in the current discourses of succession. It is through a shared past, language, traditions, and other cultural customs that Catalans voice their difference from Spain. Catalonia is rich in key symbols that assemble national characteristics, and as Catalan culture continues to resist conforming to the dominant adversary, I assume that Catalan distinction from Spain will only continue to shape Catalan secession from Spain.

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