

**Europe's Regions in a New System of Governance?:
The Case of Catalonia in Spain and the European Union**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
 SECTION I: THE STATE LEVEL ARENA: CATALAN NATIONAL ACTIVITY AND THE CENTER'S RESPONSE.	
7	
 1. Administrative Decentralization or Meaningful Power Devolution to the National Peripheries?	
8	
2. The Province Issue Between Madrid and Catalonia.	
12	
3. Local Government and the Conflict Between Spanish Socialists and Catalan Nationalists .	
15	
 SECTION II: THE EUROPEAN ARENA: COMPETING REGIONAL STRATEGIES IN THE EU.	
18	
 1. Catalan nationalist (CiU) vs Catalan Socialist (PSC): Two Set of Catalan Political Elites, Two Different Agendas.	
19	
2. European Regional Associations: AER and CEMR.	
23	
3. The Committee of the Regions: State Elites Capture the Decentralization Issue.	
27	
4. 1994-1996: The Early Activities of the Committee of the Regions.	
33	
 Conclusion	
37	
 Endnotes	
40	
 Bibliography.....	
48	

"The Spanish state is plurinational... we do not agree that these 17 regional communities continue to be considered in similar fashion. For us, the sovereignty of Catalonia is based on an organization of a federal Europe, where the units would be nationalities."(Rafael Ribó, leader of the Catalan Communist party IC. Avui 3/11/92)

"In what area of foreign policy should the Generalitat reinforce its efforts?..."

"More than reinforce what is important is to consolidate the regions in the EC. Maastricht has been the first step. Insufficient, because we now have to cohabitate with municipalities, but it is important. Now we must know how to give substance to this committee and to make it function to serve the interests of regions." (Joan Vallvé. Commissioner for Foreign Relations of the Generalitat of Catalonia. Interview with José Antich. El País 2/27/92)

During the 1990's there has been an explosion of administrative activity at the regional level in Europe as the EU continues to develop funding initiatives for regional projects, economic development, and "cohesion". Starting with its initial sessions on March 9-10, 1994 the Committee of the Regions now consults the Council and the Commission on a wide variety of issues concerning regions. Since the Maastricht conference of 1991 the prospect of this new regional body within the EU, coupled with the transfer of state competencies to the supranational level, have generated much debate about its potential impact upon the modern European state. Is the modern European state being eroded from below and absorbed from above?

Introduction.

Many scholars have formulated measured responses to this question. David Cameron (1992) observes a "new and strengthened" institutions which allow activities resembling a political federation. Lawrence Sharpe (1993) argues that the EU focus on regional economic

development, the growing significance of the structural funds (one third of the EU budget), and the new Committee of the Regions indicate an important trend towards greater regional participation in the EU policy process. Michael Keating (1993) detects a significant growth in the *formal* representation of regional government in Brussels. Beate Kohler-Koch (1995) recognizes that the political and the economic dynamics of today's Europe have made the modern state "*un modèle dépassé*", although the precise result of the long term trends now underway is difficult to predict. Streeck and Schmitter (1991) go a step further when they claim that economic dynamics are leading in the short term to the "regionalization of Europe". Although widely varied in their approach all of these views seem to be based on the observation of the political economy of the EU, and the resulting degree of regional activity in the formal policy process on economic issues.

However, does frenetic activity by regions in the final stages of EU policy decision-making, coupled with active regional involvement in determining policy implementation, represent a fundamental reorganization of the political order of the state, and its distribution of political power from the center to the periphery within its territory? In outlining the most extreme position, Gary Marks (1993) and Liesbet Hooghe (1995) argue that a "multi-level governance" model emphatically proves that the present EU environment is fundamentally reorganizing decision-making in Europe, producing "co-decision-making" at three political levels (EU, state, and region) encompassing a wide range of governmental, institutional, and special interest actors. In conjunction with international trends towards "globalization" of the world economy, the state, particularly in Europe, is now seen by this perspective to be a weak anachronism of a bygone age.¹

This paper disagrees with the "multi-level governance" argument and resists the implication

present in the above views that the modern European state will fundamentally change in the near future. The EU is becoming a more significant center of political power, and the regions are a growing presence in the policy process, but my findings indicate that the political dynamics at the European level are not altering the fundamental reality of the modern European state.

Furthermore, when significant change does occur it is the product of domestic political dynamics *within* specific states; such power redistribution towards distinctive peripheries is not a result of regional activity at the European level.

This project offers a new viewpoint to this debate by examining these issues from the perspective of Catalan regional elites who aspire to obtain important levels of political authority for their "nation" within Europe. A study of the Catalan case in Spain and Europe reveals that the state-level platform remains dominant, and that much of the regional activity in Europe is in fact directed by state-level actors, AND their regional allies, who have coopted the decentralization issue through a strategy of *administrative decentralization*. This activity must not be confused with a fundamentally different process involving *the devolution of political power* from the state center to its periphery.²

Catalan political elites pursue a dual-level strategy for strengthening their regional political platform. First, they follow state-level strategies exploiting the need for state-level political parties to rely on legislative pacts with the Catalan Minority in the Spanish Cortes to support minority governments in Madrid³. Secondly, Catalan nationalists pursue an aggressive European level strategy, through European regional associations, to gain *political* recognition from the EU. In response Spanish state-level elites, in conjunction with their socialist (PSC) and center-right (PP) allies in Catalonia and other regions, deploy a variety of tactics to thwart these efforts. One

of the most effective has been to capture the very issue of decentralization itself; these groups use calls for strong local government, and its inclusion in regional organizations and institutions, to disrupt regional elite attempts to qualitatively increase their effective political authority.

This paper argues that a review of the activity of the new Committee of the Regions demonstrates that this statist strategy of coopting the decentralization issue, through the use of local level government, has been highly successful. Regional activities in the EU are the product of *administrative decentralization* -- a tactic of central decision-makers to improve *their* policy decision-making and policy implementation abilities, as well as to address the issue of "distance" and "isolation" between Brussels and the daily lives of its citizens. Recent articles by Conzelmann (1995), Jeffery (1995), and Christiansen (1995), evaluating the modest activity of the Committee of the Regions, and its lack of any existing ability to change current decision-making patterns, support this argument. "Subsidiarity" in the present political reality of the EU is not a "federalist" process of devolving true initiating capacity to the regions. Rather it represents, in novel form, the classic desire of central planners to increase the efficiency of *their* policy process. A quote by Lopez Rodo, Minister of Planning to the Franco regime in Spain during the late 1960's, the most unitary and centralist regime of post-WW II Western Europe, exemplifies this state elite perspective of how to use "regionalism" for their ends:

"In the future, whether we like it or not, we will have to deal with the regional issue. It is indispensable that we have harmonious development in all of the lands of Spain. Today the regional fact is present within its proper limits, has lost its pernicious quality and has gained social and economic weight. The full development of a region can have no other goal than its perfect integration in the nation, which facilitates later, inevitable, supranational integrations." (Quoted in Colomer 1984: 238)

Finally, I argue that examples of successful devolution of meaningful political power are

occurring only within the individual state context, as bilateral negotiations between state-level elites and regional elites take place. In Spain, a country with one of the most robust processes of political decentralization in Europe, this process has been highly uneven as each region must negotiate individually with Madrid. The recent success of the Catalans is the direct result of electoral politics and the lack of a one party majority in Spanish general elections. Specifically the Catalan Minority gains great negotiating leverage. This leverage has been used to further the long-term Catalan objective of fundamentally altering the power architecture of the Spanish state to allow the development of the institutional resources necessary, in Catalonia, to facilitate the exercise of an evermore autonomous government.

To support these assertions this paper is organized in two sections. Section I examines the domestic context of contemporary Spain by reviewing several events.

1. How, during the initial period of the Spanish Transition, *franquista* elites failed in their attempt to impose a form of limited administrative decentralization upon Catalonia.
2. How central elites successfully used the issue of provinces to limit the radical devolution of political authority during subsequent constitutional and regional negotiations.
3. How the actions by Socialist governments in Madrid during the early 1990's followed an explicit strategy of arguing for the robust development of local level government as a way to frustrate the aggressive regional policies of the Catalan regional government (Generalitat).

Section II argues that a similar strategy of using local level government to thwart ambitious regional projects is also observable at the European level. Furthermore, these European level activities are linked to these domestic struggles. The Catalan case is important to the issue of the political role of regions in the EU. The Catalans are the active leaders of several European regional

alliances which represent both the ambitious regional project, as well as the regional perspective allied with the state sponsored, administrative decentralization, counter strategy.

SECTION I: THE STATE LEVEL ARENA: CATALAN NATIONAL ACTIVITY AND THE CENTER'S RESPONSE.

Often overlooked in Spain's transition to democracy was the development of a decentralized system of territorial organization. The 1978 Constitution outlines in broad form a system of regional Autonomous Communities which regions could develop in bilateral negotiations with Madrid.⁴ Originally intended to mollify the political ambitions of Spain's three "historic regions" (Basque Provinces [Euskadi], Galicia, Catalonia), this vague, open-ended system instead produced 17 autonomous regions by 1983.⁵ With a wide variety of competencies and capacities this system of disparate Autonomous Communities has unevenly developed through the 1980's.⁶ The ambiguous and open-ended nature of this system has provided flexibility; however, it has also produced an unending series of demands from certain regions, particularly the national regions of Euskadi and Catalonia which have continually pressed for greater home rule. In fact some of the most significant political issues in current Spanish politics involve debates between Catalonia or Euskadi and Madrid.⁷ Finally, this disparity between a few powerful regions and the more limited regions has created a trend of growing regionalist sentiment within these latter regions.⁸

In part this regional activity is a reaction to the Catalan and the Basque position on Spain's system of regional autonomies. Rather than supporting a uniform system for all of Spain's regions (e.g. a system of "territorial solidarity" between rich and poor regions supported by the socialists), or a more limited regional system supported by the Spanish moderate right (PP, Popular Party),

the moderate nationalist parties in Euskadi (PNV) and Catalonia (CiU) have always sought a "particularist" solution of developing a special regional regime for their "nations" which would clearly distinguish their status, and capacities, from other "regions" in Spain. Recent attempt in Catalonia to gain greater control of police activities, income tax funds (IRPF), and to move their policy of Catalan language "normalization" to new levels embody the Catalan perspective that they are a unique nation, with unique political needs, which should be accommodated *within* a Spanish polity.

1. Administrative Decentralization or Meaningful Power Devolution to the National Peripheries?

Entering the period of Spain's transition to democracy (1975-1980), Catalonia was the location of the oldest and best organized unitary, national-democratic resistance movement in Spain.⁹ Based on a formula of three simple demands (Democratic liberties, Amnesty, Autonomy Statute of 1932), the Catalans became key actors during the Transition drama. One of their principal goals was the elimination of provinces as a level of state territorial organization. If enacted their vision would have produced four levels of territorial organization. The state and specific "national" regions would be the most important (Catalonia, Euskadi, Galicia). Within Catalonia there would also be the *comarca* (county level) and the municipal level. Electoral districts would be organized either by *comarques* or as one large district for Catalonia.

Created in 1833 as part of "Jacobin" centralization and standardization program by a conservative liberal government, provinces became the principal organ of the Spanish state's territorial organization. Modeled on events in France each province was an abstraction with little tradition or history; a Civil Governor emulated the role of the French *préfet* as the capital's

representative to that area. Each province also had a government (*Diputación*). Hence, by eliminating the province, the Catalan vision was for a strong regional level government for Catalonia (*Generalitat*) which would dominate the counties and municipalities within its borders. The state elites in Madrid had a very different vision of Spain.

i. *Madrid's "Special Regime" Project for Catalonia:* Madrid elites recognized that the historic "Catalan problem" was again a crucial issue during this delicate period. As a result from November 1975, until the June 15, 1977 constituent elections, several initiatives were undertaken to resolve the "Catalan problem". The state's BOE for November 21, 1975 published a new law, *Bases del Estatuto de Régimen Local* [The Bases of the Statute for Local Government], which reformist elites such as Salvador Sánchez Turán, Civil Governor to Barcelona, characterized as an "enormous opening" for the regime. (Sánchez Turán 1988:42) Enacted as a Decree Law on December 5, 1975 it allowed for the direct elections of presidents of provincial governments (*Diputación*), except in Navarra, and of half of the mayors of each province (except Madrid and Barcelona). Juan Antonio Samaranch was elected President of the Barcelona provincial government and in a February 8th speech called for the creation of a *Régimen Especial* for Catalonia which would organize the functioning of its four provincial governments under a single administration (Mancomunidad).

"...this new law is, without a doubt, a step forward, but it can be improved, especially in reference to the issue of decentralization... Naturally, one must plan for the possible extension of this Special Regime to the other Catalan province as well as the creation of a regional Mancomunidad with its own organization, competences, and economic regime..". (p.43)

During 1976 the conservative Arias Navarro government pushed hard for this "Special Regime" for Catalonia, introduced in Samaranch's speech, as a very modest form of administrative

decentralization which would hopefully mollify the Catalans. This was far from the self-government demands of the Catalan national-democratic opposition. Demonstrating the importance placed on events in Catalonia by Madrid elites, the King Juan Carlos I made Catalonia the destination of his first official trip on February 16, 1976. In a speech containing Catalan excerpts the King reaffirmed "the exceptional importance which I attribute to Catalonia, and the Catalan personality, within the whole of the lands of Spain".

Samaranch, Arias Navarro, the King, and later Suarez's actions and statements demonstrate a strategy of flattering Catalans with cultural acknowledgements and promises for local administration, in the context of affirming Spanish unity and the primacy of the Spanish state.

"Catalonia waits, and we do not want to disappoint her with the special regime, an ample and generous decentralization permits an autonomy of management that will be done by men who are truly interested in local politics and administration."(Samaranch quoted in Sánchez Turán: 58)

The Special Regime project was clearly a strategy of administrative decentralization meant to forestall the Catalan push for home rule "as the first step towards the exercise of the right to self-determination". It would miserably fail, but a more subtle strategy succeeded in containing eventual Catalan self-government from becoming this initial step towards "self-determination".

During the Navarro government Manuel Fraga represented the limited reformist strain of this very conservative government, and took the lead on the Special Regime initiative. His views of this project confirm the profound differences between a centralist strategy of *administrative decentralization* and the Catalan nationalist project of *devolving real political power* to the Catalan periphery:

"I know that there cannot be a grand Spain without a healthy Catalonia... But it must be added that there can be no Catalonia possible except within the reality of a

Spain in peace and order, in justice and in liberty... Yet more clear: there cannot be in Spain more than one sovereign, in domestic as well as in exterior terms: That of the Spanish nation; neither can there be more than one sovereign political power: That of the Spanish state, of which we all form part."(p.60)

Fraga's comments again demonstrate this the paper's distinction between administrative decentralization (the passing of administrative tasks with no "initiating capacity"), and the true devolution of political power which impacts the power architecture of state and regime. For the Civil Governor Sánchez Turán, Fraga sought to solve the "*hecho Catalan*" (The Catalan reality) as an *administrative* problem, not as a juridical-constitutional problem:

"...he told me: 'But do not forget that throughout the decree there is one essential word: administrative.'"(p.63)

The new Suarez government of July 1976 may have been truly reformist in many ways, but it would fully agree with this initiative and push it strongly until Catalan political parties advocating the *Assemblea's* third demand won %75 of the vote in Catalonia on June 15, 1977 (1932 Autonomy Statute as a STARTING point for Catalan self-government).

Summary: The Suarez party's (UCD) poor showing in Catalonia, along with the nationalist left and nationalist center's dominance in the June elections, forced the Suarez government to immediately drop the Special Regime initiative and to quickly enter into negotiations with Josep Tarradellas, exiled President of the Generalitat from the Spanish Second Republic. These negotiations quickly culminated in the establishment of the Provisional Generalitat in October 1977. Tarradellas dramatic return to Catalonia on October 23, 1977 is symbolized with his emergence onto the Generalitat's balcony, before thousands of Catalans, who erupted into cheers when the living embodiment of Catalan self-government exclaimed, "Ja soc aquí !" (Finally I am here!).

Given the results of the constituent elections of June 1977 the Suarez government was forced to give up on an administrative decentralization strategy. Within this new political environment, in which the real devolution of political power to Catalonia would occur, Madrid elites fell back on a new array of tactics which successfully contained this power devolution within acceptable limits for *franquista* regime elites (reformist as well as reactionary). The use of *local level government* was a key component of this strategy not only in the late 1970's, but also during the early 1990's -- the Maastricht period. The following issues will be examined below:

- i. The use of the province, during 1977-1979 negotiations for a democratic Constitution as well as a Catalan Autonomy Statute.
- ii. The use of calls for strengthening local government, as a reform policy to decentralize and democratize government, during the early 1990's to frustrate Catalan regional initiatives.

2. The Province Issue Between Madrid and Catalonia.

During the 1977-1979 period two fundamental processes were underway in Spain and Catalonia. One was the negotiations for a new democratic constitution (1977-78). The second was the process of writing and approving of an Autonomy Statute for Catalonia. In each process the initial Catalan position was the elimination of the province. Suarez's UCD group, and the Spanish socialists (PSOE) who were quickly reverting back to a more classic unitary socialist position, adamantly refused to eliminate the province. Josep Tarradellas spoke for most Catalan national-democratic leaders when he stated that,

"As long as there exists Civil Governors and the diputacions, the Generalitat will be nothing but an administrative organ."(Solé Sabaris et.al. 1989:22)

- i. But Tarradellas exemplifies the complexities of the moment. His Provisional Generalitat had

no authority of its own; instead Tarradellas was President of the Diputaci3n of Barcelona, and granted the ability to coordinate the activities of Catalonia's four provinces until competencies could be transferred to the Provisional Generalitat. As the only source of his real influence, Tarradellas would refuse to eliminate the provinces during the 1977-78 period, a time when many Catalan elites felt Catalonia lost its historic opportunity to do so.

The final draft of the 1978 Constitution offers a clear example of an effective strategy by the center: The assertion of the need for robust local level government, concomitant with the grouping together of regional and local level governments when legally defining their characteristics. Article 141 defines the province as "a local entity with its own juridical personality"; it can only be modified by an Organic Law passed by the Cortes. Article 137 defines the territorial organization of the Spanish state:

" The state is territorially organized by municipalities, provinces, and those Autonomous Communities which are constituted.

All of these entities possess the autonomy to manage their respective interests. (Emphasis mine.)¹⁰

ii. The process of writing an Autonomy Statute for Catalonia began during the summer of 1977 when the "Commission of 20", selected from the Assembly of Catalan Parliamentarians, met in the town of Sau to negotiate the Catalan draft (know as the Sau process and the resulting Sau Statute). Given its inclusive political composition, no strong statement on the province issue could be agreed to in this process. However, Article 6, point 1, of the Sau statute states,

"The Generalitat of Catalonia structures its territorial organization in municipalities and comarques."(Sobrequ3s and Riera 1982: v.2, p.254)

The following summer, during intensive and final negotiations in Madrid (Las Semillas

negotiations, July 1979), the Catalans confronted the adamant position from Suarez's negotiating team that the provinces were non-negotiable. The small Catalan team ceded the point and have been strongly criticized ever since. Furthermore, in the final draft of the Catalan Autonomy Statute a fourth point was added to this original Article 6:

"That established by the above parts will be interpreted without prejudice to the organization of the province as a local entity and as a territorial division for fulfilling the activities of the state, and in conformity with that provided for in articles 137 and 141 of the Constitution."

Summary: By 1979 the stage is set in Spain for a continuous conflict between the Madrid capital and Catalonia over the degree to which political power would be devolved to the Catalan regional government. It was the intended purpose that these documents be vague, because most actors envisioned a dynamic consolidation period -- a long process of negotiations and evolution in the relationship between the "historic regions" and Madrid. In this endless struggle the issue of provinces, as well as the municipal governments which compose it, would be used by Madrid to frustrate Catalan attempts to establish the Generalitat as the *dominant* political entity within the territory of Catalonia. For Jordi Solé Tura (1985) the "constitutional acknowledgement" of the province represents the "principal political defeat" for pro-autonomy groups.(p.133)

A final dynamic also would quickly emerge by the early 1980's. In the elections of 1982 the Socialists (PSOE) began their 14 year dominance of Spanish politics, while in Catalonia the moderate nationalist coalition led by Jordi Pujol (Convergència i Unió, CiU) has dominated the Generalitat since 1980. Shutout of the regional arena, the Catalan socialists (PSC) have been quite successful at the municipal level, and thus by extension, they control several provincial diputacions (e.g. Barcelona). Therefore, what is on the one hand a state level issue over the

state's fundamental territorial organization, has also become part of a systemic conflict between the two dominant political parties in Catalonia.

As will be shown below there is an endless struggle between Catalan socialists, entrenched in provincial and municipal governments (e.g. Barcelona), and the Catalan nationalists (CiU) entrenched in the regional Generalitat, that has extended as far as the European political context and the Committee of the Regions itself. This has created a political situation in which socialist officials at the local, state, and EU levels have allied themselves with other European actors who seek to limit the development of the regional level as a significant platform of political power. Meanwhile the CiU governments of the Generalitat have been extremely active in alliances with European actors (e.g. the German Lander, Belgian regions) who promote a "Europe of the Regions" vision of strong regional governments acting in direct relationship with the EU.

3. Local Government and the Conflict Between Spanish Socialists and Catalan Nationalists.

This section briefly reviews several incidents to exemplify how the issue of local governments can become part of the struggle between state-center elites and the elites of its nationalist peripheries. This tactic can be effective because state elites project themselves as being reformist, and open to issues of decentralization and democratic reform, while simultaneously frustrating nationalist elites' "state-building" at the regional level.

On November 16, 1991, with the election of Pasqual Maragall as President of CEMR less than a month away, with the Maastricht meetings on the horizon, and with Jordi Pujol in Brussels to participate in a meeting of the Action Committee for Europe, the Catalan socialist, and Vice-President of Spain, Narcis Serra announced a government proposal to transfer competencies from

the Autonomous Communities to municipalities.(El País 11/19/91) This announcement was made at the annual assembly of the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP)¹¹, led by Francisco Vázquez, socialist major and representative to the Congress of the Deputies (lower house of the Cortes). Vázquez made clear the view of this socialist controlled organization; he even linked its views to the European arena:

"The philosophy of FEMP is that local entities should not be in front of or behind anyone. Local corporations must be at the same level as the other Administrations, each with its own environment of action. The problem is that, in the last years, the fashion has been to favor the autonomous communities. This has to be rectified because if not there will be a problem of coordination with respect to the rest of Europe."(Avui 11/24/91)

The day after Serra spoke to FEMP, Pasqual Maragall stated in Madrid that the entire financial system of Spain must be reformed so that municipalities receive significantly more resources. Maragall proposed that revenue be split 50-25-25: 50% for the state and 25% each for the autonomous communities and municipalities (although he offered to be "flexible" and go with a 60-40-40 split). The statements by these three socialist leaders clearly exemplifies the central government's strategy of using local level government to respond to the Generalitat's attempts to solidify itself as the dominant political platform in the territory of Catalonia. FEMP underscored this position on November 24 by formally asking for 25% of revenues, coupled with the "decentralization" of competencies from autonomies to municipalities.(El País 11/24/91)

The Catalan response was to be expected. Pujol claimed that Serra was purposely trying to confront local governments with the Generalitat in Catalonia. However, he went on to reveal the European perspective of those regional elites seeking the actual devolution of political power to their level. He argued that robust regional government (e.g. Lander, Autonomous Communities)

were the "middle road" between "pure administrative decentralization and independence". The EC should politically organize its territory in this way in order to assure peace and stability in Europe, as well as to resolve existing ethnic conflict. (Avui 11/23/91) Pujol finished by expressing his frustration that the EC is presently organized to hinder, not facilitate, such projects.

This issue was quickly overtaken by Maastricht but occasionally resurfaced in 1992-1993. In early October 1992 PSOE began an internal process of asking PSOE controlled autonomies to begin devolving competencies to municipal governments, with no effect. (El Pais 10/5/92) In October of 1993 the Diputaci3n of Barcelona formally asked the Generalitat to pass certain services to it, again without effect. Finally, in November 1993 the Constitutional Tribunal struck down sections of the Municipal Law of Catalonia, passed by the Catalan Parliament in 1987, which attempted to control the distribution of revenue at the provincial and municipal levels in Catalonia.

Summary: The Generalitat was trying to legalize the principle that it controls revenue issues involving local governments in its territory. Furthermore, said law was an attempt by the Generalitat, which has little control over its own revenue which the state cedes to it, to create a way to fund the *comarca*, its stated manner of organizing itself within Catalonia. The Catalans have long wished to eliminate the provinces and to establish the *comarca* as the county level of government. This event demonstrates how institutions of the state's center can effectively use the local government issue to disrupt attempts by regional governments to establish a state-like presence within "their" territory. This event also demonstrates the long range implications of the struggle over the issue of provinces during the 1977-1979 negotiations.

SECTION II: THE EUROPEAN ARENA: COMPETING REGIONAL STRATEGIES IN THE EU.

"As a result it is clear that we [the Catalan regional government, the Generalitat] have the resolve to lead this European regional movement. When we speak of this now we know that Catalonia is different than the other European regions. Catalonia is more than a region: It is a nation.... Catalonia should play a leadership role in the European regional movement." Joan Vallvé. Commissioner for Foreign Relations of the Generalitat of Catalonia. Interview with José Antich. El País 9/20/92. [] mine.)

In December 1991 the European Council approved the Maastricht Treaty creating the European Union. One of the less publicized components of this treaty was the creation of a Committee of the Regions to advise both the Council of Ministers and the Commission on specific issues. Therefore, while Maastricht made the headlines because of the unprecedented transfer of state initiative to a larger political organization, it also increased substantially the potential for an accelerated transfer of political initiative to regions. This Section II will examine the Catalan case as an example of how some regional political elites are using European organizations to push for a major change in the position of regions not only within the emerging European Union, but also within their respective states. The Catalan case also reveals how state level interests have successfully mitigated the full impact of these initiatives, by coopting the decentralization issue, through sympathetic sub-state elites using a "local level government" argument..

The major regions of Europe (e.g. German Länder, Belgian regions, Spanish "historic" regions) have long been politically active in Europe as well as in their respective states.¹² The Catalans are among the most active and influential of these regional elites in the EU. Two Catalans are president of the major European regional organizations.¹³ Furthermore, Pasqual Maragall, originally Vice-President of the EU's Committee of the Regions is now its President,

while a Catalan, Communist, Antoni Guitierrez-Díaz is President of the Commission on Regional Policy of the European Parliament. The Catalan nationalists are part of the "Four Motors of Europe" initiative¹⁴, comprised of the economically advanced areas of France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, the "Euroregion" movement¹⁵, as well as a curious "Eurocomarca" initiative.¹⁶

1. Catalan nationalist (CiU) vs Catalan Socialist (PSC): Two Set of Catalan Political Elites, Two different Agendas.

The activities of the Catalan Generalitat represent a regional strategy of seeking the real devolution of political power to national peripheries in Spain and the EU. The activities of the Catalan Socialists (PSC), who control Barcelona city and provincial governments, demonstrates a brilliant strategy for limiting the scope and magnitude of power redistribution to regions. While somewhat overstated, the socialists are the "Trojan horse" for state level elite in their attempt to coopt regionalization into their vision of administrative decentralization, and away from the devolution of political power sought by specific regions in Europe. In the Catalan case this reflects the strategic tensions inherent to Catalan political parties, which must reconcile actions at the regional and state levels. Over time each political party has had to articulate a specific political ideology, as well as its own vision of Catalan identity. The trick is that they had to do this in a way which was both effective with the Catalan electorate, and yet congruent with their political strategy at the Spanish level.¹⁷

i *"The Treaty of European Union"*¹⁸ : The Catalan Socialists (PSC) have always been in a difficult position in Catalonia because of their close institutional ties with the Spanish Socialists (PSOE) who governed Spain from 1982-1996. For the first time in modern Spanish history significant numbers of Catalans have been in Madrid governments; in fact Spain's present Vice-

president until the March 3, 1996 elections, Narcís Serra, is a major leader of PSC. (Company and Ainaud de Lasarte in Vidal-Folch 1994) With a "Jacobin" image in Catalonia due to years of Catalan-Madrid friction over the development of the regional autonomy system, PSOE is highly associated with PSC. During much of the 1990's PSC supported the classic socialist position, of Spanish and European socialists, by supporting Jacques Delors' vision of the European Union. Hence, their position in Catalonia is defensive as IC (Catalan Communists) attacks their leftist credentials for supporting Maastricht, and as ERC (Republican Left of Catalonia: separatist nationalists) and CiU attack them for selling out Catalonia to gain power and influence in Madrid.

While active in adjusting regional representation within the Maastricht framework the Catalan socialists are locked into PSOE's European policy, and the policy of European Socialists represented for so long by Jacques Delors. As PSOE goes and Maastricht goes, so go the Catalan Socialists.

ii. *"A Europe of Regions"*¹⁹: The Socialists and the Catalan moderate nationalist (CiU led by Jordi Pujol) represent two completely different visions, strategies, and actions for regional elites in Europe. CiU dominates Catalan politics. To most observers the historic error of Catalan Socialists, which they admit, was refusing Jordi Pujol's offer to form a coalition government after the first regional elections in Catalonia in March 1980. With a strong plurality of the vote, Pujol instead formed a minority government with the old ERC, and proceeded to initiate the construction of Catalonia's first regional government and administration since the short-lived Catalan regional government of Spain's Second Republic (1932-38). By 1984 Catalonia was personified by Pujol, permitting his party to create a position of political dominance in Catalan regional politics. CiU "moderate" credentials as nationalists rests on a carefully measured strategy

of regional government, coupled with a clear and ambitious European project.

President Pujol claims to embody a modern, culturally progressive, and economically dynamic Catalonia which looks towards Europe for its future. "A Europe of Regions" epitomizes the pragmatic balance in CiU's message: They are constantly seeking greater powers from Madrid and Brussels in recognition of Catalonia's unique, national status, but these nationalist demands are couched within a discourse on Spain and Europe which does not alarm the eclectic population of Catalonia (the same cannot be said for the reaction it elicits from other sectors of Spanish society). They present themselves as statesmen who are realistic and pragmatic, not wild eyed nationalists (ERC) or utopian leftists (IC). While CiU constantly fights with Madrid for an "equitable" degree of self-government to fit the status of Catalonia as a nation within Spain, Pujol's discourse of a Catalonia, which is open to Spain and to Europe, is essential to his overall image. President Pujol and his assistants are often seen traveling throughout Europe -- acting on a European stage as major players in European regional politics. Furthermore Pujol often travel with the attitude of a head of state and is often received as such. Hence, "Europe" is an essential component of the CiU moderate nationalist coalition's overall strategy.

iii. The Activities of the Generalitat in Western Europe:

"The government is demonstrating its serious preoccupation with the 'growing interference in the international activities of the State by the autonomous communities ... and the nonexistent of set rules which regulate these activities!...'". (El País, 1/10/93)

This citation by El País of a study written by Spain's Ministry of Public Administration, in an article on the international activities of regional governments, represents the serious concern by Madrid of the growing foreign activities of regions, mainly within Europe. While using the term

"autonomous communities" Madrid's real concern lies with the activities of Euskadi and particularly Catalonia. Pujol's 27 foreign visits in 1992 (the year he became president of the Assembly of European Regions) is triple of any other regional president except Manuel Fraga (ex-president of the Popular Party and President of the Xunta of Galicia [regional government]).

Pujol's election to head AER (Assembly of European Regions) in July 1992 and his subsequent appointment of Joan Vallvé to a post referred to by many as the "minister of foreign affairs" for Catalonia, in September 1992, reopened a simmering debate over the role of regions in international affairs.

"... as long as the act with the class goals of a lobby or with the function of obtaining information for the respective region";
but the line is crossed when, they act "with representative functions, incompatible with those reserved for the state in the Constitution." (El País 1/10/93)

Catalonia has "offices" in 23 countries which nominally serve as a lobbying agent for the region but which in European countries, particularly Brussels, clearly aspire to serve as a pseudo-embassy.

The timing of this issue's new political relevance was not coincidental. As explained below Pujol's leadership in AER is a powerful platform for Catalan nationalists to project themselves in Europe not only because of this organizations size (representing over 180 regions in Europe); furthermore since late 1992 it became apparent that the Maastricht treaty was finally to have a future. Because the Treaty on European Union creates a Committee of the Regions, and gives juridical status to the concept of "subsidiarity", this period began intense activity by regions to position themselves to influence the application of these two ideas in concrete terms (e.g. Committee of the Regions). This shift in strategy and activity is particularly apparent in Catalonia

where one can see how regional elites such as the CiU Generalitat will use the new juridical status of "subsidiarity" as a powerful justification for their efforts.

"Why did France, one of the fathers of Europe, give such a conditional yes to the European Community? [French referendum on the European Union] In good part this was due to that fact that the French citizen feels isolated from the decisions that are made in Brussels, very distant from his own interests and his own identity." ([] mine.)

Hence, Vallvé argues, a greater role for regions would increase the importance of regional issues in the EU, but more significantly it would bring closer to the daily life of an ordinary citizen the EU and its "mechanisms". For these reasons Vallvé states that the "regionalization" of Europe as proposed by AER, and the "construction" of Europe as outline at Maastricht, are parallel rather than divergent processes.

2. European Regional Associations: AER and CEMR.

Transnational regional initiatives annoy the states and the European Parliament, and do hold the potential to become significant entities in the long-run. However events at Maastricht created a new political environment for regions. For at least the short term it is the European regional associations (Assembly of European Regions, and Council of European Municipalities and Regions), and their links to the Committee of the Regions, which provide a potentially important European platform for Catalan leaders. These two associations represent very different strategies and goals for regional activity in a new Europe. Significantly, Jordi Pujol is president of the Assembly of European Regions (AER) which advocates a strong regional role in European affairs. Pasqual Maragall is president of the Council for European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), an organization dedicated to assuring municipal representation side by side with regions.²⁰ As a result, the confrontation between Catalan socialists and Catalan

nationalists has been extended to a European level where a similar struggle exists between these two associations (AER and CEMR).

In a speech which many European regionalists consider to be a watershed in the EC's position on regions, Jacques Delors stated before the Bavarian parliament in March of 1991 that: "The participation of regions in the construction of Europe is an essential factor to its success." (L'Express 3/6/1992. "L'Europe par la petite porte". Europe by the Small Door.) However, this statement says something to everyone for the essential question is what *kind* of participation will regions have. Among self-proclaimed regionalists this debate breaks down into two different visions, with different strategies and objectives. To study the articulation of these two positions, and the evolution of their conflict, it is instructive to study the period from November 1991 (on the eve of the Maastricht meetings), until the summer of 1994 when the Committee of the Regions began to function.

i. *The European Strategy of Catalan Nationalist (CiU) in AER:* Over the course of the following month Jordi Pujol emerged as the favored candidate to replace the Italian Carlo Bernini as President of the Assembly of European Regions (who defeated Pujol in 1988). Founded in 1985 (its charter was written in Barcelona) AER had grown to represent more than 180 regions from all of Europe. From its inception Pujol has been active in this organization by promoting the notion of a "Europe of Regions" in which regional level governments, especially in regions with national communities, would play a prominent role. However, Pujol's emergence as a candidate to lead this organization in May of 1992 reversed what had been the Generalitat's recent strategy to move away from AER and to focus completely on the "Four Motors of Europe" initiative, which at the end of the 1980's was deemed to hold more promise for

Catalonia in terms of economic development. AER was seen to have little real influence.

The "decisive factor" in this change in European strategy was the Maastricht treaty and the creation of the Committee of the Regions. (El País 5/25/92) AER and CEMR have taken on new importance because these organizations will influence the initial formation of the Committee of the Regions, and will have a hand in its development and operation. The potential implications of this new strategy were great enough that Pujol personally, and the Generalitat as an institution, fully committed themselves to his election campaign for this post, thereby exposing themselves to significant political risk in the event of failure.

The importance placed on this European strategy was underscored after Pujol's victory in July 1992. The Catalan government was reorganized in September of 1992 to free Pujol and top CiU officials to devote substantial time and energy to the AER organization and the future Committee of the Regions. A Commissioner of Foreign Relations was created in a cabinet shuffle placing Joan Vallvé in this new post which carried significant responsibility and prestige. To occupy this position was to be considered a close confidant of Pujol, and the only reason that a full cabinet position and department of foreign affairs was not officially created, at this time, was to address Madrid's sensitivity over Catalan activities in matters of international relations. (El País 9/15/92) Statements by Vallvé (see above quotes) underscored the importance placed by the Catalan nationalists on their European strategy. Finally, indicating the extent of Pujol's political project in European regional circles, AER, which comprises the most economically advanced and politically developed regions of Europe, overwhelming elected Pujol to lead them during this crucial period of European integration.²¹

ii. *The Strategy of Catalan Socialists in Europe and CEMR*: During this same period (May 8,

1992), in the City Hall of Barcelona, Pasqual Maragall was invested with the presidency of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions. Created in 1951 this organization represents 30,000 regional and municipal entities in over 24 countries. Significantly, Jacques Delors was present at this ceremony in a clear gesture which linked CEMR and Maragall's position, on regions AND municipalities in Europe, to that of Brussels' official position. Delors reaffirmed two elements of his position at this ceremony.

- First regions and municipalities both have an "essential role" to play.
- Secondly, this "essential role" is to approach EU institutions to European citizens.(El País 5/8/92)

Therefore, Delors and Maragall argue that both regions and municipalities must have a "balanced" representation in EU institutions, particularly the Committee of the Regions. The Committee of the Regions is composed of by regions and municipalities, at least until 1996, when the Treaty on European Union, and the Committee of the Regions which it created, can be revised. Maragall and CEMR argue for a permanent arrangement in which municipalities would play a significant role in EU decision-making while Pujol and AER are willing to grit their teeth until 1996, but strongly argue for significant changes at that point in time. (see below)

3. The Committee of the Regions: State Elites Capture the Decentralization Issue.

Just as this debate over the political organization of Europe has a Catalan context in which Maragall and Pujol have been clashing for years over the role of regions within Spain, and Barcelona within Catalonia, this debate also has a European context. The dominant position, held by states with unitary traditions and by many of the EU's institutions, use the municipal argument to thwart the development of robust regional prerogatives which they view to be potentially

disruptive and inefficient. A counter position is held by countries such as Germany and Belgium, supported by national regions such as Catalonia, who argue that significant decentralization is an effective way to implement the notion of subsidiarity in a manner which will bring government down to the scale of citizens and increase institutional efficiency. (See below) Yet while Catalan socialists and Catalan nationalists were posturing to gain the advantage on the issue of Europe in 1992-1993 (a period of regional and general elections), and while AER and CEMR were debating how the Committee of the Regions would function internally, the main characteristics of the Committee of the Regions were already defined in November of 1991, prior to the Maastricht meeting.

i. The Initial Agreement to Form a Regional Body. In mid-November of 1991 the Intergovernmental Conference for European Political Union accepted the proposal by Germany and Spain to create a Committee of the Regions which would serve as a consultative body to both the Commission and the Council. (El País 11/15/91) In fact it was reported that this issue was one of the few issues which countries agreed to prior to this historic meeting. (El País 11/22/91) This is surprising given the reticent view of many member states and EC institutions (particularly the Parliament) which were concerned that granting regions political recognition would be "divisive" rather than useful in making the EC more efficient and representative.

This rare consensus was reached prior to Maastricht by modifying Germany's initial proposal to create a committee of only regions, which was the strategy most favored by the ambitious regions seeking to maximize their presence in European institutions. (Avui 11/26/91) The new German-Spanish proposal instead contained the classic strategy by those concerned with the fallout of regional recognition -- mix both regions and municipalities into a single category. In

this way one can claim to be granting representation to local authorities while assuring that the divergent interests of municipalities and regions would contain the agenda of certain regions who would certainly push the limits of any organization in pursuit of their ideal of a "Europe of the Regions". (German Länder, Belgian regions, Euskadi, Catalonia, etc.)

ii. *The Basic Characteristics of the Committee of the Regions.* The compromise achieved in this proposal between these two positions is clearly seen in the basic characteristics of this Committee of the Regions as outlined in the Treaty on European Union. While it is a purely consultative body, it must be consulted on certain issues.²² Its recommendations are not binding. However, the Committee can meet and act on its own prerogative and can emit opinions "in cases in which it considers such action appropriate". (Article 198) Its members are selected for four years terms by each country (which itself determines the mix of regional to municipal representatives); these members may elect their own president and formulate the committee's internal rules and procedure, *upon approval by the Council.* (Article 198b) However, these members can act with complete independence and may not be bound by "mandatory instructions" from their country's government. (Article 198a) Although this body appears to have a wide margin of action, "community sources" indicated to El País that this committee was designed to be "purely symbolic" as indicated by its institutional association with the Economic and Social Committee. (11/22/91)

The Committee of the Regions would be composed of 189 members: the largest member states (Germany, Great Britain, France, and Italy) have 24 members, while the smallest state, Luxembourg, has six. (Article 198a) Spain has 21 members which the Socialist government decided to distribute to all 17 autonomous regions *and* four municipalities (Madrid, Barcelona at

least, but there is some kind of rotational system in place for municipalities).

iii. *The Reaction by Catalan nationalist Leaders:* The reaction by Catalan nationalists and Pujol was swift. Pujol and José Antonio Ardanza (President of the Basque regional government) applauded the creation of this committee because it had been one element of their program to create the "legitimacy of regions" at the EC level. However, in Brussels and Barcelona Jordi Pujol quickly outlined a series of objections to this organization. (El País 11/22/91; Avui 11/26/91) The mixing of regions and municipalities creates "confusion" over the objectives of this committee. In mentioning Germany's initial proposal Pujol reiterated the Catalan nationalist view that regions should be solely present on this committee because they are a higher order of government than municipalities, while national regions such as Catalonia are an altogether special case.

Furthermore, Pujol criticized the placing of this committee in conjunction with the Economic and Social Committee. The Committee of the Regions should have been given complete organizational autonomy. Seen as a purely symbolic entity by many, the Catalan nationalists did not wish to be associated with this Economic and Social Committee. Their ambition is to energize the Committee of the Regions and to quickly establish it as an organization with a certain degree of influence. For this reason the Catalan nationalists also would have liked to have increased the prerogatives of this committee and its ability before the Council and the Commission to inject its opinions into the policy process.

Even Manuel Fraga voiced several criticisms: He was critical of the "timid" nature of this committee, of the European Parliament's recent admonition against regional representation, and of the fear that a "Europe of the Regions" would compromise rather than compliment a "Europe of

the States". (Avui 11/20/91) While his position on regions is not as ambitious as that of Jordi Pujol, Fraga does see an inevitability in the political evolution of Europe:

"The Nation-States will not disappear, but neither will they again be the sole protagonists in the international sphere. Nor will regions become as they were in the Middle Ages, almost sovereign, but they will have a much greater projection in the interior of States and they must also have a similar projection in Europe. This is the road which is open... and it will ameliorate without a doubt the organization of the European Commission and the European Parliament."(Avui 11/20/91)

iv. 1993: *A Struggle to Control the Committee of the Regions*. In the first months of 1993 Catalan socialists and Catalan nationalists fully articulated their vision of Europe, and their strategy to achieve it, in two editorials. First, Joan Vallvé outlined the Generalitat's position, titled "Maastricht and the Regions", in early January. (El País 1/8/93) Vallvé begins by noting the historic precedent of this Committee of the Regions, even with its limitations. "The Treaty of Maastricht expresses for the first time the regional reality [*el hecho regional*], of regions, in the text of a community treaty". Vallvé claims that this is part of a political evolution of both the EC and European states towards decentralized patterns of organization which Austria, Sweden, and Finland will accentuate.²³ Quoting the economist Alvin Toffler²⁴, Vallvé sees the state being absorbed into a superstate while simultaneously devolving specific policies to local authorities. For Vallvé this inevitable evolution of the political organization of Europe requires, for reasons of efficiency and democracy, the creation of a special and important role for regions within the EU.

"This reality necessitates the rethinking of what should be from now on the function of the State before a changing world which advances towards the constitution of larger entities which are increasingly more distant from citizens, but in which each individual seeks the affirmation of his identity through the existence of regions [*a través del hecho regional*]. This is the principal function that regions should have in the new construction of Europe."

Here Vallvé has added the subtle nuance of Catalan nationalists to the discussion that

subsidiarity will "democratize" the EU by bringing government closer to the people. By speaking of identity Vallvé includes, into the very notion of democracy, the assertion that the protection of the national identity of a region is essential; by inference then a political entity (i.e. the EU) will only be considered legitimate, by the population of that region, if it "affirms" their identity. In this way the Generalitat's European strategy seeks to create a direct political relationship with Brussels which will empower the Generalitat in its struggle with Madrid to redress perceived injustices on the issues of nationality and self-government.

In a response entitled, "Regions and Cities in Europe", Pasqual Maragall defines the Catalan socialist position in clear distinction to CiU's stance. (El País 2/3/93) He begins by quoting Jacques Delors who defined cities as "... the essential element in the construction of an authentic Europe... indispensable intermediaries between the power that is ever more distant, and the problems this creates, and its citizens." Citing the Maastricht treaty itself Maragall reminds the reader that the Committee of the Regions is to be formed by both regions and cities. Because many countries are not organized in regions, what is essential is the principle of subsidiarity rather than the explicit support of regional government. This point underscores Maragall's central premise of defending a broad set of political principles rather than the parochial prerogatives of a region.

Subsidiarity for Maragall is the "approximation" of power to the citizen which is the most adequate to administer the issue in question. "This is a profoundly democratic principle, but it is also, a principle that selects one of many forms of democracy: that which minimizes the difference between the citizen and the administrator...". What is important is that "all levels of government have equal dignity". By reaching beyond the narrow defense of a national region, to state a

broader democratic principle, Maragall seeks to reinforce the Catalan socialist vision of Catalonia within the Maastricht EU.

From this normative high ground the Catalan socialists can balance an assertion of their *catalanisme* with two political realities: One, they must maintain an alliance with PSOE in the Spanish government (and its support of Delors); two, the political reality in Catalonia dictates that they may firmly control many city governments in Catalonia, but are locked out of the Generalitat by Pujol. Maragall ends by reaffirming the importance and uniqueness of Catalonia as a national region while also asking for "generosity" from Europe's national regions to cohabitate with municipalities during this transition period in European regional affairs (1994-96). During the treaty revision process in 1996 a more permanent solution can be found which addresses both the general principle of subsidiarity as well as the principle that national regions have specific needs.

During this period CEMR also filed a complaint with the European Commission because countries such as Spain, Germany, and Belgium had violated the "letter and spirit" of Maastricht on the equality of representation, by giving far greater representation to regions. Maragall also called for the enforcement of the principle of subsidiarity to assure its application at all levels of government, and suggested the creation of legal mechanisms which would allow one to appeal this issue to the European Court of Justice.

3. 1994-1996: The Early Activities of the Committee of the Regions.

i. *The Initial Sessions:* On March 9-10, 1994 the Committee of the Regions held its opening session.²⁵ Initial indications reveal that the less ambitious strategy and vision of Pasqual Maragall and CEMR orient the committee's activities. AER and CEMR compromised on the committee's president; Jacques Blanc (AER) was elected president and Maragall Vice-president with the

understanding that they will switch after two years.(Agence Europe 3/11/94) Perhaps the most significant event was the opening speech by Jacques Delors which underscored the similarities between his views and those of Maragall's. With the ultimate mission of helping to add "soul" to abstract and aloof EU institutions, the Committee of the Regions is to "bring the Union, perceived as being too distant, closer to local reality". (Agence Europe 3/10/94)

Yet in order to avoid "misunderstanding" Delors went on to stress that the Union is a union of nation-states; therefore EU institutions should not interfere with the "natural" relations between central and regional authorities. Citing Article F1 of the Maastricht Treaty the Agence Europe report ended this section with the statement, "the Union respects the national identity of Member States."²⁶ Even before its first actions the limits to this Committee were being made clear.

Delors made two additional points in his speech. First, he claimed that this body was unique because of, "the extraordinary diversity of its members: the leaders of large regions will sit alongside mayors from small towns, and mayors from major cities will mix with representatives of rural communities." What sounds like a quaint aspect of this committee is in reality a central element which conditions its activity. The "uniqueness" of this "diversity" is what diffuse any attempts to use this committee as a platform to enact the ambitious regional strategy of AER and Pujol. Secondly, Delors stated that the "special expertise and influence" of this regional body should be used to give a better understanding of cohesion and structural funds as well as "strengthen people's feeling of belong". Again Delors' "compliment" seeks to limit this committee's focus to narrow, concrete, issues. Finally, Delors warned that this committee "bears a heavy burden" because many are "wary" that this committee will be a divisive force with little substantive contribution to the EU. Delors ended by asking this committee to disprove these

fears.

The next day President Jacques Blanc closed the committee's first session by outlining some of its principles (e.g. geographic diversity among its leaders) and characteristics (4-5 plenary sessions annually, 5 permanent committees, and a plan of focusing on a few substantive issues such as Cohesion Fund regulations). (Agence Europe 3/12/94) This was seen in subsequent meetings which worked principally on the Cohesion Fund issue. Stated future subjects included programs on AIDS, education, "Youth for Europe", "community initiatives", and trans-european networks. (Agence Europe 4/7; 4/8/94)²⁷ Clearly the early activities of the Committee of the Regions are centered on limited administrative tasks rather than on a strategy of pushing the limits of this committee's mandate in order to articulate a radical position on the role of regions in Europe.

Of interest are two statements by President Blanc which hint at the environment in which this committee is working. On April 6, 1994 he felt the need to explain that, "We are not against the States, but we want to express the experience of regional and local authorities". (Agence Europe 4/7/94) On May 5, 1994 after the committee met in cramped quarters, Blanc complained and explained that the inadequate accommodation were deliberate: "Parliament is fearful of the success of the Committee of the Regions and fear is a poor advisor". (Agence Europe 5/19/94)

ii. *Evaluating the First Two Years:* On May 20, 1996 Pasqual Maragall assumed the Presidency of this Committee, as agreed to between AER and CEMR. Maragall's stated objectives confirm the entrenchment of the limited vision of regional activity in the EU. Maragall was "determined to take advantage" of the Committee's advisory role to issue opinions on "major" topics such as new technologies and employment, the environment, and institutional affairs. Hardly the kind of path breaking activity envisioned by Pujol when he led the writing of the CoR's official "Opinion on the

Revision of the Treaty on European Union".(Jeffery 1995) In response to the upcoming IGC and the Committee's status, Maragall state:

"We are in no rush, we know that the Treaty's revision will be in the right direction, in favor of citizens and local powers."(Agence Europe 3/22/96)

Clearly, the "right direction" is to keep more or less to the status quo, while the significance of his ambiguous reference to "local powers" is clear in respect to the argument of this paper. What has this Committee done during 1995-1996, and what does this activity indicate? A statement on their eight draft opinions is revealing: "Integrated management of coastal zones", "community initiatives in regional policy", a Green paper on "innovations in industry", "consumer policy priorities", a white paper on "education and training", "promoting the multilingual information society", and "the hunting of migratory species".(Agence Europe 3/18-19/96) The Committee of the Regions is clearly engrossed in the details of minor policies, and has not addressed at all the significant issues of EU-state-regional relations and the distribution of real political power between them.

What are the future prospects with the IGC in progress? In a speech before the full Committee on November 16, 1995, Carlos Westendorp (Spanish socialist) reported on initial review of the CoR done by the Reflection Group on the 1996 IGC. He announced that the news was "good, and not so good". The good news was that the Group was *considering* a larger role for the CoR, independence from the Economic and Social Committee, and the ability to go before the Court of Justice if its role was not taken into account.(Agence Europe 11/17/96) These would be modest but real gains. However, the CoR would not be able to go before the Court of Justice over the issue of a violation of the principle of subsidiarity --seemingly a fundamental

competency, advocated in Pujol's report, if the CoR is to gain any real weight within the EU policy process. In sum, Westendorp's report reconfirms the thesis of this paper that the state level interests within the EU had successfully coopted and channeled the regional issue into an administrative decentralization format which in fact serves the state level interest of increasing the efficiency of *their* policy process.

Conclusion

This paper has analyzed the activities and the strategies of Catalan political leaders in Spain and in Europe. This was done in conjunction with an examination of how state-level actors and institutions use local government to turn the very issue of decentralization back upon the regions. Two principal European strategies were identified and examined. The moderate nationalist Jordi Pujol and the Catalan socialist Pasqual Maragall are the proponents of these two radically different strategies for positioning Catalonia in the emerging European context of the European Union.

Beyond the discovery of the great influence which these Catalan leaders have in European regional activities this paper argues that these two Catalan strategies correspond to two regional strategies at the European level, as well as to two specific European regional associations which are active proponents of each approach -- one approach seeks the actual devolution of meaningful levels of political power to certain regions, while the other approach is in accord with the state level perspective that administrative decentralization is more appropriate.

Early activity in the Committee of the Regions suggests that the more limited strategy of Maragall and CEMR has clearly oriented this unprecedented regional institution within the EU.

This activity demonstrates the effectiveness of this strategy of mixing local level government with regional level initiatives. Perhaps these events were not surprising considering that the statist perspective, with regard to regions, still controls the Council and the EU establishment as represented by the Commission.

This paper has reviewed a series of frenetic activities and initiatives by Catalan regional leaders which appear initially to be quite impressive. However, while holding a long-term potential to significantly change the political organization of Europe, there are no short-term reasons to think that the position of the modern European state is being seriously challenged. In fact Jordi Pujol's initial reaction to the Maastricht Treaty was to assert that the role of the state had been strengthened -- an interesting comment by a regional leader on a treaty that gave subsidiarity a juridical status, and which created an unprecedented institution for regional representation in Europe. Yet a close look at the Committee of the Regions demonstrates that the Council can exert tight control over many of its elements. The European Parliament has stated that regions cannot be represented in this body. Finally, the modern state maintains a firm control over political relations between its territory and the EU. An important moment in judging the direction of these trends will be the 1996 revision process of the Treaty on European Union.

Domestically, within Catalonia, the European strategy of Pujol's nationalist government is productive since their vision of Catalonia in Europe is an integral part of their basic political position as "moderate" nationalists. Pujol's image and influence is greatly strengthened in Catalonia by his European activities and strategy. While not underestimating the importance placed on these European activities by the Generalitat, perhaps here one finds the best short-term motivation for CiU's European strategy. These leaders have demonstrated over the past 15 years

a great sense of patience and timing in their dealings with Madrid. They know that it takes time to accomplish the reorganization of political power within a territory. Perhaps their European policy is aimed as much at the immediate benefits gained within Catalan domestic politics as it is aimed at the long-term transformation of the role of regions in Europe, which is still to be defined.

ENDNOTES

1. Marks perspective strongly rebukes any attempt to argue differently, as seen in his reaction towards the "intergovernmental perspective" which argues that the European Union project actually strengthens the state -- this latter view is demonstrated in the title of Andrew Moravesik (1994) APSA paper "Why the European Community Strengthens the State: Domestic Politics and International Cooperation".

2. "Meaningful political power" is a capacity to independently initiate decision-making in core policy areas (finance, force, justice, cultural/educational), and to have the ability to create the resources necessary (financial, institutional, public opinion) to effectively implement these policies. This can be thought of a unique, modern state's "**initiating capacity**", imparted by the state environment to the inhabitants of its regime institutions, who then have the discretion to transfer this initiating capacity to other public or private entities.

Significantly empowered peripheries would adhere, to a reasonable degree, to the features of a truly decentralized state order (e.g. federalism): "Each is supreme in its own jurisdiction". For Watts (1981) this is the independence of both levels:

- to control the formation and execution of policy areas clearly, and specifically, outlined for each level (usually in a constitution);
- to hold direct elections for its governance by the people;
- to secure independent sources of revenue;
- to assure the inability of the center to unilaterally amend a regions formal prerogatives and powers;

Finally, a central institutional regime which is structured to be sensitive to regional interests should exist (ie. an upper chamber based on territorial representation).

Even after a long *domestic* process of internal change Spain's strongest Autonomous Communities only come close to these requirements. Frenetic regional policy activity at the EU level must create this order of political change to be classified as creating significant power devolution from the state center to its peripheral regions.

3. Since the UCD (Union of the Democratic Center) minority governments of Suarez, in 1977 and 1979, periods of significant devolution of political power have occurred only when minority governments, of any political ideology, are forced to form legislative pacts with the Catalan Minority in the Spanish Cortes. During the years of Socialist majority governments (PSOE: 1982-1993) little progress was made in a political system specifically designed in the 1978 Spanish Constitution to evolve over time.

In a milestone event for Spanish democracy the moderate right (Partido Popular, PP) won a plurality of seats in the March 3, 1996 elections, but failed to win a majority (PP 38.85%, 156 seats vs PSOE 37.48% 141 seats [350 seats total]). After years of harshly criticizing the socialists for "selling out" Spain to the "nationalists", and of harshly attacking Pujol's nationalist party (Convergència i Unió: CiU), PP's leader José Aznar quickly reached agreement with the Catalans (16 seats) for legislative support in the Cortes in return for a series concessions to the Catalans -- including the control over 30% of income tax collected from a region (The Catalans had for years been asking for 15% and were harshly criticized by PP!).

This gives the Catalans a crucial tool -- an independent source of finance. See following endnotes for more details on Spain.

4. Title VIII of the Spanish Constitution of 1978 outlines the territorial organization of the state. Articles 148 and 149 list the powers which are exclusive to the state and those which may be exercised by the Autonomous Communities. What is unique to the Spanish system is the manner in which regional autonomies are formed. Either through a restrictive procedure (Article 143) or through the "fast track" procedure for the "historic regions" of Galicia, the Basque Lands, and Catalonia. Each region negotiates bilaterally with Madrid to determine the exact nature of its autonomous government; hence a wide disparity exists between regional governments depending on their manner of formation (143 or 151), and subsequently their negotiations with Madrid.

For more general information on the formation of these Autonomous Communities see: Robert Clark in Rudolph and Thompson (1989); Díaz-Lopez (1981) and in Meny and Wright (1985); for an historical perspective see Linz (1973), and Zariski in Rasseau and Zariski (1987). For an important look into the constitutional debates surrounding the drafting of Article VIII see Solé Tura (1985).

5. Four regions used the powerful Article 151 to create their Autonomous Communities: The Basque Lands, Catalonia, Galicia, and surprisingly Andalucía. At the time that the Constitution was written few people suspected that areas outside of the "historic regions" would seek to form an Autonomous Community. However, by the May regional elections of 1983 the entire territory of Spain had been organized into 17 Autonomous Communities. A surge in Andalusian regional sentiment in the late 1970's led its leaders to demand access to the 151 process. Its final victory by early 1982, over strong resistance from Madrid, opened the flood gates as every region felt the need to be so organized. Hence, 13 other regions formed regional entities through Article 143.

To place these events within the context of Spain's democratic transition see Maravall and Santamaría's short but excellent review of the transition period in O'Donnell et.al. (1986). For a more indepth study of the transition period there are many sources. A recently edited volume by CIS covers a lot of ground. (Cotarelo 1992)

6. On February 28, 1992 Spain's two main political parties agreed to an autonomy agreement (Pacto Autonómico) which attempts to create greater uniformity among the disparate levels of administration between the 17 Autonomous Communities. The core of this agreement is the transfer of 32 areas of policy (with varying degrees of exclusive control) to the Article 143 regions in an attempt to bring them up to the level of the four more fully developed regional governments formed under Article 151. Basque and Catalan nationalists have not signed this agreement which is in line with their position that the "historical regions" of Spain should have a special political status given that they are nations not regions. *El País* 2/6 2/16, 3/15/92; *Avui* 1/13, 1/24, 1/28, 2/6,92)

7. Over the last several years a few issues have been prominent -- the transfer of control of 15% of tax receipts to the regions, pushed by the Catalans; the control of the police by Euskadi

and Catalonia in their regions; and the prerogatives of the unique civil law traditions in Catalonia. The degree of tension has risen greatly since the June 1993 elections in which PSOE lost the majority, but maintains a minority government with the legislative support of the Basques (PNV) and especially the Catalans (CiU). Accusations of "selling out" Spain to the "nationalists" accentuate the bitter struggle between the moderate right (PP) and the socialists for the future political control of Spain. This has exploded a final issue to a dangerously high level of tension: The language policy in Catalonia based on a 1983 law by the Generalitat (held to be constitutional) which seeks to create a bilingual population in Catalonia (Catalan, Castilian). The Law of Linguistic Normalization in Catalonia. Since March 3, 1996 PP and PSOE have now switched places (See endnote 3).

8. An explosion in regional movements is occurring in Spain since 1992. In 1992, the year prior to the June 6, 1993 general elections, 189 local and regional parties were registered. (El Pais 11/8/92). While most of these are insignificant 6 regional parties formed an election coalition for the June 6th elections, while various regional parties won an unprecedented total of 6 seats (this figure does not include traditional nationalist parties). The March 3, 1996 elections confirmed this trend with non-traditional regional parties winning 8 seats. This regionalism tends to be right of center (Aragón, Valencia) and critical of the February Autonomy Pact, because they feel that it continues to favor the "privileged" national regions. Hence this movement is in some ways more of a reaction against the national regions than it is against Madrid. However the motives and issues do vary depending on the area (e.g. Canary Islands) as all movements call for political reforms as well as a further development of regional governments.

9. The *Assemblea de Catalunya* (The Catalan Assembly) was formed in 1971 as a unitary, national-democratic opposition movement which included social and political groups from all political ideological, and national, perspectives. This organization also had strong grassroots links into all sectors of Catalan society (Catalan as well as Castilian immigrant). Spanish-wide organizations of narrower scope, and less social mobilization, only formed in the summer of 1974 (communist led), and the summer of 1975 (socialist led). These two organizations finally combined in the summer of 1976.

10. Negotiations over Title VIII of the 1978 Constitution (detailing the territorial organization of the state and the role of the Autonomous Community) were very intense and complicated. In reference to the provinces the UCD position, supported by the right, was to define the state *only* in terms of provinces and municipalities. It was up to the socialists, highly influenced by Catalan socialists, to broaden this definition to include the Autonomous Community (obviously with support from the smaller nationalist groups).

"...we understand that this territorial organization is by provinces and municipalities -- and this would be one of our proposed corrections to the actual text -- and the autonomous communities that they constitute". (Peces-Barba 1984: 331)

11. FEMP comprises 80% of municipalities in Spain. These are local governments controlled by Spanish-wide political parties (PSOE, PP, IU [Communists], and CDS [Social Democratic Center, a small remnant of Suarez's UCD]) Local governments controlled by nationalist parties in Euskadi and Catalonia are not present. Hence, this organization clearly operates through a centrist optic.

12. For discussion of regionalism and the activities of regions in West European states as well as in the context of the EC, see Hueglin (1986) and Keating (1988b) for concise reviews. Keating and Jones (1994) and Harvie (1994) look specifically at the European context while Rousseau and Zariski (1987) and Keating (1988b) deal not only with the issues around regional nationalism, but also reviews indepth several West European countries. See also Meny and Wright (1985), Krejci and Velimsky (1981), Rudolph and Thompson (1989), and Tiryakian and Rogowski (1985) for edited volumes which approach the issue of regional nationalism from different perspectives. An edited series which still provides interesting insights on the historical dimension of these issues of state, nation, and regions, from the perspective of political sociology, is Eisenstadt and Rokkan (1973).

13. Jordi Pujol, President of the Generalitat, and the dominant political figure of Catalonia since 1980 is president of the Assembly of European Regions. Pasqual Maragall, a Catalan socialist and Mayor of Barcelona is President of the council of European Municipalities and Regions. This paper will analyze in detail their activities in these organizations.

14. Composed of Lombardy, Rhône-Alpes, Baden-Württemberg, and Catalonia these self-proclaimed economic powerhouses formed this organization to promote economic growth in their regions, which they felt would then pull along their respective countries. In the late 1980's Pujol and the Generalitat became enamored with this initiative for two reasons. First, they felt that it was a good vehicle for promoting Catalan economic growth. Furthermore, the image of Catalonia rubbing shoulders with Europe's most economically powerful and sophisticated regions reassured a chronically insecure Catalonia that it was a modern and advanced region, not simply of Spain but of Europe.

However, even before the ratification of the Treaty on European Union the Generalitat's shifted its European strategy. On the eve of Maastricht the Generalitat was positioning Catalonia not only to compete economically in a single market, but also to exist in a new European Union in which traditional patterns of political, and territorial, organization would be called into question. With the Treaty on European Union, and initiatives such as the Schengen Agreement, these considerations have strengthened.

15. i. The Euroregion Project. On October 19, 1991 the presidents of Catalonia, Midi-Pyrénées, and Languedoc-Roussillon signed the constitutive act of their Euroregion, which has the stated goal of coordinating their development policies and serving as a regional lobby to their respective states as well as the EU. Perhaps the potential significance of this initiative can be measured in the reticent attitude of Madrid, Paris, and Brussels to this activity. In fact this agreement came shortly after the European Parliament had voted against the possibility that states could cede representation to regions. All three leaders asserted that this was not an attempt to undermine the

state but rather a project to develop the internal relations between these regions in the area of economic development, communications and transportation, cultural exchange, and scientific research.(El País 10/20/91; Avui 11/10/91) A second role will be that of a regional lobby in Brussels which will "reinforce the driving role of the Euroregion within the Large European Single Market".(Communique of three presidents 10/19/91)

Avui reports that, "these two elements are more valued every day as the moment of eliminating borders within the EC approaches, because it will pressure neighboring areas to coordinate their activities which have been scarce until now."(Avui 11/10/91) A comment by the influential regional leader Jacques Blanc, President of Languedoc-Roussillon hints to these potentially more far reaching implications when he states that the "destiny" of these three regions is "linked" together given the trends in Europe.

At an April 1992 meeting of Euroregions in Braunschweig, Germany, Jordi Pujol was much more explicit about the ultimate ambition of such projects: "Euroregions are not only administrative entities but could also manage the democratic development of the EC through the decentralization of power."(Avui, 4/30/92) This organization compliments well the Catalan leadership's desire to project themselves as more than simply a geographic region. Given the much greater political capacities of the Generalitat, as a Spanish Autonomous Community compared to these French provinces, Catalonia will play a leadership role in this nascent organization representing 10.5 million people.

16. Eurocomarca. The extent to which the movement to a European Union might affect the organization of local and regional government can be seen in a curious initiative by 5 Catalan comarques and 3 French *départements* (each equivalent to a county), to form a single *mancomunidad*. These local areas lie along the Mediterranean coast where the region of Catalonia meets the Pyrenees and passes into southern Languedoc-Roussillon (an area of mixed French and Catalan culture). This is an area whose local economy depends on fishing and the now eliminated business generated by the major border crossing between France and Spain (Cerbère-Portbou); surprisingly this part of France voted 'no' in the referendum on the European Union. An impoverished area of 23,000 inhabitants, these counties wish to organize their limited local services into a regional "comarca" which will better serve all of these coastal communities (Distribution of water, trash collection, management of the fishing areas off the coast, and the formation of common schools).(El País 2/14/93)

The influence of the move to a Single Market and a European Union can be seen the development of this initiative. What is now a serious attempt to create a transnational, local governmental, entity began as a folkloric and cultural exchange organization in 1985 to promote festivals, cultural events, and sporting events (Asociació Cap de Creus-Cap de Sant Vicenç). Yet the movement to European integration and the elimination of the border, and its economy, has transformed a cultural society and vague ideas of cooperation into a potentially significant initiative.

Serious enough that the Civil Governor for Girona (the state's representative in a province, roughly equivalent to a French *Préfet*), Pere Navarro, pronounced that such a project is in conflict with the administrative and territorial legislation of both countries.(El País 2/14/93) Pushed by CiU mayors in the Catalan towns, this group claims to truly test the idea of the European Union

to see if it is more than mere words. The statement by a French Mayor in this region is perhaps the most revealing:

"Neither the French state or the region of Languedoc-Roussillon help us, we are very alone. In this association we will have the support of the Catalan Generalitat and of its President Jordi Pujol, who has much charisma in Europe."(El País 10/14/93)

17. E.g., Catalan Communists (PSUC/IC) exist in a party coalition with the Spanish Communist party (PCE) and leftist groups (IU); Catalan Socialists (PSC) have a very close organizational relationship with the Spanish socialists (PSOE) who have governed Spain since 1982 -- in this way an historical number of Catalans have been serving in cabinets and agencies in Madrid; Catalan Christian democrats (UDC) are the minor partner of the a dominant, moderate nationalist, coalition (CiU) formed with the Catalan conservative party (CDC) -- this coalition dominates regional politics and controls a large Catalan contingent in the Spanish parliament (which presently plays a crucial role in keeping the minority socialist government in office); curiously, even the Popular Party, which is a conservative party with a centralized, single national view of the Spanish nation-state, claims that its Catalan section is autonomous -- these leaders speak in Catalan of the Spanish *patria*; finally, small separatist groups were completely marginalized during the 1970's and 1980's -- however, their takeover of the historic ERC (Republican Left of Catalonia) in 1989 gave them a new political vehicle; but as of the 1992 regional elections, the 1993 general elections, and the 1994 European elections their support may have reached its apex. (8%, 5%, 5.5%)

18. The following description of the political positions of PSC are in part derived from the informal section of interviews (off tape) with Joan Reventos and Jordi Solé Tura during June 1994.

19. The following description of the political positions of CiU are in part derived from the informal section of interviews (off tape) with Jordi Pujol and Joaquim Xicoy, President of the Parliament of Catalonia, during July of 1994.

20. An interesting discrepancy exists in the literature here. Christiansen (1995) and Agence Europe reports always speak of the relationship between the European Socialist Party, and the European People's Party, in reaching agreements within the Committee of the Regions on its functioning. My research of the Catalan and Spanish reports indicates that it was agreements between the two European regional associations (AER and CEMR) which determined accords within the CoR.

21. Pujol's years of activity in regional associations was one key for his 104 to 34 vote victory over Manuel Fraga, President of the Xunta of Galicia and historic figure of the Spanish right. In a statement attributing his victory to his years as a European regional activist Pujol demonstrates

the importance that the idea of "Europe" has been to the self-identity of Catalans and to the articulation of "moderate" Catalan nationalism:

"Ever since I was a little boy I was already a *catalanista* and a regionalist, in a period when it was complicated to be these things [in reference to his opposition activities during the Franco regime]"(El País 7/4/1992. [] mine.)

22. The sections of Article 198, of the Treaty on European Union, simply say "where this treaty so provides" in reference to the subjects on which the Committee must be consulted. These subjects are: Economic and social cohesion, education, professional training and youth, public health, culture, tourism, consumer protection and transeuropean networks of telecommunications, transportation, and energy.(El País 3/2/94)

23. His quote of the AER statute which defines a region demonstrates the underlying ambition of the Catalan nationalist position. Regions are,

"political entities of a level immediately below that of the State, empowered by specific competencies exercised by a Government, which itself is responsible to a democratically elected assembly."

24. "Over the long-term there will be distinct levels of competencies, and the future of Europe will be determined on the one hand by Brussels, and on the other hand by an equilibrium between nation-States and regions."

25. In a Commission Decision of April 21, 1994 (94/209/EC), the European Commission ended the existence of the Consultative Council of Regional and Local Authorities which had been a limited advisory body to the Commission since 1988. This decision is a small indicator that, however limited, the Committee of the Regions does demonstrate a substantive change in EU institutions in regards to regions. (Official Journal of the European Communities. L 103/28)

26. Significantly, the meaning of Article F1 is subtly altered in the context of this report to infer a specific view that the internal conflicts between capitals and regions are beyond the scope of the EU. While this may be a valid interpretation, a straightforward review of this article indicates that it was a statement protecting cultural aspects of Member States from EU meddling, as long as the country was organized on democratic principles. However, assumptions behind terms such as "national identities of its Member States", and "principles of democracy" are deliberately called into question by regional nationalists. Furthermore, there is no specific reference to the center-periphery relations of Member States on these issues.

Article F1: "The Union shall respect the national identities of its Member States, whose systems of government are founded on the principles of democracy."

27. Official Communications from the Commission to the Committee of the Regions during 1994 also indicate a focus on narrow, substantive issues: "Industrial and social challenges" COM (94) 528; "European Social Fund" COM (94) 510; "Structural Funds" COM (94) 421; "Industrial Competitiveness" COM(94) 319, etc..

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