

Direttori

Silvio BERARDI

Università degli Studi Niccolò Cusano

Gianluigi ROSSI

Sapienza – Università di Roma

Giangiacomo VALE

Università degli Studi Niccolò Cusano

Segreteria di redazione

Matteo Antonio NAPOLITANO

Università degli Studi Niccolò Cusano

Comitato scientifico internazionale

Paolo BELLINI

Università degli Studi dell'Insubria

Claudio BONVECCHIO

Università degli Studi dell'Insubria

Gérard BOUCHARD

Université du Québec à Chicoutimi

Ester CAPUZZO

Sapienza – Università di Roma

Giuliano CAROLI

Università degli Studi Niccolò Cusano

Giulio Maria CHIODI

Università degli Studi dell'Insubria

Claudio CRESSATI

Università degli Studi di Udine

Peter HEINTEL

Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt

Michael KAHLO

Universität Leipzig

Georg MEYR

Università degli Studi di Trieste

Paolo NELLO

Università di Pisa

Giuseppe PARLATO

Università degli Studi Internazionali di Roma

Gaetano PECORA

Università del Sannio di Benevento

Daniela PREDÀ

Università degli Studi di Genova

Johannes Michael RAINER

Universität Salzburg

Maurizio RIDOLFI

Università degli Studi della Toscana

François SAINT-OUEN

Université de Genève

Fabrizio SCIACCA

Università degli Studi di Catania

Jean-Jacques WUNENBURGER

Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3

BIBLIOTECA SCIENTIFICA EUROPEA

Biblioteca Scientifica Europea ha come prioritario focus la riflessione intorno alle questioni dell'identità e dei processi di integrazione europea nel XIX e XX secolo in una prospettiva interdisciplinare (storica, filosofica, politologica, sociale e diplomatica). Legata alla rivista « *Europa* », con la quale condivide buona parte della direzione scientifica, adotta un sistema di *double blind peer review* e ospita opere nelle diverse lingue dell'Unione europea. Si propone non soltanto di pubblicare opere originali e inedite aventi come tema centrale l'indagine su alcune delle tappe essenziali del divenire europeo, ma anche lavori concernenti il pensiero e l'opera di intellettuali italiani e stranieri in grado di offrire un significativo contributo scientifico all'integrazione del vecchio continente. Infine, la collana intende prendere in considerazione la traduzione e il commento in lingua italiana di opere di autori stranieri aventi come argomento il processo di integrazione europea.

Biblioteca Scientifica Europea focuses especially on the issues of identity and European integration processes in the 19th and 20th centuries in an interdisciplinary perspective (historical, philosophical, political, social and diplomatic). *Biblioteca Scientifica Europea* is directly linked to the journal « *Europa* », also in terms of the Scientific Committee. The series adopts a system of double blind peer review and accepts contributions in all of the European Union's languages. It aims to publish original and unpublished works on the investigation of some of the essential stages of European becoming. Are also accepted contributions — concerning the thought and work of Italian and foreign intellectuals — that can offer a significant scientific enrichment to the Old Continent integration theme. Finally, the series aims to take into account the Italian translation and analysis of works by foreign authors whose subject matter is the European integration process.

Biblioteca Scientifica Europea est une collection ayant pour objectif principal la réflexion autour de la question de l'identité européenne et de la reconstruction des processus d'intégration à l'Europe au XIX^e et XX^e siècles, tâche qui se place dans une perspective pluridisciplinaire (historique, philosophico-politique, diplomatique). Liée à la revue « Europea », avec laquelle elle partage une bonne partie de la direction scientifique, la collection adopte un système de *double blind peer review* et accueille des œuvres inédites dans toutes les langues de l'Union européenne ayant comme sujet principal la réflexion sur les étapes fondamentales qui ont marqué la construction de l'Europe, mais aussi la pensée et l'œuvre d'intellectuels européens susceptibles de fournir des contributions conceptuelles significatives sur la question. La collection vise aussi à accueillir des éditions et des traductions en italien d'œuvres d'auteurs étrangers.

Biblioteca Scientifica Europea widmet sich Fragen zur europäischen Integration des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts und zu Identitätsprozessen allgemein und legt dabei Wert auf Interdisziplinarität (Politische Philosophie, Zeitgeschichte, Geschichte des politischen Denkens und Geschichte internationaler Beziehungen). Sie ist verbunden mit der Zeitschrift « Europea », mit der sie die wissenschaftliche Orientierung teilt und das *double blind peer review* Verfahren übernimmt. Relevante Werke werden in allen Sprachen der Europäischen Union publiziert. Sie bietet nicht nur Gelegenheit originelle und unveröffentlichte Werke zu publizieren, die sich mit der Forschung zur Entwicklung Europas beschäftigen, sondern auch Arbeiten, die das Denken von italienischen und europäischen Intellektuellen betrifft, die sich speziell mit Themen der europäischen Integration/dem Werden Europas auseinandersetzen und auseinandergesetzt haben. Schließlich soll die Reihe auch Platz bieten für Übersetzungen und Buchbesprechungen in italienischer Sprache zu fremdsprachigen Autoren, die sich mit dem Prozess der europäischen Integration beschäftigen.



FONDAZIONE **ERACLE**
LE SCIENZE DELL'UOMO

La pubblicazione del presente volume è stata possibile grazie al contributo della Fondazione Eracle – Le scienze dell'uomo.

Catalonia, Iberia and Europe

edited by

David Duarte
Giangiacomo Vale

Contributions by

Silvio Berardi, Sérgio Campos Matos, David Duarte
André Freire, Joseba Gabilondo, Niccolò Inches
Gabriel Magalhães, Víctor Martínez–Gil, Thomas Jeffrey Miley
Matteo Antonio Napolitano, Robert Patrick Newcomb
Anna Pirozzoli, José Miguel Sardica, César Rina Simón
Giangiacomo Vale





Aracne editrice

www.aracneeditrice.it

info@aracneeditrice.it

Copyright © MMXIX

Gioacchino Onorati editore S.r.l. – unipersonale

www.gioacchinoonoratieditore.it

info@gioacchinoonoratieditore.it

via Vittorio Veneto, 20

00020 Canterano (RM)

(06) 45551463

ISBN 978-88-255-2855-8

*No part of this book may be reproduced
by print, photoprint, microfilm, microfiche, or any other means,
without publisher's authorization.*

1st edition: December 2019

Index

- 9 Introduction
Giangiacomo Vale

Part I

Iberian Studies and Iberian identities

- 23 The Iberian disavowal of imperialism and globalization
from the XIXth to the XXIst century
Joseba Gabilondo
- 55 Iberianism's lessons for Iberian Studies
Robert Patrick Newcomb
- 75 Plasticina peninsular. Um estudo sobre o uso da metá-
fora e outras figuras de estilo na construção da(s) iden-
tidade(s) ibérica(s)
Gabriel Magalhães

Part II

Iberianism: Past, Present and Future

- 113 Iberismos: problemas e horizontes de pesquisa
Sérgio Campos Matos
- 139 Iberismos en el siglo XIX. Expectativas internacionalistas
y regeneración nacional
César Rina Simón

- 175 A europeização da Península e os novos iberismos: Portugal e a Espanha, 1986–1996
José Miguel Sardica
- 205 Portugal y el iberismo en el actual debate político catalán
Víctor Martínez–Gil
- 227 A receção da crise catalã na imprensa escrita portuguesa
David Duarte

Part III
Catalonia and Europe

- 261 Catalunha e Espanha: conflitos de legitimidades
André Freire
- 279 La questione indipendentista: le ripercussioni del caso catalano sull’Unione Europea
Anna Pirozzoli
- 291 Catalan Self–Determination and the European project
Thomas Jeffrey Miley
- 313 Giovanni Spadolini, la Catalogna, l’Europa
Silvio Berardi
- 327 Catalonia and the European integration process (1986–1992)
Matteo Antonio Napolitano
- 339 Catalogna: (Euro)regione transfrontaliera tra cooperazione e spinte identitarie
Niccolò Inches
- 355 The Authors

Introduction

GIANGIACOMO VALE*

Can Iberian Studies contribute to the political and cultural debate on European integration? What does the ongoing Catalan crisis teach us about the impact of regional and national claims for self-determination on the European project? And, finally, how both Iberian Studies and the Catalan crisis contribute to the rethinking of the European integration process? These were the main questions raised when we first engaged in the project of a volume entitled *Catalonia, Iberia and Europe*, the same questions underlying the research papers of the scholars who have generously accepted our invitation to participate in this book.

The general purpose of *Catalonia, Iberia and Europe* is to explore original perspectives aiming at renewing the political and cultural debate on European integration and, notably, on the Europeanization of national histories and cultures. The latter became a major European issue since the European Union (EU) adopted a cultural approach to its political project following the highly arguable success of its economic one. This change of approach has been recently translated into an increasing number of cultural actions and statements, in particular since the also known *Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2005 and entered into force in 2011. It is yet too early to determine the real impact of these actions, but there is no doubt that the EU is now committed to a cultural integration aiming at the reinforcement of the «sense of belonging amongst and between European citizens», as stated in the declaration *The*

* Niccolò Cusano University of Rome.

Mind and Body of Europe (2014). A sense of belonging that, nevertheless, still relies on a national approach emphasizing the existence of well-delimited cultural identities.

The recent events in Catalonia have brought to light the very European question regarding the creation and consolidation of a multi/transcultural political community, opening thus the path to consider the Iberian Peninsula as a microcosm of Europe, as well as the ideal laboratory to explore different solutions to the problem of coexistence of several national entities within the same political organization. Throughout the Catalan crisis, the limits of the national approach to its resolution became clear with the radicalization of both sides. On the one hand, the Spanish State tends to restrict the Catalan matter to the respect of the Rule of Law, thus neglecting Catalans' political will for self-determination, either as an independent State or yet as a Catalan State within a federal Spain. On the other hand, Catalonia's claims for independence are often based on an essentialization of their particular history and culture reproducing, therefore, the binary and exclusive national narrative opposing «identity» and «otherness».

Different voices requested a European intervention in the Catalan crisis. The fact that Spain is a European Member State, as well as the existence of several pro-independence movements across Europe, led the EU to take sides and support the Spanish position. The EU is, indeed, unable to act otherwise because of the national (or intergovernmental) approach structuring its own institutions and treaties, and the dogma of national sovereignty still present in the minds of Europeans (see Brexit and the rising of neo-nationalisms), politicians and other State officials working at the very heart of the EU.

Rather than considering the Catalan crisis from the traditional national and exclusive approach opposing the Catalan claims for independence and the Spanish State, we have decided to mobilize for our analysis the field of Iberian Studies and contribute to the rehabilitation of the studies on the Iberianist movement. Defined by Pérez Isasi as the «the consistent and deliberate consideration of the Iberian Peninsula as an interconnect-

ed, multilingual and multicultural political, identitarian and literary polisystem» (2013), Iberian Studies emerges as an unexplored field, when one considers its eventual role in the development of European Political and Cultural Studies and, therefore, in the understanding of the challenges faced by the European political project.

Regarding the XIXth century Iberianist movement, it is a privileged object of study for those who question the making of post/transnational cultural and political communities. The rehabilitation of the studies on the Iberianist movement is particularly relevant to the questioning of the Catalan crisis for one can identify, in some of its authors, different elements structuring a «post-national» and «post-sovereign» perspective on political communities. In this respect, the challenges raised by Catalonia would no longer be considered according to the old national scheme, but rather from the perspective of a progressive autonomy within a federal Europe built on the subsidiarity principle and effective democracy at all levels, having local and regional levels as starting points. This was, precisely, one amongst different proposals supported by Republican federalists within the Iberianist movement, a federal solution which could also result in federal municipalism replacing the tension between nations by a regenerated *Polis*.

Iberianism was a heterogeneous movement that covered political, cultural and economic purposes. One can identify the existence of a cultural Iberianism in which some authors stated the Europeanness of Iberia while others privileged the ties with a larger Latin world. Also, political Iberianism has as many proposals as intellectuals and politicians who wrote about the Iberian political union to support either a Federal Republic, or a centralized Monarchy, or yet the rehabilitation of the old imperial form. Finally, one can mention the existence of a diplomatic as well as economic Iberianism aiming at the coordination of the Portuguese and Spanish strategies, without necessarily questioning the independence of both peninsular States. In a XIXth century marked by the decline of the former great peninsular empires and their submission to foreign powers, in particular to

France and England, several Iberian politicians and intellectuals saw in the reinforcement of the political and cultural ties between Iberians the path towards the rehabilitation of the Peninsula. This path required then a new approach to Iberians' perception of their past and cultural identities, an approach capable of assembling Iberians together despite their local, regional, and national differences.

An integrated approach mobilizing History, Political Science, Constitutional Law or yet Literature has been adopted to the study of the Iberian political and cultural entity. Ultimately, this volume highlights the relevance of Iberian Studies and of the studies on the Iberianist movement to the understanding of a multicultural Iberian Peninsula. Furthermore, we have taken into account the recent developments in Global History emphasizing the idea that the real challenge in studying historical and cultural communities consists in, according to Sebastian Conrad (2016), «shifting between, and articulate, different scales of analysis, rather than sticking to fixed territories» and remaining «tied to forms of container–thinking». Consequently, and having the Iberian Peninsula as a laboratory of study, we intend to understand how the coexistence of different scales of identification — local, national, Iberian, European — creates shared representations capable of assembling individuals and communities with multiple cultural and historical backgrounds.

The volume is composed of three parts. The first part, *Iberian Studies and Iberian identities*, questions the field of Iberian Studies and the nature of its object of study, that is to say, the Iberian Peninsula and the relations between its different cultural communities. We will see that there is an intense ongoing debate tending to overcome the traditional vertical and national approaches to the Iberian cultures, a vertical approach that considers the existence of a hegemonic cultural center to which all other Iberian cultures are subordinated. In this sense, the psychoanalytic approach proposed by Joseba Gabilondo in his *The Iberian Disavowal of Imperialism and Globalization from the XIXth to the XXIst Century* shows that this vertical perception of the relations between peninsular cultures is, in fact, the result of

the Iberian «internalization» of the analyses made by North European historiography in the XIXth century, which tended to reduce the Iberian diversity to the Spanish/Castilian model. In his critical summary of the contemporary debate on the nature of Iberian Studies, Robert Patrick Newcomb reinforces Joseba Gabilondo's argument by stating that this debate is mainly focused on the influence of Hispanism within the field of Iberian Studies. According to the author of *Iberianism's Lessons for Iberian Studies*, the Iberianist movement should be considered if one intends to fully explore the potential of the Iberian Peninsula and its plurilinguistic and pluricultural system from a peninsular, comparative and non-hierarchical perspective. Finally, in the third chapter, Gabriel Magalhães' *Plasticina peninsular* engages in the study of the metaphors used by Portuguese and Spaniards to represent each other and questions the cultural representations they vehiculate. From Gabriel Magalhães' analysis, one understands that these metaphors are dynamic depending on the kind of Iberian relation they intend to convey, from those of family asserting a homogeneity between Iberians to those of neighborhood, when one considers the existence of ties linking Iberians together but living in "different houses".

The second part of the volume, *Iberianism: Past, Present and Future*, presents an overview of the Iberianist movement, of its emergence in the XIXth century, development and complexification into different movements, and of its contemporaneity, notably of the impact that the entry of both Portugal and Spain in the European Economic Community (1986) and current Catalan crisis have on Iberianist ideas. In this sense, Sérgio Campos Matos' *Iberismos: problemas e horizontes de pesquisa* undertakes a bibliographic review on the Iberianist movement in order to identify the research possibilities that this object of study still proposes. He supports the idea that the studies on Iberianism are essential for all those who engage in understanding the evolution of both Portugal and Spain from the XIXth century onwards, notably because they clarify the building and nature of both peninsular nation-states. César Rina Simón, on his side, presents an analysis of the context having motivated the emer-

gence of the Iberianist movement and, in particular, of the impact on Iberianism of the main liberal and romantic ideologies of the XIXth century. *Iberismos en el siglo XIX* emphasizes the relevance of liberalism and internationalism among Iberianists, who saw in the Iberian political union the first step towards a universal community. However, the failure of the First Spanish Republic federal project discredited any ambition of an Iberian fraternity, a fact followed by the increasing influence of Portuguese anti-Castilian nationalism.

In the chapter *A europeização da Península e os novos iberismos: Portugal e a Espanha, 1986–1996* José Sardica questions the impact of the Iberian entry in the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1986 on the relations between Portugal and Spain. He emphasizes the existence of a parallelism in the history of both countries, especially during the XXth century, when Portugal and Spain lived under two long dictatorships before joining the European project. Furthermore, the entry in the EEC meant a critical moment in the way the two peoples identify themselves, to the extent that it signified a strong bet in Europe after centuries imagining themselves as universal peoples rather than European. Despite the mutual mistrust between both States, José Sardica argues that the entry in the EEC had a comparable effect in the Iberian Peninsula to that of the First European Communities in the relations between France and Germany. Portugal and Spain ceased then to see themselves as enemies to become strong economic and political partners.

In *Portugal y el iberismo en el actual debate político catalán*, Víctor Martínez-Gil begins by stating the existence of a political and cultural relation between Portugal and Catalonia, which reached with the Iberianist movements its most significant moment thanks to intellectuals who contributed to the rapprochement of both Iberian communities, as well as to political leaders with progressive and republican ideological affinities. Then, Martínez-Gil questions the representations that Portugal assumed within Catalanism. If there is a Catalan movement that tends to turn its back on the Peninsula to structure its autonomist discourse on an association with Europe rather than the

Iberian space, Portugal's role in catalanist rhetoric, translated by the slogan "*L'autonomia que ens cal, és la de Portugal*", is crucial to the independence-oriented Lusocatalanism.

David Duarte's chapter, *A receção da crise catalã na imprensa escrita portuguesa*, intends to demonstrate the existence of a peninsular public space through the analysis of the debate generated in Portugal by the Catalan process of self-determination. Duarte analyzes the opinion-articles published in the Portuguese press, taking into consideration: the different positions adopted by the press; the impact of Catalan events on Portuguese politics; and the impact of Catalan events on the European political project. Duarte supports the idea that there was a real commitment of Portuguese opinion-makers to the Catalan question. Nevertheless, this commitment did not mean the existence of a consensus. On the contrary, also in Portugal, the positions were polarized with opinion-makers supporting, on the one side, the Catalan ambitions and, on the other side, the Spanish position.

The impact of the Catalan crisis in Spain and in the EU, both from a political and juridical point of view, is faced in the third and last part of the volume, *Catalonia and Europe*, which also questions regionalism and the transboundary political and diplomatic relations between Catalonia and Italy, France and the EU. André Freire's *Catalunha e Espanha: conflitos de legitimidades* questions the relevance of the Catalan crisis to the recent Spanish electoral campaigns and results. Furthermore, he reflects on the existing resolution possibilities (federalism vs. self-determination) and on the conflicts of legitimacy raised by the conflict between the Spanish State and the Catalan *Generalitat* (rule of law vs. democracy). Freire displays a state of profound political crisis resulting from the different elections held in Spain in the first semester of 2019. Then, he frames the Catalan debate within the history of the Spanish nation-building, which has been affected by the tension between centripetal and centrifugal forces transversal to the current Spanish political parties. Finally, he analyzes the judicialization of Spanish politics engaged by the former conservative executive, as well

as its limits and, notably, how it neglects the right to self-determination as a democratic fundamental right.

In *La questione indipendentista: le ripercussioni del caso catalano sull'Unione Europea*, Anna Pirozzoli reflects, in the light of international and European law, on the implications of the Catalan crisis to the debate concerning the European integration. According to the author, the principle of self-determination, enshrined in the North American Declaration of Independence of 1776 and consecrated more recently as one of the fundamental principles of international law by the International Court of Justice, does not directly imply the right to secession. The secession of a region is considered, since the decolonization period, as a last resort, which must, however, take into account the protection of the territorial integrity of the State. Subsequently, Anna Pirozzoli analyzes the misfortunes and the legal and political effects of the referendum held in October 2017 and of the following unilateral Declaration of Independence approved by the Catalan Parliament, questioning the Spanish choice to address the issue of secession through the penal instrument. Since it was carried out outside constitutional legality, the referendum was a mere exercise of democracy without legal effects, but with important political effects both internally (the explosion of a reactionary nationalism with the growth of the *Vox* party in the General Elections of 28 April 2019) and internationally, with the rekindling of the hopes of the autonomist and independence movements in other European countries (Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, the Basque Country, Northern Ireland, Corsica...).

The attempt by the Catalan secessionists to stimulate a European reaction received a very clear response from the European Commission with the *Statement on the events in Catalonia* (2 October 2017): a hypothetical independent Catalonia «would find itself outside of the European Union». According to Anna Pirozzoli, this reaction is due partly to the fear of an emulation effect in other European countries, where independence dreams are cultivated, partly to an attitude of prudence in the EU, which has distanced itself from the celebration of any referendum out-

side constitutional legality, affirming that the Catalan question remains «an internal matter for Spain that has to be dealt in line with the constitutional order of Spain» (*Statement on the events in Catalonia*)

Thomas Jeffrey Miley's *Catalan Self-determination and the European project* contextualizes the Catalan claims for self-determination through the writings of Frantz Fanon on the independence rights of colonized peoples. The author states that the Catalan case is different from that of African peoples studied by Fanon, insofar as the distinction between colonized and non-colonized peoples is difficult to apply to the Catalan cause. Furthermore, the International Law does not support Catalonia's ambitions considering that it only recognizes the right to self-determination when there is evidence of oppression and violation of human rights by a State in one of its territories. Here too, the question is not obvious, as the Catalan struggle for self-determination has deep historical roots, always associated with a feeling of cultural persecution particularly accentuated during Franco's regime. Confronted with such a situation, the EU is in a "waiting position", to the extent that it can only intervene under the condition of violating its own law, such as Article 4.2 of the Lisbon Treaty, where it is established that the EU respects the essential functions of States, including the maintenance of order and territorial integrity. In other words, it is up to Spain to resolve the Catalan crisis.

Silvio Berardi (*Giovanni Spadolini, la Catalogna, l'Europa*) highlights the perception of Catalonia in the political writings and speeches of the intellectual and republican politician Giovanni Spadolini (1925–1994), former Prime Minister of Italy. Spadolini admired the anti-Franco position and the strong republican and anti-monarchic Catalan tradition. He also perceived in Catalonia's struggle for recognition of its cultural and political identity the 1789's principles and the ideals of the Italian *Risorgimento*. In his dedicated pages to the Catalan situation, Spadolini highlighted the relevance of the *Generalitat de Catalunya*, which he considered to be the symbol of Catalan struggles for autonomy since the beginning of the century,

while Jordi Pujol, the president of the *Generalitat* from 1980 to 2003, was for Spadolini the true pioneer of the Catalan struggles for autonomy. Given his political and cultural background, Spadolini agreed with the reformist ideals of Catalanism aimed at recognizing greater political, economic, social and cultural autonomy. Nevertheless, he could not agree with the views of those who called for the independence of Catalonia, as he was convinced that its historic and inseparable link to Spain was fundamental. Thus, Spadolini saw in Pujol's political vision the best way to promoting the dialogue not only with the other regions of Spain but also with Europe, given Pujol's strong Europeanism. Indeed, together with the French politician Edgar Faure, Pujol was one of the promoters of the European Council of Regions, as well as the President of the Assembly of the Regions of Europe from 1992 to 1996. According to Spadolini, Pujol represented the less extremist and pro-European tendency of Catalanism, which fitted within his republican and democratic ideals emphasizing both the value of State unity and the relevance of federal institutions aiming at protecting the customs, traditions, and values of each local community.

In the chapter *Catalonia and the European integration process (1986–1992)*, Matteo Antonio Napolitano highlights the path towards the formation of a European identity in Catalonia, starting from the Spanish application for accession to the EEC and the early stage of negotiations. This important issue is addressed in a twofold perspective: the reaction to Spanish centralism and the peculiar nation-building of Catalonia after, notably, Franco's regime. Then, he analyzes the relations between Spain and Catalonia, when facing the problems regarding Catalonia's role within the European project, notably those related to the making of the *Europe of the Regions* and the institutional dialogue with other international actors.

Finally, Niccolò Inches's *Catalogna, (Euro)regione transfrontaliera tra cooperazione e spinte identitarie* faces the issue of regionalism in the EU, which has become a crucial topic in the deepening of the European political and territorial integration. A multi-level approach in terms of governance has pro-

gressively risen as the result of several phenomena, above all the collapse of nation–state as main geopolitical actor and paradigm of analysis. Inches states that European projects of neighborhood cooperation imply the assessment of borders as an opportunity to benefit from, instead of being considered as a hindrance. In this respect, the natural frontier separating Spain from France in western Mediterranean (the Pyrenees) is symbolic from the point of view of the economic–cultural synergy between the two sides. Within the Catalan “Euroregion”, Barcelona stands as a benchmark of growth for surrounding areas, especially those in south–western France. In this respect, Inches analyzes transboundary relations in this specific corner of Europe, introducing them as a source for development as well as an opportunity to emancipate from a top–down scheme *vis-à-vis* central institutions.

