

IDENTITY CONFLICT IN THE LAND OF VALÈNCIA DURING THE POST-FRANCO DEMOCRATIC PERIOD

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Resum: València (oficialment *Comunitat Valenciana*) és un territori ubicat a l'est d'Espanya i habitat per uns cinc milions d'habitants on tant el català (oficialment *valencià*) com el castellà són llengües oficials. La llengua tradicional del Regne de València des de temps de Jaume I era el català/valencià, l'ús oficial del qual es va prohibir el 1707 amb l'adveniment dels reis Borbons. Poc després de l'arribada de la democràcia a Espanya, el 1983, el seu ús tornà a ser oficial i el seu ensenyament legal a la Comunitat Valenciana. Encara que és una de les dues llengües oficials, el català o valencià no ha assolit al País Valencià el prestigi i l'ús social que aquesta llengua té a Catalunya o a les Illes Balears. Per explicar aquest fet, cal analitzar el període de transició democràtica a Espanya (1977-1983), quan la identitat i la llengua de València esdevingueren un assumpte de disputa social i política. Com a resultat, la identitat valenciana –i, particularment, el seu tret més característic i distintiu, la llengua– resultà notablement afeblida. Tanmateix, a pesar dels conflictes d'identitat i de llengua, cal reconèixer que el català o valencià ha fet avanços legals significatius al País Valencià des del 1983.

Paraules clau: Identitat valenciana, català (valencià), València (Regne de València/País Valencià/Comunitat Valenciana), castellà (espanyol).

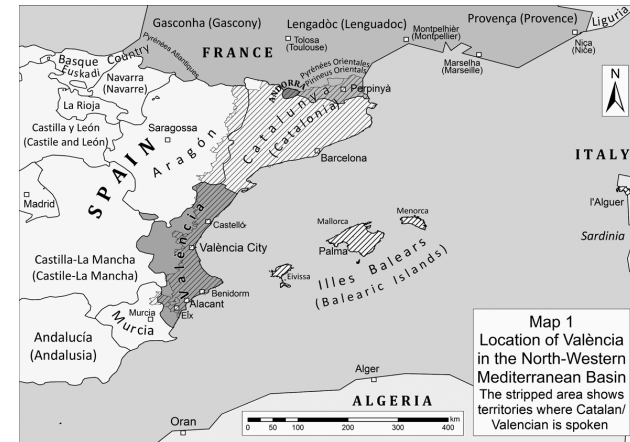
Abstract: València (officially *Comunitat Valenciana*) is a territory in eastern Spain inhabited by five million people where both Catalan (officially known there as *valencià*, Valencian) and Castilian (i.e. Spanish) are official languages. The official use of Catalan (València's traditional language) was banned in this territory in 1707, with the advent of the Bourbon dynasty. In 1983, six years after democracy arrived into Spain, the official use and the teaching of this language was restored. Even though today it is one of the two official languages in València, Catalan/Valencian has not achieved the prestige and social use there that it has in Catalonia or in the Balearic Islands. In order to explain this fact, we need to look back at the Spanish transition to democracy period (1977-1983), when the identity and language of València became a matter for heated political and social dispute. As a result, the Valencian identity –and, particularly, its most characteristic and distinctive trait, València's language– was significantly weakened. However, in spite of these linguistic and identity conflicts in València, it must be acknowledged that the Catalan/Valencian language has made significant legal advances in València from 1983.

Key words: València's identity, Catalan (Valencian), València / Land of València / Kingdom of València, Castilian (Spanish).

1. INTRODUCTION

València, also known as the land of València, *País Valencià* (Valencian Country), *Regne de València* (Kingdom of València), or, officially, *Comunitat Valenciana*, is a territory inhabited by about 5 million people and located in the northwestern Mediterranean basin. Its main cities are the capital, València City (*València* in Catalan/Valencian; *Valen-*

cia in Spanish, and officially¹), with an urban agglomeration reaching more than 1.5 million inhabitants, and the urban area of Alacant (*Alicante* in Spanish) and Elx (*Elche* in Spanish), which jointly comprise 750,000 inhabitants. València, or the *Comunitat Valenciana*, is also one of the seventeen autonomous communities of Spain (see maps 1 & 3).



Map 1. Location of València in the North-Western Mediterranean Basin.

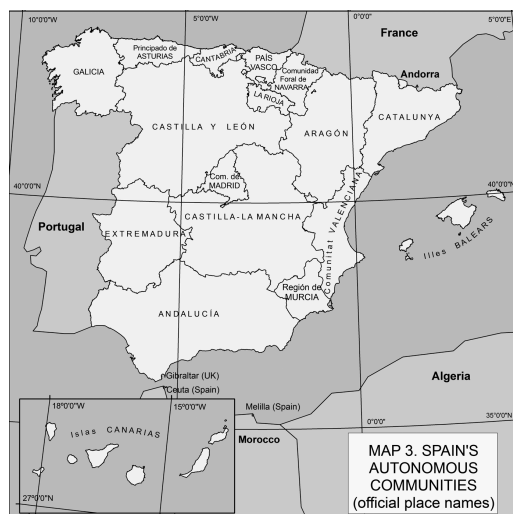
Both Catalan (officially known as *valencià*, Valencian, in this territory) and Spanish or Castilian are official languages. València can be divided into two areas according to the language historically spoken in each of them: the Catalan-speaking area, in the north and the east (72% of the territory, where 87% of Valencians live), and the Spanish-speaking area, in the west and in the southern tip (28% of the territory, 13% of the population) (see map 2).

After the 36-year-long Franco dictatorship, Spain became a decentralized state upon the establishment of democracy. Spain has been divided since into 17 autonomous regions or *comunidades autónomas* (autonomous communities), one of which is València (*Comunitat Valenciana*) (see map 3).

¹ The official name of the Valencian capital is *Valencia*, but in this paper we will call it *València City*, in order to distinguish it from the whole Valencian territory (officially *Comunitat Valenciana*), which will be called (*land of*) *València* in these pages.



Map 2. Historical Spanish or Catalan-speaking areas in València.



Map 3. Spain's Autonomous Communities.

Thanks to the Law on the Use and Teaching of Valencian, this language now enjoys extensive legal support in the land of València. However, if we compare the situation of Catalan/Valencian in València and in Catalonia, it is clear that this legal support has not been sufficient to provide this language with the prestige and prevalence enjoyed by it in Catalonia. The historical reasons explaining such difference are complex: already in the first decades of the 20th century the cause of the reestablishment of Catalan/Valencian as a language of culture that could –and ought to– satisfy the needs of a modern society was far more popular and advanced in Catalonia than in València. However it was making significant progress in València too when the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and the establishment by the victors of a Fascist dictatorship put an end to such advances, both in València and in Catalonia itself: the Catalan/Valencian language was once more banned and persecuted everywhere. Even though nearly four decades of Franco's dictatorship weakened the Catalan/Valencian language considerably, it was still very much alive in 1975, when the dictator died and his regime started to evolve into a democracy. In this new democratic context it was hoped that Catalan/Valencian would have another opportunity of recovery –and so it was, only in the Valencian case such recovery was impaired by a lasting and bitter internal struggle over the Valencian identity and the symbols expressing it, as we shall see.

In this paper we will explain how Catalan came to be spoken in València and we will analyse the current situation of that language in that territory. In order to explain this situation, we will focus on the conflict over the Valencian identity and symbols in the transition-to-democracy years and in the years that followed, and on the lasting consequences that such conflict had for the Valencian society.

As for the methodology, for the analysis of the origins and socio-linguistic situation of the Catalan language in València we have consulted several scholars from different areas of knowledge, such as Furió and Burns (History), Ferrando & Nicolás (Linguistics) or Flor (Sociology). We have illustrated the texts with several maps that we have created using ArcGIS in order to help the reader to understand the historical, geographical, political, and linguistic context of València.

2. THE CATALAN LANGUAGE IN VALÈNCIA: ITS ORIGINS AND ITS CURRENT SITUATION

2.1. How Catalan came to be spoken in València

The city of València was founded by Roman settlers in the year 138 BCE. This Latin-speaking city, called *Valentia*, together with its surrounding Iberian territory –where Iberian (a non-Indo-European language) was spoken until the Romanization process led to its being replaced with Latin too– was a part of the Roman Empire for centuries. The prolonged fall of this empire brought chaos and the arrival of the Germanic invasions; a Germanic people, the Visigoths, ruled over these lands during the 7th century CE. Byzantines, trying to recover Hispania for the empire, conquered and ruled over southern Mediterranean Spain, including Southern València, from the mid-6th century until roughly 620, when they were defeated by the Visigoths. About a hundred years later, Muslims, who were then in a period of conquest and expansion, invaded the Iberian Peninsula (called *al-*

Andalus in Arabic). They became the new rulers of most of its territory, including the whole of the current València, most of Catalonia, and also the Balearic Islands. In a few decades, Muslim religion and law prevailed over the Christian Catholic faith and Roman law. And some centuries after that, also the (neo-)Latin language spoken in València before the Islamic conquest was replaced with the Arabic language. Muslim rule lasted in València from 711 to 1238. At the beginning of the 11th century, the Umayyad Caliphate of Córdoba collapsed, which gave rise to the creation of different little kingdoms or *taifas* in the current Valencian territory, such as the taifa of València (*Balansiya*) and the one of Dénia (*Daniya*, which included the Balearic Islands). During this taifa period there was agricultural progress –especially as far as irrigated crops are concerned– and urbanization growth. The population of *Xarq al-Andalus* (Eastern Iberia) grew and Balansiya (València City) became a remarkable city of about 15,000 inhabitants at the beginning of the 13th century (GLICK, 1988, p. 66-69). However this period also brought the weakening of the Muslim military effort that the Caliphate had been sustaining during the previous centuries. The taifas of València and Dénia were forced to pay taxes to the Christian kingdoms of the north in order to keep the peace and avoid a crusade against them (see map 4).



Map 4. Political map of Eastern Iberia (about 1031).

North of the Muslim kingdom of València were two Christian states: the Kingdom of Aragon and the County of Barcelona (which came to be known as the Principality of Catalonia in the following centuries). At first, most of Aragon and Catalonia (all their territory, in fact, but the Pyrenees Mountains) were also a part of Umayyad Muslim al-Andalus.

However, Barcelona (which was to become the Catalan capital) was conquered as soon as 801 by a Frankish army commanded by Louis the Pious, son of Charlemagne (SOLDEVILA, 1998, p. 55). The Carolingian Franks took Barcelona and the Catalan language developed from its Latin roots in the following centuries in close contact with the Occitan language, spoken in what is now Southern France (i.e., Gascony, Provence and the Languedoc). Today Catalan is generally regarded as a sister language to Occitan, and therefore as one of the Gallo-Romance languages (an Occitano-Romance subgroup, comprising Occitan and Catalan, has been proposed as well) (BEC, 1977, p. 60; COLÓN, 1993, p. 101). At the same time, in the south-central Pyrenees, the small county of Aragon was born, linked first to the Franks, who wanted to defend their own border against the Muslims, and later to the Kingdom of Navarre. Aragon, which became a kingdom itself (including Navarre) in 1076, underwent a southward expansion which was slower than Catalonia's: the important city of Saragossa was only taken as late as 1118 (and eventually became the capital of Aragon) (see maps 4 & 5).



Map 5. Territorial Development of the Crusader Kingdom of València (1232-1296).

A few years after this event, in 1137, Catalonia and Aragon became unified under one king, which made their craving for expansion grow. The Crown of Aragon (i.e., a confederate state composed of the Kingdom of Aragon and the County of Barcelona) tried to expand northward, beyond the Pyrenees, but it was defeated –and its king Peter the Catholic killed in battle, close to Toulouse– by the French in 1213 (Soldevila, 1998, 93). The heir

of the Aragonese crown –James I– changed this policy and decided to expand only southward. In 1229 he began the conquest of Mallorca, which he completed in 1231. The surviving Muslims were expelled into Africa or Menorca (which was allowed to remain a tributary taifa until 1287, when it was christianized too) while the bigger island was settled by Catalans. That is why Catalan is spoken in this island today. Eivissa was conquered by the same king in 1235 and again Muslims were expelled, as in Mallorca (map 5).

Meanwhile, James I began the conquest of València, to which he was to owe most of his renown (BURNS, 1967, p. 3). In 1233 the Christians reached Borriana, which was by then the most important city in the northern lands of the Muslim kingdom of València. In 1237 Pope Gregory IX granted a bull of crusade to James I for the conquest of València (Furió, 1995, p. 27). That year an important battle took place at el Puig, 14 km north of Balansiya, and it was the Christians who prevailed. One year and two months later, the Muslim city of València surrendered to the Christians: on October 9, 1238, James I, now called James the Conqueror, entered the city. In 1245 the Christian conquest had already expanded south to the Xàtiva and Dénia region, and the border of the new Christian Kingdom of València was established 15 km south of Benidorm (nowadays an important tourist resort), not yet including important cities such as Alacant or Elx. These two important places, along with Oriola (*Orihuela* in Spanish) and their nearby areas, were not made part of the Kingdom of València until 1296, after being seized from the Castilian (also Christian) Kingdom of Murcia (Furió, 1995, p. 54) (see map 5).

After the sieges of Borriana (1233) and València (1238) there was a mass expulsion of Muslims from these cities. One third of Valencian Muslims, among them their political and cultural elites, fled to Northern Africa or to southern –and still Muslim– Spain. However, unlike what had happened the Balearic Islands, in the rural areas of València Muslims were permitted to stay on payment of tribute. James I needed the local population –for the moment– in order to ensure continuity of production (Furió, 1995, p. 34). Nonetheless, Valencian Muslims were to live in precarious conditions –under a kind of *apartheid* system– in which Christian settlers had many rights that were denied to Muslims. Valencian Muslims were victims of increasing exploitation by Christian lords, which led them to revolt, being subdued by James I or, after his death in 1276, by his son Peter. The initial numerical dominance of Catalan settlers over settlers with other ethnicities explains why Catalan became the new official language –along with Latin– of the Kingdom of València².

In the 15th century València lived a golden age, especially as far as the economy and some artistic fields, such as architecture and literature, are concerned. This period gave great writers to the medieval Catalan/Valencian literature, such as the poet Ausiàs March or the novelist Joanot Martorell, who wrote *Tirant lo Blanc*. From then on, the Catalan language was most often referred to by the name *valencià* (Valencian) in the Kingdom of

² In general terms, during the 13th and 14th centuries Catalans represented two thirds of the settlers in the coastal zone, the richest and most populated of the new Kingdom (FERRANDO & NICOLÁS, 2005, p. 103). According to Guinot (1999, p. 259), 40% of settlers in the Kingdom of València were speakers of Western Catalan, 30% of Eastern Catalan, 20% of Castilian-Aragonese (a dialect of Castilian) and 10% speakers of Aragonese (a language spoken in the Pyrenees, halfway between Catalan and Spanish). The Aragonese were the main group of settlers only in a small area in the interior of València, bordering the Kingdom of Aragon. The rest of València was settled mostly by Catalans.

València, even though it was known to be the same language that was spoken in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands.

In the 16th century, after the last Muslim state in Iberia, the Kingdom of Granada, fell to the Christians, religious intolerance grew in Spain, and Muslims were forced to convert to Christianity (if they refused, they might be expelled from Spain or, in some cases, simply killed, as happened during the Valencian *Germanies* revolt). During the 17th century, the remaining population of Muslim descent living in the Kingdom of València (still one third of the population of the Kingdom) was finally expelled, as the Spanish monarchy, under the Habsburg king Philip III, wanted to be seen as the European champion of Catholicism, and therefore could not allow Muslims to continue to live in Spain itself; thus the ethnic cleansing of València was completed (Furió, 1995, p. 311). The areas –mostly in the interior of the land of València– where these Muslims lived, in which an Arabic dialect was still spoken, were abandoned and, later, settled mostly by people from Aragon, Castile and Murcia, who spoke different dialects of Castilian (Spanish) (Ferrando & Nicolás, 2005, p. 239)³. That is why the interior of the land of València is today a place where the Castilian language has been spoken for some centuries, in contrast to the coastal and some interior areas, where Catalan is the traditional language (map 2).

2.2. Valencian and Catalan: one and the same language

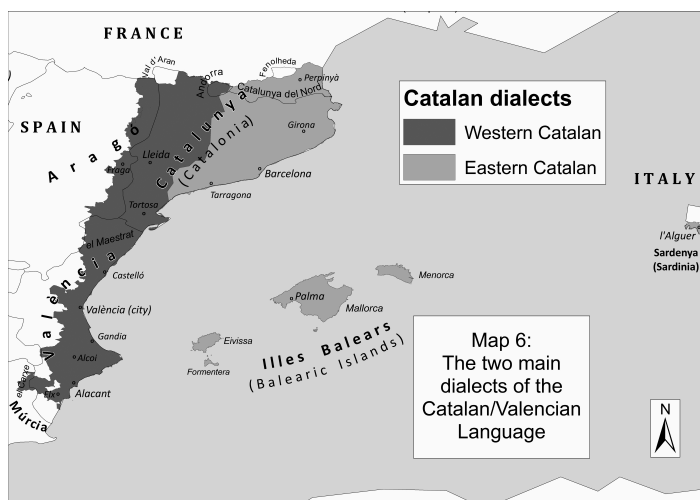
The dialect of the Catalan/Valencian language spoken in València is the one that linguists call *Western Catalan*. Apart from the land of València, this dialect is spoken in some little villages (el Carxe) belonging to the Murcia region, in the western half of Catalonia (including cities such as Tortosa and Lleida), in Andorra, and in the easternmost part of the old Kingdom of Aragon –bordering Catalonia–, along an elongated strip going all the way from the Pyrenees to the Valencian border (about 20-km wide). The other big dialect of the Catalan/Valencian language is Eastern Catalan, which is spoken in the eastern half of Catalonia (including big cities such as Barcelona, Manresa, Reus, Tarragona, and Girona), the Balearic Islands, Northern Catalonia (belonging to France since the 17th century), and the Sardinian city of l'Alguer (*Alghero*). The main difference among these two variants lies in their vowel systems: while Western Catalan has the same system as standard Italian (seven vowels: /a/, /e/, /ɛ/, /i/, /o/, /ɔ/ and /u/), the Eastern variety also includes a neutral vowel (/ə/): all unstressed *a*'s and *e*'s are pronounced /ə/; besides this, in Eastern Catalan (excepting most of Mallorca), all unstressed *o*'s are pronounced /u/.

Most Valencian people are reluctant to admit that *Valencian* and *Catalan* are actually two names for one and the same language⁴. This reluctance is due to several factors. First of all, there are dialectal reasons: the fact that most Catalan speakers in Catalonia live in the area of Barcelona, and thus they speak Eastern Catalan and not the Western variety, has led some Valencian people to believe that *Catalan* (i.e., Eastern Catalan) and *Valen-*

³ Not all the new settlers were Castilian speakers. La Marina, the Valencian coastal area closer to the Balearic Islands, was settled by people from Mallorca, who brought some peculiarities of the Catalan variety spoken there with them, such as the *salat* article (*sa, ses* instead of *la, les; es* for *el, els*).

⁴ About two thirds of the Valencian people think that Catalan and Valencian are different languages (Castelló, 2006, pp. 49-50).

cian are two different languages, because of the obvious differences in the unstressed vowel system between the two dialects⁵. However, the people from western Catalonia use Western Catalan variants which are –as far as the vowel system is concerned– identical or almost identical to the ones used in València⁶. Secondly, there is the problem of the name of the language: in València there is a long tradition of calling the language *Valencian*, whereas in Catalonia, *Catalan* is the usual name for it. To some people, the name seems to make the thing, so that people from el Maestrat, in the far north of València, whose local dialect is closer to Lleida's than to the one spoken in València City, may say that they speak *valencià* whereas in Lleida people speak *català*, and may think that these names designate essentially different realities, i.e., different languages. However the third and most important reason is politics: there are some Spanish nationalist sectors –disguised as Valencian regionalists–, many of whom do not even speak Valencian, who insist that Valencian is not the same language as Catalan. They even have their own set of rules for writing Valencian, which is slightly different from the standard rules (the difference, however, is so small that it may often take one some time to realize that a text written with these rules is not supposed to be in standard Catalan) (see map 6).



Map 6. Catalan/Valencian dialects.

⁵ In about half Catalonia Western Catalan is spoken, and in the other half Eastern Catalan is the predominant dialect. However, 91.5% of Catalans live in the territory where Eastern Catalan is prevailing, and only 8.5% live where Western Catalan prevails.

⁶ According to GUINOT (1999, p. 259) and to Ferrando & Nicolás (2005, p. 102) most Catalan-speaking settlers in the Kingdom of València came from western Catalonia and from the Catalan-speaking parts of Aragon (where local variants of Western Catalan are spoken too).

These *secessionist* groups try to justify their point of view by arguing that Valencian is the result of the direct evolution of Latin in València, regardless of the evidence that shows that, after five centuries of Muslim rule, king James I's troops did not find any speakers of the native Romance language that had been spoken in this area previously, and had to employ Arabic translators in order to communicate with the native population⁷. Despite their efforts, it is universally accepted in academic circles worldwide that *Catalan* and *Valencian* are one and the same language⁸.

Of course, the fact that all academic authorities accept the unity of a given language may not prevent its splitting in two or more languages, because of the political context: let us remember what happened in the former Yugoslavia, where Serbo-Croatian was one language for decades, spoken in Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro, whereas now, after the Balkan wars of the 1990's, four different languages (Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, and Montenegrin)⁹, all derived from it, have replaced it in their respective territories. The Valencian case, however, is more similar to the case of Moldovan (as Romanian is called in Moldova), in which international academic authorities accept the unity of the Romanian language (including Moldovan), but some social and political sectors in Moldova insist that Moldova's language should not be called *Romanian*, and even promote linguistic secession. The case of Flemish (Dutch) in Flanders, by contrast, was sensibly solved by means of a compromise on language matters between the Netherlands and Belgium¹⁰.

In the case of Catalan/Valencian, a compromise has been reached as far as the spelling and grammar rules are concerned. In theory this compromise applies to the name and identity of the language spoken in València as well, recognizing *Valencian* and *Catalan* as two names for the same language, but two thirds of the Valencian population still think that those are not just two names for the same language but actually two different languages, an idea that continues to be promoted –more or less openly– by some local politicians. In Catalonia, on the other hand, the awareness that the words *Catalan* and *Valencian* designate the same language is nearly universal.

2.3. The process of Castilianization

Castilian (*castellano* in Spanish, *castellà* in Catalan) is the traditional name of the Spanish language both in Spain and in most of South-America¹¹. The process of *Castilian-*

⁷ It was usually Jews, who were already living in the Muslim kingdom of València before James I, who were used by Christians as translators in order to communicate with Muslim Valencians (Ferrando & Nicolás, 2005, p. 108).

⁸ The *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* says in its on-line version (<http://buscon.rae.es/draeI/>) that Valencian is a variant of the Catalan language which is used in most of València. If you search for *Valencian language* in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, you will be redirected to *Catalan language*.

⁹ The splitting of Serbian into Serbian and Montenegrin did not happen immediately after the war (1991-1995), but as a result of the outcome of the 2006 referendum on Montenegrin independence, which led to the political separation of Montenegro from Serbia.

¹⁰ The *Nederlandse Taalunie* (Dutch Language Union) is the institution created in 1980 for discussing issues regarding the Dutch language. It was the result of a compromise between the speakers of Dutch in the Netherlands and in Flanders (Belgium), according to which *Nederlands* (not *Vlaams*, i.e. 'Flemish', or *Hollands*, 'Hollandish') was to be the official and common name of this language.

¹¹ The name *Castilian* derives from the former Kingdom and Crown of Castile, which became the central and biggest one of the medieval Christian states of the Iberian Peninsula, and where this language

ization, in the case of València, is the linguistic substitution of Castilian for Catalan. This process affected only a small part (some aristocratic and intellectual circles) of the Valencian society in the 16th century, but it gained strength in the 18th century, when the War of Succession to the Spanish Crown was fought between the forces supporting the Austrian Archduke Charles¹² and those that supported the French Bourbon pretender Philip¹³, who eventually won the war. In 1707 the newly-established Bourbon dynasty abolished the Kingdom of València and its territory was annexed to neighbouring Castile, while Castilian/Spanish was imposed as the new official language in València, replacing Catalan (Ferrando & Nicolás, 2005, p. 231 & p. 267-268), that had been –along with Latin– the Kingdom of València’s official language since its founding in 1238. In spite of centuries of banning, the Catalan language was still alive in three quarters of València when Spain became a democratic state in 1977.

2.4. The official recovery of Catalan/Valencian and its legal status today

Thanks to the arrival of democracy into Spain in the late 1970’s, nowadays both Catalan/Valencian and Castilian/Spanish are official languages in the land of València. This territory, the former Kingdom of València, has had its own autonomous regional government, called *la Generalitat*, since 1982¹⁴. That year’s law establishing València’s autonomous government (called *Estatut*) stated that Valencian and Spanish were the two official languages of València (article 7): thus, 275 years after it was expelled from official life, València’s traditional language regained official acknowledgement and support. One year later, in 1983, the official use and the teaching of Catalan were re-established in València, nearly three centuries after they were banned. Thanks to the Law on the Use and Teaching of Valencian (*Llei d’Ús i Ensenyament del Valencià*, LUEV, 1983), the Catalan/Valencian language enjoys extensive legal support today, and is widely used in areas such as primary, secondary, and higher education, the media, road and street signs, or festivals. However, it is seldom used for business, and knowledge of Valencian is hardly ever

was spoken and, together with Latin, officially used. This may remind us of the history of the English language, which expanded into Scotland, Ireland, Wales, America, Australia, etc. from England, the biggest kingdom in Britain. We must point out, however, that whereas the international name of the English language is still *English* (not *British* or any other), Castilian became internationally known as *Spanish* centuries ago.

¹² The future Charles VI, Holy Roman emperor. The Austrian Archduke was in favour of keeping the traditional division of the Spanish territories in different kingdoms with different laws and customs, and València, Catalonia, Aragon and the Balearic Islands mostly supported his candidature to the Spanish throne.

¹³ The future Philip V of Spain, following the centralized French model, wanted a unified, centralized Spain with one official language, Castilian, to the exclusion of all others. Before he won the war, however, he was careful to hide this goal (he even swore the Catalan constitutions).

¹⁴ The *Generalitat* or *Diputació del General* is a historical institution created in València in 1418 in order to collect taxes for the medieval Kingdom. The *Generalitat* of València was based on the *Generalitat* of Catalonia (created in 1359) and the *Diputació del General* of Aragon (created in 1362). In 1982 the *Generalitat* of València was re-established some centuries after it was suppressed, along with the Kingdom of València and the teaching and the official use of Catalan in València, in 1707.

a requirement for getting a job. In the world of advertising, only a small portion of ads are in Catalan. At traditional markets, Catalan is quite habitually used both in signs and orally, but at supermarkets, whereas signs in Valencian are common too, its oral use between customers and employees is not so frequent, particularly in the main metropolitan areas.

Having an official language status is not sufficient if this language does not have a public presence and a social use that give it prestige, and Catalan does not seem to have enough of them in València. Although some surveys (Ros, 2005) show the progress that has been made in the knowledge of Valencian among young people in the last decades, it is equally true that conversations between strangers –even if they are Catalan speakers, a fact unknown to each other– are mainly and by default in Castilian/Spanish; so, more people can speak Catalan, but less people use it: polls say that the oral use of this language in València has declined at an alarming rate over the period 1995-2004: those who always or habitually use it at home have decreased from 44 to 35%, while those who always or habitually use Spanish at home have gone up, from 48 to 53%. We must take into account that in 1995 only 1% of the inhabitants of València were immigrants from out of Spain, whereas in 2004 non-Spanish immigrants were more than 10% (17% in 2011). These immigrants usually try to integrate into Valencian society by learning Spanish (when it is not their mother tongue), and even a good part of them (above all, the British) do not integrate either in Catalan or in Spanish (MEMBRADO, 2011). These data show that the process of linguistic substitution of Spanish for Catalan which began centuries ago has not come to an end in our own time, despite the –very limited– institutionalization of Catalan in València after the establishment of democracy in 1977.

If we search for the reasons explaining why Catalan in València has not achieved the prestige that it has achieved in Catalonia –or even in the Balearic Islands–, we need to go back to the period 1977-1983, during the Spanish transition to democracy, when the language and identity of València became a matter for political dispute.

3. IDENTITY CONFLICT IN VALÈNCIA

Practically everything having to do with the Valencian identity was a matter for dispute among the two main actors in those years of transition: those who upheld the view that València should come closer to Catalonia –as, they argued, it was in the centuries that followed the conquest by James I– and that the Valencian identity could be subsumed under a wider (Pan-)Catalan identity (this group was known as *catalanista* or *pancatalanista*), and those who sought to emphasize the differences between València and Catalonia in order to prove the essential non-Catalanness of València –this group was called *anticatalanista* or (derogatorily) *blaver*¹⁵.

The relationship of València with Spain was at stake too, with the *catalanista* sector generally in favour of lessening, or even totally cutting, València’s ties with Spain and the *anticatalanista* parties, as a general rule, defending that València was, and ought to remain, essentially Spanish.

¹⁵ The word *blaver* is derived from the Catalan word *blau* (‘blue’; ‘blau’ in German), as this group favoured the blue fringe that can be seen on the current Valencian flag (the *Senyera*) (see figure 2), whereas the *catalanista* sector regarded this version of the *Senyera* as historically unauthentic and proposed a former *fringeless* (or *blueless*: *sense blau*) version.

3.1. The language of València

The first issue to be discussed, and the one that got the most attention, was the language traditionally spoken in València: whether it was to be regarded, and treated, as the same language as the one spoken in Catalonia or as a completely different language. The compromise that was reached in the early 1980's was that the official name of the language would be *Valencian* (*valencià*), but its spelling and grammar rules would be the same as those used in Catalonia, with only minor differences (mainly regarding some morphological traits, especially a part of the verbal conjugation). This compromise, however, was on rather shaky ground, as the right-wing parties in València (the Popular Party (PP) and *Unió Valenciana*, a regionalist and openly *anticatalanista* party) were at first very reluctant to accept its second part (i.e., for spelling and grammar to be, in essence, shared with Catalonia)¹⁶. They used the language issue as a weapon to attack the left, which ruled both Spain and València in the 1980's and the first half of 1990's. They presented the PSOE (i.e., the Spanish Socialist Party, whose leaders were Felipe González in Spain and Joan Lerma in València) as a *catalanista* party, which it hardly was. In 1995 the Popular Party won the elections in València and its local leader Eduardo Zaplana was elected as the new President of the Generalitat. One year later, the Spanish leader of the Party, José María Aznar, became the President of the Spanish government with a simple majority in Parliament: this caused him to need the votes of the Catalan nationalist party *Convergència i Unió* (CiU), but the language issue in València stood in the way. Then a deal was made between the presidents of the Valencian Generalitat (PP's Eduardo Zaplana) and the Catalan Generalitat (CiU's Jordi Pujol)¹⁷: the PP would adhere more clearly to the language compromise of the 1980's and a new linguistic authority –the *Acadèmia Valenciana de la Llengua* (AVL)– would be created in València, only its members would be mostly chosen from those who supported the unity of the Catalan/Valencian language. It is, therefore, as a result of these compromises that nowadays *Valencian* and *Catalan* are, as we have already explained, two names for one and the same language, under (essentially) a common standard and two different linguistic authorities: the Institut d'Estudis Catalans (IEC)¹⁸ in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, and (since 1998) the AVL in the land of València¹⁹. During the 1980's, the 1990's and the first half of the 2000's, acknowl-

¹⁶ Manipulation by the right-wing press –especially by a Valencian newspaper called *Las Provincias*– in order to deny the unity of the Catalan/Valencian language would often reach grotesque extremes, as when it reported the findings of a Bernhard Weiss, allegedly a member of Munich University's Romance Languages Department, who, it was claimed, had discovered some writings in the Valencian language by Valencian troubadours from the 11th century (i.e., before the Christian conquest –thus the texts would prove that this language was not brought to the land of València by its Christian Catalan conquerors). After six years sending opinion pieces against the unity of the Catalan/Valencian language to *Las Provincias*, suddenly he stopped –forever. Today we know that Bernhard Weiss was merely a fictional character, as were his alleged findings (Climent-Ferrando, 2005, p. 30).

¹⁷ Some newspaper articles about the deal between Jordi Pujol and Eduardo Zaplana (who does not acknowledge this deal, because he does not want to offend the *anticatalanista* Popular Party's voters) can be consulted on-line at: http://elpais.com/diario/2004/11/10/cvalenciana/1100_117884_850215.html (April 2012).

¹⁸ Law 8/1991, of May 3, on the linguistic authority of IEC, and Law 1/1998, of January 7, on linguistic policy.

¹⁹ Law 7/1998, on the creation of AVL, and Organic Law 1/2006, of València's *Estatut*.

edgement of the unity of the Catalan/Valencian language by the Valencian Government was only implicit: even though the language's official name was different in València from that used in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, the official spelling and grammar rules were essentially the same in the three territories. In February 2005 the first explicit acknowledgement by Valencian (politically-appointed) authorities that the names *Valencian* and *Catalan* actually referred to the same language was issued, through an AVL statement²⁰.

In Catalonia, no need was felt for any similar debate on the name of the language or its spelling and grammar rules (there has been, however, some debate on whether the Catalan linguistic norm ought to be more or less open to accepting interferences from Spanish, but nothing on the Valencian scale). As far as the Illes Balears are concerned, the historical problem of having three traditional names there for the same language (one for each island: *mallorquí*, *menorquí*, *eivissenc*; and one could even add *formenterer*) was solved by adopting *Catalan* as the sole official name. As for the spelling and grammar rules, people from the Balearic Islands may write Catalan with minor (mainly morphological) differences from Catalan as written in Catalonia or València, but these are not generally regarded as putting the unity of the Catalan language into question.

In the eastern area of Aragon Catalan is also spoken. The Aragonese right-wing parties (PP and, especially, Partido Aragonésista, a regional party) are against Catalan being officially recognized in this territory, whereas PSOE keeps an ambiguous position, and the left-wing Chunta Aragonésista, an Aragonese nationalist party, is in favour of this recognition. Aragon's language law, passed in 2009, was the first official document acknowledging that Catalan is spoken in Eastern Aragon²¹. In Northern Catalonia and in the Sardinian city of l'Alguer, the local traditional language is referred to as *català* by their authorities (for instance, on their Internet sites), and there is no social debate on this matter.

3.2. The territory's name

The official name of the Valencian territory was another issue at dispute: its historical short name, *València*, was identical to the name of the capital city (thus in medieval and

²⁰ It says, among other things, that the historic designation *Valencian* has coexisted with that of *Catalan*, which has been generally used in the field of Romanistics and in Valencian universities in the last decades (http://ca.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictamen_sobre_els_principis_i_crite-ris_per_a_la_defensa_de_la_denominaci%C3%B3_i_l%27entitat_del_valenci%C3%A0). Unfortunately, there is always the danger that some politicians find that it would be strategically convenient to their own interests that this conflict should be revived. A recent instance of this was the motion that a group of Popular Party members of the Valencian parliament submitted to it in order to ask the Real Academia Española to change the definition of the word *valenciano* given in its dictionary of Spanish and suppress the notion that the language spoken in València is the same as the one used in Catalonia from it. This motion became famous in the Valencian press for containing the absurd idea that the Valencian language derives from ancient Iberian, which in fact was not even an Indo-European language.

²¹ In 2013 the Aragonese government, now belonging to right-wing parties (the Popular Party and the Aragonésista Party), has repealed the 2009 Aragon Language Law, which had been passed by the left-wing parties (PSOE, Chunta Aragonésista, Izquierda Unida). In order to avoid calling *Catalan* the language spoken in eastern Aragon, the current Aragonese administration has come up with a rather awkward –and considerably confusing– euphemism: “LAPAO” (an acronym: *Lengua Aragonesa Propia del Àrea Oriental*, ‘Aragonese Language of the Eastern Area’).

early modern times it was customary to speak of *la Ciutat i Regne de València*, ‘the City and Kingdom of València’). This ambiguity was made worse by the division in 1833 of the Valencian territory into three provinces, with the name *València* being given to the central province as well (since provinces were normally named by their capital). These ambiguities made it difficult for people from the north and the south of the historical Valencian territory to continue to identify with the old name. To solve this problem, two alternatives were proposed, both consisting of more than one word: the historical long version of the name, i.e., *Regne de València* (Kingdom of València), which was supported by right-wing parties, even though València did not have a king anymore (as king Juan Carlos’s title was that of *King of Spain*); and *País Valencià* (Valencian Country), a name which had appeared in the 18th century but had only become commonly used during the Spanish Second Republic (1931-1939) and in recent decades, and was advocated by left-wing parties. Eventually, neither proposal was accepted by the supporters of the other one, and a compromise lacking any tradition, *Comunitat Valenciana* (Valencian Community), became the territory’s official name in 1983.

This rather awkward-sounding neologism joins the noun *comunitat* (*comunidad*, in Castilian), a term adopted during the Spanish transition to democracy in order to generally designate the 17 new autonomous regional institutions (*comunidades autónomas*, ‘autonomous communities’) born in the new decentralized Spain, and the adjective *Valenciana*, the feminine form of the adjective referring to someone or something from València. In spite of this, *Comunitat Valenciana* is not the only name currently used to refer to this territory. Inside the land of València, the regional Valencian television (and other Valencian media) and the Valencian Government frequently use “la Comunitat”, dropping *Valenciana*, which makes this name even more impersonal and unappealing. In Spain outside València, the short name *Valencia* (or *València* in the Catalan-speaking territories) is quite often used for all the Valencian territory, but there is a tendency, especially in the Spanish media, to replace it with *Levante* (‘the East’), despite the obvious fact that Spain’s easternmost region is the Balearic Islands, and the easternmost region in the Iberian Peninsula is Catalonia. Besides, *Levante* is also the Spanish version of the name by which a different geographical area is internationally known: the Levant, i.e., the geographic and cultural region comprising the eastern Mediterranean seaboard between Anatolia and Egypt.

As regards the name given to the territory in texts published in English by the Valencian authorities, the socialist Valencian governments (1983-1995) used the name *Land of Valencia*, but the Popular Party governments (1995-) first used *Valencian Community*, a rather strange name for a territory to the ears of an English speaker, and later –presumably upon realizing the oddness of the previous solution– replaced it with *Region of Valencia*. In German, however, the name *Land Valencia* is still used in official texts for the promotion of tourism. Some international –and very visited– websites, such as Google Maps, name the territory *Valenciana* –which might seem not a bad idea, as it makes it possible to distinguish the name of the city (*València*) from that of the territory (*Valenciana*), only it currently sounds very odd to a speaker of Catalan or of Spanish, *Valenciana* not being a noun but the feminine form of an adjective. Accuweather, on the other hand, calls the territory just *Valencia* (after having used *Valenciana* for some time) and the English-language version of the Wikipedia uses *Valencian Community* as headword, but in the article that this headword designates other possibilities (*Valencia*, *the Land of Valencia*, etc.) are also used.

In Catalonia, by contrast, no problem arose about the name of the territory, because its historical short version²², *Catalunya* (Catalonia), was unambiguous, being different from both the name of the territory’s main city (Barcelona) and that of any of its provinces (Barcelona, Tarragona, Lleida, Girona) (See map 3). This fact allows people from all of Catalonia to share a common Catalan identity without conflict, whereas in València, some people from the northern province (Castelló) or from the southern one (Alacant) are uncomfortable with the name *Valencians*, which they associate with the central province only, and even refuse to see themselves as such. In Catalonia this problem was avoided in the Middle Ages by replacing the name *County of Barcelona* with *Catalunya* (Catalonia), a name which probably derives from an Iberian tribe who lived in central Catalonia in Ancient times (the Lacetani). As no similar process took place in València after its conquest by James I, nowadays the Valencian identity is weakened, among other factors, by the very name of this territory. This leads to politicians, journalists, etc. often avoiding the adjective *valencians/valencianos* and using periphrases instead: *ciutadans/ciudadanos de la Comunitat Valenciana* (‘citizens of the Valencian Community’) or *valencians, castellonencs i alacantins / valencianos, castellonenses y alicantinos* (combining the adjectives referring to people from the three provinces) (see map 3).

The problem of the land of València is not very different from that of other territories, for instance the Czech Republic’s: in this case, possible misunderstandings about this territory’s name have been avoided by distinguish in the modern Czech language between *Čechy* (noun) - *Čech* (adjective), respectively meaning Bohemia-Bohemian, and *Česká republika / Česko - Český*, meaning Czech Republic / Czechia (i.e., the sum of Bohemia, Moravia and Czech Silesia) - *Czech* (a person from any of these three territories). Another case to the point is Mexico, where in order to distinguish between Mexico City, the state of Mexico and the federation of Mexican states, three different adjectives have been created: *mexicano* is a person from any part of the federation, *mexiquense* is someone from the state of Mexico (which borders the national capital, i. e. Mexico City / Ciudad de México or México DF, but does not include it), and *mexiqueño* is someone from the national capital, although *mexiqueños* are often called *capitalinos* (i.e., people from the capital), *de-feños* (from México DF, i.e. México, Distrito Federal or ‘Federal District’) or, contemptuously, *chilangos*.

In València there are some intellectual groups connected to Valencian nationalism which –with no institutional support– have tried to introduce a difference between the name of the city and the name of the country, by naming the country just *València*, and the city *Ciutat de València* (‘València City’). An alternative unofficial name for the city is *el Cap i Casal* (a traditional phrase in Catalan referring to the capital of the Kingdom of València)²³. In order to distinguish a person from *el Cap i Casal* from someone from any part of the land of València these groups propose using the adjectives *valentins* (for the capital) and *valencians* (for the whole country).

As for the Balearic Islands, their official name is *Illes Balears*, but almost nobody sees himself or herself as a *balear* (i.e., a Balearic, a person from the Illes Balears). A person from Mallorca is a *mallorquí*, a person from Menorca a *menorquí*, and a person from Eivissa (Ibiza) is an *eivissenc*.

²² In this case, the historical long version was *Principat de Catalunya* (‘Principality of Catalonia’).

²³ This name (*Cap i Casal*) is also used in Catalonia for its capital, Barcelona.

3.3. València's national identity

The national ascription of València was another conflictive issue in the Transition years. At the time, the vast majority of Valencians considered València an integral part of Spain. They were obviously aware of some "regional" peculiarities, notably the fact that a language different from Castilian/Spanish was widely spoken in this territory, but they did not attach much importance to them –after all, as far as this majority was concerned, Catalan/Valencian was almost exclusively for use in familiar, informal or folkloric contexts. At the same time, a small –albeit influential in progressive intellectual circles– minority proposed a different view of Valencian identity: they wanted the Valencian public to acquire a new awareness of the importance of their own cultural and historical legacy, and insisted that the Catalan/Valencian language could and should be used for all the purposes that a language normally performs in a modern society (i.e., in government, education, culture, the media, etc.). The intellectual leaders of this movement also emphasized what they regarded as the quintessential Catalanness of Valencian identity: to them, "calling ourselves *Valencians* is simply our way of calling ourselves *Catalans*" (Fuster, 196, p. 39). In consequence, a new concept arose: that of *Països Catalans*, i.e., 'Catalan Countries' (see figure 1). It was not unambiguous: some interpreted it as a fundamentally cultural notion, whereas to others *Països Catalans* was the name of the genuine nation of the Valencian people, and even a project for a future nation-state²⁴.

Proponents of the idea of the Catalan Countries as a nation comprising València (called *catalanistes*) met the open and fierce hostility of the Valencian right-wing sectors (including most of those who labelled themselves *centrist*) in the Transition period (see figure 1). *Catalanistes* were constantly demonized by the conservative Valencian press, which never considered their project as a legitimate political option, but systematically presented it as fascist expansionism and even likened it to Nazism²⁵. This press was never deterred from using such a line of argument by the fact that Valencian *catalanistes* generally were staunch supporters of democracy, incurred the hostility of the heirs of Franco's fascism, and were at the time suffering physical violence: not only progressive bookshops, but even the residences of some Valencian intellectuals and politicians who identified with the *catalanista* sector (or were regarded as such by the opposing party) were attacked with bombs during this period (Flor, 2011, p. 266). In this context, *catalanistes* were unable to widen their support base in those crucial years, and remained a small minority in Valencian society.

²⁴ Joan Fuster's conception of *Països Catalans* had some precedents in the first decades of the 20th century. In those years, some Catalan intellectuals, such as Enric Prat de la Riba and Antoni Rovira i Virgili, had already advocated the Catalan national ascription of Valencians and Balearics. Pan-Catalan nationalism is thus linked to other pan-national movements from the same period, such as Pan-Slavism, Pan-Hellenism, Pan-Italianism or Pan-Germanism.

²⁵ During the 1980s and 1990s it was rather common to find in such press the *catalanista* project for València compared to the occupation and annexation of Austria into Nazi Germany in 1938. This was odd, as it is generally admitted that Austria and Germany share a common language and many historical and cultural elements, which was precisely what the very people making such comparisons emphatically denied in the case of València and Catalonia. Thus, the lure of a convenient *reductio ad Hitlerum* seems to have carried the day here over any scruples about logical coherence.

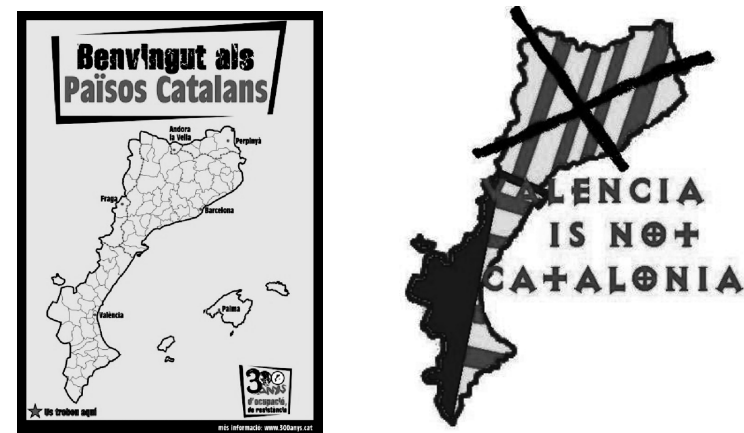


Figure 1. Poster pro-Catalan Countries (left). Poster anti-Catalan Countries (right). The one on the left says "Welcome to the Catalan Countries".

In the 1980's, support for the idea of the Catalan Countries was minimal in València (2% in 1986, according to Gunther *et alii*, 1986, p. 433), while in Catalonia, few people really believed in it as a political project. The main concern for Catalan politicians is not at all for València and/or the Balearic Islands to be(come) a part of the Catalan nation. At most, some of them can use this idea from time to time to stir up the patriotic feelings of some voters.

In the 1980's and 1990's a *third way*²⁶ on the question of València's national ascription developed, advocating that the nation of the Valencian people need not be Spain or the Catalan Countries, but could, and should, be the land of València itself. This view has come to be accepted by prominent intellectuals and by the main Valencian nationalist political party (formerly a *catalanista* party), the Bloc Nacionalista Valencià. However, has it persuaded much of the general public?

According to a 2010 poll by Fundación José Ortega y Gasset y Gregorio Marañón about national identity in Spain, in València 51 percent of the people polled stated they were equally from its land and from Spain (48% in Catalonia; 43% in the Balearic Islands), 8 percent stated they were more from its land than Spaniard (21% in Catalonia; 13% in the BI), 3% stated they were only from its land (10% in Catalonia; 7% in the BI), 16% more from Spain than from its land (8% in Catalonia; 9% in the BI) and 19% only Spaniard (9% in Catalonia; 24% in the BI). From these data we can deduce that the national identification of Valencians with their land is minor than that of the Balearics with their own and, especially, than that of Catalans with Catalonia. Valencian nationalism, therefore, has up to now been remarkably less able to expand within its society than Catalan nationalism within its own.

²⁶ *La tercera via*, 'the Third Way' was the label that the press attached to these ideas. People advocating them did not call themselves so.

3.4. València's flag

The design of the flag that was to represent the land of València officially was yet another ground for political conflict and strife. Since the king of València was also the sovereign of Aragon, Mallorca and Barcelona/Catalonia, all these territories shared a traditional flag consisting of four red stripes over a yellow background (called *senyera quadribarrada* ('four-striped flag'), or just *senyera*, in Catalan). When Catalonia passed the law giving it an autonomous government (called *Estatut*) in 1979, it adopted this design as its own flag. At the time, neither València nor Aragon nor the Balearic Islands had passed similar laws (they were to do so in the following years). On historical grounds alone, they might have adopted the very same design as Catalonia, but they preferred to make some changes to it so that each of them could have a flag that expressed its own particular identity. Aragon decided to include its official coat of arms in the middle of the flag, on the four stripes. In the Balearic Islands, a version of the official flag of their capital, Palma, and of the biggest island, Mallorca, was adopted for the whole territory: it kept the four stripes too, but added a castle on a purple quarter (the upper flagpole quarter). As regards València, two alternatives were proposed: one equivalent to the Aragonese solution, consisting of the four red stripes on a yellow background and the Valencian coat of arms in the middle, and one which was more akin to the Balearic solution, as it implied adopting the official flag of València City for the whole Valencian territory –this flag included the four stripes as well, but added a golden crown (for this reason it was called *senyera coronada*, 'crowned flag') on a blue fringe on the flagpole side. The *catalanista* movement actually advocated the pure *quadribarrada* flag, i.e., exactly the same as Catalonia's, but seemed amenable to accepting the version including the coat of arms, which was used by institutions governed by left-wing parties. On the other hand, the right-wing and *anticatalanista* sectors were strongly against any design that did not include at least the blue fringe of the *coronada* flag. Eventually (in 1982), the *coronada* was chosen as the official flag for the whole Valencian territory (see figure 2).

The conflict over flags caused a real split between those Valencians who supported the fringeless (*sense blau*) versions of the flag and those who championed the fringed ones. To those who supported the fringed version, the *senyera quadribarrada* –in spite of the numerous evidences of its historical use as the flag of the kings of València– was just the Catalan flag, and the possible addition of the Valencian coat of arms on it did not change this perception. On the other hand, the *catalanista* sectors refused to accept the *coronada* or any fringed flag (which they called *blavera*, from the word *blau*, 'blue'²⁷ as the flag of the whole land of València, seeing it merely as the capital's flag).

Unfortunately, after being refused as the official Valencian flag, no effort was made officially to integrate the *senyera quadribarrada* (with or without the coat of arms) as a part of the official Valencian symbology; on the contrary, it is still considered by some people –especially people from the Valencian capital and its surrounding areas– as an un-Valencian emblem²⁸.

²⁷ In fact, as we have already seen, the word *blaver/blavera* came to be used as a derogatory synonym for *anticatalanista*.

²⁸ For example, it is not possible to take it into the València CF football stadium, unless you want to put at risk your physical integrity (Flor, 2011, p. 24).

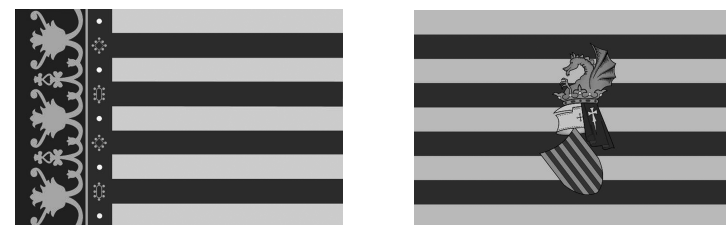


Figure 2. València's flags: on the left the *coronada* (the official one) and on the right the *quadribarrada* (with València's coat of arms).

3.5. València's anthem

For the post of official anthem of the land of València there were two candidates as well, each of them favoured by one of the conflicting parties. The right-wing and *anticatalanista* sectors preferred the *Himne de l'Exposició*, a song composed²⁹ in 1909 for a local expo that took place that year (the *Exposició Regional Valenciana*), which was promoted to Valencian regional anthem (*Himne regional*) in 1925, during the Spanish military dictatorship of General Miguel Primo de Rivera. This song included the *Marxa de la Ciutat de València*, a brief 16th-century composition which might be considered the Valencian capital's traditional anthem.

The *Himne de l'Exposició* failed to win approval from some minority sectors of the Valencian population, particularly those who supported some form of Valencian nationalism. Its musical qualities were called into question: particularly it was found lacking in solemnity³⁰. But it was the lyrics, and particularly the first verse, that mostly provoked this sector's rejection. By summoning the whole Valencian people to come together in order to "present Spain with new glories" (*Per a ofrenar noves glòries a Espanya*), the expo anthem seemed to convey the idea that València, its historical identity and its legitimate interests, were actually subordinate –it was Spain's that really mattered.

For these reasons the *catalanista* sector sought a more appropriate anthem in València's musical tradition, and in the 1960's thought it had found it in the *Muixeranga*, an anonymous wordless piece of music that for centuries has accompanied a traditional religious street dance in the Valencian town of Algemesí³¹. As an anthem, it sounds profound and very solemn, and perhaps a little mournful too. However, while the vast majority of

²⁹ By the composer Josep Serrano and the poet Maximilià Thous (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MU8uHYUaKXU&feature=fvwrel>).

³⁰ J. Fuster (1964, p. 232) compared the *Himne de l'Exposició* to a particular zarzuela –a kind of Spanish operetta– by the same authors, only he found it to be inferior to the zarzuela (and a symptom of the vulgarity and ridiculousness of certain supposedly *Valencian-patriotic* stuff). V. Flor (2011, p. 23) says that this anthem is one of the longest and least solemn official pieces of music that he knows of.

³¹ Which in 2011 was declared, together with other dances from the same town, a UNESCO Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sjb3ZcAbWUM>).

the Valencian population had been familiar with the *Himne de l'Exposició* for decades, and was accustomed to think of it as *the* Valencian anthem, few people outside Algemés had ever heard the *Muixeranga* (or even heard of it) at the beginning of the Transition period, so the *Himne de l'Exposició* had a huge advantage over the *Muixeranga*. Also the optimistic, upbeat tone of the expo anthem enhanced its popularity over the serious, downbeat *Muixeranga*.

As could be expected therefore, in 1984 it was the *Himne de l'Exposició* that was made the official anthem of the Comunitat Valenciana. As in the case of the fringeless flags, the *Muixeranga* received no official recognition as an alternative Valencian symbol.

3.6. The outcome and the consequences of the confrontation

As we have seen, in the years following the end of Franco's dictatorship and the reestablishment of democracy in Spain, in València a battle was fought for political and social supremacy in those changing circumstances –and València's identity and the symbols expressing it were the battlefield³².

Both sides in this battle tended to be dogmatic, by creating closed sets of accepted truths and supposedly genuine symbols while completely rejecting the other side's set. Neither side seemed willing, for instance, to admit that accepting the unity of the Catalan/Valencian language did not inevitably lead to considering València a part of the Catalan nation (or of a possible future (Pan)Catalan independent state). Conversely, if the name *Regne de València* was preferable to *País Valencià* for historical reasons, the same kind of reasoning might recommend the *quadribarrada* flag over the *coronada* (historically a symbol of València City alone).

Thus there was too much irrationality during the Transition years in València, which in this period was one of the most violent territories in all of Spain after the Basque Country and Navarre, and Madrid (Flor, 2011, 24-25).

Neither side was willing to compromise, but in the end neither of them succeeded completely, and some compromises had to be reached. The *anticatalanista* sector was able to impose its flag and anthem, but it felt that it had failed in the language issue, as the spelling and grammar rules that it had devised in order to separate Valencian from the rest of the Catalan language were generally ignored by Valencian institutions, and finally rejected by the AVL. The *catalanista* sector felt it was the loser party, but even so it was able to prevent the linguistic secession from Catalan that the other side wanted to carry out. Additionally, as regards the territory's name, both sides could be regarded as losers, for the final compromise (*Comunitat Valenciana*) was as neutral as it was insipid.

The *Battle of València* (*la Batalla de València*, as the struggle over Valencian identity and its symbols in the Transition period came to be called) had the lasting effect of making Valencian identity controversial, and therefore problematic, undecided, insecure... The problem of Valencian identity, however, could be very easily avoided, by sticking to

³² It has to be taken into account that València was critical to the territorial power game in Spain. Geopolitically, the role that a Catalan or pro-Catalan València would have played in Spain's post-Franco transition to democracy would have been very different from that of an anti-Catalan València.

Spanish identity, which seemed, by comparison, very solid and dependable. Thus the losers in this conflict were those people who had hoped to raise the Valencian population's awareness of the importance of Valencian (as opposed to Spanish) identity, and of the linguistic and cultural heritage that were historically connected to it, in the new democratic context. For instance, a person wanting to use the Catalan/Valencian language in València as a normal language (outside the purely familiar/colloquial context) in the 1980's was faced not only with having to learn the standard version of this language (as it had never been taught at school under Franco's regime), but also with deciding whether the standard that was being introduced into schools at the time was legitimate, and therefore worth the effort of learning it, or was instead a *Catalanized* falsification of the genuine Valencian language –a fake that any good Valencian ought to reject–, as the conservative and *anticatalanista* press never tired of repeating in those years, day after day. Continuing to use Spanish outside the familiar/colloquial context was no doubt a much easier alternative –and to many it must have seemed a more sensible choice as well. All this, in our opinion, helps explain why the movement in favour of promoting Valencian (national) identity and/or the normal use of Catalan/Valencian in all social ambits has made significantly less progress in València than its equivalent in Catalonia has in the last decades.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The land of València's sociolinguistic situation is in many respects unique: the Catalan language is spoken in most of its territory since the 13th century, after it was conquered by Christians and settled by Catalans (and other, less numerous, peoples). Until the 1970's the Catalan/Valencian language was still used in colloquial/familiar contexts by most Valencians, despite its teaching and official use having been banned since 1707. In 1977 Spain became a democracy, and to many this looked like a good opportunity for reviving the Valencian language and identity. However, although the official use and teaching of Catalan/Valencian were reinstated in València in 1983, this language has been losing speakers there steadily, not so much in absolute as in relative numbers. Surveys show that in our time –thanks to the introduction of Catalan/Valencian in the educational system– more young people can speak, read and write Catalan/Valencian than ever before, although less young people than ever actually use it. The percentage of Valencian population using this language orally at home has declined from 44% in 1995 to 35% in 2004.

The considerable decrease in the relative numbers of speakers of Catalan/Valencian can be explained in part by the substantial increase that has recently occurred in (non-Spaniard) immigration (1% of Valencians were immigrants (from outside of Spain) in 1995; 17% in 2011). However, it must also be taken into account that many of the autochthonous Valencians, especially in the big cities, have decided to abandon their traditional language, or not to transmit it to their children, in the last decades, because they do not consider it valuable and/or advantageous enough. The Spanish transition to democracy (1977-1983) was in València a difficult, sometimes violent, period, in which everything having to do with Valencian identity became highly controversial. Even though the language survived that period too, the Valencian identity was damaged by the conflict, and many Valencians saw no point in promoting the recovery of their own identity and language, unlike what was happening at the same time in Catalonia, where there was a

wide consensus on the Catalan identity and the need to promote it. Besides, in the 1980's and the 1990's, the right-wing parties and media kept insisting that there was a plan for replacing the (supposedly) genuine Valencian identity and language with an adulterated, Catalanized version of them. It followed that being a *good Valencian* meant to resist such a plan, and therefore to be as opposed to Catalonia as possible. Of course, being against those with whom you share a minority and endangered language can hardly be a sensible policy if you aspire to revive such a language –or merely to help it survive. Even worse than that, opposing this alleged *plan for the Catalanization of València* meant, in fact, opposing all efforts to revive València's traditional language, as the modern standard version of this language was discredited by accusing it of being unauthentic. This hindered its dissemination.

In theory this conflict (the so-called *Battle of València*) was closed in 1998 by means of a compromise between the right-wing political Spanish (PP) and Catalan (CiU) parties that secured the unity of the language, although Valencian PP politicians were careful never to explicitly acknowledge either the unity of the language or even the compromise itself. As a result, nowadays two thirds of Valencians think –or want to believe– that *Valencian* and *Catalan* are not the same language. This particular view on language among Valencians –non-existing among Catalans– is often permeated by a certain degree of Spanish anti-Catalan nationalism, which is more or less present in a part of Spanish (not just Valencian) society, and regularly stirred up by some (mainly right-wing) media.

Even though it must be acknowledged that Valencian political authorities have made a noticeable effort over the last decades in order to promote the Catalan/Valencian language in areas such as education, the media, road and street signs, or festivals, this effort has not always been consistent, unhesitating or sufficient. On the other hand, little or no effort has been made in order to promote the public use of this language in society at large, and give it prestige. Most Valencian authorities do not speak it in public frequently; many hardly ever use it. It is therefore unsurprising that, for most people –including most Valencian speakers of Catalan– Spanish remains the important language, whereas Valencian is still relegated to secondary, subordinate status.

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