

Decentralization in Spain 40
years after :
Achievements, limits and future
perspectives

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J. Botella, UAB

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The 4 traditional political cleavages in Spain

Religious : Catholic vs. Secular

Institutional : Monarchy vs. Democracy

Social : Land-owners vs. Poor peasants

Bourgeoisie vs. Working class (in some regions)

Cultural – territorial: Centralism vs. Pluralism

A succesful democratic transition

Both regime and oppositions too weak for a complete victory

=> “Consensus”: large agreements between parties.

1977, social agreements (“Pactos de la Moncloa”)

1978, Constitution is approved

1979, new agreement (“Concordato”) with Catholic Church

1980, first regional governments are elected

1982, opposition wins elections

1986, “ international normalization” : Spain enters NATO and EEC

The difficult “regional” transition

Regional self-government: rule or exception?

How to draw the map?

Two types of regions?

A consensual solution

- No privileges: all the country, divided in self-governed regions
- Priority given to those regions “which in the past approved, by referéndum, a Statute of self-government” (3: Catalonia, Basque Country, Galicia)
- All other regions would have to wait at least 5 years to reach maximum level of Powers
- Powers: essentially, culture, social services and education. But not the pensions system, nor economic policy.
- AP : initial rejection; acceptance since 1989
- System starts working in 1983 (first “general regional election”)

The evolution of the model

Reforms in 1992 and 2000 suppress differences between regions
(exception: financing, where Basque Country and Navarra enjoy a larger autonomy – and more money !)

In 2015, the distribution of expenditure by levels was:

Central level,	35 %
Regional level,	52 %
Local level,	12 %

Limits of the model

- Absence of a Senate representing the regions
- Nationalist / Regionalist parties act in the lower chamber, and not in the upper chamber
- Regions are not involved in central policy – making (for instance, vis-à-vis EU discussions and decisions)
- Funding of regions largely depending on transfers from the center
- Services assigned to regions often remain unfunded
- Distribution of central investments and expenditure remains “opaque”

The catalan case

- Catalonia had played a certain “leading role” in the decentralizing process: strong identity and political traditions, no terrorism, consensual politics, succesful bilingualism
- Left catalan government tries in 2005 to solve those problems through a reform of the Statute. After changes introduced by the central govt, the Statute is approved in referendum (but with low turnout)
- PP will refer the Statute to the Constitutional Court; its decision comes in 2010, suppressing central elements of the text

What next?

- The current Catalan crisis can have the negative effect of “freezing” the pending problems.
- There is a very large agreement between experts on necessary reforms, with **Federalism** in mind:
 - Revision of the financing system (which is not in the Constitution)
 - Reform of the Senate, towards a German scheme
 - Mechanisms of involving regions in central and European decision – making
 - Assumption by central authorities of their responsibilities in the promotion and protection of languages

The Catalan crisis

- Since 2012, regionalist parties in Catalonia changed their general vision, now claiming self – determination (“right to decide”) towards Independence of the region.
- Two such pseudo-referendums have taken place (Nov 2014, Oct 2017), without legal recognition but with large popular support.
- Both “referenda”, as well as all elections and public opinion surveys, show a 50 - 50 division in Catalan society.
- This division reinforces (and is reinforced by) the institutional passivity of central authorities; in addition, the trial of leaders of the movement blocks possible negotiated solutions

Difficulties for a solution

- Political division of the Independence movement (3 / 4 parties) blocks its strategies: the party which would take a negotiating stance would be called “traitor”.
- Only institutional reforms at Spanish level would at least reduce the dimensions of the problem; but this reduction is required to undertake any reform
- The divisions within Catalan opinion are highly correlated with structural realities; and therefore, one cannot expect a rapid change.

"Do you want Catalonia to become an independent State?"

(Source : "CEO Barometer", various editions)

	July 2015	July 2017	May 2018
• Yes :	42,9 %	41,1 %	48,1 %
• No:	50,0 %	49,4 %	43,7 %
• NS, NC:	7,1 %	9,5 %	8,2 %

Attitudes and internal migration

How many Catalan grandparents?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
• None	21,2	68,8
• One:	57,0	34,0
• Two:	58,6	30,6
• Three:	70,0	16,7
• Four:	73,2	20,4

(Source: CEO Barometer)

Attitudes and monthly income (€ net)

Support for Independence of Catalonia ?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>NS, NC</u>
• Under 1.000	31 %	61%	8 %
• 1.000 - 2.000	41%	54,5%	4,5%
• 2.000 - 4.000	58%	37%	5 %
• More than 4.000	58%	36 %	6 %

(Source: CEO Barometre, April 2017)

Attitudes and age - groups

<u>Age-group:</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
• 18 – 24	46,8	40,8
• 25 – 34	49,7	42,6
• 35 – 49	49,0	39,0
• 50 – 64	48,6	44,0
• 65 i més	42,7	48,0

(Source : CEO Barometer, May 2018)

Attitudes and the rural – urban cleavage

Population	% supporting independence
Under 2.000 habs.	54,5 %
2000 to 10.000	41,3 %
1000 to 50.000	39,9 %
50000 to 100.000	28,2 %
10000 to 400.000	29,7 %
Barcelona	35,8 %

STABLE SUPPORT : vote in the “referendums”

REFERENDUM Nov 2014:

- BI, NI : 107.000
- No: 105.000
- Si /NO: 232.000
- Si/Si: 1.900.000
- TOTAL 2.305.000

(in 2014, two questions were asked)

REFERENDUM Oct 2017:

- BI,NI: 66.000
- No: 175.000
- SI : 2.000.000
- TOTAL : 2.340.000

Figura 1. "Me siento español porque comparto con los demás españoles...": grado de acuerdo con cada frase (% que responde "bastante" o "mucho")

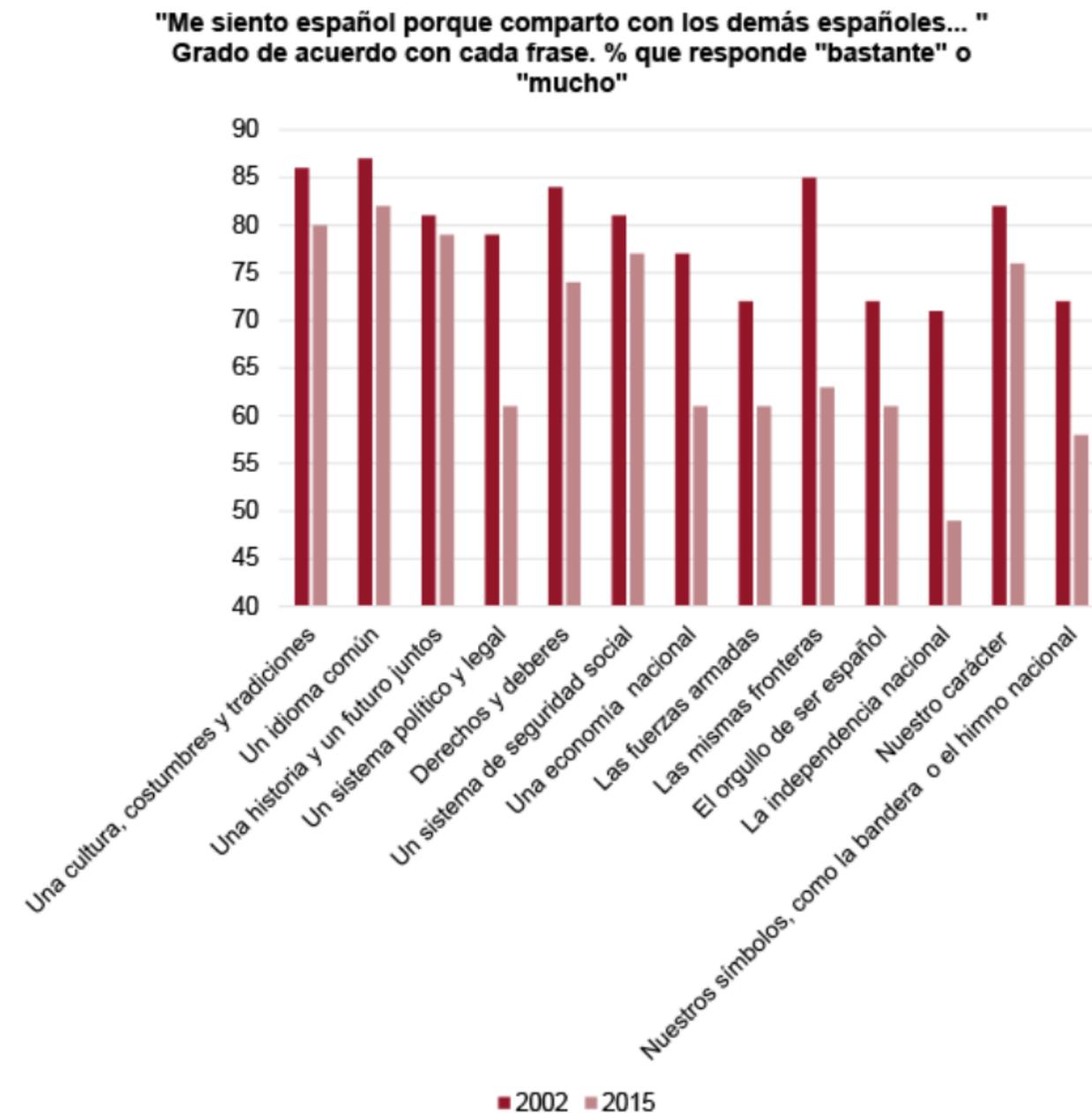


Figura 4. Evolución del sentimiento de cercanía hacia...

	2002	2015	2015-2002
Los habitantes de su ciudad/pueblo	92	87	-4
Los habitantes de su Comunidad Autónoma	86	80	-6
Los españoles	90	85	-5
Los europeos	57	59	+2

Fuente: Eurobarómetro 57.2, 2002; y BRIE nº 36, 2015.



“Risks arising from an old Constitution and the need for bold action: times for reform and agreements”.

Javier GARCÍA ROCA,
Professor of Constitutional Law,
Complutense University of Madrid,
Vice- President of the International Association of Constitutional Law.

Helsinki, 21st of March 2019.

I wish to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ambassador of Spain, my friend his Excellency Luis Tejada. I will attempt to explain a few ideas clearly summarized in the title of my lecture. We do have a good Constitution, a reasonable representative democracy, one of the best Social States in the world, and a quasi-federal State, but we need to review certain ingredients in order to adapt them to our acquired experience over forty years and to the new challenges.

1.- Hard times and uncompleted tasks.

Indeed I believe we should have *addressed the review of our Constitution* several years ago, as many legal experts have been insisting for more than a decade. I envy other more illustrated periods of our history such as those of the Cádiz Constitution of 1812 and the transition to democracy in the late seventies. But Spanish history seems to reflect the barbaric custom of erecting a new constitution on the ruins of its predecessor... We have perhaps learned very little from the XIX century, and therefore we are bound to make the same mistakes. It is a curse on our country and it distances us from the mainstream of European constitutionalism.

In hard times, *iuris prudentia* must be *iuris audatia*... There are certain constitutional reforms that cannot be postponed. Our political parties should reach basic

agreements and hold the firm determination of achieving a successful conclusion: an obligation of results or what Germans call “*a commitment to compromise*”. It is not possible to ask for an initial consensus as a precondition, as the former Government of President Rajoy has done, instead of as the result of lengthy deliberation.

As James Bryce pointed out in the XIXth century, if legal and constitutional reforms that adjust legislation to reality are not *carried out in a timely manner*, the results are always revolts, revolution and dissatisfaction. The serious events in Catalonia during 2017 confirm this theory and finally produced led to a State intervention in self-government applying article 155 SC for several months. Our Constitution has lost a good part of its capacity for political integration which is the main function of any Fundamental Law.

However, the constant battle among political parties, an excessive electoral short-term perspective, and the *lack of parliamentary compromise* do not provide us with a great constitutional moment. I am afraid we have a democracy based only on electoral surveys. There is a serious contradiction between reason and Law, on one hand, and the poor political reality in which we live, on the other. I am afraid that we will continue to hurt ourselves for a while. The decline of the political scenario is probably not over yet.

As though *events in Catalonia* were not really painful enough: a unilateral declaration of independence by the local Parliament, and the proclamation of a Catalan Republic, carried out irresponsibly with no planning whatsoever, and which lasted only a few hours. It has been a nightmare and the image of Catalonia’s self-government and the independence leaders, as well as the image of the rest of Spain, has deteriorated a lot.

It is true that our *current material conditions* are not the best for taking on the renovation of our constitutional compact, which was built during the transition to democracy, and also some basic legislation that has to be revisited in order to regenerate the country. But the longer we delay this task, the worse the situation will become. We cannot hope that inaction will solve the conflict, instead of making the conflict more serious. Political parties would have to change their political culture and get used to a democracy based on consensus: a “*consociational democracy*” as Arendt Lijphart has theorized. In a Spanish Parliament with more than twelve political parties, four of which are very big -and probably five in the future-, there is no other option. The old two-party

system, based on a Westminster democracy focused in alternation, has disappeared and our political parties seem still to be unaware of this.

Indeed, the current material conditions required to celebrate a new “constitutional process” are even worse and this is a clear advantage for a peaceful solution. A radical process inspired by totally different political decisions called for by certain radical and populist groups, or by secessionist forces that try to lead to the independence of Catalonia, will prove nearly impossible to succeed. Anyway, we have already witnessed an attempt to destroy Spain by revolutionary means, violating Rule of Law, with the Catalan Parliament’s approval of the Referendum Law and the Law of the Transition and Foundation of the Republic. These laws were suspended and later annulled by the Constitutional Court due to their absolute contempt of the Spanish Constitution and the Catalan Statute of Autonomy. There are very few examples in Europe of such a contempt for the law: a Catalan Parliament turning into a revolutionary assembly that ignores its own Standing Orders violating the political rights of half its members: all the numerous MPs of the opposition.

I wish to highlight that the government of the majority without respect for the Law and the political rights of minorities is nothing but *tyranny*. In a representative democracy nothing can be settled without respect for the Law, including the secession of a territory. “*Democracy embedded in the Rule of Law*” is the sentence coined by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). It is absurd to separate the principles of legality and constitutionality from the principle of democracy, as the separatist groups have done, a winding road that only leads us to a dead end. The reform of the constitution sits precisely at this crossroads. Reforming the Constitution will be a long and difficult process, but, if current inaction prevails, the outcome will be a new Constitution some day with unpredictable features.

2.- The success of our constitutional consensus and transition to democracy and the consolidation of a good Constitution.

The Spanish transition to democracy was a great success. It went far beyond what could have been expected of a country fleeing international isolation and the long dictatorship of General Franco during forty years. Such success has led some people to

mistake a decent respect for the Constitution with its religious consecration as an untouchable symbol. But constitutions are necessarily defended through their revision. Nowadays some radical groups disagree with this very positive judgment on transition to democracy and they carry out diachronic analyses which are unfair. History cannot be judged in the light of later events. We cannot not lie to young people.

Therefore, it would be wise to remember some facts ourselves. After the first democratic elections in 1977, Spain approved a good Constitution by consensus. Several generations' fears arising from our successive civil wars acted as a brake which is in contrast to the flood of sectarianism today. We made good use of the experience of post World War II European constitutionalism which in turn enabled us to inherit: constitutional justice, a representative democracy, a rationalized parliamentarism and stable governments thanks to an electoral system that rewards majorities, a very decentralized and autonomous State, and a good Rule of Law.

The Communist Party and the PSOE, the Socialist Party, accepted the Monarchy despite their republicanism. AP, the conservative party, and the Catalan and Basque nationalists accepted the ambiguous formula of the Autonomous State, in practice a quasi-federal system, considered a pragmatic compromise which would be completed by means of further agreements. The traditional confrontation between Catholics and laity did not recur. We passed a long and modern declaration of rights -one of the best I have read-, and recognized a market economy and a strong Welfare State.

What more could one realistically hope for? Even today an assessment of the Spanish Constitution and democracy must be very positive according to all European standards and international index.

For the nearly two decades that followed the approval of the Constitution in 1978, and promoted by the UCD –a center Party-, a process of constitutional development was carried out under several governments, mainly those of the Socialist Party, from 1982 to 1996. Thanks to this process we were able to become members of the EEC and received a large amount of European legislation and development funds, both of which were decisive in our progress. Democratic stability, European integration, economic development changed the face of Spain, modernizing the country and improving public services: health, social security and education. Regulation was passed to implement all human rights. Spain is today one of the countries with fewest violations of human rights

found by the ECtHR. We have also consolidated one of the constitutional jurisdictions with the best guarantees for individual human rights and jurisdiction of the Autonomous Communities. We have constructed our own brand of parliamentarism: it is predictable and very formalized, but has enabled the control of the government and the approval of legislation with the participation of minorities.

The Statutes of the Autonomous Communities were passed and within a few years seventeen regions had been set up with a high level of self- government whose competences and level of spending are comparable to those of any other European federal state including Germany or Austria. As is the case in any federal State or country, all of this was not achieved without any number of problems.

But who could have imagined this modern scenario after four decades of dictatorship? Better is always the enemy of good. Some may perhaps underestimate the many things that bind us together and that we have already accomplished. They may not realize that it would be foolish to tear down these achievements. We have only to contemplate the disastrous process of Brexit in UK, or the dangers posed by all supremacist, populist and nationalist movements in many European countries (Poland, Hungary, Romania or Italy) to appreciate the Spanish success.

However, all these positive achievements must not serve as an excuse to avoid correcting some defects in our political system that were clearly identified years ago. Some parties have found a comfortable place thanks to their *immobilism* which is nothing more than a slow suicide; as any codified body of Law, the Spanish Constitution must be updated as well as the political agreements that lie at the base of our State.

3.- Constitutional deterioration and the loss of *consensus*. New challenges.

Nothing is perfect forever and diverse unsolved problems have been eroding our Constitution. Without the will to strengthen democracy through reforms, political representation and territorial integration deteriorate.

Let us remember the harsh criticism to our representative democracy of the youngest citizens embodied in the “*Indignados*” movement in 2011, which was summarized in the painful slogan, “They do not represent us”, referred to the two classic

political parties. It led to the creation of a new radical leftish party, very critical of the “establishment”, with a populist ideology: “Podemos”. However, citizens must not be regarded as mere consumers of simplistic slogans, as the radical Marxist sociologist Ernesto Laclau and his Podemos followers maintain, but as rational adults, responsible citizens linked morally to the State and who wish to participate in public affairs. Besides, in 2018, during the regional elections in Andalucía, a second populist movement has emerged, this one on the extreme right, “Vox”.

Since 2007, the long economic crisis has had serious social consequences: unemployment, emigration, cuts in social spending, deterioration of public services... The corruption of some political parties has only served to increase tension. And this to the point that separatist forces have been able to convince many Catalans that secession is not just a utopia but a real alternative. They claim that independence would not only improve Catalan self-government but also upgrade democracy, avoid corruption, and recover social rights. Secessionists tend to present Spain as a country incapable of regeneration. We will not be able to stop the independence movement without generating a new network of reforms and solidarities.

We have however not reviewed our Constitution in all these years. We have only changed two constitutional precepts (articles 13 and 135 of the Spanish Constitution), and we only did so in answer to demands imposed by the “European Constitution”, the second time related with the balanced budget rule.

We especially need constitutional reforms in our territorial Constitution. As a matter of fact, in all federal or quasi-federalist states like Spain, the federal equilibrium is dynamic by definition. It is a good idea to review constitutional pacts from time to time in order to ensure that the process of problem-solving can continue. The strong internal nationalisms in Spain (Catalonia and Basque Country) are a historic asymmetrical characteristic that reinforces this tendency. It still surprises me that our politicians have still not given the issue the same attention as scholars have.

Our territorial model has seen problems emerge over time. There is a high number of constitutional conflicts between the State and the Autonomous Community, which have become the breeding ground for constant political disputes. There is no other intense situation like this in Europe. The vagueness of our constitutional rules for the distribution of jurisdiction and the absence of constitutional reforms have forced the Constitutional

Court to take on the role of a permanent constituent power through a long number of “interpretative constitutional judgments”.

This bad situation is the outcome of a Constitution open to an enormous block of rules in seventeen Autonomous Communities. This broad “*block of constitutionality*” is an ill-defined parameter for review of legislation, full of contradictions and subject to constant transformations. It is indeed a bad model according to all comparative references. Our territorial competences are a source of legal insecurity and constant conflicts. Even the entire ocean of the Constitutional Court’s case-law can no longer offer solutions to problems that come up regularly year after year like the *ritornello* of a piece of music. This is obvious to all experts, but still has not moved politicians to make constitutional changes. I made this very statement before the Parliamentary Commission for the reform of the Autonomous State just a few months ago.

Furthermore, there are few constitutional rules governing the funding of the Autonomous Communities. The issue was left to the *Organic Law for the financing of the Autonomous Communities* (LOFCA) and depends in practice on several financial funds freely created and managed by the Government. This acute dependence on the Government’s political decisions has generated constant protests from the Autonomous Communities. It simply cannot be considered a stable financing system. Neither is in the Constitution as an agreement on the scope of financial solidarity among all Spanish citizens. The issue has acquired a serious political dimension due to the diffusion of false separatist slogans in Catalonia such as “Spain robs us”, despite numerous studies that prove these statements to be false. I wonder why cannot the Members of the Senate clearly explain the financing system to the Spanish nation? The reason is because we do not have a truly federal Senate where all the Autonomous Communities are represented. Never underestimate the power of the burse in any decentralized State, and we still lack stable constitutional compromises in this area.

Another problem we have to introduce is related with our *official languages*, as we do have several local languages beside Castilian in Spain. Linguistic pluralism is one of the values recognized by the Spanish Constitution for the first time in our history. There is however no regulation that establishes the equal official status of these languages either in the Constitution or in the Statutes of Autonomy. The issue has been left to successive regulations by regional laws and has frequently become a permanent source of conflicts,

and cannot be resolved in the Courts alone; it too requires stable constitutional agreements.

Another subject barely mentioned by the Constitution involves the cooperation mechanisms among the Autonomous Communities and between the Autonomous Communities and the State: *horizontal and vertical cooperation*. It is essential to explain the advantages of cooperative federalism which we have in fact been applying in practice for years through several instruments. Nevertheless, the functioning of our model is based on mistrust, and this impoverishes us all. If we could accept cooperative and unitarian federalism as constitutional ideology, we would have gained much. Indeed, the same gains could be achieved without recourse to the word “federalism” if the term still caused disputes. But I will highlight that this rejection to the word “federalism” happens in no other country. It is another Spanish oddity to add to our quirk of not reviewing Constitutions. We Iberians tend to be stubborn when we make mistakes...

To summarize, the Autonomous State needs constitutional reforms and political agreements. This is the most pressing and delicate issue, and not only with regard to the Catalan conflict. We need to modernize our common home to make it more attractive, and to offer comfortable quarters to many Catalans who do not really wish to leave but who feel annoyed. These reforms will not convince many radical separatists, but probably will be enough for many of those Catalans who did not vote for the separatists forces in the past but who do so now.

Another challenge is that posed by our *parliamentary system*, very much “rationalized”, formal and predictable. The Standing Orders of both Chambers are obsolete and do not include many lessons learned during these past decades. It is essential that citizens recover the certainty that the heart of democracy lies in parliamentary compromise in order to face complex issues, rather than in referendums prone to emotional decision-making, which divide societies and simply postpone solutions for problems.

Then there are some challenges in our *electoral system*. It has not been reformed since the transition to democracy, and we now live in a very different context. For instance, nowadays blocked candidatures -closed party lists- are the exception in Europe. It would be worth trying some type of preferred vote that would allow citizens’ participation.

There are also further challenges in the functioning of the *Constitutional Court and the General Council of the Judiciary*. The legal capacities of *Constitutional Judges* should be seriously reinforced through a better recruitment system in both Houses. But this is a common problem in nearly all constitutional courts. The Constitutional Court judgment on the Catalan Statute (STC 31/2019) was strongly contested, and generated no political integration of our nation of nationalities and regions, despite its solid reasoning. The separatists have used this decision exaggeratedly as another argument for secession.

The same might be said for the *election of the General Council of the Judiciary*, which is undergoing its fourth reorganization while we still have not agreed on how to appoint its Members. We remain at an impasse discussing whether this power should belong to the judges themselves or to the Parliament.

Furthermore, it is of course clear that we could better guarantee some *fundamental rights* in the Constitution, especially to reinforce the protection of certain social rights such as the right to health and the right to social security that nevertheless are already fairly protected by legal rules and ordinary courts in Spain. I sincerely believe that the Spanish declaration of rights is the best working part of our constitutional system, as it is constantly updated by our Courts as well as by innovative case-law from the ECtHR and European Court of Justice. Certainly, it is not enough to anchor social rights in our constitutions if we cannot pay for them. On the contrary, I have to admit that during the big economic crisis the Constitutional Court declared nearly all social policies of the Autonomous Communities null, producing a serious outrage in Catalonia, who is trying to regain them. A jurisprudence more respectful with Autonomous Communities' policies seems necessary.

It is also convenient to establish a long-term State pact on *education*, both among all political parties and within the Autonomous Communities. The education regulation has been changed too often with different political perspectives. It is not a question of recentralizing powers as some hold, but of a better and more efficient execution of existing ones, including a sufficient knowledge of Spanish by the students in all the Autonomous Communities.

Last but not least, the Constitution says nothing about the *European Union*. We need a European clause in a Constitution which was passed in 1978 and still ignored the European Communities. There should be no dissidence in this regard, since the idea of

Europe brings the vast majority of Spaniards together. We could reinforce the European integration and the will to create a European *demos*. We live in a scenario which implies a *pluralism of constitutions*. The member States have ceded to the Union a large part of their competences and decision-making powers and retain only a diminished “transition sovereignty”. The situation is rather similar -but not the same- in the system of the European Convention of Human Rights which has become “a constitutional instrument of European public order” in the Strasbourg Court’s words. The main challenge is thus to culminate the process of the European “constitutional organization”. We must not disintegrate into small weak nations but rather build a powerful European *demos*.

All these problems can of course be solved not only through constitutional reforms but also through *different levels of legislation and good practices and policies*. But an analysis of the problems from constitutional level provides a good dose of democratic legitimacy and political integration, which is what we need at this moment.

It is clear that these unfinished tasks, which have been piling up for forty years of passivity, cannot be completed all at once. We will have to choose our priorities. Most experts believe that the first should be the *territorial reform*.

In contrast, a very broad constitutional reform comprising multiple objectives seems to me highly inadvisable. This is the main lesson we learned from the *Renzi experience* in Italy as a failed attempt; I tend to consider that it failed because it was such a complex and varied wide-ranging reform, impossible to explain to public opinion.

Unfortunately, the consensus that drove the transition to democracy in Spain has disappeared. Defects accumulate year after year, and they are denounced by experts, who suggest solutions. But this is not followed by a Parliament’s review of institutions, which gradually deteriorate. We need to break out of this vicious circle. We should not continue to believe in the virtues of immobilism, a strategy that leads to an impassive waiting for better days and for problems to go away. Compromise for reform does not just float down from heaven with no previous deliberation like a *Deus ex machina* in the old classic theater.

Furthermore, without dialogue, negotiation and reforms we cannot hope to avoid the painful separation of Cataluña, part of one of the founding kingdoms of Spain. The

fact is that one half of the Catalan population cannot fully defeat the other, but that neither can we abandon more than a half of the population who feel themselves to be Spanish.

The criminal responsibility of certain separatist leaders, now being judged by the Supreme Court, will not be enough to pacify the conflict, even when we admit that the convictions are unavoidable since these leaders freely placed themselves in an illegal situation, disregarding multiple warnings of the Constitutional Court and the Government during several years. Our problems will find a solution only if we recover the will to engage in dialogue and to achieve an agreement. I cannot feel optimistic in this regard, but my intellectual and civic duty commits me to modestly continue reporting on everything I have just warned of.

5.- Some conclusions.

I cannot observe promising material conditions for a prompt constitutional pact on the reforms we need at constitutional, legal and conventional levels. But our political parties should strive to achieve agreements to serve the good of the general interest.

In contrast to the situation in 1977 before our Constitution was passed, our political parties still do not sufficiently share a diagnosis on the need for constitutional reform or on its contents. Yet we will only reach this shared diagnosis through hard permanent work of MPs and dialogue with experts. It is up to the political parties to improve our bad situation.

There are several State reforms pending, but I believe the territorial constitutional reform to be the most urgent and important. Many separatists may of course at first reject this reform, but I do believe that there will be a sufficient number of Catalans who will not, as many statistics prove, thus paving the way for the reconstruction of unity. Of course, the reform of our Constitution must not be carried out only because of Catalonia or to increase self-government, but to improve the efficiency of our quasi federal organization, denying arguments to those who challenge it.

As I have sketched in my impressionist portrait above, there are naturally many other legal and constitutional reforms that could be carried out, and probably must be considered in order to regenerate our *democratic and social State*. But it would be

advisable to pass these reforms in step with agreements reached, following a music *tempo* that avoids both shocks and confusion, and always using good communication policies so that these reforms can be understood by public opinion. This will take time. Let us hope for an *allegretto*, a hopeful rhythm, rather than a sad *adagio*. But let us get up and move forward.

Thank you very much for your attention and for being so patient.