

# Spain's National Cycling Tour and the Politics of Regional and National Identity, 1975- 2000



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# Abstract

This thesis examines the banal nationalism of *La Vuelta Ciclista a España* (Spain's national cycling tour) in the post-Franco period. In light of recent work completed on post-Franco Spanish nationalism, this project provides a robust empirical analysis of four newspaper's coverage of the race between 1975 and 2000. The object of this thesis is to provide empirical ballast to a number of hypotheses and suggestions that have been made, primarily as to the role of informal symbols such as sport in the immediate post-Franco period where formal national symbols suffered a delegitimisation. There are two major themes in this work: firstly, a theme that comprises Spanish national identity and nationalism in the post-Franco period, and secondly, a theoretical theme that looks to interrogate and develop Michael Billig's theory of Banal Nationalism (Billig 1996). Utilising Billig's original publication, as well as other work on *Le Tour de France*, this thesis constructs a mixed quantitative/qualitative content analysis of newspapers in this period, seeking to expand our knowledge of informal national symbols beyond areas, such as football, where analyses have already been done. Newspapers from the main territorial cleavage in the country, Spain and Catalonia, are represented in an examination of the growth of *La Vuelta* as a national symbol as well as how this has been mediated across political and territorial lines.

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# 1 - Introduction

'The Spaniards, they said, did not know how to pedal.'

Ernest Hemingway.<sup>1</sup>

Most people have heard of *Le Tour de France*. One of the largest sporting events in the world, its lengthy history has left it inferior only to the Olympic Games and the World Cup in terms of size, reach and scale. Each year it draws a huge audience, not least the millions of Frenchmen (among other nationalities) who line the roads as it passes through the Pyrenees and the Alps on its metronomic way back to Paris.<sup>2</sup> From the *départements*<sup>3</sup> that it visits to the one hundred and ninety countries that receive images from *France Télévisions*,<sup>4</sup> it symbolises France on many levels. Its avowed ambition to visit all *départements* every four years, alternating clockwise and anti-clockwise biannually, as well as its centenary *Grand Départ* in Corsica in 2013,<sup>5</sup> mark out the explicit national framing of the design committee.<sup>6</sup> Domestically it is deeply symbolic, with the 14 July Bastille Day celebrations and the traditional finish on the *Avenue des Champs d'Élysées* creating an image of France, an idea stretching back to the origins of the race in 1903. Fewer people have heard of *La Vuelta Ciclista a España*,<sup>7</sup> however, despite *de jure* parity with its French cousin, a mismatch in development and identity that is probed in this thesis.

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<sup>1</sup> E. Hemingway. 2000 (1954). *Fiesta (The Sun Also Rises)*. London: Vintage. p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> Some estimates for single day roadside audience figures reach up to one million people. <http://letour.yorkshire.com/news/tour-de-france-the-facts> [accessed: 06/02/14].

<sup>3</sup> A territorial division akin to county in the United Kingdom. There are 96 *Départements* in metropolitan France, with a further 5 overseas, lying in size between the region (27) and commune (36,681).

<sup>4</sup> French state television.

<sup>5</sup> The *Grand Départ* is the start of the race, with the 2013 edition being the first *Tour de France* to visit the island.

<sup>6</sup> A committee receives bids for stages with a route designed fitting these towns. Limitations apply, in not visiting towns that have recently been on the route and marking important French themes (the 1919 race closely circumnavigated French borders, a signal of postwar intent).

<sup>7</sup> [Spain's National Cycling Tour]. Commenced in 1935 but has had a difficult history (see below).

Along with the *Giro d'Italia*,<sup>8</sup> these three Grand Tours are the pinnacle of the cycling calendar and yet *La Vuelta* has seemingly not managed to reach the same level of national symbolism as the other two.

The initial idea behind this thesis related to the relative underdevelopment of *La Vuelta Ciclista a España* as a national symbol capable of representing Spain in the post-Franco period. As a bias towards informal symbols of nationhood vis-à-vis formal symbols had been widely suggested, the failure of the race to symbolise Spain in a similar vein to *Le Tour de France's* evocation of France represented an unexplored but possibly fruitful area of inquiry. Franco's explicit ideology (*España: Una, Grande y Libre*), sometimes referred to as National-Catholicism,<sup>9</sup> had meant an instrumentalisation of formal symbols of Spanish nationalism as part of an attempt to create a homogenous unitary Spain. After Franco's death on 20 November 1975 a deep delegitimisation of these formal symbols has been widely suggested (Balfour 2005; Balfour & Quiroga 2007; Muñoz 2009, 2012; Núñez Seixas 1999, 2001, 2005; Stapell 2007, p. 175; Vincent 1999, p. 481), with the caveat that informal symbols, such as sport, filled the symbolic gap before a re-emergence of overt political nationalism in the 1990s. It has already been argued that football filled the gap to a certain extent (Núñez Seixas 1999; Quiroga 2014) and this thesis expands this area of research through the inclusion of a different sport. Given that *Le Tour de France* is widely held as a successful symbol of French identity, the study of a similar event in Spain, which itself has always looked towards France, seemed likely to provide both new and comparative data. Why had *La Vuelta* failed to become a national symbol when the opportunity structure for sports to flag national identity was improved in the post-

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<sup>8</sup> [Italy's National Cycling Tour]. Begun in 1909, it comes between *Le Tour* and *La Vuelta* in terms of size and success.

<sup>9</sup> Muñoz, for example, has examined the route from 'National-Catholicism to Democratic Patriotism' although the former term may be less than adequate for determining the non-religious elements of Franco's ideology (Muñoz 2009, 2012).

dictatorship era and when similar events in similar countries had seen other outcomes? Would further study of informal symbols corroborate the findings for football, or would a different account emerge?

I imagined that the scope and intensity of competing nationalisms within Spain (less relevant in Italy or France) might have been involved in the relative underdevelopment of *La Vuelta*. Another factor could have been a failure in the event itself as national symbolism is necessarily tied to a certain size of event (Houlihan 1997; Bairner 2009).<sup>10</sup> To be a truly national symbol *La Vuelta* would have to receive ample coverage across a wide section of media, as well as gracing the front pages in a regular, if not frequent way. Only a select few sports can manage this at any one time and the question remained to be asked if cycling and *La Vuelta* reached this point. Football remained the leading sport in Spain throughout the period, yet cycling was not without a certain cachet, as we will see below. Unlike *Le Tour* (1903) and *Il Giro* (1909), *La Vuelta* (1935) was not a product of *la belle époque*,<sup>11</sup> arriving three decades later than its progenitors on the eve of the Spanish Civil War, a fact that further delayed its development (it was not fully established until 1955).<sup>12</sup> This late arrival, behind that of even regional Spanish races such as the *Volta a Catalunya*<sup>13</sup> and the *Vuelta al País Vasco*,<sup>14</sup> left it in a subsidiary position, one made permanent in 2008 by the purchase of 49 per cent of *Unipublic* (the race's organiser) by

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<sup>10</sup> National sports can be divided into *de jure* ones that are legally defined as such in a Constitution and *de facto* ones, the latter being far more common.

<sup>11</sup> The metaphor of *la belle époque*, taken to mean the culture of innocence before the First World War (see: Eksteins 1990; or for a different angle: Ross 2009), can be extended to the birth of cycling, which coincided with the wider cultural movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

<sup>12</sup> The history of the race is available in two Spanish language books (Pablos 1985) (Chico Pérez 1986) and one English-language one (Fallon & Bell 2005, updated in 2013), although the Spanish ones have not been updated since 1985 and the English text focuses on the racing rather than the broader context.

<sup>13</sup> [Tour of Catalonia]. Born in 1911 this is Spain's oldest extant cycling race. It has only just started to receive funding from the *Generalitat* (Catalan regional government) in the past few years. The Basque Country is, however, far more generous in terms of regional government funding for cycling events and teams.

<sup>14</sup> [The Tour of the Basque Country]. The first edition was held in 1924 in what is known as the region with the deepest attachment to cycling in Spain. It still exists today but has come under huge financial pressure after 2008 due to the withdrawal of generous municipal and regional government funding.

the *Amaury Sport Organisation* (who run *Le Tour de France*).<sup>15</sup> The long dictatorial regime under Franco, as well as the uncertainty in the immediate post-Franco era, should also be included as limiting factors, affecting an event that depends on participation and investment from other mostly European countries.<sup>16</sup>

I soon came to realise that a number of these assumptions were in need of adjustment, if not outright rejection. Despite being comparatively less known than the other Grand Tours, *La Vuelta* had enjoyed a prolonged period of domestic success in the 1950s and 1960s, a 'Golden Age' where radio provided the means for a mass cultural event shared by Spaniards (Vázquez Montalbán, quoted in Tusell 2007, p. 180.). This period also saw a number of successful Spanish riders (such as Federico Bahamontes, Miguel Poblet or Luis Ocaña), many of whom competed in *Le Tour* and *Il Giro*, making them symbols of Spain both domestically and abroad (Bahamontes became the first Spaniard to win *Le Tour* in 1959). The race declined in the 1970s, under a litany of competing pressures (see below), but by the 1980s a new 'Golden Age', replete with widespread media coverage and individual Spanish success, was heralded, contravening my earlier assumptions of a lack of symbolism in the post-Franco era. This study thus became less a history of the failure of *La Vuelta* as a national symbol in the post-Franco period and more one of its relative success. The task now became more about measuring the extent of that success and placing it into context with what studies had already divulged about football in this period. Did *La Vuelta* form part of a wider suite of informal symbols crucial in reinvigorating Spanish national identity and pride in the post-Franco period? Was

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<sup>15</sup> This could be seen as inbuilt subsidiarity, but is highly beneficial for *La Vuelta* since it can draw on the expertise of *Le Tour* as well as being part of a fixed calendar of cycling events.

<sup>16</sup> Internationalisation of cycling did not take place until the 1980s and is still limited today, although there has been substantial growth in this aspect over the past few years, particularly with the injection of Middle Eastern money into teams and races i.e. The Dubai Tour, The Tour of Oman, the Tour of Qatar.

development of informal symbolism in the 1980s a precondition for the re-emergence of more formal Spanish nationalism in the 1990s?

Between 1955 and 1978 *La Vuelta* was organised by the Basque newspaper *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco*, a conservative Spanish nationalist daily of considerable importance in northern Spain.<sup>17</sup> From 1979, however, the race was organised from Madrid, a vital change that is explored below. That Spain's national cycling tour was not only organised from but also based on the Basque Country is noteworthy, given that it is difficult to imagine *Le Tour* being organised from Brittany or Corsica, for example. The Italian tour, *Il Giro*, is broadly comparable to the pre-1979 *Vuelta*, in being organised from Milan (i.e. not the political capital) by the Italian newspaper *La Gazzetta dello Sport*. It has rarely finished in Rome and instead the locality where the race ends is determined on a yearly ad hoc basis, although the race is informally based on the north where the newspaper is published.<sup>18</sup> It is to be noted that the style of *Le Tour* (finishing in Paris) and *Il Giro* (with flexible finishes) symbolises the general territorial makeup of each respective state, with *La Vuelta's* switch from regional (Bilbao) to central (Madrid) in 1979 showing a movement towards the French model. Spain has always looked to France and this friction between periphery and centre in cycling symbolises the main political, cultural and economic cleavages in modern Spain. If sport is taken as an imperfect reflection of society then the shift from periphery to centre in the organisation of *La Vuelta* could not be more poignant.

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<sup>17</sup> It remains in the top ten Spanish dailies and is the leading daily in the Basque Country despite its strong Spanish national editorial position.

<sup>18</sup> It has only finished in Rome on three occasions in a century of racing, a flexibility that ensures riders are not forced to travel large distances for the last stage as in Spain and Italy.



Spain's *Vuelta* thus lies somewhere between the two other Grand Tours (and between Italy and France) finishing in the Basque Country between 1955 and 1978 and then in Madrid after this date (with a few small exceptions, such as in 1993 when the race finished in *Santiago de Compostela*). This shift reflects the re-organisation of *La Vuelta* after 1979, when a professional company, *Unipublic*, based in Madrid took over from the Basque newspaper *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco*, which cited economic pressures as it dropped the race in early 1979. Cycling has been deeply embedded in the sporting culture of the Basque Country since the late 19th century, with a number of races, riders, teams, sponsors and investment that extends far beyond that of any other area of Spain.<sup>19</sup> It is for this reason that *La Vuelta* had been domiciled in the region before 1979, with the periphery paradoxically being at the centre of the race. This structure was signalled not only by the last three to four stages being traditionally held in the Basque Country, but also by Catalonia becoming involved too, with sponsorship from *El Mundo Deportivo*<sup>20</sup> also part of the peripheral axis of the race in the pre-1979 period. This hints at the intriguing possibility that cycling could unite Spain with its most distinct regions (in terms of language, identity and political culture) in a way that football could not. We should remember that *La Vuelta* successfully returned to the Basque Country in 2011 after a thirty-two year hiatus, a feat that *La Selección* (Spain's first XI) has not been able to equal, with no national football involving Spain played within the borders of the Basque Country since 31 May 1965.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The depth of this association between the Basque Country and cycling is demonstrated in the publication of an alphabetical compendium of the history of cycling in the Basque Country. See: Hego Euskal Herriko Txirrindularitzaren / Historia del ciclismo en el País Vasco Peninsular (Bodegas & Dorronsoro 1999).

<sup>20</sup> [The Sporting World]. The leading sport newspaper in Catalonia, now part of *Grupo Godó* who also owns *La Vanguardia*.

<sup>21</sup> Ethnic considerations of Basque identity are visible in both football and cycling. *Athletic Bilbao* has a policy of only including Basque-born players within their squad with the (now defunct) cycling team *Euskaltel-Euskadi* following a similar principle between 1993-2012.

However, in the immediate post-Franco period, *La Vuelta* was unable to be organised from, or even enter, the Basque Country, a fact which amply demonstrates the importance of sport in society i.e. sport is rarely just sport (see: Coakley 1998). Beyond the official economic reasons cited above, we must also consider the extreme public and political pressures facing the organisers of the race in the late 1970s. The race route had already been targeted by bombs planted by *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* (ETA - Basque Homeland and Freedom) in 1968, a situation repeated again in 1990.<sup>22</sup> The 1978 *Vuelta*, the last to be not only organised in but also based on the region,<sup>23</sup> saw large-scale protests against the race, with roads blocked and projectiles thrown at riders. *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco* saw a number of attacks against its personnel and infrastructure during this period, making *La Vuelta* doubly vulnerable. It was not only a Spanish symbol, but a Spanish symbol organised by a conservative Spanish newspaper with historic links to the *Falange*<sup>24</sup> and Franco. These attacks against the newspaper and the race should be seen as part of a wider campaign against Spanish symbols, people and institutions within the Basque Country as tensions came to a height in the post-Franco era, highlighted by the high abstention (54.5%) in the 1977 constitutional referendum and the increase in violence in this period (Sánchez-Cuenca & Aguilar 2009, p. 433).

However, despite these problems there can be no doubt that by the mid to late 1980s *La Vuelta Ciclista a España* was yet again a national symbol, widely accessible through television, radio and newspapers, a development I had not originally considered. Financial security was reached through a broad agreement with *Radiotelevisión*

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<sup>22</sup> Between 1978 and 2011 *La Vuelta* did not enter the Basque Country. The 1990 route was bombed when it entered Navarre, a neighbouring *Comunidad Autónoma* (Autonomous Community or region) which is part of irredentist claims for *Euskal Herria* (the wider Basque Country which also includes the French Basque Country).

<sup>23</sup> *La Vuelta* had been organised from the north since 1955 and was embedded in the Basque Country, utilising its superior infrastructure (such as Spain's best velodrome at Anoeta) and fervent cycling public.

<sup>24</sup> The fascist party co-opted by Franco that was the sole official political organization during his reign.

*Española*<sup>25</sup> and the race began to attract sponsorship and foreign participation of a level that led to a revaluing of its place in the national imagination (as well as abroad).<sup>26</sup> The race was still relatively underdeveloped vis-à-vis *Le Tour* and *Il Giro* but was not as poor at an absolute level as I had principally imagined i.e. it had developed a certain cachet both within and outside Spain. Radio had been replaced by television as the dominant transmission mechanism with newspapers forming part of a wider media arc.<sup>27</sup> Given that television is culturally central in Spain, with readership of the press being among the lowest in Europe (Papatheodorou & Machin 2003), no national symbolism could have been reached without television in the post-Franco era. As for *Il Giro* and *Le Tour* state television led the coverage, suggesting an important mediating role for the state in selecting which sports can prosper and which may not.<sup>28</sup>

This study was designed to expand the range of sports used as empirical matter in the study of Spanish history and politics, adding to the corpora already extant on football within Spain (Castillo 2007; Crolley 1997, 2000; Fernández 1990; Gómez 2007; León Solís 2003; Quiroga 2013; Shaw 1987; Shobe 2008a, 2008b, 2008c). It is not my position that *La Vuelta* displaced football in this period, which remained the main sport, but that it become a relatively important national symbol within the strict confines of the April/May (September after 1995) dates in which it was held. As we will see, a concatenation of

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<sup>25</sup> [Spanish state television]. *La Vuelta* had previously seen some broadcasting, mainly highlights, but a deal reached in 1983 led to lengthy live coverage, attracting sponsors and securing the future of the race. This was the beginning of a more comprehensive professionalisation and commercialisation of cycling and sport more generally.

<sup>26</sup> The progressive development of foreign coverage of the race provides supplementary evidence as to its growth. In 1983 we saw, concomitant with the French star Bernard Hinault's participation, the arrival of French media. Similarly, the involvement of Columbian cyclists in the same year brought extensive radio and newspaper coverage from the South American nation, as *La Vuelta* became less Spanish and more international in participation and projection. It should be noted, however, that cycling remains rooted in a select number of mainly European countries.

<sup>27</sup> The implications of my reliance on newspapers are discussed in the methodology section.

<sup>28</sup> See, for instance, the documentation on the sports and sporting events that should be included within the A (priority) and B (highlights only) lists for free-to-air television in the UK: [www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN00802.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN00802.pdf) [accessed: 17/03/2014].

factors could lead to *La Vuelta* briefly surpassing football in the national imaginary, but this was rare. The increasing institutional stability of the race after 1979 was a necessary but not sufficient condition for national symbolism, which was reached with broader media coverage linked to individual Spanish successes in the 1980s and 1990s. This development of *La Vuelta* as a national symbol fits into two wider areas: firstly, other informal symbols such as football, and secondly, it can be taken together with formal symbols to create a general idea of Spanish nationalism and national identity after 1975. Singular studies of informal symbols such as *La Vuelta* will not provide firm confirmation for hypotheses on the complex and varied picture of identity in Spain after Franco, yet combining these with other work in this area will lead to advancement of the discipline as it stands today.

Cycling is an important secondary sport in Spain, on a par with tennis, Formula One and basketball.<sup>29</sup> The general level of interest in recreational cycling in Spain is high, with 22.2 per cent of the population cycling at least once a week. Bicycle ownership is also high, rising from 52 to 63 per cent in the 1990s, above those who own a football (61.4 per cent) or a tennis racquet (52.5 per cent). Furthermore, the 1990s also saw a growth from 3 to 9 per cent in people attending bicycle races, demonstrating that *La Vuelta's* growth as a race in the press can be linked to attitudes in the population at large.<sup>30</sup> We cannot equate recreational cycling, Spanish cycling and *La Vuelta* perfectly but they do show signs of interrelatedness in their joint growth in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>31</sup> This correlation signals how

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<sup>29</sup> The popularity of a given sport is conditioned by many different factors, not least Olympic cycles, local and regional particularities and national (i.e. Spanish) success.

<sup>30</sup> CIS. 2000. *Los Hábitos Deportivos de los Españoles*. Estudio no. 2,397.

<sup>31</sup> The empirical data to back up these assertions are contained within the four main analytical chapters of this thesis.

elite and popular experiences of sport interact, reinforcing each other in this particular instance.<sup>32</sup>

The problems related to formal symbols of Spanish nationhood, such as the *Rojigualda* (Monarchist Spanish flag) in the post-Franco era and the opportunity this provided to non-formal symbols, such as sport, structured my study, as did the success of *Le Tour* and *Il Giro* in symbolising the respective nations where the races, for the most part, take place.<sup>33</sup> It is this context of a legitimacy crisis for Spanish nationalism and nationhood in a post-dictatorship setting (akin to postwar Germany) that represents one half of the foundation of this study, with the other theoretical part explored below. However, a key problem in the separation of formal and informal symbols is that sport was also heavily utilised under the Franco regime (Krüger 2002, pp. 127-130; Shaw 1987, p. 24-25; Quiroga 2013, p. 4), with football particularly prominent in the Francoist conception of society in a construct commonly known as a 'culture of evasion' (Carr 1979, p. 158). The assumption that sport thus emerged relatively unscathed by linkages to Francoism is open to question, with Real Madrid linked particularly closely to the dictator (Hargreaves & Ferrando 1997, p. 66; Krüger 2002, p. 130; Shaw 1987, p. 46).<sup>34</sup> Franco possessed neither the will nor the economic means to control sport to the degree of fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, but the organisation of *La Vuelta* being handled by a conservative Spanish

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<sup>32</sup> We have seen this recently in Britain as success at the professional level in the *Tour de France* has led to increasing bicycle sales and interest in cycling in the general population, which goes some way to proving that investment in elite sport does work as a mechanism to enhance general participation.

<sup>33</sup> While these races are predominately based on the nation in which they take place it has become increasingly common for stages to take place outside the formal borders of the nation, with the race more a brand than a deep conception of national identity as it once was. In 2014, for example, *Il Giro* will start in Northern Ireland and *Le Tour de France* in Yorkshire, with both areas hoping to utilise the scale of the events to promote their own regions - showing the complexity of identity practices when examining a modern sporting event.

<sup>34</sup> See: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2013/10/25/the-symbolism-in-spanish-football-illustrates-that-catalan-and-spanish-identities-are-not-necessarily-incompatible/> [accessed: 17/03/2014].

newspaper, albeit based in the Basque Country, does show that the race was at least given a green light in this period.

The prime reason for undertaking this study was not the relative underdevelopment already noted of *La Vuelta* as a national symbol (in an epoch where sport supposedly became an important part of Spanish identity) but that empirical data for indications as to the prominence of informal symbols of nationhood was sparse. Most studies of this era rely on Moreno-style identity surveys (e.g. Muñoz 2009, 2012)<sup>35</sup> and although these remain central to the discipline, it was my intention to provide further empirical data that could enhance our understanding of post-Franco Spanish nationalism. Cycling plays a small role in any overall conception of identity, even within sport, but the centrality of *Le Tour de France* to French identity, at least during July, as well as the previous Golden Age of *La Vuelta*, led me to believe that this analysis could provide important empirical ballast to sit alongside the studies already undertaken on football (Quiroga 2014; León Solís 2003; Shaw 1987), as well as more general overviews of the era (Balfour 2004; Muñoz 2009, 2012; Núñez Seixas 1999, 2001, 2004).

The decision to focus on Spain and *La Vuelta* as a single case study, rather than incorporating a comparative approach with *Il Giro* and *Le Tour*, was taken due to the imbalance of work currently available on each race. While the French, and to a lesser extent, the Italian tours have seen many studies the modern history of *La Vuelta* has not received any academic attention. Once this work has been completed it will be far easier to work comparatively, a task I hope to carry out in the future. We can still, however, triangulate this study in a number of ways, not least with studies already completed on

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<sup>35</sup> Muñoz's reliance on identity surveys is linked to his conception of national identity as being political in nature (Muñoz 2012, p. 3). I think that a wider conception of identity, including cultural as well as political elements, is probably closer to the truth.

Spanish football, and other sports, as well as works on *Le Tour de France*. Parallels can also be drawn with postwar West Germany here, as the nation and specifically national pride became complicated in a post-dictatorship setting (Eley & Palmowski 2007; Maier 1998), making this study part of wider debates on sport in post-dictatorship societies. In Germany the 2004 Football World Cup has been cited as a return to normalcy for German national pride (Laetsch 2008) with Spain's hosting of the same event in 1982 perhaps too close to 1975 to re-launch Spanish national identity (Quiroga 2013, p. 61-63), leading to questions of when and where we can pinpoint Spain's return to normalcy.

The 1990s are the central decade for a consideration of Spanish nationalism in the post-Franco era. After 15 years of post-Franco society, and nearly a decade of Socialist rule, Spanish nationalism re-emerged in the political sphere. A sense of normality had been reached through the successful establishment of democracy, a new constitution, consecutive democratic elections, entry into NATO (1982) and the EEC (1986) as well as policies of decentralisation and economic liberalisation and privatisation. The renovation of the *Partido Popular* (PP) is central too, as José Maria Aznar, the new charismatic leader, was finally able to break through the *techo de Fraga*<sup>36</sup> in the 1993 general election. The symbolic events of 1992 are also relevant, as the Olympic Games in Barcelona, the Seville World Expo, the quincentenary of the discovery of America and Madrid as the Capital of Culture, culminated in a widespread feeling that Spain had come full circle after a decade and a half of post-Francoism. Politically, the PP's victory in the 1996 general elections finalised the re-emergence of the political right, after victories at local, regional and European levels in previous years, but the party was still unable to secure an overall majority. This forced the PP to rely on the Catalan *Convergència i Unió* (CiU) coalition,

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<sup>36</sup> [Fraga's ceiling]. This relates to the historic leader of the PP, and its predecessor the *Alianza Popular* (AP) Manuel Fraga. As an ex-Franco minister he was unable to overcome the political baggage associated with the Franco era, consistently reaching an electoral ceiling of around 25 per cent.

constraining overt Spanish nationalism until a majority was gained in 2000 when a clear divergence from conciliatory political rhetoric can be seen (Núñez Seixas in Balfour. ed. 2004; Balfour 2004). A year later José Maria Aznar was instrumental in unfurling a huge Spanish flag (294m<sup>2</sup> and 35 kilos in weight) in the centre of Madrid, a symbol of how the process of re-legitimation had come to an end and overt Spanish nationalism was back.<sup>37</sup>

While we can plausibly date the reinsertion of overt Spanish nationalism in the political scene to the 1990s, the question of national pride remains subtly different. While political nationalism may have been substantially displaced after 1975, nationality and national pride, very difficult to measure, are likely to have persevered, particularly after the cultural, economic and political return of Spain to Europe. Indeed, data from the World Values Survey seems to suggest this as Spanish national pride was consistently high in the post-Franco era, a finding we will look at in more detail below. Surveys of Spanish national identity for the entire 1975-2000 period show a slow dilution of Spanish-only and regional-only answers to the Moreno question in most *Comunidades Autónomas*,<sup>38</sup> with a 'dual' or 'nested' identity as the majority option in most areas, although there are a few clear exceptions and the data is not without uncertainty (Moreno 1998; Muñoz 2012; Núñez Seixas 1999). Understanding the difference between national identity, national pride and nationalism is of utmost importance, since only then can we understand how an informal symbol such as *La Vuelta* fits into this.

I had originally earmarked the *lieux de mémoire* approach (Nora 1997; Balcells 2008) as my main theoretical tool for consideration of *La Vuelta*, although I moved away

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<sup>37</sup> [http://www.abc.es/local-madrid/20130714/abci-banderas-grandes-madrid-201307101635\\_1.html](http://www.abc.es/local-madrid/20130714/abci-banderas-grandes-madrid-201307101635_1.html) [accessed: 13/02/14].

<sup>38</sup> [Autonomous Communities.]. Basically regions of which there are 17 in Spain, usually split into the 'historic nationalities' of the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia and the rest.



from this during the preparatory stage of the project. I felt that the descriptive nature of the approach did not offer the analytical clarity I needed and thus began to incorporate Michael Billig's theories of national identity as found with *Banal Nationalism* (Billig 1996) instead. Moreover, as I moved through the mixed quantitative/qualitative analysis that forms the central part of this thesis it soon became clear that rather than using Billig's theory to aid my study I was in fact testing its accuracy in the Spanish context (as has already been done for, *inter alia*, the United Kingdom and Turkey: Rosie et al 2004; MacInnes et al 2007; Yumul & Özkirimli 2000). Although unanticipated, this theoretical development represents the second pillar of my thesis, along with the primary aim of empirically analysing an informal symbol of national identity in post-Franco Spain. Billig's theory offered not only a novel form of analysis of everyday nationalism in the present (as opposed to more orthodox analyses of the origins of nationalism) but also a clear methodology of newspaper content analysis that I reprised for my own work.

Methodologically I have stayed close to Billig, although his day study has been replaced by a research design that is far more comprehensive and detailed in nature. A bespoke mixed quantitative and qualitative content analysis was developed for this project, based mainly on the ease of comparability with other studies in this field, where content analysis (of newspapers) is the main method, as well as the ability of this research design to capture longitudinal change. Discourse analysis was not considered for two reasons: firstly, the chronological narrowing that its use would impose (*Negotiating Spain and Catalonia* (León Solís 2003) uses the technique but only looks at a few months at a time), and secondly, the time needed to master its techniques. An additional reason for the research design was the ability of newspapers to represent certain given strands of opinion in the population i.e. left and right as well as regional divisions (Spain/Catalonia).

Given that I wanted to measure *La Vuelta* as a national symbol it became important to not only measure its institutional development and the history of the race,<sup>39</sup> but how, where and when it was mediated across time in different newspapers or areas of opinion. *La Selección* is always analysed in terms of regional interest and designing this study around that aided the ability to compare and contrast between the two sports that have played such an important role in modern Spanish culture.

Six newspapers were originally chosen coupled with a random sampling technique, but this was refined to four newspapers and a rather more comprehensive sampling technique after working through a pilot study.<sup>40</sup> The newspapers were aligned to a common typology of Spanish nationalisms: *El País* for Spanish liberal, *ABC* for Spanish conservative, *La Vanguardia* for Catalan differential and *Avui* for Catalan disjunctive (León Solís 2003, pp. 13-23).<sup>41</sup> Typologies only approximate reality, but this seemed a necessary step in order to operationalise the study before a more comprehensive judging of the validity of the results in the concluding chapters. Having now designed this study it would be possible to expand it easily to incorporate more newspapers in the future. The use of quantitative as well as qualitative data, now quite common in content analysis, was enlisted to help provide useful longitudinal data on changes over time. There are limitations to this approach, a main one of which is the inability to measure audience reception. Also, given the time needed to perform the analysis, only four newspapers were included within the dataset and the inclusion of further newspapers would certainly enhance the inferences that could be made (especially in other areas of Spain, such as

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<sup>39</sup> Given my training as a historian I had originally favoured a more formal history of the race approach, looking at institutional development among other factors, but this morphed into a research design focused on theoretical development, on the one hand, and engagement with the study of post-Franco Spanish nationalism, on the other, as I proceeded through my PhD.

<sup>40</sup> For a discussion see the Methodology chapter below.

<sup>41</sup> For a discussion of each respective newspaper, see the relevant chapter: 1) *La Vanguardia* 2) *ABC* 3) *El País* 4) *Avui*.

the Basque Country, or newer newspapers, such as *El Mundo* which was launched in 1989).<sup>42</sup> A further discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the method is to be found in the methodology chapter below. In measuring the symbolism of *La Vuelta* in Spain and Catalonia, however, the study matches Billig's insistent demand for analyses of banal nationalism in established nation-states (Billig 2009, p. 351), as well as providing a necessary counterpoint to analyses carried out on *La Selección* as a symbol of national identity in the post-Franco period.

There are two clear themes within this thesis: firstly, a general theme that concerns contemporary Spanish history in the post-Franco era, specifically that relating to national symbolism and the renovation of Spanish nationalism. Secondly, an interrogation of the theory of banal nationalism arrived at through a close analysis of four newspapers' reportage on *La Vuelta Ciclista a España*, giving us large amounts of empirical data that can add to the critical analysis of the theory already published. Central concepts here relate to the longevity and robustness of Billig's theory, as it was originally published and as re-stated in a recent rejoinder (Skey 2009; Billig 2009), as well as its applicability in the Spanish context. These two themes are highlighted in the research questions posited below: How did *La Vuelta Ciclista a España* develop as a symbol of banal nationalism in the post-Franco period? How, where and when was this mediated across geographical and political boundaries? What can we infer from this development about informal symbols of Spanish nationhood after 1975 i.e. relations between informal and formal symbols as well as links between nationality and nationalism? How do the empirical findings fit with the theory of banal nationalism vis-à-vis the criticisms it has received since its publication?

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<sup>42</sup> *El Mundo* [The World] was launched in 1989 as an independent newspaper but quickly came to replace *ABC* as the leading voice of the political right in Spain. Given its late entrance to the Spanish market and my desire for a longitudinal comparison between the newspapers included within my sample, *El Mundo* was left out of the analysis. However, any study that focused on the 1990s would start with it.

## 2 - Literature Review

This literature review is divided into four main sections: history, nationalism, Spanish history and sport. Each section proceeds from the general to the specific before a progressive narrowing of focus towards the research questions. A discussion of media theory is not included here and is instead to be found within the subsequent chapter on methodology, given the close ties between the two. The sub-discipline of Spanish nationalism in the post-Franco era has only just started to receive wider academic attention and the main argument here is that further empirical work is needed, not least to ascertain the veracity of a number of hypotheses and suggestions that have been made. These include the separation between informal and formal symbols of Spanish nationhood as well as the role of sport as a unifying factor in the post-Franco era and the rejuvenation of Spanish nationalism. Theoretically, the argument is made that an analysis utilising Billig's theory of banal nationalism (Billig 1995) is both useful as a structuring device for a study of everyday nationalism and as a way to improve the theory by testing it empirically in a case study different to that already completed i.e. on the United Kingdom (Rosie et al 2004; MacInnes et al 2007) or Turkey (Yumul & Özkirimli 2000). An appended conclusion compiles the main arguments as well as positing the research questions that drive the analytical and theoretical parts of this thesis.

### **I - History**

The field of contemporary history is normally delimited by the Second World War and is roughly devised as that which comes under living memory (for a discussion see:

*The Journal of Contemporary History* 46:3 2011). An earlier demarcation had been the First World War and it is in this way that we see the flexibility of definition as each generation moves from one part of history to the next. While the pivot of contemporary history, at least in Europe, has been the Second World War, recent historiographical trends moving away from the Second World War should be noted. As Spain did not take part in either war, her historiography has developed differently, with the Civil War of 1936-39 as the main dividing line between contemporary and modern history (Cabrera 2005, p. 989; Vincent 1999, p. 485). This is just one of many ways in which Spanish history, both as lived reality and professional discipline, differs from that of her European counterparts, a key trend that will be explored below.

Some important methodological considerations arise within the field of contemporary history. The lack of distance between the present and the past being investigated is commonly cited as a problem, as is the related issue of presentism, since a sense of historical distance has usually been considered *de rigueur* since the birth of the modern discipline. Yet, given that classical history lauded immediacy over hindsight and political science, for the main part, analyses contemporary events, these barriers can be overcome. Moreover, the study of the contemporary world also has many advantages, not least the fuller nature of the historical record (with some complaints as to the proliferation of sources), meaning we should talk of both opportunities and disadvantages. This study left a decade between the final events being considered and the present day, sufficient time for the events in question to be considered in a close but still historical context. Many major political, economic and social events have happened since then, but that remains a subject for future historians. It is to be remembered that every discipline, sub-discipline

and school has its methodological issues and as long as one is coherent in approach, explicative in methods and rigorous in analysis, no insurmountable problem should arise.

Further delimitations include the particular type of history utilised (i.e. economic history or social history) as well as the national orthodoxy, both of which provide a series of norms that must be taken into account, not least in terms of subject choice and methodology. The embedded nature of a historian or political scientist within a particular nation and the effect of this on what they work on and how they work has often been noted (Burger et al. eds. 1999) with wider notions such as euro-centrism also relevant. It is therefore inevitable that in studying Spain from the outside (in the Hispanist tradition) as well as from a political history/political science viewpoint I bring a series of assumptions, ideas and ways of working that will impact upon my study, a position that will be discussed in the concluding part of this thesis. I strongly believe in the value that historians following the Hispanist tradition can bring, perhaps no longer better than the previously constrained domestic discipline, but certainly different.

Within Spain the delayed development of academic disciplines including history should be recognised given that contemporary work of any hue was seriously discouraged under the Franco regime. This led to a flowering of other areas of history within Spain, such as medieval history, as well as the study of Spain from outside, as represented in the Hispanist tradition. The work of Jaume Vicens Vives in the 1950s and 1960s stands out as an early marker of contemporary history even under the yoke of Franco before more extensive developments in the 1960s and 1970s. Within autochthonous Spanish history a predominance of social history in the broadest sense should be noted (Cabrera 2006, pp. 11-17) with the local provincial and regional levels seeing the most work (Forcadell 1998,

p. 142). Although delayed at first in its development vis-à-vis other comparable European countries Spanish history as it stands today is largely in step with broader developments in the discipline (Moradiellos 1996, p. 268; Núñez Seixas 2004, p. 519). Localism, however, is a defining characteristic broadly explained by the centrifugal dynamics of institutionalisation at the regional and local level, leading to myriad history departments where local history thrives (Ibid; Sevillano 2001, p. 231-234).<sup>43</sup> The study of present-day nationalism in Spain reflects this, being dominated by the substate level (in Catalonia or the Basque Country) rather than any consideration of central Spanish nationalism (Forcadell 1998, p. 147; Núñez Seixas 1999, p. 147), although this is now beginning to change. It is for this reason that the research questions are posed at a national level, directly challenging the awkward imbalance between the micro and macro levels in Spain.

## **II - Nationalism**

Common definitions of nationalism, such as Gellner's "political principle that holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent" (Gellner 1983, p. 1), limit it to the world of politics. Breuilly, in a similar fashion, conceptualises nationalism as "political movements seeking or exercising state power and justifying such actions with nationalist arguments" (Breuilly 1982, p. 3), constraining nationalism not just to a political principle (which could be held by many) but also to political movements (a smaller circle again). Thus nationalism, seen politically, is often limited to political actors rather than the masses, which seem oddly absent from most theories (Whitmeyer 2002). This is probably due to the focus of much work in this area being on the origins of nationalism rather than nationalism as it is today, which is the central part of this thesis.

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<sup>43</sup> As to the production of local history journals, in Moradiellos' words "every Spanish university publishes one" (Moradiellos 1996, p. 170).

The idea of the nation as a supreme value is key to most definitions of nationalism, but there is considerable terminological indeterminacy. A major problem is that definitions are held constant across differing historical epochs when it is unlikely that the political principle that gives birth to a nation-state in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is perfectly correlated to the political principle of nationalism within an already established nation-state today. It is in this terminologically troubled area that I hope to add some clarity by first differentiating between nationalism at the origin of the nation-state and then as it exists today. Furthermore while I can accept that the nation-state is the current territorial norm within the established state order and that for some the nation is the supreme value, I do not believe that this represents the majority view in any given nation-state, with nationalism more often a relational aspect that must be taken into consideration along with other geographical and non-geographical identity markers (region, locality, gender, class etc.). It is Gellner's political principle definition that this thesis holds to as we should be careful of ascribing too much power to nationalism with the nation as supreme value and instead focus on how that relates to other identities as well as concepts such as nationality and nationhood.

Other theorists see nationalism as sentiment, bringing the masses into the conceptual structure, yet also complicating the picture since one has to choose between nationalism as political principle, nationalism as sentiment, or both. Analyses may also choose to define nation, nationalism, both or neither, and it is in this way that definitions have become a major area of interest themselves, outside any further contemplation of the phenomena. It is also not unusual for definitions to shift within a text. At the far end of the nationalism definition spectrum we find Billig, who argues that the mindless everyday flagging or banal nationalism of nationhood means: "nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition" (Billig 1995, p. 6).



Billig's theory is undeniably useful in highlighting current symbolic practices that shape nationhood, but whether this represents nationalism is open to debate. I do not believe that we can equate mindless everyday flagging of nationhood with nationalism, per se, given that these acts (and what they mean to the person who consumes or performs them) cannot be easily conflated with making the nation congruent with the state. Thus, it would seem more judicious to speak of banal nationality, which along with the differentiation of forms of nationalism across historical epochs and an awareness of the relational aspect of national identity forms the major part of this thesis' attempt at enhanced terminological clarity.

A key characteristic of many publications involving nationalism, then, is an inability to differentiate nationalism from national identity or patriotism, whereby the conflation of terms leads to nationalism taking on the *primus inter pares* nature noted above, since everything is subsumed under nationalism. This is concept stretching at its worst.<sup>44</sup> Authors may allude to the difference between nationalism and patriotism, for instance, but this does not seem to have been taken to its logical conclusion (i.e. that there are degrees of nationalism). Some studies (e.g. Dekker et al 2003) differentiate between levels of national identity - from preference to superiority and then to exclusion – grounding the concept of nationalism in the actions of people rather than at the vague level of the state, but this remains the exception not the rule within the discipline (this is also hinted at, but not developed, within Balfour & Quiroga 2007, p. 8). The interconnection between nationalism as a concept and the lived reality of nationalism is incredibly important and goes some way to explain the impact of *Banal Nationalism* (Billig 1995) as the object of analysis was not only brought closer temporally but also made subject to empirical study. It

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<sup>44</sup> Billig openly admits this as his book “insists on stretching the term ‘nationalism’” (Billig 1995, p. 6) but I do not believe that this represents the best way forward, particularly in light of the issues with terminology already evident in the nationalism studies discipline.

is this complex fuzzy relationship between national identity and nationalism that lies at the centre of this thesis as I look to two different levels of action: firstly, an overarching structure of the legitimacy problems of Spanish nationalism in the post-Franco era and secondly, the role of one particular informal symbol within that.

It is perhaps the necessary condition of academia that after a certain amount of study the key terms of an area are designated 'essentially contested concepts'. Indeed, given the colossal amount of work published thus far it is no surprise that this phrase has been applied to nationalism (Calhoun 1993, p. 215). Turning away from the modern problems of definition, however, we can find an array of solutions already posed in the past. J. S. Mill, in a much-misunderstood and ill-quoted text, wrote on the principle of nationality and the difference between vulgar and normal patriotism, with nationalism being something above and beyond this (Varouxakis 2002). Difference between patriotism, love of one's country, and nationalism, hatred of foreigners was also a subject in *England your England* (Orwell 1953, pp. 63-90) and similar arguments have been made recently (Miller 1995). This study is anchored in this liberal nationalist tradition with the maxims that *not all actions to do with the nation are nationalism* (once properly defined), but *nationalism is relational in nature and cannot be easily separated from other concepts* and yet *that there is an important difference between nationalism and mere national consciousness*, although they are closely related.

I think it is important to recognise the terminological difficulties inherent in the subject as well as being aware of the limits that one work has in putting an end to two centuries of shifting definitions. For me it seems counterproductive to conflate nationalists and their ideology that puts the nation above all other concerns with national identity that is

highly contingent and relational in nature. This thesis, then, will take banal nationality as its central concept, with the idea coming from Billig's own work in which he analyses the banal flagging of nationhood i.e. not nationalism itself. It is my intention to continue in this direction, problematizing the catchall term of nationalism and locating it (and patriotism) as specific expressions of national identity within a complex of economic, political, societal and cultural factors. Nationalism will be taken as mainly political in nature (although other variants such as economic and cultural nationalism clearly exist), echoing Gellner's claim for congruence between the state and the nation (Gellner 1983, p.1) and as something existing beyond mere national consciousness.

I would argue that banal nationality and not banal nationalism more correctly defines the modern-day lived reality in established nation-states, where the nation is already congruent with the state. To reduce all aspects of nationality within established nation-states to nationalism does not work within the definition of this term as a political principle, a concept that requires action. It is as unfair to the citizens of everyday established nation-states to label them nationalists (which carries heavy pejorative connotations), as it is to limit this definition to the periphery, when it is clear that the political principle of making the nation congruent with the state is visible as a political principle (but not held by all, at least to the same degree) in all parts of the state. Two centuries of shifting perceptions and definitions cannot be changed here, but it is to be hoped that the clarity of my position aids its interaction with the discipline

The study of nationalism can be divided into chronological, disciplinary and thematic areas, now increasingly contained within the umbrella term of 'nationalism studies' (combining sociological, anthropological, historical, political, geographical and other

approaches). Much like the discipline of history itself, studies of nationalism are closely tied to the emergence of the nation-state and a general shift from primordial to modernist attitudes can be noted, with the nascent emergence of ethnosymbolism and postmodernism not quite constitutive of a new paradigm (Smith 1998).<sup>45</sup> The many other words in use - essentialism, perennialism, constructivism, and patriotism – illustrate the terminological menagerie outlined above. In turning from a primordial basis to a new modernist paradigm from the 1960s onwards, studies of nationalism forsook essentialist categories of race and ethnicity to embrace a new coterie of theories best subsumed within Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (Anderson 1983).<sup>46</sup> The ethnosymbolist position (proposed by, among others, Smith 2005, 2009), arguing that nations are modern yet have long historical roots, can largely be contained within the modernist position, representing a difference in degree rather than overall conception.

The burst of activity in the early 1980s – comprising *inter alia* Anderson, Breuilly, Gellner, Hobsbawm and Hroch - laid the groundwork for the discipline of 'nationalism studies' as it stands today, with Hroch (1968 in German, 1985 in English) particularly useful in providing rich empirical data rather than the more general observations found for the most part elsewhere. The main catalyst of studies on nationalism seems to be present events, with nationalism often conceived as a black mark (or dark god) against humanity:

“Nationalism is the starkest political shame of the twentieth century, the deepest, most intractable and yet most unanticipated blot on the political history of the world since the year 1900”. (Dunn 1999, p. 27).

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<sup>45</sup> Ethnosymbolism could be said, however, to constitute the dominant paradigm within the 'stateless nation' literature as scholars seek historical legitimacy.

<sup>46</sup> Imagined is an unfortunate term and I think that created or build would more accurately reflect the active participation required to successfully build a national community.

However, given that one could replace nationalism with communism or fascism here, this thesis needs to be approached with care. I would argue, instead, that nationalism is neither “the starkest political shame”, nor the “most unanticipated blot” in twentieth century history and that a more relational conception of this phenomena would be beneficial i.e. Are we talking of nationalism or national identity? Do people conflate the different political ideologies of nationalism, communism and fascism? Can we ascribe all aspects to do with the nation to nationalism or are there other concepts at play? There is a highly normative argument in favour of national identity (which must be predicated on some prior nationalism) in that it provides the glue for modern democratic societies (See: Miller 1995; Viroli 1995) and has also coincided with a huge decline in violence in the past two centuries (see the debate on democratic peace theory as well as: Pinker 2011). Nationalism, then, may not deserve the pejorative sense it frequently retains.

Similarly, as Miroslav Hroch states in the preface to a new edition of his seminal *The Social Preconditions of Nationalist Revival in Europe*, in the late 1960s nationalism was viewed as an ‘abstract academic problem’ which only became fashionable and politically relevant later (Hroch 2000, p. xii). Had *les trente glorieuses* inured people to forces of nationalism or is nationalism perhaps less significant than is sometimes claimed? The effect of current events on academic practice is also visible in the Balkan Wars with Brubaker noting how eastern European events had “sparked – with only the shortest of lags – an even stronger resurgence in the study of nationalism” (Brubaker in Hall. ed. 1998, p. 272). The conceptual distance between these remarks and the previous quote concerning the “starkest political shame” could not be greater and shows how the study of a concept or idea may exceed its actual relevance given the salience, or otherwise, of a

particular paradigm at any given time. There is no doubting the centrality of the nation-state to modern day society or the important role of nationalism as a political ideology since 1789, but this should not become a conceptual straitjacket that ignores the complexities and degrees of nationalism, especially as lived reality in the present age.

Nationalism, as the political principle that desires the nation to be congruent with the state, may actually have become less relevant over time as nation-states have become the dominant structure in global terms and thus the persistence and daily-lived reality of nationalities becomes relatively more important i.e. process over origin. This becomes more problematic, markedly so in the case of Spain, when we consider substate nationalities who aim to make their nation congruent with their state. Billig, who we will deal with in more detail later, uses this as part of his armoury to argue that nationalism is the “endemic condition” and not something that is solely existent on the periphery. However, given that we have already split nationalism as process and nationalism as origin, I think a claim can be made to suggest that nationalism does indeed exist at the periphery in a different sense to the centre and yet this can be seen in a normative democratic sense rather than the more orthodox separatist light in which it is commonly seen. Hroch also comments upon the prevalence of theoretical over empirical studies (Hroch 2000, p. xii), an unevenness that is replicated within the field of post-Franco Spanish nationalism and is further reason for making empirical detail a central aspect of this thesis. It is my belief that nationalism as a standalone mega concept does not deserve the *primus inter pares* status that is normally afforded it and a key element of this thesis, beyond its empiricism, is to ask why scholars say nationalism when they really mean what Isaiah Berlin called “mere national consciousness” (Berlin, quoted in Miller 1995, p. 7).

Pace *The Nation in History* (Smith 2000, p. 2) several main themes can be delineated within 'nationalism studies': debates surrounding the origins of nations and nationalism, those relating to the antiquity or modernity of nations and others that situate the role of nations and nationalism as actors in historical change vis-à-vis other unit of analysis, such as class. The focus in this thesis, however, is narrowed to the daily-lived reality of nations and nationalism and not the historical origins of these, an area that has seen less work. Within this subdivision of the field the main scholar is Michael Billig, whose *Banal Nationalism* (Billig 1995) marked a second generation of works that focus on the everyday symbolism of nationhood rather than its historical origins. The history of national symbols themselves had already been touched upon in *The Invention of Tradition* (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983) making this work less revolutionary than it might seem. Billig's work, often through the unreflective use of the term 'banal nationalism', has subsequently become a central part of studies of nationalism in the present but a series of questions remain wholly or partly answered, not least the overall veracity of his theory in different case studies. At the heart of this thesis, then, is an empirical case study of banal nationalism in Spain with two distinct levels of activity: a theoretical level analysing Billig's theory and a specific level of banal symbolism within Spain.

A number of other theorists (e.g. Edensor 2002) have looked at the everyday flagging of nationhood – Billig's question as to why we do not forget our nation – and yet this work will focus on Billig for a number of reasons. Firstly, his book and the ideas contained within have become standard across the discipline, and indeed outside it, in much the same way that Anderson's *Imagined Communities* became paradigmatic as the modernity of nations was accepted. It is therefore difficult to consider everyday nationalism without understanding, if not utilising, his concepts. More importantly, however, I believe

there is considerable distance between references to his book and its empirical verification - a gap identified by Billig himself (Billig 2009; Skey 2009). There is also a methodological reason for interacting with Billig in that his use of media (mainly newspaper) content analysis adds a rigorous empirical side to the debate that can be replicated across different case studies ensuring comparability. Although a deeper and more widespread restructuring or redrawing of his theory may be possible in the long-term, I felt that testing it (which had not been done across many cases) represented the most logical step since it was both original and feasible, a key part of any PhD.

Billig trained as a psychologist, a background that aptly demonstrates the wider disciplinary remit of 'nationalism studies' after 1983 and yet may also explain the originality of his approach. His theory is founded on one major question: Why do people not forget their nation? Yet an underlying fascination with the support given by the British and United States' public during the Falkland and Gulf Wars can also be seen, illustrating the continued importance of the present in works on nationalism. Two major points are made: on the one hand he argues strongly against the perception that nationalism is a peripheral matter, both geographically and in a temporal manner (i.e. not constant). As we saw above, for him "nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition" (Billig 1995, p. 6). His second major point, however, concerns how this nationalism in established nation-states is structured in a process he terms banal nationalism. Covering the "ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced" (Ibid, p. 6) the term has been widely accepted in academia, often uncritically. In a concluding note Billig urges us to "look and see the constant flaggings of nationhood" (Ibid, p. 174), a clarion call that will be followed here. It is this second process of the flagging of nationhood rather than the re-orientation from the periphery to the centre



that has received the majority of attention post-publication, an order of things that will be changed here as both are examined together.

First published in 1995, *Banal Nationalism* has had a huge impact on the discipline, especially in the subfield of the examination of present day nationalisms, where it remains the key work. Although it has received a number of critiques, which will be looked at below, the most important characteristic of its life as a theory is its wide acceptance and use across many different disciplines. As for Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, it has become the *du jour* term when discussing or referencing nationalism in the present age, a factor which probably limits actual discussion of its robustness as a theory.<sup>47</sup> One of the main problems with the theory, widely demonstrated in the literature (Rosie et al 2004; MacInnes et al 2007), is its failure to properly define the national media market as well as differentiate between other identities that are also flagged. Even in the United Kingdom, one of Billig's two core cases, we find that the idea of a national press flagging national identity on a comprehensive and equal basis to all citizens is largely untenable. Also, given the marked differentiation of the press in the various nations, regions and locales within Britain, there are a number of other identities which are flagged which are either non-national in nature or not the British identity that Billig identifies as the main unifying symbol in his work (Ibid).

A number of other issues with the theory have also been raised, including its failure to look at supra as well as substate identities that may also be flagged and the top-down nature of the theory with citizens as passive receivers of information (Skey 2009). Billig, in a rejoinder following the previously cited article (Billig 2009), accepts a number of these

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<sup>47</sup> A Google Scholar search for "banal nationalism" produces 14,500 results, although this is far behind the 215,000 for "imagined communities". The relatively new term "ethnosymbolism", however, only returns 1,380 results illustrating that "banal nationalism" is relatively well used.

critiques, whilst remaining loyal to his theory for two main reasons. Beyond his claim that as a psychologist he is more than aware of the importance of the individual mind in assessing and mediating received information (Ibid. p. 347-349) it is his belief in the nation as a supreme value held above other lesser identities (Ibid. p. 351) as well as his attempt to outline an idea rather than create a watertight theory that drove his analysis (Ibid. p. 350). As with all theories the detail contained within the original book with all its nuance and complication is not replicated once this theory is accepted and used in the wider discipline of the liberal arts. A close reading of his work shows that he is alive to the problems inherent in designing an overarching theory in this area, with his attempt driven by the desire to open up a previously marginalised area of study. However his theory still runs into a number of problems, some already empirically demonstrated for the United Kingdom, and it is a prime motive of this thesis to expand this empirical interrogation to Spain. Will we be able to verify his theory in Spain or will it instead add to the small body of work done on the United Kingdom that seriously questions the central assumptions of his theory?

It is my intention to do what Billig really wanted through a thorough empirical investigation of his theory in an established nation-state (Spain) that includes the periphery without making this the sole object of its analysis. Spain is similar to the United Kingdom, where his theory has already undergone rigorous testing (Higgins 2004; Law 2001; MacInnes et al 2007; Rosie et al 2004, 2006) and thus not only will original evidence be produced, but this will fit into the existing framework of analyses. It is in this way that his theory can be not only utilised or referenced but challenged, improved and altered, moving the discipline forward. This, in turn, represents the theoretical side of a project that looks at the specifics of post-Franco Spanish nationalism, with the aim of broadening the empirical

basis of the discipline while trying to arrive at answers to a number of hypotheses and suggestions that have been made. Following Billig I have centred on the flagging of identity in the sport pages of the newspapers, aware that this limits the scope of the work. However, given that sport forms an important structuring and socialising aspect of modern society, that it has been suggested as a key site for Spanish national identity in the post-Franco era and that feasibility remains a key ingredient of doctoral study, I do not think that this is prohibitively disadvantageous. Finally, given my recalcitrance in using the word 'nationalism', given its mainly pejorative and imprecise usage, it is my intention to put forward a theory of banal nationality, a small but significant change that is an attempt to engage with and improve the theory of banal nationalism, rather than merely reference it.

### **III - Spanish History**

The discipline of Spanish history, which had its beginnings in the late 1800s, suffered during Francoism (Moradiellos 1996, p. 267) due to the explicit denial of the civil liberties vital to any public sphere (Habermas' *Öffentlichkeit*). Although an early renovation occurred with Jaume Vicens Vives in the 1950s it would not be until the 1980s and 1990s before normalisation was reached. As a corollary to this, significant contributions to the discipline have been made outside Spain, with the Hispanists particularly prominent (Vincent 1999, p. 474; Balfour 1998). The Hispanists enjoyed, and continue to enjoy, considerable prestige both outside and within Spain and yet an inward turn has recently been noted (Mateos 1992), another sign of Spain's growing confidence in this period. In approaching Spain from the outside in the Hispanist tradition I bring a set of attitudes and biases that will affect my study. It is my hope that the benefits of being an external

observer can counterbalance the fact of being less close to the events and that I can add to a discipline that is now mainly driven by autochthonous researchers.

Spanish history is a mature discipline, with the Civil War and Transition as the major themes (Cabrera 2005, p. 989).<sup>48</sup> There is consensus between academics on the modern nature of Spain (Beramendi 2001, p. 270) and yet ‘the Spanish problem’ remains a *cause célèbre* in Spanish history as in Spanish politics and society. Some calls have been made to place the origin of Spanish nationalism before the 19th century but most analysts agree that the peninsular war of 1808-14 and the constituent Cádiz Cortes should be seen as the *locus classicus* of Spanish nationalism and the Spanish nation (Morales 2000, pp. 241-242; Beramendi 2001, pp. 275-276).<sup>49</sup> Ethnocultural and linguistic elements precede this but the nineteenth century is most commonly cited as the beginning of the modern (Weberian) state in Spain, as indeed for most European countries. Spain, then, although frequently viewed through the prism of ‘difference’ (i.e. Spain is different) is actually largely representative of wider European trends of state formation and nationalisation. Caution should be taken against those who think that identities and nations are immanently malleable (a postmodernist view), as continuities (in language, in geography, in culture and in customs) outweigh change.<sup>50</sup>

Given the enhanced, one could say existential, status of the national question in Spain a *longue durée* approach is taken here to properly situate my own study. Within the

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<sup>48</sup> A simple search for “Spanish Civil War” reveals 487 books in my own university library at Cardiff and 1,475 in the British Library. For “Spanish nationalism” the figures are 8 and 18.

<sup>49</sup> The gradual adoption of the name ‘Guerra de independencia’ [war of independence] in Spanish history of the 1830s and 40s and the subsequent relation of this to national identity is shown in *Mater Dolorosa* (Álvarez Junco 2002).

<sup>50</sup> This seems to be the position taken within *The Reinvention of Spain* as “The reinvention of different national identities in Spain since the return of democracy illustrates their malleable nature” (Balfour & Quiroga 2007, p. 203), although perhaps it is better to speak of Postmodern influences in the work rather than it being Postmodernist itself since they go on to state that “an entirely optimistic scenario for the future of Spain would be one of a postmodern, postnational state” (Ibid. p. 203).

literature, 19th century Spanish nationalism has been described as caught between two poles: *moderados* and *liberales*,<sup>51</sup> whereby in successive phases the *liberales* lost out to the *moderados* and a historicist, unitary and Catholic nationalism became dominant (de Riquer 1999). Moving towards the end of the century and the Restoration period (1874-1931) Spanish nationalism has been defined as weak and ineffectual with a failure to fully nationalize the population as its most salient feature. This, in turn, has been linked to the rise of peripheral nationalisms competing with a Spain that they saw as increasingly backward (Ibid.). It is my view that the historical weakness of the Spanish state is in danger of being overstated: firstly, as evocatively described in *Peasants into Frenchmen* (Weber 1976) even the strong unitary French state could hardly claim success in integrating her diverse population until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Secondly, significant questions remain on what the European norm is any case (i.e. if Spain is different, what is it different to?), since it is the United Kingdom, not Spain that is to see a referendum on a putative breakup of its currently constituted state.

Substate Spanish nationalisms are commonly seen as reacting to the historical weakness of the Spanish state, based on cultural factors such as language (Catalonia) or ethnicity (the Basque Country) and linked to earlier cultural revival movements (in Hroch's classic Phase A) like the Catalan *Renaixença*.<sup>52</sup> A general consensus exists that while Catalonia reacted to the backwardness of Spain, the Basque Country reacted against modernisation as industrialisation threatened the lower-middle and artisan classes (Conversi 1990, 2000).<sup>53</sup> Early Catalan movements were mainly conservative in nature,

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<sup>51</sup> For *moderados* read conservative, whereas *liberales* can be read as is.

<sup>52</sup> [Renaissance].

<sup>53</sup> This division has also been seen in the terms of one of the classic debates (Kohn 1967) on nationalism: ethnic (Basque) versus civic (Catalan), although this has recently been challenged (Brubaker 1999; Miley 2007; Kymlicka & also Keating in McGarry. ed. 2001).

based on the *Lliga Regionalista*<sup>54</sup> and an idea of modernising Spain from within (*per la Espanya gran*)<sup>55</sup> i.e. not independence (independence would come late to most regionalists, including the Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru and Catalonia's *Esquerra Republicana Catalana*). This was to turn into a mass left-of-centre Catalanism in the 1930s, before being reassembled in the 1960s and 1970s under the rubric of the *Assemblea de Catalunya* leading to Jordi Pujol's hegemonic *Convergència i Unió* (Dowling 2005).<sup>56</sup> The Basque Country has seen more continuity with the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV), once divested of its earlier racial tenets, becoming the dominant force, based on a conservative, religious and ethnic view of 'Euskadi'.<sup>57</sup>

Francisco Franco came to power set on the imposition of an autarchic National-Catholicism which promoted an official Spanish nationalism based on a Catholic, unitary and historic Spain (*Una, Grande y Libre*)<sup>58</sup> while severely repressing regional expressions that went above the mere folkloric (Balfour and Quiroga 2007, pp. 37-44). The formation of this doctrine is masterfully analysed in *Mater Dolorosa* (Álvarez Junco 2002), whereby the Right's loyalty to the Church in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was slowly reformulated to that of the nation whose principal and only characteristic was the Church, a subtle but important change. This fits into the wider schematic of nationalism in the 19th century as it moved from its origins on the left in Revolutionary France to an appropriation by the right in the second half of the 19th century (Hobsbawm 1992, pp. 101-130). Franco's initial political doctrine was to undergo substantial change during his nearly four decades in power, but an understanding of his attempts to foster what has been termed National-Catholicism, the

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<sup>54</sup> [Regionalist League].

<sup>55</sup> [For greater Spain].

<sup>56</sup> [Convergence and Union].

<sup>57</sup> The founder of the PNV, Sabino Arana, created the name 'Euskadi' in a clear example of the salience of Hobsbawm's 'invention of tradition' thesis.

<sup>58</sup> [One, Great and Free]. Franco's motto, which indicates the lack of space for any competing national identities within Spain.

changes made to this doctrine over time, and the reactions against it, are central to any understanding of the subsequent periods of contemporary Spanish history.

The failure of autarchy led to some small economic apertures in the regime, not least the liberalisation programme based on the 1959 *Plan de Estabilización*<sup>59</sup> and an influx of Opus Dei technocrats into government. Yet the strong conservative nationalist nature of the regime did not change, with the peace of the victors and strong cultural oppression important structuring elements throughout the entire dictatorship. There was some relaxation of cultural repression from the 1950s, with an expansion of Catalan book publishing as well as wider cultural, social and economic changes in the 1960s, not least in tourism. It is this strong dictatorial-cum-totalitarian inheritance, with an official non-inclusive Spanish nationalism that lies at the heart of most analyses of Spain in the post-Franco era. Spanish nationalism, and the ideologies, symbols and political positions aligned with it, was significantly damaged by the one-sided imposition of doctrine, with a corollary that an unbreakable bond between democracy and decentralisation was established. We then move into the crucial questions regarding the fate of Spanish nationalism in the post-Franco period, the revitalisation of this over time, and how this fits into wider questions of the flagging of nationhood à la Billig.

While there is no doubt concerning Franco's imposition of a conservative religious Spanish nationalism, care should be taken before assuming the acceptance of these tenets in society at large as we have no way of measuring this. Equally generational change as well as change in the content of Franco's message over time (from autarchy to National-Catholicism and then economic liberalisation of the 1960s) complicate the picture,

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<sup>59</sup> [Stabilisation Plan]. Which signaled the start of some of the deep economic and social changes of the 1960s. For an excellent overview see: E. Quintana. 1993. *Tres Decenios Largos de la Economía Española en Perspectiva*. Madrid: Espasa Calpe.

a fact that I do not believe is accurately reflected in most literature. Franco's ideology of 'España: Una, Grande y Libre' certainly led to a deep delegitimisation of similar practices of overt political nationalism after 1975, but the extent and depth of this delegitimisation as well as what exactly suffered beyond a vague division between formal symbols (that did) and informal symbols (that did not) is not known.<sup>60</sup> Temporally, we should also note that challenges to Spanish nationalism and Spanish symbols predate Franco to a certain extent (Vincent 1999, p. 482) making his dictatorship just one part of a wider historical arc. The effect Franco's doctrine had on Spanish national identity (as opposed to nationalism) is also less clear given the above arguments against conflating nationalism and "mere national consciousness" and the fact that national identity is not likely to disappear overnight, whereas political discourse may be more easily modified.

If we peruse data from the World Values Survey on Spain we find high levels of national pride over the entire period, with a slight rise in feeling quite or very proud and a slight decline in feeling not very or not at all proud between 1981 and 2000. Taken cumulatively (quite and very proud) we find a rise from 87.4% in 1981 to 88.3% in 1990 and again to 92.2% in 1995 and 92.4% in 2000. On the other hand, the cumulative data for negative pride (not very and not at all proud) declines from 12.5% in 1981 to 11.7% in 1990 before a drop to 7.7% in 1995 and 7.6% in 2000.<sup>61</sup> This brings into question the delegitimisation argument since pride was high over the entire period regardless of the proximity to the Franco era (although there is no data for 1975-1980).<sup>62</sup> Similar figures

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<sup>60</sup> The difficulty inherent in this dichotomy has already been examined in the introduction, but it remains a common meme repeated within the discipline.

<sup>61</sup> Data compiled and tabulated by the author using the World Values Survey dataset: <http://www.wvsevsdb.com/wvs/WVSanalyze.jsp> [accessed: 07/04/14]. See also: (Aguilar Fernández & Humlebaek 2010; Shevel 2011).

<sup>62</sup> Although we have no data for this period the fact that *desencanto* [disenchantment or disillusionment] developed in the early 1980s suggests that the immediate period after Franco was met positively before the slow pace of reform and the deep economic malaise started to affect the population.



have already been used to argue that national pride was strong in the immediate post-Franco period linked to the re-establishment of democracy after four decades of dictatorship (Aguilar Fernández & Humlebaek 2002, p. 140-141), but unpicking this formally in terms of Spanish nationalism, Spanish national identity and Spanish national symbols remains to be done.

Clearly, national pride differs from nationalism, a conclusion that must be taken into account here before the discourse on the serious delegitimisation of Spanish nationalism leads us to assume that Spaniards did not feel proud of their country in this period. In fact, Spaniards felt far more proud of their country in this period than other comparable countries such as France, Italy and the United Kingdom, a sign of how overcoming dictatorship can lead to huge satisfaction and pride in one's country even if political nationalism at the elite level suffers some displacement at ideological, symbolic and practical levels.<sup>63</sup> This forms part of a wider problem where elite political discourse is linked to popular belief without sufficient rigour in the mechanisms or weight of one in causing the other, a problem highlighted in some areas of the literature (Balfour & Quiroga 2007, p. 3) but not in others (Múñoz 2011, p. 214).<sup>64</sup>

There is a keen difference between the quantity of work done on the national question in general, including regional nationalisms and the origin of Spanish nationalism, and that specifically related to Spanish nationalism after 1975. The lack of academic work in this latter area has often been noted (although there has been a recent surge in interest)

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<sup>63</sup> Spain substantially outperforms France and Italy in the measures over the period and is close to the United Kingdom, if slightly more proud on average. Data was taken as per footnote 61.

<sup>64</sup> Muñoz may be aware of the gap between elite discourse and popular opinion, but in formulating national identity as solely political he falls into the trap of elevating political discourse without sufficient recourse to how that discourse is received and reformulated at the popular level (See the introduction to: Muñoz 2012).

with one author of particular relevance: Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas.<sup>65</sup> His voluminous production contains the most insightful work on Spanish nationalism in a long series of articles and books (1993, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2004, in Balfour. ed. 2005 and 2010) stretching from initial inquiries in the subject to rather more authoritative content. His main contention is that Spanish nationalism has gone through a crisis of legitimacy to arrive, through a weak acceptance of constitutional patriotism by left and then right, to an ‘unfulfilled renovation’ (Ibid. 2001, 2005), although others see more fundamental change (Balfour 2005, pp. 146-168).

Another important conclusion in his work is the separation of informal and formal symbols of Spanish nationalism, with the former not suffering from the delegitimisation that he attaches to the latter. As put forward in the introduction, a clear separation of informal and formal symbols is hardly tenable since Franco heavily instrumentalized sport and formal symbols (such as the flag) are ubiquitous in the sporting arena. However his assertion that sport was important in the rehabilitation of Spanish nationalism is one that can be empirically tested, especially given that he includes sport within the umbrella term of informal symbols and goes on to state that *La Selección* (the Spanish football XI) is perhaps the only unifying symbol of Spain in this era (Núñez Seixas 1999, p. 168; 2005, p. 139). It is my intention to test this suggestion through an empirical analysis of another informal sporting symbol, *La Vuelta Ciclista a España*, seeing how this compares to analyses already completed on football in post-Franco Spain (Quiroga 2013; León Solís 2003). Adding in data from another sport is a crucial task since there are normally a large range of national symbols that can be drawn on at any one time.

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<sup>65</sup> *Qua* Núñez Seixas, “one of the least researched areas in Spanish politics is the ideological, political and social presence of Spanish nationalism”. (Núñez Seixas 2001 p. 719.).

However, as Keating has repeatedly argued (Keating & Gagnon 2012, p. 40; Keating 2001, pp. 38-40; Keating 2007, p. 412), governance structures and nationalism can never be simply 'solved' and thus identities (see also: Brubaker in Hall. ed. 1998, pp. 274-280), nationalisms and political parties are part of an on-going political process of negotiation and development where change is always possible. From this angle it is thus possible to argue that Spanish nationalism has successfully renovated itself with the public measure of national pride a key signifier of how that development has occurred over the period. With a substantial level of national pride existing throughout the period and yet also seeing growth, fitting the re-legitimation of Spanish political nationalism into that becomes far more easy, as it has a well of support from which it can draw. The question becomes when, not if, political nationalism will re-emerge with the flagging of nationhood as an important element within the overall picture of national identity in Spain in the post-Franco era. With Spain showing high levels of national pride over the period and sharing post-authoritarian characteristics with a range of other European countries (e.g. Portugal, Greece and Germany), perhaps we should finally drop the epithet of 'difference' that has structured studies of Spain for too long.

Beyond the general and widely accepted idea of a renovation of Spanish nationalism in this period and a tie between peripheral and central nationalisms, Núñez Seixas (2001 and in Balfour. ed. 2005, pp. 121-145) provides us with a broad overview of contemporary Spanish nationalism in the post-Franco period that is worth restating. On the right the main current is a democratic nationalism that consolidated itself after the re-founding of the PP in 1989, leading to the election of this party in 1996 (see also: Balfour 2005, pp. 146-168) after 14 years of Socialist rule. Their failure to secure an overall majority, however, left them dependent on regional party support, blunting their more

openly nationalist policies and statements until a majority was secured in 2000. Other lesser variants include neo-regionalism (for instance in Navarre or Aragón) where the region is the proxy for Spanish nationalism and a tiny section of the far right where National-Catholicism lives on, but both remain largely peripheral to the main statewide and regional nationalisms.

From the left we see a democratic Spanish nationalism based on membership of the European Economic Community and a weak attempt at appropriation of the constitutional patriotism doctrine during the 1990s that was then picked up by the right – more political opportunism than a deeply held belief in Habermasian principles. This promulgation of a European and Internationalist Spain by the left against a more conservative and traditional conception of Spain from the right broadly fits into wider global patterns of left/right politics (Hart & Lim 2011), another sign of convergence between Spain and other democracies. The reconstitution of the political right remains the most important part of this history, as this was where delegitimisation hit hardest (in personnel, symbols and politics) and where the arrival of a new generation of post-Franco politics coincided with the re-emergence of Spanish political nationalism.

This left/right conception of Spanish nationalism is visible in a useful typology found in *Negotiating Spain and Catalonia* (León Solís 2003, pp. 13-23) constituting conservative and liberal strands in central Spain and differential and disjunctive strands in Catalonia. This divide is replicated in a methodological sense here as it helped operationalize the unit of analyses in this project, a choice explained in further detail in the methodology section. However, relationships between the PP and the PSOE at state level (in changing the constitution and opposition to some regional demands), the PP and CiU at regional level

(shared conservative tendencies) and CiU, ERC, CUP and ICV-EUiA (favourable to independence), demonstrate complexity within the political sphere outside of any putative typology (see: Dowling 2005, p. 117). However, in categorising the main tenets of nationalism within Spain, both regional and national, typologies such as this allow us a framework from which to construct studies, which lies behind my choice to redeploy the device here.

A critical notion within this subject area is that of a tie between central and peripheral nationalisms (Núñez Seixas 1999, p. 168),<sup>66</sup> where both have developed to a certain degree but neither has become dominant, although events posterior to my research period have put this into question.<sup>67</sup> Related to the rise of the 'dual identity' option in Moreno-style social science surveys (Moreno et al 1998; Moreno 2002; Díez Medrano & Gutiérrez 2001), whereby most respondents are not exclusively tied to the central state or region, this also links in to theorists who have argued for post-sovereignty political structures (Keating 2004). Add this to provincial and local identities within Spain as well as a marked enthusiasm for Europe (Díez Medrano & Gutiérrez 2001, p. 755) and we begin to build a picture of the complexity of identity in modern day Spain beyond the simple idea of the nation as supreme value. The rise of dual-identity in particular and how this has been reported, signals two further important points in relation to the discipline.

Firstly it is clear that the methodological apparatus of the Moreno question identity survey remains one of the only reliable empirical indicators used by theorists. To a large extent scholars have become reliant upon this and thus my study will seek to move

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<sup>66</sup> First suggested here but repeated in his subsequent texts (e.g. Núñez Seixas 2005 p. 138), other authors also generally accept this tie: (e.g. Balfour & Quiroga 2007, p. 197).

<sup>67</sup> These include the rise of the Catalan independence movement, especially in the post-2010 period where surveys show a huge increase in the support for independence and the embrace of independence as a key political demand by the hegemonic coalition *CiU* (it had previously been non-committal).

beyond the identity survey to include other supplementary empirical data. A second point arising from the dual-identity paradigm is that an understanding of regional identity is key to an understanding of Spanish nationalism and thus this study will analyse reportage of *La Vuelta a España* in both Spain and Catalonia, reaching both sides of the identity debate in Spain in the post-Franco era. The rise and mobilisation of civil society (for Catalonia see: Dowling 2009) outside of formal political parties as well as doubts to the stability of dual identities (Núñez Seixas 1999, p. 168) also hint at wider frameworks to the study of the national question that should help us to understand it in its entirety.<sup>68</sup> It is not whether someone ticks a 'Spanish-only' or both 'Catalan and Spanish' box that matters, but what these identities mean, how they are mediated and how they change across time.

At the peripheral level we must consider the mass nationalisation policies followed by Catalonia and the Basque Country, a shift in the tectonic plates of identity in Spain that has significantly altered the equilibrium in terms of state power and nation building capacity. In developing their regional powers (and demanding more) elites successfully implemented nation building through linguistic changes in education (*immersió* in Catalonia), regional television and radio (which are politically subservient) and taking control of key institutional apparatus such as education and the police (See: McRoberts 2001; Cramer 2008; Gagnon et al. eds. 2003). Developed by nationalist elites these policies have led to an increase in regional affirmation, mostly as part of the aforementioned dual identity, although there are some signs of the consolidation of nationalist opinion in Catalonia and the Basque Country (Martínez-Herrera, pp. 435-438). The signing of the Pact of Barcelona in 1998 (a memorandum of understanding between

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<sup>68</sup> Within *The Reinvention of Spain* (Balfour & Quiroga 2007, pp. 197-198), for example, we find the explanation that "Informal agencies, such as the family, the group of friends, alternative media, popular culture, and sport activities, also have a crucial role to play when it comes to the creation of national identity".

the regional nationalists CiU, PNV and the BNG)<sup>69</sup> demonstrates an inter-group tendency that can compete with and articulate against the centre as and when needed, although regional co-operation is not thoroughly implanted within Spain due to its non-federal structure and lack of formal constitutional mechanisms.

This dynamic shows the complexity of the situation in Spain, as the CiU-Pujol-Catalonia triad that became hegemonic in Catalonia (Dowling 2005) interacted with the regions, the central state and Europe (although the latter largely failed to fulfil the early promise it initially held for regional elites). The development of these regional elites in government and the policies that they followed must be taken into consideration at the point of accounting for identity at a regional and national level. Their discourse and their control of important regional television stations and other media form an important part of the overall regional and national landscape. Leaving the Basque Country and Galicia to one side, as Catalonia is the only region to be included in this case study, Catalanism has been very successfully implanted into Catalonia, and is widely accepted by political parties and the population,<sup>70</sup> and yet CiU under Pujol did not push for independence. Equally the former president of the *Generalitat*, Pasqual Maragall, stated that he was Catalanist but not nationalist, a strong symbol of dual identity as it was constituted in the 1990s.<sup>71</sup> CiU have now reversed their position but as this extends beyond the end of my period it is not considered here. It is to be noted that in 2000 the primary concern of Spanish nationalists were the PNV and the Ibarretxe Plan,<sup>72</sup> which in being replaced by Catalonia and Artur

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<sup>69</sup> [Galician Nationalism Block]. The *Bloque Nacionalista Galego* is a group of nationalist parties that have not achieved the level of success or cohesion evident in the Catalan and Basque cases.

<sup>70</sup> Even the PP felt the need to change their Catalan affiliate from Spanish/Catalan blend of *Partido Popular de Catalunya* to the more Catalan *Partit Popular Català*, a small but significant step.

<sup>71</sup> Maragall was mayor of Barcelona between 1982 and 1997, leader of the *Partit del Socialistes de Catalunya* (Socialists' Party of Catalonia) from 2000-2006 and president of the *Generalitat* between 2003 and 2006.

<sup>72</sup> Juan José Ibarretxe was leader of the PNV and president (lehendakari) of the Basque Parliament at this time and his plan sought free association status with Spain.

Mas demonstrates the changing course of identity within Spain, neither static nor malleable but certainly changeable. However, as at the national level, there is a significant gap between elite discourse and popular opinion (Balfour & Quiroga 2007 p.3; Miley 2007, 2013), with elites far more visceral in their conception of the national idea.

Looking towards other analyses, the paucity of which must be stressed, it seems two approaches are taken: first, syntheses of the subject (Núñez Seixas 2001, 2005; Balfour & Quiroga 2007; Balfour 2005) and then second, empirical works predicated upon identity surveys (Muñoz 2011), although these are widely referenced in the general works too. All works in this area coalesce around the thesis of a deep delegitimisation of Spanish nationalism in the post-Franco era, with the corollary of a separation between formal symbols, affected by this, and informal symbols, which are not. Within *The Reinvention of Spain* (Balfour & Quiroga 2007) we find a broad overview of Spanish nationalisms, cognisant of the fact that nationalism can be found in both the periphery and the centre. This approach, highly influenced by the work of Anderson and Billig, is normative in nature as it seeks to find solutions to the present situation by an analysis of the present. The consistent way in which they separate elite discourse, marked by univocal ideology, and popular opinion, closer to dual identity, is useful and yet is not buttressed by a similar understanding of nationalism, which they see as “an ideology that assumes or claims a territorially defined community to be a nation” (Ibid. p. 1). If, as argued above, nationalism is taken as a political principle existing above and beyond “mere national consciousness” then no agreement can be had with this definition where the very idea of having a nation is seen as nationalist, a step I am not willing to take.



This wide definition of nationalism as an ideology that resurfaces as “patriotism, constitutionalism, solidarity” (Ibid.), is not compatible with my separation of “mere national consciousness” from nationalism. The authors do, however, recognise that this perception of national crisis is largely confined to political elites and the media associated with them, as “the vast majority of people who live in Spain are less troubled by such issues” (Ibid. p. 196.). It is odd, then, that they concentrate solely upon elite political discourse of the various nationalisms that they see existing in Spain, rather than the underlying traits in the population who they claim to be relatively unsupportive of these positions. The failure to separate nationalism from national identity, as well as the lack of consideration of difference between nationalism as an ideology to set up a nation-state and nationality as lived reality once the borders of a country are roughly accepted, mars the rich descriptive detail contained within the book, although it remains an important text in the nascent area of post-Franco Spanish nationalism.

A second major work in this area, *La Construcción Política de la Identidad Española* (Muñoz 2011), is empirical in nature, based on multiple regression analyses completed as part of a project with the *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (CIS). The book is predicated on empirically measuring the change from National-Catholicism to Democratic Patriotism, but fails in measuring the second without sufficiently establishing the roots and extent of the former in the pre-1975 population.<sup>73</sup> National-Catholicism is an imprecise term, used by Muñoz to refer to Franco’s general ideology when it should really refer only to the religious aspects of this, which became diluted as the regime moved away from the ideological certainties of war. The weakness of the state was a further limiting factor in the implementation of Franco’s overall doctrine, meaning that we should be careful not to elide

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<sup>73</sup> There are of course no datasets for this, meaning that this is probably a methodological issue at heart since other approaches to the question of measurement would have to be employed.

his doctrine and the implementation of it in the wider populace since Franco did not possess a similar strength of state apparatus as Hitler or even Mussolini. We simply do not and cannot know the extent to which his official ideology was received and internalised in the population, a problem that is not sufficiently recognised by Muñoz. By taking elite ideologies without recourse to their acceptance on a wider level we make the mistake of eliding elite and popular discourse that has been frequently cited as a factor in the Spanish case (Balfour & Quiroga 2007, p. 3). The major problem here is the elevation of politics to a *sui generis* position in the formation of citizens' identities, shown by the use of the phrase 'political construction' in the title. Spanish identity is far more complex than that.

Similarly, Democratic Patriotism, the idea that supposedly replaced National-Catholicism (Muñoz 2009, 2012), is an elite high-level theory that was partially accepted by elements of the *PSOE* in the 1990s before later being introduced to the *PP* in the 2000s and bears little relation to identities at the popular level. However, the book does demonstrate an important shift in the values underlying Spanish identity, moving away from traditional Francoist values of ideology and religion towards more modern democratic ones, although territorial problems are shown to remain. The empiricism of this work should be welcomed, although an over-reliance on regression analysis is noticeable, linking back into the traditional identity-survey that has formed the bedrock of answers to this question over the previous few decades. Fascinatingly the book starts with a sporting metaphor, a sign of just how central informal national symbols have become in this area, although Muñoz does not go on to develop this. However, an important part of the present work is moving away from this methodology to bring in further empirical analysis that can be stitched together with these existent analyses to form a broader picture of Spanish nationalism in the post-Franco period.

These other studies, taken together with the work of Núñez Seixas, give us a general picture of the discipline as it stands today. While explicit Spanish nationalism, especially on the political right, may have suffered serious legitimacy problems in the post-Franco era, the successful development of Spain as a modern, European and democratic country under the Socialist governments of Felipe González is not in doubt, particularly in terms of the high levels of national pride over the period. The reinsertion of the political right into politics and government from 1989/90 (a minority government from 1996 before a majority from 2000), with the leadership of the party passing from the ex-Franco minister Manuel Fraga to José María Aznar, completed the return of explicit Spanish nationalism. Yet it was not until the PP secured a majority in the 2000 general elections that we saw a more virile Spanish nationalism emerge, illustrating the movement in public discourse over the 25 year period from the death of Franco as Spanish nationalism once again became a normal factor of Spanish political life. The study of one informal symbol of Spanish nationalism, *La Vuelta Ciclista a España*, will add to this corpus in a number of ways, particularly in the discussion of informal vis-à-vis formal symbols and the role of sport in the post-Franco period – a task already started in terms of football, but not in other sports. This study also contains an important methodological development, by designing a bespoke mixed quantitative/qualitative content analysis that extends the empirical basis beyond the identity survey.

#### **IV – Sport**

Studies of sport have seen significant growth since the 1960s, with today's sport studies discipline highly influenced by, and indeed part of, sociology. However, with my background in history, as well as my intention to follow a historical methodology, sport

history, rather than sociology, is reviewed here. Sport history grew out of the social history of the 1960s before experiencing much growth in the 1980s. As has been pointed out (Johnes, in Pope & Nauright. eds. 2010, p. 444-460) the scholarly study of sport history has not been too different from the study of history itself with issues of class, economics, gender and identity the main areas of inquiry. Two defining features of the discipline include a national bias (much as in political science and history) as well as the predominance of football over other lesser sports in terms of subject matter, which may hint at underlying eurocentrism. The renaming of the journal *Sports History* to *Sport in History* in 2002 represents attempts made to re-orientate towards wider themes - a thematic shift that is followed in this study i.e. sport is taken as a vehicle to explore history more generally. Within studies of identity and sport, a major area in the discipline, work has focused on national as well as regional and local levels, a schematic followed here as we analyse Spain's national cycling tour in both Spain and Catalonia.

Within Spain there is a clear dominance of football as subject matter, which aligns with football being the major sport within the country (González-Ramalled 2008, p. 273). The many publications on *Fútbol Club Barcelona* (Shobe 2006, 2008a, 2008b), *Real Madrid* (Crolley 1997) and *La Selección* (the Spanish national football team – Quiroga 2013; Castro-Ramos 2008; Goig 2006; 2008) are redolent of this.<sup>74</sup> Local, regional and national identity have all been linked to football here with *La Selección* intimated in modern times as a unifying symbol (Quiroga 2013, pp. 187-188; León Solís 2003, p. 141), confirming suggestions made in the general literature on contemporary Spanish nationalism (Núñez Seixas 1993, 2001, p. 743; Balfour & Quiroga 2007, pp. 197-198). It is

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<sup>74</sup> Many studies link all three: *Real Madrid*, *Fútbol Club Barcelona* and *La Selección*.

my intention to test the unifying nature and national symbolism of another sport, providing original empirical data to a relatively understudied area of Spain.

One key concept that we have yet to define is what constitutes a national symbol. Thus far we have only intimated that *La Vuelta* may or may not have become one over the post-Franco period and that *La Selección* has been repeatedly denoted as one by the main authors in the field (*inter alia* Muñoz, Núñez Seixas, Balfour, Quiroga, León Solís). In *Lieux de Mémoire* (Nora 1992) we find the author looking for “places or loci bearing a particularly significant memory” or, wider still, “a systematic exploration of French symbols” (Nora 2001, pp. xix-xx). In this work a national symbol will be taken as a symbol that has meaning, or is known, for a significant proportion of any given society. Specifically in our case we will be looking for *La Vuelta* to demonstrate a high degree of saturation across the media spectrum (newspapers, radio and television), with articles being both frequently published and prominently placed. Moreover, we will be looking for signs that *La Vuelta* has crossed over from the sporting pages to more general content as well as for evidence that it is consistently viewed independent of which geographic region of Spain we are examining. All this while remaining cognizant of the fact that *La Selección*, and football more widely, remained the leading sporting symbols within the period.

As was briefly mentioned in the introductory chapter, cycling and specifically Spain’s national cycling tour, was chosen for two main reasons: firstly, the role of cycling as an important secondary sport within Spain along with tennis, Formula One and basketball. (Spain’s current prime minister, Mariano Rajoy, is a keen cycling fan having commentated on *La Vuelta* for Spanish state television as well as contributed articles on the race for

Spain's biggest selling sport newspaper *Marca*).<sup>75</sup> Secondly, given that much fruitful work has already appeared on *Le Tour de France*, as well as some work on *Il Giro d'Italia*, I felt that an expansion of this literature to Spain was a logical next step. The Golden Age of *La Vuelta* during the 1950s and 1960s illustrated how the race could signify national identity on a broad scale, with the question now turning to whether it did so again in the post-Franco period and when and how this was constituted.

The 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona is another area where unity through sport has been noted (Hargreaves 2000; Hargreaves & Ferrando 1997; Núñez Seixas 1999, p. 168),<sup>76</sup> fitting into the wider economic, political and cultural events that culminated in that year. The Olympic Games is unlike *La Selección*, however, in being a highly visible but one-off event that is unlikely to represent more than a temporary mediation of identities. Of far more importance is the unifying potential of *La Selección*, already well documented, but caution should be taken since there is also the strong countervailing influence of regional clubs such as *Fútbol Club Barcelona* and *Athletic Bilbao* which act as beacons of identity in their respective regions of Catalonia (Shobe 2006, 2008a, 2008b) and the Basque Country (Castillo 2007; Nili 2009). In this instance *La Vuelta* actually offers a less divisive symbolic offering, since it is not as parochial in its design – a factor which is picked up by some correspondents later on in this study.

There is far less academic literature concerning cycling than on other sports, but that it is not to say it is without documentation. Concomitant with its place in sport *Le Tour*

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<sup>75</sup> See: <http://www.elmundo.es/larevista/num109/textos/rajoy1.html> [accessed: 13/06/2014]. Sales of *Marca* outstrip even those of *El País* making it the largest newspaper in Spain. It is not used here due to the explicit wish to concentrate upon broadsheets, although it often features in analyses of Spanish sport (e.g. Ramallal 2004).

<sup>76</sup> A similar view is expressed here: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2013/10/25/the-symbolism-in-spanish-football-illustrates-that-catalan-and-spanish-identities-are-not-necessarily-incompatible/> [accessed: 02/04/14].

*de France* enjoys widespread coverage in the literature with an array of papers ranging from biology (Brouns et al 1989; Saris et al 1989; Jeukendrup et al 2000) and physics (Hannas & Goff 2004, 2005; Atkinson et al 2007) to geography (Palmer 2010; Campos 2003; Bull & Lovell 2007; Vigarello in Nora 1992), history (Dauncey & Hare 2003; Gaboreiau 2003; Thompson 2008) and economics (Torgler 2007; Desbordes 2007; Cherchye & Vermeulen 2006). One of the first analyses of symbolism in *Le Tour* is contained within *Mythologies* (Barthes 1957), a way of looking at the race that is continued within the more recent *Lieux de Mémoire* (Nora 1992). As outlined in the introduction, however, I decided that Billig's theory of banal nationalism provided a more methodologically driven approach from which to analyse the symbolisation of *La Vuelta* and thus Billig and not Nora or Barthes provides the theoretical heavy lifting here.

When we turn to the *La Vuelta*, however, only two scholarly articles have been published (López 2010a, 2010b). Both of these articles use *La Vuelta* to explore national and regional identity, with one examining an early failed attempt to launch a Spanish equivalent to *Le Tour* and the other looking at its first edition in 1935. No academic articles have been published on *La Vuelta's* history after 1935 and this taken in conjunction with the mass of articles published on *Le Tour* detailed above illustrates the need for work in this area. An opportunity exists to apply literature from *Le Tour de France* to *La Vuelta*, enhancing the breadth of the discipline and comparing the two races. This imbalance is also visible at the non-academic level, with only four books available on *La Vuelta Ciclista a España* (two in Spanish from the 1980s, two in English from the 2000s), while five to ten books are published on *Le Tour de France* every single year. However, following the thematic shift outlined above it is not my intention to write sport history, but rather to utilise a sporting event to research wider themes in history i.e. post-Franco Spanish nationalism

(hence my decision to concentrate on general newspapers, rather than sporting ones). This is undertaken because it has been explicitly stated that informal symbols, especially sport, played a larger role in Spanish nationalism than formal symbols which have suffered a post-Franco delegitimisation and it is my intention to test this hypothesis while also empirically examining Billig's theory of banal nationalism.

## **V - Conclusion**

It is perhaps a measure of the certitude of Billig's theory of banal nationalism that the Spanish history discipline has only relatively recently begun to deal with post-Franco Spanish nationalism as opposed to Catalan or Basque nationalism. With so much work focusing on the problem of Spain in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early-to-mid 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as well as the problem of regional nationalisms in their entirety, little attention has been focused on Spanish nationalism after 1975. Why has Spain itself, as opposed to some of the regions within its borders, seen so little study of its post-Franco nationalism? There is no doubting that a deep initial delegitimisation of Franco and his explicit Catholic, conservative and unitary nationalism occurred from 1975, although there had been important movements within the Franco elite before this date (as well as substantial social and generational change). Yet, after twenty years Spanish political nationalism re-appeared, with a more marked turn towards virile nationalism once the PP entered office for the first time in 1996 (this hardened after they secured a majority in 2000).

It is patently not the case that "Spanish nationalism, discredited by Francoism, is weaker than ever and has for all practical purposes disappeared" (Payne 1991, p. 487). Yet the process involved in nationalism evolving after Francoism, similar to arguments



surrounding German nationhood and nationality in the post-war period, is not clear since national identity remained relatively unperturbed, if undergoing some ideological change (Muñoz 2011). Spanish national identity did not disappear after Franco, although it may have undergone substantive change as 'dual' or 'nested' identities became more prevalent and older ideologies were replaced under the rubric of democratic patriotism. Further, as we have seen above Spaniards actually reported extremely high levels of national pride across the period, a sign of how we should discriminate between national identity and nationalism itself.

It is at this level of the relationship between nationalism and national identity that this study takes place, seeking to tease out the changes occurring in the twenty five year period as Spain drew away from the long shadow of the Franco regime. The PSOE's pursuit of a modern, democratic and European Spain after 1982 is a key part of this debate, attested by the heavily pro-European attitude of Spaniards (Sánchez-Cuenca 2000, p. 156). The delegitimisation of explicit Spanish nationalism as personified by Franco had a lasting effect on the salience of formal symbols of Spanish nationalism and thus it is at the informal level, such as that surrounding sport, where an important part of Spanish national identity played out during this period. It is my intention to fully investigate the level of banal nationality involved in *La Vuelta Ciclista a España*, as well as how this manifested throughout the period in different political and geographical boundaries. Given the clear territorial cleavages within Spain a study that looks both at the centre and the periphery has many advantages. Questions here become less general and more concrete: How did *La Vuelta* develop as a symbol of nationhood in this period, especially across political and territorial lines? Can we pinpoint the temporal development of this symbolism, comparing it to that of other informal symbols such as *La Selección*? What does the study

of *La Vuelta* tell us about informal symbols in general in this period, particularly their links to more formal symbols as well as the wider concept of Spanish nationalism?

A second major theme here is theoretical, where Michael Billig's theory of banal nationalism will be tested in the case of Spain and Catalonia. The theory has been widely accepted and utilised throughout academia, receiving a number of criticisms especially regarding its applicability within the United Kingdom (Rosie et al. 2004; MacInnes et al. 2007). It is my intention to use Billig's theory in the case of Spain, but also to test it, given that it is often used uncritically. Billig recently commented on how his theory has been widely accepted in that the process of the flagging of nationhood is often referred to, yet with little attention to his other major theme, the superannuation of the periphery over the centre. My work will examine both areas of his theory. I also stay close to Billig in a methodological sense, a decision that will be looked at further in the following chapter. This work will contribute a theoretically informed but empirically dense look at Spanish nationalism in the post-Franco era, with influences and impacts across a range of disciplines (nationalism theory, Spanish history, cycling). Spain developed into a thoroughly modern European democracy over this period although as Borja de Riquer once concluded, Spain "es un país normal, pero no tanto" (de Riquer 1998).<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> [(Spain) is a normal country, but not that normal]. The question of what constitutes a normal country is open to debate. See: [http://elpais.com/diario/1998/03/17/opinion/890089203\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1998/03/17/opinion/890089203_850215.html) [accessed: 13/06/2014].

### 3 - Methodology

In his thorough overview of the method Krippendorff (2012) notes that content analysis first appeared in Webster's Dictionary of the English Language in 1961. While it had already been in use for many decades by this point, this corresponds to its confirmation as a standard analytical tool in the academic world. It carried the following definition:

“analysis of the manifest and latent content of a body of communicated material (as a book or film) through classification, tabulation and evaluation of its key symbols and themes in order to ascertain its meaning and probable effect.”

Although much has changed in the intervening period, not least the explosion in information available to analysis, this remains a definition which adequately sets out the parameters within which the method works. This case study will analyse the manifest and latent content of communicated material through classification, tabulation and evaluation of its key symbols and themes in order to ascertain its meaning and probable effect. Krippendorff (ibid.) does note, however, that the “probable effect” part of this definition remains contentious, a subject we will return to below when examining the disadvantages of this method.

The primary reason for the choice of content analysis was its ability to produce replicable, empirical and longitudinal data in a feasible and structured way. In the preceding two chapters we have highlighted a main line of enquiry - the role of sport for

national identity in post-Franco Spain - that has been researched in some areas but not in others, with a particular strength in football. The number of suggestions made about the role that sport could have played to fill the gap for a damaged national identity is far higher than the evidence that has been provided to support these suggestions and the primary aim of this study is to bring the two together. Content analysis' well defined methodology allows for this study to be both empirical and replicable, ensuring that we move on from suggestions into evidence. However it is the longitudinal capability of content analysis that makes it the most appropriate tool for this study, since we are interested in change over time as Spanish political nationalism came back to the fore in the early 1990s. No other method is quite as capable of producing long-term quantified trend data in this way (Riffe, Lay & Fico 2005, p. 38). Discourse analysis, for instance, could not conceivably stretch across such a large historical period without negatively affecting the feasibility of the study. Similarly, and as we will see below, an historical case study would cope with the longitudinal nature but would not produce the same level of empirical detail. It is the combination of these factors that led to the methodological selection of content analysis, which offers a very well developed set of tools that are also sufficiently flexible to mould to the research questions at hand.

Quiroga's *Football and National Identity in Spain* (2013) is similar in tracing a wider arc of meaning for a sport and national identity, but is a mainly historical study that does not include a formal content analysis of any kind (although a close reading of newspaper content is the basis for his work). Within this work we find important conclusions on *La Selección* as a cohesive symbol of Spanish national identity in the immediate post-Franco period. However these remain to be empirically tested and put against other possible national symbols that could provide additional knowledge or even directly contradict what

is suggested there. Within *Negotiating Spain and Catalonia* (León Solís 2003), another proximate work, we see a thorough utilisation of discourse analysis to map out the interaction of football and identities of both regional and national yoke in Spain. The much narrower focus employed in the book demonstrates the opportunity cost of the method as only a short period of time can be examined in full. Although the methodological rigour is apparent, the limited timeframe shows where content analysis can make its presence felt.

The important difference and added value of this work is the quantitative basis which content analysis of this kind brings, adding an empirical backbone to the qualitative work. The project set out here works towards a similar aim as the studies by Quiroga and León Solís, testing the linkage between a sport and identity in modern Spain, but relies on a more formal method of analysis than the former and reaches across a longer historical period than the latter. With some scholars (Núñez Seixas 1993 & 2001, p. 743; Balfour & Quiroga 2007, pp. 197-198) suggesting that football provided the only non-complicated avenue for expression of Spanish identity in the period, this study provides an important correction based on quantified data. We will see later that *La Vuelta* could at times exceed the salience of that even football had for national identity and this demonstrates the importance of hypotheses being buttressed by empirical data. This is not to say that these and other studies are without merit, but that a quantitative study, overlaid with qualitative matter, can substantially improve our knowledge of sports and national identity in modern Spain and thus answer some of the key questions that have been posed since the birth of the field in the early 1990s.

Content analysis is more strongly established in the banal nationalism field, being so central to studies by Billig and his successors that it can be considered to be woven into

the fabric of the discipline. Billig's *Banal Nationalism* focused on several 'day studies' he carried out on major British newspapers, illustrating the potency of national flagging across all the major media outlets in Britain at that time. Most major studies to have followed and interacted with Billig and his work have followed this pattern: In 'Reproducing the Nation: "banal nationalism" in the Turkish Press' (Yumul & Özkirimli 2000), we see a close copy of Billig's original framework, whereas 'Mediating Which Nation? Citizenship and National Identities in the British Press' (Rosie et al. 2006), extends the method by employing it across a wider dataset. A similar extension to Billig can be found in 'Where is the British National Press?' (MacInnes et al. 2007) and it these latter two studies that influenced my decision to broaden the analysis even further and extend it to a period of 25 years. The expansion from Billig's original one day study to a study over two and a half decades resulted in a loss of detail, but was implemented because of the need to open up *La Vuelta* as an object of academic analysis and focus on longitudinal trends over time.

Content analysis is not without its disadvantages and it is important to stress that although the method was chosen here as the most appropriate method to answer the research questions, this was not without thought as to other techniques and the problems this choice could create. While content analysis is brilliant at creating a thorough dataset relevant to the question at hand it is less capable of answering the question of what the content means to the person who accesses it, commonly known as audience reception or audience effects. This relates back to the idea of 'probable effect' which concluded the definition carried at the top of this chapter and despite 50 years of work since the first appearance in Webster's dictionary this still remains a contentious part of content analysis. This is the main disadvantage of content analysis as a method, but this analysis proceeds with an awareness and acceptance of this - not seeking causation or effect. Instead this

study seeks to map out the development of *La Vuelta* as a national symbol between 1975 and 2000, before delimiting this across geographical and political boundaries. As for almost all content analyses we do not know how *La Vuelta*'s press coverage affected or was received at the individual level, we can only confirm how available it was relevant to a number of other sporting stories.

Although the 'probable effect' of content has been discounted in many subsequent definitions, there is wide agreement that content can affect the way people view and value concepts or events in at least two distinct ways (Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007). Firstly, it has been shown that content has an important agenda-setting effect, not making people have a different view, but affecting the order in which people value different items (first stated in: McCombs & Shaw 1972). If reports on *La Vuelta* were placed more prominently in say a Spanish newspaper rather than a Catalan one, and if this changed over time, it would inform us not only of the editorial priorities of each constituent newspaper but also the likely effect this may have on the reader accessing the material - making it more likely that they would think *La Vuelta* was an important event or national symbol. Similarly, how an article frames an issue has been demonstrated to affect how the audience understands it, more about accessibility of complex stories than attempts to deceive the reader (Kahneman & Tversky 1979, 1984). Thus the thematic information we derive from the qualitative work may illuminate, for example, the positive framing of *La Vuelta* in central Spanish newspapers, which would in turn be likely to cause readers to view the race more positively. Not changing attitudes per se, but definitely moulding them. Therefore although content analysis in the guise employed here does not confirm how the message was received by individuals, we can confidently assert that it was likely to have certain agenda-setting and framing effects in accordance with the current orthodoxy within the related

discipline (Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007).

Content analysis itself is a broad church and a number of important decisions needed to be taken in order to design and implement the study. Prolonged time was given to the questions of text selection, sampling, coding, piloting, reliability and validity before the commencement of the analysis. The first major task was to select the texts that would be included within the study, a key formative step that has important impacts on how representative your study is and what it can and cannot confirm. The broad category of newspapers, rather than television or radio, were selected due to their availability, their amenability to content analysis and the number of works that have already used newspapers successfully in this area (e.g. Quiroga 2013; León Solís 2003; Aguilar & Humlebaek 2002). Newspapers do not form the definitive way in which an individual experiences a race, especially in a country with a low press readership where the dominant medium is television, but they do form part of a wider range of media which an individual moves between - perhaps watching or listening to the race on one day and then reading about it the following day. This is the cumulative media effect that is at the heart of Quiroga's (2013) analysis, where each medium adds up to comprehensive coverage of a sporting event, a schema we can reuse here to suggest that *La Vuelta's* presence in newspapers reflected its wider presence across radio and television. Studies that pushed further past the turn of the century would need to include social media within this cumulative media effect with only a faint echo of the modern digital landscape visible in this study as the first race website was created in the late 1990s.

The way in which newspaper coverage could be buttressed by coverage across radio and television was highly visible in the pilot study carried out for this project. Content



on *La Vuelta* in *La Vanguardia* between 1970 and 1975 was analysed, with a range of useful data coming from this. Firstly it was clear that *La Vuelta* was not only a daily topic of interest in the Catalan paper, but that advertising by radio and television companies demonstrated the cumulative media effect set out above. A stratified sampling technique used was then changed to a more comprehensive technique in the main study as the former meant a lot of data was lost if the sample fell on a Monday (where no publications were made) and overall it was thought that this would not produce enough data for meaningful correlation to be drawn. Some units of analysis were also changed, which saw advertising and authorship being brought in to the analysis as the pilot studied showed the importance of these (more on this can be found below).

Spain has one of the lowest levels of newspaper readership in Europe, with the ratio of daily newspaper copies per 1,000 inhabitants in 1996 being 590 for Norway, 445 for Sweden and 331 for Britain, while only 153 for Greece, 104 for Italy and 99 for Spain (Machin & Papatheodorou 2003, p. 35). Newspapers are neither the only nor the most important mechanism for the transmission, mediation and creation of national identity in Spain. They do, however, represent the major strands of opinion in the country both politically and geographically and it is for this reason, coupled with the points on accessibility and ease of analysis made above, that my study proceeds in this way. The noted politicisation of Spanish newspapers as well as their role in the transition also adds to their viability as vehicles for analysis. Furthermore, Spain retains a marked tendency for the sharing of newspapers meaning readership figures may actually be noticeably higher than recorded (Lewis 2008, p. 412).

One of the most important decisions within the design phase of the study was to focus on four main newspapers that reflected two central parts of modern Spanish identity, a choice that again was conditioned by a number of factors. This bears strong resemblance to the framework employed within *Negotiating Spain and Catalonia* (León Solís 2003) and this work owes a debt of gratitude in terms of its design that study. The main driver in terms of specific newspaper selection was the requirement for each newspaper to both represent an important geographic element within Spain, being of sufficient readership for inferences of national symbolism to be possible. We could have only looked at Spain or Catalonia, but a mixture of both was decided on to try and answer some of the more detailed questions on how far a national symbol a sporting event could be. Did it penetrate internal boundaries or was it confined to success within only central Spain?

A second yet still significant element of newspaper selection was the ability of each medium to cover the entire period, a requirement that would lead me to exclude the Basque Country from the analysis as its national newspapers have not had the same stability as the ones analysed here. This decision was also influenced by my fluency in Spanish and Catalan, making it far more feasible to consider these two areas. The embedded nature of cycling within the Basque Country and its usage to represent the region throughout history remain ripe for analysis and it is my hope to turn towards this in the future, cross-referencing with the work produced here. However, to a certain extent it can be claimed that Catalonia, in representing one of Spain's *Nacionalidades Históricas*, can provide us with at least a basic extrapolation of how Spain's national symbols feature in peripheral areas.

Three newspapers - *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* - were largely self-selecting given that they all represent major parts of the Spanish population and have been continuously among the top 5 most read newspapers within the 1975 to 2000 period. *El País* in particular was Spain's newspaper of record, a role *ABC* could largely claim on the right of the political spectrum. *La Vanguardia*, on the other hand, actually outsold both during the Transition and its centrality to Catalan society, as well as its links to the main players within the hegemonic coalition *Convergència i Unió*, make it crucial to any consideration of the period. The inclusion of *Avui*, however, warrants explanation since it has not registered anywhere near the same level of readership as the three preceding newspapers and could be considered marginal, at least in terms of sales, even within Catalonia. It is instead included because of its symbolic importance, the first Catalan-language newspaper to be launched in the post-1975 period and a title which both received and represented the major financial aid given to high culture by the newly-reinstated *Generalitat*. Direct political involvement in *Avui* was visible throughout its history, making it representative of wider Catalan nation-building policies and thus a particularly good tool to understand to the penetration of *La Vuelta* as a national symbol into nationalist Catalonia.

I had originally intended to include six newspapers but both *El Periódico de Catalunya* and *El Mundo* were later discarded from the analysis, a decision which is covered in more detail below. An important distinction here is that general newspapers were preferred to those that concentrate solely on sport, as national symbolism could only said to have been reached if the average Spaniard was more than likely to be aware of the race. This would not be the case if coverage was confined to *Marca* or *El Mundo Deportivo*. Billig, however, has noted the masculine tendencies of even the sport sections

within general newspapers, a word of warning that may cap how far we can generalise from the data generated here (Billig 1995, p. 119). Figure 1 contains early comparative readership figures for the four newspapers:

**Fig. 1. Newspaper readership, 1975-1978.**

	<b>El País</b>	<b>ABC</b>	<b>La Vanguardia</b>	<b>Avui</b>
<b>1975</b>	n/a	187,484	222,685	n/a
<b>1976</b>	116,600	171,382	211,736	55,727
<b>1977</b>	137,562	145,162	196,886	40,036
<b>1978</b>	127,931	126,952	187,240	33,946

**Source: OJD.es (Oficina para la Justificación de la Difusión)**

The order in which each newspaper was analysed could have affected the conclusions made, although this cannot really be avoided unless via random selection that may actually do more harm than good. You will notice that this study focuses on the Catalan *La Vanguardia* before turning to Spain's *ABC* and *El País* and back to the Catalan *Avui* - a process chosen to highlight the bridging role that *La Vanguardia* has always played between the poles of identity in Madrid and Barcelona. It would have been easy to follow the schema set out by León Solís within *Negotiating Spain and Catalonia* (2003) in considering Spain then Catalonia, but the need was felt instead to be more creative in the selection and thus an active choice was made to avoid the separated consideration of each geographic bloc. It was felt that being creative and focusing on how identities can overlap (as they often do in *La Vanguardia*) would provide a different and perhaps unique version of an analysis that is too often compartmentalised into constituent identity blocs.

A further consideration to take into account is the edition of the newspaper that was chosen, with the central edition favoured over regional editions and the paper version over

online version (where possible). At each stage a decision was made to concentrate on the edition that had the highest readership, as it was not feasible to consider more than one edition of each newspaper. We cannot be certain that each regional edition carried the same or similar content to the central one analysed here, however in the pilot study carried out for this project we found no change in the sporting pages. If we take *El País*, for instance, we see regional editions gaining ground in the early 1990s, however these remain separate supplements to the main paper that in each case was almost identical to the central edition. More acutely *Avui* and *La Vanguardia*, already a localised papers, did not employ regional editions of the type found in *El País* and *ABC*. The latter paper was different in producing two dailies, one based in Madrid and the other in Cordoba, but again the sporting pages, but especially cycling reportage, were essentially the same in the small sample checked for this project.

Periodisation was largely exogenous in that the lifecycle of Spanish nationalism after Franco is an accepted fact within the discipline: an initial delegitimisation followed by a slow revalidation that was more or less complete by the 1990s. Starting the study in 1975 and finishing it in 2000 fits in with this as well as providing the necessary chronological gap for longitudinal data to emerge. The length of this study necessitates a certain loss of detail that could be enhanced by later studies. Given that the 1990s has already been marked as a key decade in the re-emergence of a more visceral and normal Spanish nationalism (Núñez Seixas 2005; Balfour 2005), a next step may be to drill down into this period further, utilising more comprehensive sampling techniques, more newspapers and different regions. It would also be useful to possess data on the pre-Transition *Vuelta* in order to set out the changes that occurred after Franco, a task that remains for future scholars.

This content analysis was explicitly designed to measure format first before going on to manifest and then latent content. Both qualitative and quantitative material has been included in keeping with the latest trends in the discipline whereby mediating both has been seen as largely beneficial (Berg & Lune 2014, pp. p. 340). Although this study has been set out and carried out as a content analysis it should be made clear that some would argue that the qualitative side tends towards non-formal discourse analysis (Ibid.). The quantitative section provides a large range of descriptive statistics, designed to formulate a broad picture of *La Vuelta* as a national symbol and to answer the key research question on the extent of its potency across Spain. On the other hand, the qualitative section consists of a close reading of the textual material, using both inductive and deductive category building to analyse the main themes that appear in the text, with special attention given to the flagging of local, regional and national identities. This is close to discourse analysis but can be separated from it in that content analysis is positivist in nature in concentrating upon social reality, whereas discourse analysis seeks to contest how a particular social reality is made up, although the differences between the two remain fluid and have been the subject of significant discussion (Ibid, pp. 349-350).

Validity and reliability remain hallmarks of content analysis, the scientific calling card of the method that has long set it apart from other techniques of historical enquiry. It for this reason that handbooks often presuppose a coding team of 8-10 people, tasked with running and re-running analyses until most errors have been removed. Unfortunately this is not replicable in a project of this size but a number of other steps were taken to replace this. The first of these was a pilot study carried out in the first few months of the PhD, which looked at data on *La Vuelta* in *La Vanguardia* the 1970-1975 range, providing both historical background and empirical fine tuning. A number of decisions were reached

during this phase that altered and significantly improved the study, although this is not to say that the method utilised here could not be further improved - it remains a work in progress.

It was originally considered that stratified sampling of an article every three days would be beneficial in limiting the amount of work needed, while still producing enough data to pick up the data trends across the period. This was a technique I had successfully seen used elsewhere and was thoroughly trialled in the pilot study. However, a number of problems arose, not least that with no Monday publications before 1982, and it was quickly decided that it was necessary to increase the sample from one article every three days to every article produced within the (roughly) 21 day period when the race was run. This enormously increased the sample data, providing a far richer dataset from which answers could be drawn, but meant a rethinking of other parts of the study. On completing this change to the sampling method the decision was made to decrease the number of newspapers from six to four, given the work involved, with *El Periódico de Catalunya* and *El Mundo* dropping out of the analysis. The former because of its non-alignment with the main societal cleavage in Catalonia (Catalan nationalism or Catalan regionalism) and the latter, because it did not cover the whole period (it was launched in 1989). Both would help with further delineating the trends that have been identified here, but this study was designed to bring out the broad parameters of the research question, rather than the detail that is a question for later studies.

With eighteen to twenty stages in each edition, four different newspapers and a period from 1975 to 2000 a total of 4,732 articles over the entire period were recorded, with some gaps due to archival and/or other issues (which have been outlined in each

chapter). The major archival issue was a period of three years where no data could be found for *Avui*, with 1987, 1988 and 1989 as blank years for this analysis. This does have some implications for the numbers presented at the end of this study, a discussion of which is found in the concluding chapters, although this does not fundamentally alter the answers given to the research questions. Beyond this major archival issue with *Avui* there were a number of minor issues, with some issues missing and where this happened it is discussed in the relevant chapter as a footnote.

The pilot study was designed to test the production of useful data from each unit of analysis. Quantitative units were mostly designed beforehand, with the qualitative units or themes emerging inductively as the text was processed, in line with the norms of grounded theory in content analysis. Units of analysis were chosen based on their ability to measure the national symbolism of *La Vuelta* across time. Of utmost importance was testing the number of articles (1) concerning *La Vuelta* in each newspaper as well as the prominence of these articles. Prominence was measured in three ways, firstly whether the race made the front page or not (2), secondly whether it led the sport section (3) and thirdly, where in the sport section it came if it did not lead it (4). Through these first units of analysis we were able to measure the frequency and quantity of articles as well where they appeared in the newspaper, crucial to any understanding of the flagging of identity. It was thought that national symbolism should be captured by these units of analysis as *La Vuelta* was reported on more often and as these reports became relatively more important within the sports section and the newspaper more generally (if this were the case). The size of each article was also measured (5), which acts as a control unit of analysis for the number of articles since many small articles could be published, as well as the mode of authorship (6). This last unit of analysis ensured we could differentiate between agency provision,



which would signal a lack of interest in the race by the newspaper, and in-house authorship, as well as a further level of interest signalled by the sending of a correspondent to follow the race.

A further unit of analysis was visual media (7), examining how imagery could interact with text to symbolise national identity. Maps, for example, have been cited in their importance to national identity (Anderson 2006, pp. 167-190) and they form a key part of the geographical aspect of cycling that differentiates itself from the static element within football (with teams confined to stadiums). This was not present in the original formulation of the content analysis and instead appeared inductively as the prominence of maps and other images became apparent in the pilot study. Slightly different to the previous units of analysis, advertising (8) looks to the economic aspect of the race, measuring the level of involvement of companies in advertising tied to *La Vuelta*. The number of adverts placed in each paper as well as the provenance of these adverts was counted giving an overall picture of where companies thought *La Vuelta* was commercially beneficial and thus also nationally symbolic. Advertising was also not originally considered in the content analysis and again appeared inductively as the breadth of advertising was shown in the pilot study, hinting at an important unit of analysis that could enhance the prior focus on article frequencies and prominence. By including advertising we extend our analysis away from newspapers themselves to include the wider economic parameters that ensure we are examining a truly national symbol, for it is important to be continually aware that we are examining only a subset of newspapers within a framework where newspapers are only one way of accessing information.

Following Billig the qualitative side of this analysis looked at the deixis involved in

the articles, particularly certain adjectives such as 'Spanish' and 'Catalan' as well as the use of the possessive to denote national boundaries. The idea here was to move beyond the mainly quantitative counting of the above units of analysis and instead focus on the deeper textual mores. This section was designed in a deductive and inductive fashion, since an awareness of the categories existed before the pilot study, but the specific categories were developed as this study was completed - in line with orthodox content analysis theories. Within the pilot study identities at all levels (local, regional and national) emerged as the central narrative common to all reports and thus a key area for analysis, confirming the original idea to examine banal nationality as exposed by reports on *La Vuelta*. Each article was examined for the main themes that emerged from it, with an explicit concentration upon identity in all its guises but also sufficient flexibility and openness to other categories that could emerge in an inductive framework. Billig's original work, as well as the works that have interacted with it subsequently, have shown a clear framing of identities within newspapers, with the added value of this study being in its vast extension to the day studies carried out by Billig as well as the slightly longer timeframes of his successors (usually measured in weeks or months). By extending the analysis in this way we can expand our knowledge of both Billig's banal nationalism as well as provide empirical answers to research questions posed widely within the subfield of post-Franco Spanish nationalism. It is for these dual reasons that the study has been designed in this way.

Taken together, the qualitative and quantitative units of analysis should provide a broad overview of *La Vuelta* in newspapers over the period, allowing for an answer to be reached as to the research questions at hand. Quantitatively, we should be able to build a picture of the relative and absolute relations between each newspaper's coverage of the

race, measuring where and when *La Vuelta* became more or less prominent at a national and regional level. The comparisons between newspapers that share territorial implantation but differ politically, as well as those between newspapers that differ territorially, should possess sufficient weight to analyse the national symbolism of the race in a longitudinal fashion. Qualitatively, the analysis should enable us to examine the main themes within each newspaper's coverage as well as the way in which the coverage is produced over time, with significant attention with regards to the particular type of identity that binds the coverage together, which was paramount in the pilot study performed beforehand. Although there are a number of choices involved in terms of case selection, choice of newspapers, unit of analysis selection and method, it is to be hoped that a defensible basis has been established here for the approach taken. No method is free from limitations and this study fits into a wider network of other similar studies in the fields of banal nationalism and post-Franco Spanish nationalism that have already been completed. A reflective commentary on the method and how it coped with the research questions is to be found within the concluding chapters, with the explicit aim of methodological development over

## 4 - La Vanguardia

### I - Introduction

As a successful, historic and centre/centre-right newspaper with a propinquity to the hegemonic regional coalition *Convergència i Unió*<sup>78</sup>, *La Vanguardia*<sup>79</sup> is a key media player in Spain.<sup>80</sup> Now incorporated within the eponymous *Grupo Godó*, it forms part of one of a select few media conglomerates that have come to dominate in the country after the transition to democracy that commenced with the death of Francisco Franco in 1975.<sup>81</sup> The paper has not only consistently outsold its statewide competitors (*El País*, *ABC* and *El Mundo*) in Catalonia over this period, but in the 1960s and 70s led the Spanish newspaper market as a whole, a unique feature that aptly demonstrates the importance of the newspaper to mainstream political opinion (although it has only ever been sold within Catalonia). In 1975 *La Vanguardia* had a circulation of 222,685 copies, far beyond the 187,484 of *ABC*, Spain's second biggest daily, considered in the following chapter. Although circulation would fall during the following years, hitting a low of 186,173 in 1979, this was in line with broader trends in the Spanish newspaper market and *La Vanguardia* has remained the most important newspaper in Catalonia and one of the most important newspapers in Spain throughout the entire period.

Its position as part of the 'old' pre-Transition media has meant that since its launch in 1881 as an organ of a small faction of the Liberal Party it has survived, *inter alia*, a

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<sup>78</sup> [Convergence and Union] CiU were a coalition of two parties, *Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya* and *Unió Democràtica de Catalunya*, between 1978 and 2001, before extending this into a federation.

<sup>79</sup> [The Vanguard].

<sup>80</sup> For detailed information on the history of the newspaper see: J Huertas. 2006. *Una Història de 'La Vanguardia'*. Barcelona: Angle.

<sup>81</sup> The main ones being: PRISA, ZETA, Planeta, Godó. This represents an evolution in newspaper history, as they become part of wider media organisations comprising film, audio, magazines and newspapers.

prolonged civil war, two military dictatorships and a fractious democratic transition – a huge achievement compared with usual media volatility in the face of regime change (see post-war France as a counterexample). Its evolution from “*La Vanguardia Española*”<sup>82</sup> (it had been forced to change its masthead in 1939 to incorporate the adjective ‘Spanish’ as the price of continuance after the conclusion of the Civil War) to “*La Vanguardia*” in 1978 as well as its eventual twin Catalan/Castilian publication is instructive.<sup>83</sup> As decentralisation was implemented and the Catalan government began to assert its authority, the newspaper moved towards more Catalanist positions, accepting Catalonia as a nation and symbolising the successful Catalanisation policies undertaken by Jordi Pujol after his election to the head of the *Generalitat* (Catalan Parliament) in 1980. I am thus inclined to view *La Vanguardia* as a bellwether for opinion in Catalonia, recognising its increased significance vis-à-vis other regional papers with it taken to represent the Catalan differential strand of Spanish nationalism. If national identity and sport were to coalesce in *La Vuelta Ciclista a España*, an analysis of this newspaper is necessary to check the breadth and depth of that linkage across geographical and political lines. Was *La Vuelta* able to act as a symbol of national identity throughout Spain? How did this change temporally, as an emergent Catalonia established a separate or dual identity? Did *La Vanguardia* continue with the maxim of “Per Catalunya i la Espanya Gran” or was there a slow movement away from this as time wore on?<sup>84</sup>

It was expected that *La Vanguardia* would cover *La Vuelta* with a similar level of reportage to *El País* and *ABC*, since unlike *Avui*, it is purported to be a national (i.e.

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<sup>82</sup> [The Spanish Vanguard].

<sup>83</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 27th February, 2011, p. 29. This occurred more than a decade after its populist competitor, *El Periódico de Catalunya*, implemented its own twin Catalan/Castilian publication.

<sup>84</sup> [For a great Catalonia and Spain] - the motto of a campaign by the conservative regionalist party ‘Lliga Regionalista’ for the 1917 general election, used here to suggest a way of examining the Spanish-Catalan relationship.

Spanish) newspaper, that is published in Catalonia (as opposed to a Catalan nationalist newspaper in the latter case). However, given the slow Catalanisation of *La Vanguardia*, I felt that the newspaper might contain less coverage than the other two Spanish newspapers, especially as we moved through the period. This Catalanisation is broadly in keeping with developments within Catalan society, with the Catalanist standpoint (an umbrella term) becoming relatively more important within the region as institutionalization and policies such as language normalisation developed (Balfour & Quiroga 2007, pp. 135-137). Catalanism can reach from regionalism to federalism and sovereignty (the latter becoming more important after 2000) and *La Vanguardia* fits the first and second models best. Given that *La Vuelta* itself, after 1979, was being centralised and becoming more reliant on Madrid and less reliant on the regions (such as Catalonia and the Basque Country) which had been at the centre of the race since 1955, I thought this double process of centralisation of the race, and regionalisation on a national level,<sup>85</sup> would lead to a change in how *La Vuelta* was viewed from this newspaper. The depth, timing and trajectory of this change, however, should inform us on how a symbol of Spanish banal nationality was negotiated beyond Madrid and central Spain, where it was organised and increasingly centred.

Between 1975 and 2000 *La Vanguardia* went through a process of modernisation that mirrored how Spain itself moved forward as it became a normalised European democracy. Moving from the yoke of Franco-era legislation (ameliorated somewhat by the *Ley Fraga*<sup>86</sup> but still pertinent until the late 1970s) to the more modern paper of the 1990s, *La Vanguardia* moved far beyond its 1975 baseline. Indeed in just three years between

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<sup>85</sup> The Catalan sports newspaper *El Mundo Deportivo* collaborated with the Basque newspaper *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco* in pre-1979 editions of *La Vuelta*, demonstrating the regional architecture of the race in this period.

<sup>86</sup> [Fraga Law 1966]. Ley 14/1966, de 18 de marzo, de Prensa e Imprenta 1966. Part of the liberalisation reforms of the 1960s providing limited press freedom i.e. abolishing prior censorship.

1975 and 1978 it had recognised the speed and direction of change by moving from being a paper that supported Franco to a paper that suppressed the word '*Española*' from its masthead. The move away from dictatorship, the re-establishment of royal legitimacy, the political transition, the entry into supranational bodies such as the EEC and NATO, the implementation of political freedoms and liberty and the extensive liberalisation and privatisation of the economy remain just a few of the extensive, deep and lasting changes in Spanish society that are covered in the pages of this historic newspaper. It is this broad structural change in Spanish society, economics and politics that gives mass events such as sport a capability above and beyond that of non post-dictatorship societies to reflect and provoke identities in their local, regional and national forms. As change ensued at all levels, the ability of citizens to project and feel their identity through sport allowed them a key avenue through which they could understand the myriad changes in Spanish society at this point. Sport, here, is not something that changed society, but a way in which changes in society can be measured. The movement in price - from 8 pesetas in 1975 to 150 pesetas/€0,90 in 2000 - is a poignant example of this, illustrating the move from isolation to membership of the European community, but at a cost.<sup>87</sup>

The title of the sports section changed from "Crónica de la actualidad deportiva"<sup>88</sup> to a far more modern "La Vanguardia de los deportes"<sup>89</sup> in the first few years. The latter then replaced by the now archetypical "Deportes"<sup>90</sup> in the early 1980s. The first few years saw a sports section far removed from that of the more modern productions of the 1980s and 1990s. Characterised by small sections, rarely stretching beyond 3 or 4 pages and lacking

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<sup>87</sup> Background information for *La Vanguardia* was taken from: J. Huertas et al. 1995. *200 anys de premsa diària a Catalunya*. Barcelona: Fundació Caixa de Catalunya; J. Guillamet. 1996. *Premsa, Franquisme i autonomia: crònica catalana de mig segle llarg, 1939-1995*. Barcelona: Flor de Vent Edicions; J. Huertas. 2006. *Una Història de 'La Vanguardia'*. Barcelona: Angle.

<sup>88</sup> [Report from today's sport].

<sup>89</sup> [The Vanguard's sport].

<sup>90</sup> [Sports].

in visual media, these early reports remind us how dates such as 20th November 1975 (when Franco died) signal change, but an uneven change that comes at different times for different parts of society. A pivotal moment in the development of the race was the extensive and revamped television coverage offered by Spain's national public television company *TVE*<sup>91</sup> starting from 1983. And it is with this step that the sporting coverage moves into the modern age - with increased space, more pictures and the varied effects of globalisation on the number and origin of reporters covering the race. In effect, it is only after 1983 that we see a modern sports section, with the increased identity-flagging opportunities that that brings (more pages, more pictures, more writing, more space).

Football remains the leading sport throughout the period, with games, regardless of provenance, projection or public, taking precedence over all other sports, a situation common to many (but not all) other countries where football is the main or national sport (Giulianotti 1999, p. xi; Harvey 2005, p. xiii). The heightened importance of the beautiful game across the whole period, in a sort of *primus inter pares* guise, must be taken into consideration when it comes to determining the relative hierarchy of sports and their potential to flag national and other identities. While football may be generally regarded as the largest and most successful sport, with the World Cup viewed as a mega event at its pinnacle (Harvey 2005, p. xiii), we should not forget the status of *Le Tour de France* as a similar sporting item broadcast to an audience of millions across hundreds of countries (Palmer 1998). The iterative monotony of stories concerning *Fútbol Club Barcelona*<sup>92</sup> throughout the period, while expected, develops this reliance on football by giving it a regional aspect - football refracted through a Catalan lens.<sup>93</sup> Therefore any claim for

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<sup>91</sup> [Spanish Television]. The state broadcaster.

<sup>92</sup> [Barcelona Football Club].

<sup>93</sup> Shobe, among others, has written at length about this, see: Shobe 2000, 2005, 2008a, 2008b & 2008c.



national coalescence through games played by *La Selección*,<sup>94</sup> must take into account the regional geography of the football landscape. Other sports, including motorcycle racing, Formula One, tennis, golf and cycling, occupy a second plane of the sporting hierarchy reported on frequently but never at the same level as football - with fewer reports, fewer times on the front page and fewer times leading the sports section.<sup>95</sup> Cycling, therefore, exists as an important but secondary sport in Spain, something that is newsworthy, but often pushed down the page by other events – still nationally relevant but certainly not dominant.

Before moving into the specific units of analysis a few general themes can be noted. The most salient feature is the critical tone taken up in many reports. *La Vuelta* comes out as very much the third tour (behind *Le Tour de France* and *Il Giro d'Italia*), with the quality of participation and the number of participants frequently cited as disappointing. This negative angle does not extend across all reports and positivity can also be found if a particular edition or event warrants it. 1983 is one example, being not only the race where direct and extensive television coverage was implemented for the first time, but also one that saw an improvement in foreign participation (television coverage provided the financial capacity to attract better riders to the race).<sup>96</sup> Yet the positive comments remain the exception that proves the rule, with commentary mainly being neutral or negative in nature. It will be vital to cross-reference this uneven balance of negative/positive commentary with the other newspapers to identify whether this was a general or particular framing of *La Vuelta*. Another factor emanating from this cursory analysis is the clear juxtaposition

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<sup>94</sup> [Spain's first XI].

<sup>95</sup> This hierarchy is visible in an anecdotal level on the website of *El País* where the order of sports is: *Fútbol*, *Baloncesto*, *Tenis* and *Ciclismo* [Football, Basketball, Tennis and Cycling].

<sup>96</sup> It's highly probable that the increased revenue from television coverage and sponsorship linked to that led to the race being able to financially attract a star of that quality. It must also be noted that to provide full coverage TVE (the Spanish national television company) had to loan equipment from France - i.e. even at the level of technology Spain had to look up to le Tour.

between foreign and Spanish cyclists and teams that comes out in the period. The proliferation of the Spanish word “extranjero”<sup>97</sup> in reports, along with the frequent lamenting of the lack of Spanish stage winners and early uses of “nuestra carrera”<sup>98</sup> and “nuestra tierra”<sup>99</sup> demonstrate a clear parallel with Billig’s original work.

The critical tone continues throughout the period with regards to other matters, such as the organisation that runs the race, *Unipublic*, based in Madrid.<sup>100</sup> Indeed although there is more coverage when the race enters Catalonia and Barcelona, the fact that this still does not give the race utmost importance illustrates the secondary plane on which the race and the sport itself exist. The importance of extended television coverage emerging in 1983 is crucial to the race and its development, but yet again we see a critical tone upheld, whereby the state television coverage is seen as “generoso”<sup>101</sup> and counted in terms of bloated numbers. Star figures, especially ones of Spanish origin, do have a positive impact on coverage - but this still remains substantially below that afforded to football. The commercialisation of the race is also seen critically, with a particular point of contention being the balance between the visibility of sponsors and the purity of the sport itself. *La Vanguardia* did not always report in a negative fashion, but this formed an important part of how it structured its coverage over the 25-year period. This, in turn, affected the capacity of *La Vuelta* to act as a symbol of banal nationality in the particular constituency of readers of *La Vanguardia* i.e. the Catalan differential strand of Spanish nationalism.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> [Foreigner].

<sup>98</sup> [Our race].

<sup>99</sup> [Our country].

<sup>100</sup> Unipublic took over the race in 1979 after a conservative Basque paper *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco* had to drop its support after ETA bombings made it unworkable. See Introduction.

<sup>101</sup> [Generous].

<sup>102</sup> Quiroga has argued (Quiroga 2014) that before the successes of 2008, 2010 and 2012 *La Selección* was a successful and cohesive national symbol despite its relative failure at international level. It is possible that *La Vuelta* also contained some national symbolism even when it did not feature successful Spanish riders.

## II - Quantitative

*La Vuelta* appeared on the front page of *La Vanguardia* 41 times or just over 7% of the time. Although *La Vuelta* did not appear on the front page very often, the times when it did appear were often backed by substantial visual media, a sign of how the race had the potential to symbolise national identity, but how this potential was mostly unrealised in this particular newspaper. Even when the race held stages in or around Barcelona, which one could expect would increase coverage dedicated to the race, front-page coverage was not common. *La Vuelta* simply did not have the status to merit front pages in this Catalan conservative newspaper. There is considerable chronological variation in the data, however, with *La Vuelta* making the front page only once in the 1975-1984 period. The incidence increased after this date, with *La Vuelta* appearing on the front page 29 times during the 1990s, a sign of a change in how the race was viewed. This suggests an important break in the race's history, and in *La Vanguardia's* coverage, as important developments such as live television coverage enabled the race to regain the symbolism it previously enjoyed. Within the broader category of sports, it is easily identifiable that *Fútbol Club Barcelona* is a mainstay of the front page of *La Vanguardia*,<sup>103</sup> with non-sporting themes such as American politics, the Spanish Royal Family and Jordi Pujol<sup>104</sup> being equally noteworthy.<sup>105</sup>

The first unit of analysis related to the overall prominence of the race in the paper. Did the race make the front page or not? The second unit of analysis also concerns prominence, but this time the relative prominence of the report in the sports section. How

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<sup>103</sup> I had not anticipated that the blanket coverage afforded *Barça* in other Catalan newspapers, such as the populist *El Periódico de Catalunya*, would be repeated in *La Vanguardia* to anything like the same degree.

<sup>104</sup> The historic leader of CiU, who governed the region throughout the period (1980-2003).

<sup>105</sup> It is unsurprising that the twin pillars of Catalonia and Spain appear so regularly, but it reflects a balance that seems to have disappeared in recent years.

often did *La Vuelta* lead this section? Above we saw that a modern “Deportes” section formed in the mid-1980s, moving towards the large and visually dominated sections that we find in today’s newspapers. Thus, regardless of what happened to *La Vuelta*, the sports section was evolving too - another factor that must be taken into account (although this modernisation occurred across all newspapers). *La Vuelta* led the sport section 75 times, or 13.3%, a low number given that it is an annual event that is concentrated in a short period of time. Football took precedence throughout the period, sometimes to an extraordinary degree where 12 pages of football led the section before any other sports came in (often on Mondays, after publication on this day was renewed in April 1982). This has been noted elsewhere in the literature, with one study finding 59.05% of the sports section of *La Vanguardia* dedicated to *Fútbol Club Barcelona* over a short period of time when three matches – or *clásicos* – against *Real Madrid* were played in one week (López & Garrido 2010).

Variation within the data across the longitudinal series shows us that *La Vuelta* led the sport section less often in the 1970s and 1980s before reaching a peak in the early 1990s. This peak in the early 1990s not only corresponds to that found in the front page unit of analysis, but also to a period where Spanish symbolism was at its zenith with the 1992 Olympic Games, the Seville World Expo and the quincentenary of the discovery of America all combining in a short period of time. Yet even at the height of this Spanish symbolism, a negotiation of identity was underway with the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona seeing an intricate balance between municipal, Catalan and Spanish identity (Hargreaves 1997, 2000). As was noted in the literature review, this period has also been marked as one that saw the re-emergence of a more confident Spanish nationalism

(Núñez Seixas 2005, pp. 130-138; Balfour & Quiroga 2007, pp. 109-110), an interesting parallel given these early results from *La Vanguardia*.

During the 1975-2000 period *La Vanguardia* published 1,005 articles, always including an article on the race when the newspaper was published (there were some periods, such as Easter, in which the paper did not appear for 2-3 days). There was a consistent rise across the period, with the average number of articles per decade growing from 18.8 in the 1970s, to 26.5 in the 1980s and 57.1 in the final decade. Thus as we move through the period there is a clear correlation between the distance from 1975 and the amount of articles published on the race. Moreover, *La Vuelta* seemingly became more newsworthy as we move through the period. It is possible to discern specific periods where more articles were published, with the rise across the period punctuated by several bursts of activity. The year 1985, for example, saw a distinct jump in the number of articles published, with 36 that year, up from 21 the year before. This demonstrates an important break for *La Vanguardia*, as it moved from a model of one article per day on the race to multiple articles. A further rise in the data occurred in 1991, with the number of articles moving from 29 the year before to 45, before a further jump to 61 in the Olympic year of 1992. This represents a second break in the data, concomitant with the enhanced cultural, political and sporting symbolism of 1992, and showing similarity with what we have found in the previous units of analysis of relative and absolute prominence.

The next unit of analysis, article size, was designed to control for variation in the data that could make article number unreliable, as explained in the methodology section. In order to present the data I have aggregated the size data for each day to present a yearly figure for article size i.e. if we get one full-page article for each day of *La Vuelta*,

ceteris paribus, we should get 21 (the number of stages in a race) as the aggregate total for that given year.<sup>106</sup> The general rise through the period that we have identified in article numbers, relational and absolute prominence, is again visible in this unit of analysis, giving us more evidence on the race's growth after 1975. In the 1970s *La Vanguardia* produced an average of 7.02 pages of content on the race per year, rising to 8.14 in the 1980s (a smaller rise than could be expected given the rise in other unit of analysis) and 21.15 in the 1990s (a more substantial increase). This doubling of content in the last decade of the analysis correlates with the doubling of article numbers we saw above. Thus the 1990s are a period when *La Vuelta* can be said to have been well covered in this newspaper, both in terms of the number and size of articles, as well as their placement within the sports section and on the front page (with some frequency). In this last decade *La Vuelta* held a considerable cachet even in this geographically peripheral newspaper that was moving towards an adoption of Catalanism. I had anticipated that *La Vanguardia* may have reported less as the two processes of *La Vuelta* becoming more focused on Madrid (and thus a Spanish symbol) after 1979 and *La Vanguardia* becoming more Catalan (with a movement towards Catalanism but never Catalan nationalism) after 1975 intertwined, but this is patently not the case. *La Vuelta* retained a high level of coverage in the 1990s, with an increasing incidence of the most important units of analysis (article size and article number) from 1975 to 2000. It is in comparison with the other datasets that we will be able to tease out the significance of this for regional and national identity and their formation in the post-Franco era, but initially we can conclude that *La Vuelta* was well-served by *La Vanguardia*.

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<sup>106</sup> The formula was to approximate the size of the report into a fraction, before collating the fractions to give the aggregate.

Above I have identified micro-periods within the data and again there is a noticeable peak in the 1991 to 1993 range with smaller peaks in 1983 and at the end of the period. This is commensurate with earlier data and confirms the trend of the rising incidence of units of analysis across time as well as the pooling of this into distinct micro-periods, such as 1991-1993. The two peaks in the article size data come in 1992 (25.1) and 1993 (26.8), being over 3.5 times that of the data for the start of the period in 1975 (7.6). This strong growth in the amount of content designated to *La Vuelta* in the period when Spain as a nation was being symbolised at many different levels suggests a correlated relationship that needs to be cross-referenced with the other newspapers.

Advertising as a unit of analysis allows us to gauge the economics of the race, with the number of adverts placed, the companies behind those adverts and which newspaper they are placed in, all represented. Advertising is central to modern professional cycling, as it is to most sports, and thus presents a particularly good opportunity to examine the strength of the race as a national symbol. The investment of large Spanish companies, for example, would allow us to posit that *La Vuelta* enjoyed sufficient status as a national symbol. On the other hand a low level of advertising with no national companies would suggest little symbolism. In *La Vanguardia* we find little advertising across the period with 47 adverts placed in the 25-year period under study i.e. less than 2 per edition. There are three mini-periods of increased advertising: firstly, between 1976-1978 (linked to local factors when a Catalan won *La Vuelta* and the race came to Barcelona), 1982-1984 (the rise of television) and 1991-1994 (which we have already seen as a symbolic triptych in contemporary Spanish history). Rather than being an increased level of advertising within a broader stable picture, these mini-periods represent the only time we see advertising in *La Vanguardia*, illustrating the low incidence of this unit of analysis in this newspaper.

There is a noticeable development from local advertising in the early period to national advertising in the later period as the race began to attract companies of a wider remit in the 1980s and 1990s. Between 1976 and 1978 the adverts are small, local and are explicitly linked to stages in and around the Catalan capital. Adverts from *El Mundo Deportivo*<sup>107</sup> typify this, with the advert used to introduce a local *fiesta* that was designed to accompany *La Vuelta*. The second period of advertising, roughly 1982-1984, is different in scale, encompassing national media companies such as *Cadena SER*<sup>108</sup> and *Antena 3*.<sup>109</sup> There are two main referents here, firstly the introduction of live television coverage in 1983, and secondly, the highly competitive media environment of the post-Franco period as liberalisation of the press, the radio network and finally television (regional channels were granted in the 1980s, private national networks in the 1990s) changed the media landscape in Spain. The main characteristics of this second period of advertising are an increased size of adverts placed, moving from 1/4 or 1/8 of a page to 1/2 and full page adverts, and the national, rather than local, provenance of the companies involved. The aggregate number of adverts also increased, with 8 adverts placed in the first period rising to 17 in the latter one. The numbers remain small, but the qualitative change in the adverts demonstrates the growth of the race beyond limited local environments i.e. a growing national symbol.

The third period of activity, between 1991 and 1994, can be linked to the Olympic and other national activities already mentioned above. This is a period that has been explored in terms of the politics of 1992 (Labanyi & Sánchez 1995, pp. 406-418), which gives a deeper societal background to the increase in this period. These four years see 22 adverts, again from national companies, which reaches almost half the number of adverts

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<sup>107</sup> A sport publication that eventually became part of the wider Godó group.

<sup>108</sup> Spain's largest and oldest radio network, based in Madrid but with extensive local programming.

<sup>109</sup> Formerly a radio station, but now better known as a TV channel.



placed in the entire period. The media companies *Cadena SER* (radio) and *Antena 3* (radio and television) advertise again, along with *Fiat* (who provide the auxiliary cars for the race) and to a lesser extent, *Gatorade*<sup>110</sup> and *Ibertext*<sup>111</sup>. In the transition from the first period to the second period we saw a move from local to national companies, with this third period introducing international companies, a further level that demonstrates the changes *La Vuelta* had undergone in this period as it benefitted from its re-organisation in 1979. While the low numbers make claims of statistical significance difficult, when taken with the other units of analysis they do provide empirical ballast to the overall patterns we have noted - a rise across time, punctuated into 3 clear periods.

Photographs, diagrams, maps and various other items of what I have termed visual media make up the last quantitative measure in my analysis. The most common examples include riders on the podium (with the *guapa*)<sup>112</sup> both for stage victories and the classic end-of-the-race photograph, a route map in the first article of each year which shows where the race is to go (although less prevalent than expected) and the altimetrical or topographical device for showing the metres to be climbed and distance travelled in any one stage (which although commonplace in cycling reportage today, only appeared from 25th April 1990 here). It is perhaps unsurprising to note that yet again we find a rise across time as the key characteristic of the data, with a very low starting point in 1975 (just 4 visual media in the whole edition) rising to a series peak in 1993 (60). The averages confirm this: the 1970s sees an average of 4 visual images per edition of the race (i.e. 4 images for around 20 reports for each year), rising to 13.6 in the 1980s and more vertiginously to 46.9 in the 1990s. Again micro-periods stand out with the low baseline of 2

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<sup>110</sup> A well-known sports drink that sponsored a cycling team and hence used adverts to capitalise on that exposure as it launched itself in Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

<sup>111</sup> An early form of teletext.

<sup>112</sup> Literally “pretty” or “beautiful” but means the podium girl.

visual images in 1982 becoming 17 in 1983, which seems to demonstrate the impact of live television coverage on the potential to produce visual imagery.

Another surge in the data comes at the end of the 1980s and start of the 1990s, with a rise from 25 visual images in 1989, to 38 in 1990, 46 in 1992, 53 in 1992 and the series peak of 60 in 1993. The slight diminution which then occurs, followed by another similar peak at the end of the period revalidates the findings from the other series whereby we have a rise across the period punctuated by three peaks: 1983, 1992 and the end of the period. While the previous data had hinted at wider changes it is visual media that best configures the idea that historical change within Spain and indeed wider society is a key factor, perhaps beyond and above that of national identity. It seems clear that at least in this unit of analysis the role of technological change is as important as any putative relationship with national identity, as the introduction of television coverage and the increased use of images and colour in this newspaper (*La Vanguardia* increased its visual content in a redesign in 1989, reacting to competition from the popular and image-led *El Periódico de Catalunya*)<sup>113</sup> and others led to a natural increase in visual media, regardless of the importance of that for any specific event. Yet, the series peak again comes in 1993 and in the flagging of identity visual images must play an important role, since these are the most easily identifiable representations of the nation. However, I had expected Spanish themes (flags, maps, pictures of local dignitaries) to be more prevalent than they were, making this unit of analysis less useful in this instance (although it may perhaps provide more in a different newspaper).<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> For a discussion of both newspapers and their histories and interaction see: Huertas & Alberch 1995; Guillaumet 1996.

<sup>114</sup> Visual analysis may provide more in pure sporting papers such as *Marca* or *AS*, rather than the broadsheets chosen for this project.

### III - Qualitative

Authorship is a complex unit of analysis since it leads to questions about the relative significance of an author vis-à-vis the line that the newspaper takes, a problem that is encompassed within wider discussions of journalist independence versus journalist interdependence in communities, professional organisations and political parties (Black. ed. 1997). While a political leader signed by the paper's editor may be easily taken as representing the paper, reports in the sports section differ from this, as they retain some autonomy as part of the 'special topic news' which is one step away from editorials (Bell 1991, p. 14). Yet it has been argued that as reporters and editors work together and authorship is more about collaboration (editing, use of agencies etc.) than a single author, articles contained within other non-editorial sections of the newspaper still represent the general view of that paper (Ibid, pp. 34-35), especially given Spain's polarised media landscape where political position is a primary attribute of broadsheets (Papatheodorou & Machin 2003).

Authorship, then, is a slightly different measure that was also examined throughout the period, with special focus on whether change can be linked directly to one author, or whether it was more widespread. Three main authors stand out in *La Vanguardia's* coverage: Enrique Canto with 99 articles or 17.58% from 1975-1979, Javier de Dalmasas with 87 articles (15.45%) from 1987-1990 and Xavier García Luque with 197 articles (34.9%) from 1984-2000 (with a few parentheses). Out of the whole period only 47 articles (8.34%) came from news agencies (both *Efe*,<sup>115</sup> the largest news agency in Spain, and the

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<sup>115</sup> The largest Spanish-language news agency.

rather indeterminate *Agencias*<sup>116</sup>), predominately between 1994-1995 and 1997-1998. This late turn to agency suggests less direct interest (through the employment of a correspondent) later in the period, which is important even though the number and size of articles was still increasing at this point. I was unable to determine the provenance of 94 articles (16.69%) and there were a number of other authors in the <10 area that are of negligible interest.

The 1975 to 1979 period started with the longstanding author Enrique Canto (he began covering La Vuelta in the early 1960s) who provided all coverage at this time. His writing is best pigeonholed by remembering the adjective suffixed to the newspaper's title at the time: *Española*. His work was characterised by the ubiquitous way in which he uses the possessive "nuestra/o"<sup>117</sup> to refer to the race (such as in "nuestra querida Vuelta"),<sup>118</sup> the riders and other such items, a distinctive and significant trait far less common in any of the other reports from other writers. This use of the possessive matches that found in Billig's day studies (Billig 1995, pp.93-109), since it assumes membership of the nation in question. Canto also played heavily on the juxtaposition of foreign and domestic riders, but this is not unique to him and is prevalent throughout the period. This leaves us with two separate levels of identity flagging within Canto's work: firstly, the basic one of Spanish or not Spanish, and then secondly, a further level which includes the possessive "our", a distinction we will return to later.

The difference between this foreign/domestic juxtaposition which was earlier highlighted as a key theme throughout the period and Canto's approximation of it is that Canto uses the possessive to refer to the Spaniards, something which is gradually lost as

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<sup>116</sup> [Agencies]. Probably *Efe*, which is Spain's biggest news agency and one of the biggest in the world.

<sup>117</sup> [Our].

<sup>118</sup> [Our beloved *Vuelta*]. *La Vanguardia*, 25th April 1978, p. 28.

we move through the period, and continually references the “nacional”<sup>119</sup> character of the race, as in: “La llegada de la ronda a nuestra región ha representado la primera victoria nacional y ésta en verdad que satisface”<sup>120</sup> or “González Linares, Autor de la Primera Victoria Nacional”<sup>121</sup>, the latter being a headline. This does not mean that Canto is uniquely positive about the race, with frequent critical comments, on weak participation, insipid racing and riders who ride for money rather than pride (a sign of how economics can supersede other factors such as nationality). It remains important to see the nuanced nature of Canto’s work, with a slightly more national appropriation visible, but not differing significantly from later writers in all respects, especially in terms of the foreign/domestic dichotomy and issues with participation, commercialisation and the quality of racing. He is critical when the need arises, but his widespread use of the possessive (and how this links to Billig’s theory of banal nationalism), taking hold or ownership of the race and his more emollient phrases (see below) signify a qualitatively different approach to that of later writers. It leads to a question: why did the possessive become less common in the 1980s and 1990s as *La Vanguardia* shifted from positive to neutral/negative commentary?

Emotive statements such as “Seguimos bordeando cada día nuestro querido mar azul que nos vio nacer”<sup>122</sup> are also part of Canto’s repertoire, a sign of the more romantic flagging of nationhood visible in Canto’s articles. His constant allusions to the passion of one region or another for cycling and the support that the race gets in this town or that province form a distinct pattern of writing that will later be replaced by the rather anodyne reports that say there were “good crowds”. The difference between his evocations of *La Vuelta* as it passed through Spain and that of the agency reports of the late 1990s is

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<sup>119</sup> [National].

<sup>120</sup> [The arrival of the race in our region has given the first national victory and that is what really satisfies]. 8th May 1976, *La Vanguardia*, p. 39.

<sup>121</sup> [González Linares, author of the first national victory]. 8th May 1976, *La Vanguardia*, p. 39.

<sup>122</sup> [We continue following our dear blue sea, that saw us be born]. 2nd May 1975, *La Vanguardia*, p. 33.

palpable. It is in this way that Canto introduces a key structuring theme in the history of *La Vuelta*, that of the race's involvement with the Basque Country. The positive comments that Canto directs towards the north in general (but mostly the Basque Country), are in complete contradiction to the fact that the race did not enter the Basque Country between 1979 and 2011 due to a series of threats, protests and other disturbances that led *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco* to drop the race in 1979. It is this inherent contradiction between a cycling race that grows in success, but is increasingly organised from and for Madrid, and the depth of cycling culture in Spain's outlying regions that lies behind the turn away from writers such as Canto to agency production in the 1990s. For *La Vanguardia*, we see a reduction in the qualitative (but not quantitative) importance given to *La Vuelta* as we move through the period. The comparison of this with other newspapers will allow us to measure the geographical and political reach of the race, which in this particular case, lessens qualitatively over time.

Other identities, beyond the local, regional and national ones noted above, can also be observed in the coverage. Previously in this chapter we have dealt with the domestic or national conception of identity flagged with "us" or "ours", but equally important is the foreign identity flagged in contradistinction of "them" or "theirs". This boundary between the domestic and the foreign, inasmuch as it reaffirms national identities, was cited above as a central feature of Billig's theory of banal nationalism (Billig 1995, pp. 70-73) and can be more generally included as a concept in the nationalism genre (for a discussion see: Triandafyllidou 1998). The headline "Colombianos, norteamericanos y soviéticos, exótico atractivo",<sup>123</sup> which leads the opening report on the 1985 edition, is illustrative of this boundary making between national and international participants in *La Vanguardia*,

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<sup>123</sup> [Colombians, Americans and Soviets, an exotic attraction]. *La Vanguardia*, 23rd April, 1985, p. 42.

furthering the flagging of identity already contained within local, regional and national guises.

After a period between 1981-1983 containing articles of unknown provenance the most prolific reporter in the period under study here (197 articles, 34.9%) comes to light, Xavier García Luque. Unlike the other two reporters studied here his period at the paper reporting on *La Vuelta* is not contiguous with three distinct periods: an early 1984-1986 period, a middle period of 1991-1993 and then closing out the period from 1997-2000 - almost concomitant with the micro-periods of heightened activity we have identified above in the quantitative units of analysis. Luque's coverage is similar to Canto's in that it follows the general themes of foreign and domestic juxtaposition (Billig's deixis), of weak participation (the race being "Huérfana...de grandes figuras extranjeras"),<sup>124</sup> of foreign riders ("extranjeros") and yet without Canto's frequent use of the possessive "nuestro/a".<sup>125</sup> A strongly critical attitude is prevalent throughout Luque's writing with phrases such as "otro caos organizativo"<sup>126</sup> being a *leitmotif* throughout his reports. This introduces a qualification on Canto's earlier writing which was far more positive and although the main themes are still present the reportage has moved rightwards in the positive-neutral-negative spectrum, especially in regards to comments on the organisation of the race (which was now based in Madrid, instead of Bilbao).

The organisational incompetence angle of Xavier Luque's commentary feeds into wider comparisons with the other main European three-week races - *Il Giro d'Italia* and *Le Tour de France* - which are found to be "muy por encima de La Vuelta".<sup>127</sup> This negative

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<sup>124</sup> [Without great foreign stars]. *La Vanguardia*, 20th May, 1991, p. 12.

<sup>125</sup> [Our] (Masculine/Feminine).

<sup>126</sup> [More organisational chaos]. *La Vanguardia*, 7th May, 1984, p. 32.

<sup>127</sup> [Well above]. *La Vanguardia*, 20th April, 1984, p. 29.

way of structuring *La Vuelta* was commonplace after Enrique Canto was succeeded by Xavier Luque and continues throughout the period as the race is seen to be inferior to those in Italy and France. The timing of this negative comparative tendency, after the race has moved to Madrid and after *La Vanguardia* has begun to react to the emergence of a renewed Catalan public sphere under Jordi Pujol's *CiU* leads me to tentatively link these events. As *La Vuelta* became centralised and *La Vanguardia* became more Catalan did the race lose its earlier lustre? There is some positive reporting too, as in 1985 we see the assertion that: "La Vuelta está recuperando el prestigio perdido", which illustrates how the introduction of live television coverage is seen in the qualitative as well as quantitative units of analysis.<sup>128</sup> The coverage is neither solely negative nor solely positive, but the particular mix of both sides does tend to move towards the former as we move through the period - despite the race becoming more successful by a number of secular factors (budget, number of riders, number of teams, media exposure) and receiving more overall coverage in *La Vanguardia*.

In the final report on the 1991 edition we see a literal example of the movements in the structuring of identity that we have noted above (a burgeoning Catalan public sphere that *La Vanguardia* is reacting to by becoming more Catalan). In this year the race was won by a Catalan, Melcior Mauri - the first Catalan to win since Josep Pesarrodona in 1976 (how *ABC* and *El País* defined his national identity will be seen later) in a race that spent significant amounts of time in the *Països Catalans*.<sup>129</sup> Intriguingly Mauri's comments on winning the race were printed verbatim in Catalan as part of the headline: Marui: "Sóc

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<sup>128</sup> [The Vuelta is recuperating its lost prestige]. *La Vanguardia*, 13th May 1985, p. 20.

<sup>129</sup> [Catalan countries]. Generally taken to mean Andorra, the Balearic Islands, Catalonia, Roussillon (within France and also known as *Catalunya Nord* or northern Catalonia), Valencia and a thin border strip within Aragón called *La Franja* (the strip), although its meaning can change given the context and situation i.e. political versus linguistic conceptions. The Italian city of Alghero, in Sardinia, can also be included as it contains a significant minority of Catalan speakers.



l'home més feliç del món".<sup>130</sup> This demonstrates the slow evolution of *La Vanguardia* towards the usage of Catalan (which would be cemented by the publication of twin Catalan/Spanish editions from May 2011) and the flagging of Catalan identity that would ensue. This is a small example within a wider dataset where Spanish identity is flagged on a majority of occasions. However it does demonstrate that a sense of Catalan identity became noticeable in *La Vanguardia* after 1975, although mostly as dual identity (Catalan and Spanish) that has often been cited in the literature and less in the mononational form that we are likely to see later in *Avui*. This small significant step is mitigated by the negative comments that *La Vanguardia* bookends the report with as the lack of quality foreign stars is noted, demeaning Mauri's victory. This was not a celebration of Catalonia *per se*, but a sign of how Catalonia and *La Vanguardia* had changed since the death of Franco.

Another common theme in Xavier Luque's coverage is money. He frequently cites the cost of organising the race, from stage starts, to sponsoring teams, to prize money and television coverage.<sup>131</sup> This focus is most prominent in his phrase: "La Vuelta sube y sube"<sup>132</sup> which is a caustic remark on how *La Vuelta* is becoming bigger, both financially as well as in a sporting sense. In another key sentence: "con el habitual y generoso despliegue de medios de TVE"<sup>133</sup> we see an example of how state television coverage is seen as "generous" - perhaps too generous for a race that is not at the same level of its European cousins (with TVE actually utilising French state television equipment at this time). This is redolent of the general critical tone outlined above and raises a rhetorical question left for the reader: Why such attention for a race that's far from the level of its

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<sup>130</sup> [I'm the happiest guy on earth]. *La Vanguardia*, 20th May, 1991, p. 12.

<sup>131</sup> A refrain that oddly ties in with the stereotype of Catalans as being overly concerned by money, or *peseteros* as it is in Spanish.

<sup>132</sup> [La Vuelta grows and grows]. *La Vanguardia*, 22nd April, 1986, p. 62.

<sup>133</sup> [With the habitual and generous coverage from TVE]. *La Vanguardia*, 2nd September, 1995, p. 25.

peers? Analytically it raises another: is it not an oxymoron that a reporter who is part of providing the raised level of coverage complains about the very nature of it? And further: it is this derogatory tone that seems to encompass much of the coverage given by Luque and indeed all of the post-Canto reporters. It is not that their coverage is wholly negative, but that it strongly tends towards being critical. *La Vuelta* slips from the emotional positive tone of Canto in early editions of *La Vanguardia* to a more negative outlook - seen here in Luque's comments on money, on comparisons and on state television coverage as the race became less a regional antidote to Madrid, more a centralised symbol of post-Franco Spain.

A prescient comment is made in the 1992 edition, whereby the notion is introduced that firms value investment in cycling because it offers a symbol of sacrifice without the local rivalries that infuse football:

“El patrocinio de equipos ciclistas es apreciado porque este deporte ofrece una idea de sacrificio y porque no conlleva sentimientos locales exacerbados, contrariamente a lo que ocurre con los equipos de fútbol. El ciclismo nunca despierta fobias”<sup>134</sup>

Huge investments by leading Spanish companies, with *Banesto* (1990-2005)<sup>135</sup> and *ONCE* (1989-2003)<sup>136</sup> among the most important, were made in cycling in the 1990s, a demonstration of how cycling had become nationally important at that time (with *La Vuelta* only one part of the wider cycling equation). Cycling does not have the same sense of

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<sup>134</sup> [The sponsoring of cycling teams is valued because this sport offers an idea of sacrifice and does not bring excessive local feelings with it, in comparison with what happens in local football teams. Cycling never triggers phobias]. *La Vanguardia*, 15th May, 1992, p. 3.

<sup>135</sup> A major Spanish bank now owned by Santander.

<sup>136</sup> Spanish National Organisation for the Blind, which runs the major lotteries in Spain.

micro-locality inherent in football (where clubs are based geographically in one locale - city, town, suburb), although a sense of regional and local identity is visible below the purely national. In the newly decentralised Spain an array of teams, races and sponsorships were created by and linked to the 17 *Comunidades Autónomas* or Autonomous Communities, usually co-funded by the local *Caja* or saving bank, which brought an additional level of regional identity.

The regional/national dynamic is shown in an interview which Luque conducts with the *directeur sportif*<sup>137</sup> of *CLAS-Cajastur* (who won the 1992 Vuelta with a Swiss rider, Tony Rominger), with the key quote being: “es un equipo con patria”.<sup>138</sup> The team were based on the Spanish region of Asturias and started by an ex-professional rider, José Manuel Fuente, from Asturias with backing from the *Central Lechera Asturiana* and the *Caja de Ahorros de Asturias*.<sup>139</sup> An Asturian rider - backed by Asturian companies - in an Asturian team. However the fact that their main rider was Swiss highlights how even teams with a clear regional basis are not uniquely based on that identity.<sup>140</sup> The period in which the team were active between 1988 and 1993 coincides with the main activities of the *ONCE* and *Banesto* teams cited above and also the leap in quantitative units of analysis that we saw in an earlier section. This is yet further proof of how cycling had developed by the 1990s to encompass national and regional investment of a level far superior to that seen earlier in the period. The example *par excellence* of the regional/national link is the *Euskaltel-Euskadi* team. Active from 1994 to 2013 and based in the Basque Country, they drew only from Basque riders (including the three main Basque provinces as well as

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<sup>137</sup> [Sporting director].

<sup>138</sup> [It's a team with identity]. *La Vanguardia*, 18th May 1992, p. 10.

<sup>139</sup> An Asturian dairy company and an Asturian savings bank, respectively.

<sup>140</sup> It is perhaps best to understand this in light of the new professional cycling squad SKY, who have a core of British riders within a larger squad made up of other nationalities. The British identity of the squad is not in question, but other economic and political incentives (they hire Italian riders to race in Italy due to the company's presence there) intrude upon the British nature of the squad.

Navarre and the French Basque Country)<sup>141</sup> and were underpinned by extensive investment from provincial and regional levels of government as well as the supporter-led model of *Fútbol Club Barcelona*.<sup>142</sup> Other teams in the period – e.g. Fuenlabrada, Kelme, KAS - also illustrate regional linkages, basing themselves in a region and drawing their main funding from companies in that region.<sup>143</sup> The funding that some of these teams drew from autonomous community governments, shows how the regional, just as much as the national, was part of the process of identity flagging in Spanish cycling and *La Vuelta*.

Between 1987 and 1990 Javier de Dalmases wrote the reports. Brought in from the sport newspaper *El Mundo Deportivo* (part of the same stable as *La Vanguardia*) he produced 87 (15.45%) articles over the four-year period. Using a reporter from a sister newspaper, at the same time that the two newspapers were moulded into a media conglomerate, provides an illustration of the wider process of liberalisation of the media developed in the 1980s and 1990s. As with between Canto and Luque, de Dalmases' coverage does not change radically from what has been before with the same themes of weak participation, foreign/domestic juxtaposition and negative cross-border comparisons. The final report in the 1989 edition highlights the unfavourable comparison of *La Vuelta* and *Le Tour* by setting out the differential way in which the city of Segovia celebrated at an institutional and personal level Pedro Delgado's (a son of the city) triumph in *Le Tour* in 1988 far more than his triumph in *La Vuelta* in 1989 i.e. the foreign victory allegedly saw more celebration due to the event being higher up the sporting hierarchy. It is another sign of the deprecatory tone which can be found in *La Vanguardia* as the coverage developed

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<sup>141</sup> There was a small amount of wriggle room, with riders who had ridden at junior and u23 level in the Basque Country also qualifying for a ride even if they had not been born in the region.

<sup>142</sup> Members or *socios* sign up for a nominal sum acting as a donation for the team, a similar model to that of *Fútbol Club Barcelona*.

<sup>143</sup> The main funding sources were the regional governments themselves or the *Cajas* or saving banks, although the regional government money could sometimes be routed through a particular department, such as Tourism.

from the early positive emotional content of Enrique Canto. The quantitative section saw a rise across most units of analysis throughout the period and yet the qualitative section has seen a movement from positive to negative commentary - two developments in two opposing directions. What does this mean for the ability of *La Vuelta* to act as a symbol of banal nationality as it became more prevalent in the newspaper, but increasingly negatively reported?

#### **IV - Conclusion**

While there were elements of this analysis that I had anticipated, such as the negative tone used, especially in the later years, the rise across time in most quantitative units of analysis had not been part of this. Starting with the quantitative side it remains clear that there is a general rise through the period, in almost all indices, punctuated by three main clusters: 1983, 1992, and 1999. From a slow start coverage of *La Vuelta* grew first in 1983, followed by a relatively more vertical ascent in the early 1990s. The impact of live television coverage in 1983 and the wider Spanish symbolism of 1992 is clearly represented in the quantitative units of analysis, although the peak in 1999 needs some explanation. The huge rise in average article numbers, from 18.8 in the 1970s, to 26.5 in the 1980s and 57.1 in the 1990s gives an indication to how coverage of the race grew over the period. Although some of this rise can be explained by the implementation of new technology and by extension the expansion of the number of pages included in the paper, it is undeniable that a change in the visibility of *La Vuelta* occurred in this period. From being a race that was worth one article per day in the 1970s we saw a rise to a series peak of 101 articles in 1999, a growth that allows us to conclude that *La Vuelta* was a national symbol even in this Catalan differential strand of Spanish nationalism.

Early in the period Enrique Canto stated that “La Vuelta a España siempre es noticia”<sup>144</sup> and this remained true throughout the period. Yet the change from the early positive and emotional writing of this writer, particularly in his comprehensive usage of the possessive (“nuestro/a”), is displaced by a more neutral/negative tone that is often critical of the race, of its organisation, of its comparative merits and of its participation. The possessive descends in usage as the race becomes less “ours” and more “theirs” although there is some evocation of a parallel Catalan identity given the Catalan quoted from Melcior Mauri in 1991. While *La Vuelta* was always news it was rarely important news even within the sport section and it is this that leads me to conclude that while we saw more articles we did not see a concurrent growth in affinity with the race i.e. quantity but not quality. *La Vuelta* may well have inculcated a sense of Spanish statewide national identity in some areas, but this is less visible in the reports of *La Vanguardia* as we move from 1975 to 2000 despite a numerical rise in the quantitative units of analysis across the period. A period of heightened information without heightened interest, which now needs to be put into context by bringing in the next analysis, that of the conservative Spanish *ABC*, as we seek to answer the main research questions that drive this study.

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<sup>144</sup> [La Vuelta a España is always newsworthy]. *La Vanguardia*, 23rd April 1975, p. 42.

## 5 - ABC

### I - Introduction

The stridently conservative *ABC* newspaper is a longstanding referent in the Spanish press landscape, one of only two titles included here that both predated and survived Francoism. A solid supporter of the monarchy, broadly successful and yet not unable to move with the times, *ABC* speaks to the conservative heart of Spain. Founded on 1st January 1903 it is now the oldest extant newspaper published in Madrid - with the other main papers based there, *El País* (1976) and *El Mundo* (1989), being part of the new post-Franco media sphere. Until the arrival of *El Mundo* in 1989 *ABC* was the second most successful newspaper after *El País*, making it central to any analysis of this period. Located on the right of the political spectrum *ABC*'s support for *Alianza Popular* (AP), and later the *Partido Popular* (PP), during our period was unwavering. As a staunchly monarchist organ of the political right this newspaper thus provides the connection to the conservative central Spanish half of *las dos Españas*.<sup>145</sup> Its inclusion here pertains to what has been termed the 'Spanish national' strand of Spanish nationalism,<sup>146</sup> allowing us to gauge the symbolic strength of *La Vuelta* in this particular constituency.

A restating of the research question may help to situate this chapter: Did *La Vuelta Ciclista a España* act as an informal symbol of Spanish nationalism in the post-Franco period? Further, what were the chronological, geographical and political particularities of this? It was expected that coverage of *La Vuelta* in *ABC* would be not only more copious than that of *La Vanguardia*, but also demonstrate a stronger and more orthodox

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<sup>145</sup> [The Two Spains] The exact phrase comes from a poem by Antonio Machado, however the idea of a conservative Spain and a Liberal Spain is prevalent throughout modern Spanish history.

<sup>146</sup> See: León Solís (2003).

mononational flagging of identity. The key trends taken from *La Vanguardia* of a general rise across the period, perhaps formed into readily identifiable peaks of activity, were expected to be present. However, a more pronounced tendency to report, narrate and cherish Spanish involvement and success was thought likely to be the most important theme within *ABC*, fully concordant with its political and geographical makeup.

In a general consideration of *ABC* over the entire 1975 to 2000 period we find both similarities and differences with *La Vanguardia*. Instead of the Catalan paper's constant citations of *Fútbol Club Barcelona* and *Sant Jordi*<sup>147</sup> we see *Real Madrid* and *San Isidro*<sup>148</sup> as *ABC*'s cultural referents. With *San Isidro* being the patron saint of the city of Madrid, but *Sant Jordi* instead representing Catalonia as a country, we see the emergence of a local Madrid aspect, introducing a third level of identity beyond the regional and national. *ABC* is a national newspaper with two regional editions - Seville and Madrid (the one used for the analysis) - but the localised nature of some of the reporting shows how national newspapers may be more metropolitan than national at times, an attribute to bear in mind when assessing the insertion of a newspaper across the whole of the country.<sup>149</sup> As the race shifted from the Basque newspaper *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco* to the Spanish company *Unipublic*, Madrid became the traditional stage finish for the race - which *ABC* covered as both local and national. In structural terms *ABC*'s traditional design characterises its whole delivery with the front page highly divergent from that of *La Vanguardia* in that the former only carried one picture and story whereas the latter carried multiple stories (making *La Vuelta* less likely to appear on *ABC*'s front page).

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<sup>147</sup> [Saint George]. Patron saint of Catalonia [and England as well as a number of other countries.

<sup>148</sup> The patron saint of Madrid.

<sup>149</sup> This has already been found for the United Kingdom, see: Rosie et al 2004; MacInnes et al 2007.



## II - Quantitative

Between 1975 and 2000 *ABC* published 1,329 articles on *La Vuelta Ciclista a España*, an average of 51 articles per edition of the race. The comparable figures for *La Vanguardia* were 1,005 articles, at a fewer 38 articles per edition, making *ABC* the clear leader at this point. The average number of articles per decade is also higher for *ABC* across all periods (36, 43, 65.4 vs. 18.8, 26.5, 57.1). Thus at an early stage we can confirm that *La Vuelta* was more newsworthy in this Spanish central conservative newspaper and thus more likely to act as an effective symbol of Spanish nationhood. Moreover *ABC* shows the same tendency as *La Vanguardia* for a rise across the period, albeit in a less marked way than the latter due to a higher starting point (1975 saw *La Vanguardia* publish 19 articles, and *ABC* 62, a figure the former would not reach until 1993). Given that for the 1977 edition I was unable to obtain numerical data for approximately half the reports due to archival issues the numerical lead shown by *ABC* is even more impressive.<sup>150</sup>

The article size unit of analysis correlates strongly with the figures for article number as *ABC* contained 583.57 pages of content over the entire period against 349.2 pages in *La Vanguardia*. As with article number *ABC* consistently leads the Catalan newspaper in article size (13.1, 19.4 and 29.5 vs. 7, 8 and 21.6) for each decade with the Spanish newspaper averaging 22.4 pages of content per year and the Catalan newspaper roughly half that at 13.4. Taking these two units of analysis together we can identify a number of trends between the two papers. The increase over time in both article size and article number demonstrates that *La Vuelta* became more prevalent in the press over the period,

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<sup>150</sup> The digital archives used for *ABC* were incomplete for the 1977 edition, with around half of the issues missing and/or illegible. I was unable to locate an alternative source for the data.

suggesting it became more of a national symbol as we move towards 2000. The numerical advantage that *ABC* holds over *La Vanguardia* is also suggestive of where *La Vuelta* was relatively more strong as a national symbol in this period, linked to important changes in the structure of the race as it moved from Bilbao to Madrid. This is largely in line with expectations, but we may yet encounter deviations or exceptions that could substantially alter the perception of *La Vuelta* as a symbol that is weaker in the periphery. As for *La Vanguardia* not a single day passed without a report on *La Vuelta* (except for designated public holidays such as Easter) demonstrating its importance as a national symbol across both readerships and their constituent social milieu.

In the previous chapter we identified a number of peaks in the data suggesting that although the race saw more reportage as we moved through the period, that this could be organised into periods where the race was more relevant and periods where it was less so. These peaks are fundamentally repeated in the *ABC* data making them more general in nature than we could claim with data from only one newspaper – key to any suggestion of wide national symbolism. The peaks around 1983 and 1992 are replicated here with two further areas of interest, one at the start of the period (around 1975/76) and another at the end (1999/2000). We have already seen how *La Vuelta* resonated on a national scale in the pre-1975 period and the data from *ABC* seem to validate this with 62 articles in 1975 and 46 in 1976 before a more prosaic 31 in 1977. Article size follows this with 23 pages of content in 1975, 13.6 in 1976 and 10.9 in 1977. These high readings for the units of analysis seem to represent the last part of *La Vuelta*'s first Golden Age with *ABC* not featuring similar numbers until 1982/83. Another peak not as prevalent in the data for *La Vanguardia* comes at the end of the period, probably related to technical innovations in the

route and increased Spanish success, but I do not possess the data for the subsequent period to fully situate this.

Turning from quantity to quality we will now examine how many times *La Vuelta* appeared on the front page of *ABC* as well as how many times it led the sporting section. As we saw for *La Vanguardia*, these locational units of analysis allow us to examine the relative position of the race vis-à-vis other sporting and non-sporting news as well as to measure the symbolism of the race since a report's symbolism is strongly correlated to its position in the newspaper. The race did not make the front page of *ABC* often appearing only twice before 1983 (and the advent of full television coverage) and five times subsequently. This compares poorly with the 41 times that *La Vuelta* featured as a front page news item in *La Vanguardia* showing that Catalan papers could lead Spanish papers in certain factors. The difference can largely be explained structurally, however, with *ABC* having a traditional front page featuring one news story (normally politics) and *La Vanguardia* having a more modern design whereby many stories were featured. *La Vuelta* rarely featured as the first story in the Catalan paper and for *ABC* if *La Vuelta* was not the primary story for that day then it did not make the front page skewing the statistics for this particular unit of analysis. Only with the addition of the analysis on *El País*, which was similar to *La Vanguardia* in design, will we be able to fully understand these results.

A recent study (López & Garrido 2012, p. 468) found that in the week leading up to a football match between *Real Madrid* and *Fútbol Club Barcelona* – commonly known as *El Clásico* – 41.96 per cent of coverage in the sport section of a number of major newspapers was dedicated to this event, rising to 50.97 per cent in *El País* and 59.05 per

cent in *La Vanguardia*.<sup>151</sup> Cycling, rarely, if ever, will generate a similar amount of content and yet the location of the report in the sport section does provide us with information on the relative importance that the newspaper gives *La Vuelta*. Here *ABC* is slightly above *La Vanguardia* with *La Vuelta* leading the sport section 82 times over the entire period, as for 75 in the Catalan paper. Although broadly similar a few differences can be seen in the chronological development of this unit of analysis. The Spanish newspaper records a lower number of times for *La Vuelta* leading the sport section before 1983 than *La Vanguardia*, only 5 times in *ABC* against 18 times for the Catalan paper. The inverse is then true in the subsequent period after 1983, with *La Vuelta* leading the sport section 77 times in *ABC* against 57 for *La Vanguardia*.

Both newspapers featured the race more often as a leading article in the sport section as we move through the period, but the chronological development of this and the relative position on the two newspapers can help us to begin to answer some of the more fundamental questions posed at the start of this thesis. There are two important structuring elements here which could affect coverage, firstly the shift from region to centre, and secondly the development of modern television coverage from 1983. This first change seems to explain why *La Vuelta* led the sport section more often in *La Vanguardia* in the 1970s than in the 1980s, since the race was then organised on a regional axis and co-sponsored by the newspaper *El Mundo Deportivo* (later bought by *La Vanguardia*'s media parent *Grupo Godó*). The second change relating to increased television coverage (including more hours, better production, enhanced advertising revenue and a professionalised ethos) probably explains the quadrupling of incidence in this unit of analysis for *ABC* as the race became more prevalent vis-à-vis other sports. These

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<sup>151</sup> Football is known (Shaw 1987, p. 70; González 2004, pp. 271-180) to dominate the sporting pages of Spanish broadsheets (as well as their UK counterparts), but this shows the extent to which content is dominated by just two teams.

changes illustrate how *La Vuelta* became a national symbol on a broad scale, in this period leading the sport section independent of the newspaper's location in the state, but also how this can be separated territorially and chronologically. The strong regional axis of the race was lost in the 1980s and the race, although reported widely in both Catalonia and Spain, became relatively more important in the latter after 1983.

The visual media unit of analysis largely follows the pattern set for the previous unit of analysis analysed here, with a growth over time in *ABC* interspersed by peaks in 1975/76, 1983, 1992 and the end of the period. The analysis recorded 705 graphical representations across the whole period in *ABC*, compared with 672 in *La Vanguardia*, making them broadly comparable. The growth of visual media fits into a historical period where a rapidly changing technological and media landscape increased the number of pages in a newspaper as well as the graphical material that could be contained within them (Papatheodorou & Machin 2003, p. 32-33). Television, as well as new image-heavy competitor publications such as *El Periódico de Catalunya* and to a lesser extent *El Mundo*, pushed older newspapers into an overhaul of their infrastructure and design. However, beyond this the unit of analysis does not offer much in terms of the national symbolism in graphical form that I originally considered it would register, a finding that if replicated across the whole dataset would make me reject this unit of analysis for any future study.<sup>152</sup> The rich data that I had supposed would come from this unit of analysis was actually more prevalent in the advertising unit of analysis, which we will now assess.

In a simple numerical comparison the 279 adverts contained within *ABC* hugely outnumber the 47 from *La Vanguardia*. The size of this discrepancy can be seen by the

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<sup>152</sup> The implications of this are discussed in the final chapter.

fact that in 1990 *ABC* carried more adverts (49) than *La Vanguardia* managed in the entire period, a sign of where companies saw the economic benefits of placing their adverts. Advertising, like earlier units of analysis for *ABC*, seems closely correlated to the arrival of full television coverage, with 9 adverts coming before 1983 and 270 afterwards. The linkage between television and advertising here, comparable to that for *La Vanguardia*, highlights the importance of this medium for modern sports and also allows us to understand the national symbolism of *La Vuelta* at an economic level. Without data from *El País* and *Avui* we cannot conclude on this finding, but we can intimate that it is strong evidence for an elevated national symbolism in central Spain that existed at a different level to that of Catalonia. *La Vanguardia* did produce coverage, particularly strongly in the pre-1983 period, but the strength of the lead in the advertising unit of analysis for *ABC* suggests that while *La Vuelta* was broadly reported on throughout Spain, there were clear demarcations as to the strength of this following and the economic impetus that companies thought could be derived from being associated with it.

In *La Vanguardia* we had seen a low level of advertising across the period, again structured around a jump in adverts after 1983, with local companies being replaced by national companies as we moved forward from 1975. Adverts in *La Vanguardia* had also been strictly limited in their timeframe, with adverts only appearing in 10 out of the 26 years, leaving 16 entire editions of *La Vuelta* without a single advert placed in *La Vanguardia*. The Spanish newspaper *ABC*, on the other hand, received adverts in all but 5 years of the period, all before the advent of full television coverage (1975-1978 and 1982). Significant breadth was also visible in the overall number of companies advertising in the papers, with 23 in *ABC* as for only 6 in *La Vanguardia*. Similar companies advertised in both papers, with the main companies in the Catalan paper – *SER*, *Antena 3* and *Fiat* –

also featuring in the Spanish one. These adverts were also placed at a similar time, at least at the beginning of the period. The main difference, however, is that these companies continued to advertise in *ABC*, increasing the number of adverts over time, but dropped their advertising from *La Vanguardia*.

If we examine 1983/84 *La Vanguardia* received 3 adverts from *SER* and 12 from *Antena 3* with *ABC* receiving a similar 8 from *SER* and 3 from *Antena 3*. Up to this point the newspapers had received a comparable number of adverts, but the post-1983 situation would lead to a rebalancing whereby advertising grew vertiginously in *ABC* while disappearing almost completely from *La Vanguardia*. Again the role of television coverage should be noted, coupled with the introduction of the Catalan television station *TV3* that drew Catalan audiences away from Spanish state television. In the 6 years following this date *ABC* would go on to receive a further 61 adverts from *Antena 3* and 25 from *SER*, while *La Vanguardia* would receive no further advertising from either. Advertising from other companies, especially the religious conservative radio station *COPE*, adds a political dimension, showing how broader media conglomerates can come to dominate how a particular person experiences a given event.<sup>153</sup>

This stark division between the two newspapers, far more pronounced than in most other units of analysis, is of substantial significance to the research questions posed above. The importance of the change in organisation from Bilbao to Madrid has already been noted previously as has the belated introduction of full television coverage, but it is this advertising unit of analysis that really establishes the main themes in this thesis. The imbalance between the papers in numerical terms suggests that companies saw *ABC*, at

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<sup>153</sup> Both *ABC* and *COPE* are part of the *Vocento* media group.

least and probably by extension *El País* (which we will see later), as the preferred conduit for adverts linked to *La Vuelta*. On the other hand *La Vanguardia* was not seen as a viable option for advertising linked to Spain's national cycling tour to anything like the same degree. This economic logic demonstrates that central Spain was thought to be far more involved in *La Vuelta* and thus its national symbolism can be thought of as higher in this area of Spain. Advertising also appeared in *La Vanguardia*, which I use to represent the main territorial cleavage in Spain, but the paucity of this across time vis-à-vis that found for *ABC* suggests a clear demarcation in the relative strength of the national symbolism of *La Vuelta*.

Apart from the prominence unit of analysis, measuring front-page coverage for *La Vuelta*, which can be explained structurally, we have found a clear quantitative preponderance in favour of *ABC* over *La Vanguardia*. The units of analysis of article size, article number, relative prominence, visual media and advertising all point to the conclusion that *La Vuelta*, while broadly reported on by both newspapers, was relatively more visible in *ABC*, which is in line with my original assumptions. The peaks in data coincide to a great degree, as does the general trend for growth in units of analysis across time, illustrating how *La Vuelta* became generally more successful and visible as we move through the period. The substantial, significant and sustained lead for *ABC* across all units of analysis, however, points to an important divergence between Catalonia and Spain in this first instance, one that will need to be confirmed in the two remaining chapters before any firm conclusions can be made. The economic basis of the advertising unit of analysis points firmly to the race having a far stronger imprint in central Spain than in Catalonia, an important territorial division that represents an inversion of how the race was formerly



organised in the pre-1979 period. We will now move into the qualitative data to further explore these incipient trends.

The data from *La Vanguardia* exhibited a strong bias towards a dedicated correspondent throughout the early and middle periods, with agency usage only appearing in the mid 1990s as the paper provided heightened information without heightened interest. The early period in particular illustrated the strong connection between a dedicated correspondent who travelled with the race and positive commentary, a linkage strengthened by the regional basis of the race in the pre-1979 era. Yet for *ABC* the picture is highly distinct, with extensive agency coverage in the 1975-1983 era before a move to a dedicated correspondent that would last for the remaining part of the period. In the early pre-television period *ABC* used agencies to provide for 68.5 per cent of its coverage, with only 13 per cent of articles directly authored and the rest of unknown provenance.<sup>154</sup> This uneven balance between agency and correspondent would be overturned after 1983 when 98 per cent of coverage was provided via correspondent and only 0.8 per cent via agency, with the remaining again of unknown provenance.

For 8 out of 9 years between 1975 and 1983 *ABC* provided an introduction by a named correspondent (Ventura Gilera) for the first day of each edition of *La Vuelta* before utilising agency content for the rest of the event. Gilera, however, did not travel with the race, instead producing copy from *ABC*'s main office in Madrid, a sign of the lack of importance given to *La Vuelta* before 1984. Enrique Canto, on the other hand, had always provided a physical connection to the race for *La Vanguardia*, a role he had been fulfilling since the early 1960s. The Spanish newspaper would make the change in 1984, a year

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<sup>154</sup> A number of articles across all papers were of unknown provenance in the early period, with attributed authorship (by agency or correspondent) becoming dominant from the 1980s.

after full television coverage was instigated, never returning to the reliance on agency provision of previous years.<sup>155</sup> The correlation between the television revolution and *ABC*'s change in authorship should be noted, a link already evident in previous units of analysis, but above all it was the correspondent chosen by *ABC* to lead their coverage that hints at the importance that the paper would now give to the race.

Jorge Castroverde led the 1984 coverage, as *ABC* switched from agency to correspondent, but it was the arrival of Chico Pérez a year later that signalled the paper's complete overhaul of how it approached the race. Pérez led the coverage between 1985 and 1991, presiding over a period that also saw a sharp increase across the board for the quantitative units of analysis. Advertising, especially, grew significantly in this period, rising from 7 adverts in 1983 and 1984 to 17 for 1985 and 28 for 1986 before reaching a series peak of 49 in 1990. Chico Pérez was the leading cycling commentator within Spain at this time, publishing a book on *La Vuelta* in 1985 that forms one of only two books that have been published on the race in Spanish since 1935.<sup>156</sup> Pérez would go on to found *Bicisport*, the premier Spanish cycling magazine, as well as having an amateur race, the *Trofeo Chico Pérez*, named after him in his home town of Parla (on the outskirts of Madrid). The Spanish newspaper *ABC*, then, did not only move from agency to authorship, but employed one of the foremost cycling journalists in Spain at this time, a huge shift in emphasis. Pedro Delgado, a Spanish cyclist who became a popular public figure in the 1980s, had first emerged in 1984 and we will see in the qualitative section how it was a combination of these factors (extended live television coverage, star riders and acclaimed correspondents) that led to broad national symbolism for *La Vuelta*.

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<sup>155</sup> Agencies were used at times to provide supplementary material, although this was rare after 1984.

<sup>156</sup> The lack of books published on *La Vuelta* in Spanish (as well as in other languages) shows the limitations of its growth, with no book published since 1986. Books have, however, been published on aspects of Spanish cycling, such as histories of cycling in the Basque country and rider biographies e.g. *Historia del Ciclismo en el País Vasco* (Bodegas & Dorronsoro 1996). *A Golpe de Pedal* (Delgado & Redondo 1995).

There is a wider point to be made here, since it is not the singular manifestation of *ABC* that we are interested in, but its comparative behaviour vis-à-vis *La Vanguardia* (and other newspapers as we build our dataset). In the same year that *ABC* employed its first ever dedicated correspondent, *La Vanguardia* divested of Enrique Canto and turned to Xavier García Luque, who as we have already seen, produced a far more removed and neutral, bordering on negative at times, commentary. This is a further demonstration of the quantitative findings whereby *La Vanguardia* showed a strong interest in the race in the 1970s, an interest that was less marked in *ABC*, particularly as no dedicated correspondent was employed to follow the race's journey through Spain. The Spanish paper may have held a quantitative lead for much of the earlier period, but this was not matched by the provision of a dedicated correspondent, a key factor in measuring the importance that a newspaper gives to an event. The quality of coverage in *La Vanguardia* was higher in this earlier period, illustrating an important divergence between Catalan and Spanish newspapers that would be reversed after the commencement of full television coverage in 1983 and the earlier organisational changes in 1979. We will now examine the textual part of the analysis to see if this trend is more widely evidenced.

### **III - Qualitative**

In the introduction to this chapter we noted the strong local aspect in *ABC*, with Madrid and *San Isidro* replacing the Barcelona and *Sant Jordi* themes that we had seen in *La Vanguardia*. Beyond this we need to establish the general pattern of coverage in the newspaper, how this compares with *La Vanguardia* and particular elements of coverage that help us to formulate a basis from which to answer the research questions, such as any flagging of the homeland that is present and how *ABC* presents Spain as well as other

micro and macro identities. We know that *ABC* provided more coverage on a basic quantitative level, with advertising being far more prevalent in the Spanish newspaper, but it is how this coverage reached the audience and what message it carried that will to a large extent allow us to measure the national symbolism of *La Vuelta* as well as interrogate Billig's theory of banal nationalism.

Within *La Vanguardia* we were able to establish that the qualitative section moved from positive to neutral/negative as the race changed from a peripheral to a central axis with the uptake in quantitative units of analysis not increasing the level and quality of coverage. Spain was flagged as a nation on a frequent basis, but Catalonia was also flagged, leading to two interacting units of analysis: change in the relative position of the two national identities and the fact that it was two national identities, and not a sole one (as per Billig), that existed within the coverage. We were also able to track the growing importance and success of the race itself, particularly linked to individual cyclists such as Pedro Delgado and Miguel Induráin, although technical and technological developments were also prevalent in the revitalisation of the race in this period and the arrival of a second Golden Age, after the first one had come to an end in the 1970s. Yet how does *ABC* compare?

In the first instance the qualitative data from *ABC* broadly confirms that *La Vuelta* became far more successful through the 1980s and 1990s, with the organisational change in 1979 and the television revolution in 1983 as pivotal in reshaping the stature of the race. We had already seen this in the coverage from *La Vanguardia* and thus we are able to establish that *La Vuelta* not only rose in importance throughout the period but from the 1980s had reached a point where it was a national symbol, visible to a majority of the

Spanish population. Again, the narrative of a race that had significant problems in the late 1970s can be seen, with the changes in 1979 and 1983 leading to a revalorisation in *La Vuelta* as it once again became a national symbol.

The depth of problems facing *La Vuelta*, confirming what we had seen in *La Vanguardia* is evident from the reports in *ABC* for the pre-1979 period. In the introduction to the 1978 race, which would be the last organised from and based in the Basque Country, Ventura Gilera gives us an idea of why there is a precipitous decline in the quantitative units of analysis from 1975:

*“la Vuelta ha perdido prestigio, por mucha solera ciclista que tenga y por mucho afán que tengamos nosotros en presentarla”.*<sup>157</sup>

The very next day this point was reinforced, this time by *Efe*, Spain’s largest news agency, giving us a broader base from which to establish the standing of *La Vuelta* at this time:

*“En fin, una parte de la pequeña historia negra de una competición que intenta recuperar una buena parte del prestigio que ha ido perdiendo poco a poco en los últimos años”.*<sup>158</sup>

Taken together these two statements show the progressive deterioration that the race had suffered since the golden period of the 1960s. One of the most visible aspects of this decline in the race were the attacks carried out by the terrorist group ETA in the 1960s and

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<sup>157</sup> [La Vuelta has lost prestige, despite its singular nature and the great interest that we have in seeing it]. G. Ventura. 1978. *ABC*, 25th April, p. 59.

<sup>158</sup> [To conclude, a part of the small black history of a competition that is trying to recuperate some of the prestige that it has lost little by little in the last few years]. *Efe*. 1978. *ABC*, 26th April, p. 47.

1970s, with the race route targeted on a number of occasions, although no riders were hurt. Protests from the wider Basque public also contributed to a feeling that the race was unwelcome in the region where it had been organised since 1955, although officially economic reasons were cited for the eventual change from Bilbao to Madrid.

This largely confirms what we had found in *La Vanguardia* with the race being a divisive symbol far removed from the national symbolism that it had once held. Yet the transitory nature of sporting success can be seen by the fact that the very next year with a change in ownership from *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco* to a Spanish company *Unipublic* and a consequent change in the final stage, from Bilbao to Madrid, the reports from *ABC* had significantly evolved:

*“En fin, balance positivo para España. Cinco entre ocho es cota importante. Pero lo mejor, si cabe, ha sido la respuesta pública a ese ciclismo que, afortunadamente, ha vuelta a resurgir”.*<sup>159</sup>

This marks a pivotal change in the fortunes of the race as not only ownership structure changed but also the whole ethos of the race was altered. Taking its cue from *le Tour de France*, Madrid became the centre of the race and a new commercial spirit was developed (criticised in *La Vanguardia* as we have seen above) as *La Vuelta* became not just an event that one newspaper organised, but the main part of what would become a successful sports management company. This refocusing clearly affected the potential of the race to become a national symbol, since not only was it removed from intractable political issues, but it became part of a business which was solely focused on growth in an

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<sup>159</sup> [To conclude, a positive outcome for Spain. Five from the top eight is an impressive haul. But the best is the public response to this kind of cycling, which fortunately, has resurfaced]. Gilera, V. 1979. *ABC*, 15th May, p. 61.

economic sense, which meant advertising and above all, entry to the dominant media in Spain: television. Three separate tiers of information emerge from the quote: that the race has been positive for Spain, that five out of the top eight were Spanish and that cycling had rebuilt its popular support. All part of how *La Vuelta* could act as a symbol of national identity, in flagging identity, in attracting the average Spaniard, and in regaining its former standing.

We will analyse the national flagging evident in the above quote later, but for now we will concentrate on the development of the race, as this helps us to ascertain the process through which it became a national symbol – much as has been demonstrated for *La Selección* in a similar period (Quiroga 2013). The events of 1978/79 certainly represent the nadir of the race with evidence from both papers suggesting that it was in serious jeopardy, but the re-organisation from 1979-1983 represents a crucial period where the fundamental basis for national symbolism was laid. The elements of this are visible in a report from *ABC* in 1982:

*“Los medios informativos la explican; TVE la enseña. La Vuelta es geografía de España, geografía autonómica, geografía deportiva y geografía comercial”.*<sup>160</sup>

Not only do we see the importance of written, audio and visual media here, in bringing the race to the people in a variety of ways, but the manner in which *La Vuelta* symbolises Spain on a number of levels, far beyond that which even football is able to do.

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<sup>160</sup> [The media explain it; television shows it. *La Vuelta* is Spanish geography, regional geography, sporting geography and commercial geography] Unknown. 1982. *ABC*, 5th May, p. 59. It is important to note that although *La Vuelta* was shown on state television before 1983, after this date the amount of coverage grew exponentially as TVE used French equipment usually reserved for *Le Tour* to enhance its live production.

The phrase “*La Vuelta es geografía de España*”<sup>161</sup> is particularly poignant since it points to the geographical element of Grand Tour cycling allowing it to visit and symbolise the regions and provinces of a country, in this case Spain. This mirrors the way in which *Le Tour de France* has been seen as a national symbol (Barthes 1957, pp. 103-113; Campos 2003) and a *lieu de mémoire* (Nora 1996, pp. 469-500), demonstrating the development of *La Vuelta* from the nadir of the 1970s. A geographical representation of France has always been central to *Le Tour de France*, a facet *La Vuelta* started to develop with the television revolution of 1983, although the Basque Country remained excluded until 2011, much as Corsica was absent from the French race until 2013. The ability of cycling races to visit and publicise the varied geography of any given country is the most salient and unique characteristic of the sport, especially given the integral role of geography and territory in nationalism (See: Brice 2007). The allusion to “*geografía autónoma*”<sup>162</sup> is also important, indicative of how *La Vuelta* was beginning to symbolise a modern post-Franco decentralised Spain. If the principal attraction of *La Selección* to symbolise national identity was its informal non-political nature in the post-Franco era (which we have strong reason to doubt), then *La Vuelta*’s ability to symbolise Spain’s new territorial makeup is equally important.

This growing interest is, however, not without critical commentary at times, such as in the 1981 edition whereby unresolved financial issues led to the non-participation of a main Spanish team. In this particular case the largest and most successful Spanish team, *Teka*,<sup>163</sup> demanded more revenue from the organisers and on not receiving this pulled

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<sup>161</sup> [*La Vuelta* is geography of Spain].

<sup>162</sup> [Autonomous geography]. Relating to the post-Franco division of Spain into 17 *Comunidades Autónomas* or Autonomous Communities.

<sup>163</sup> Teka, a fabricant of domestic electrical equipment, sponsored one of the main teams in the 1980s peloton. It was active between 1976 and 1990 and as such is a precursor to the higher level of financial investment from sponsors such as *ONCE* and *Banesto* which arrived in the 1990s.



their team from the race. This friction between economic and national motives can be taken to illustrate the wider problems of assuming that national identity is always the dominant value, when other considerations can seriously affect and/or supplant this. Avoidance of the national imperative was also visible in Miguel Induráin's decision to ride *Le Tour* and not *La Vuelta* during 1992-1995 with both actions criticised in the Spanish press as being not sufficiently patriotic i.e. why would the main Spanish team avoid the Spanish race? Why would Spain's premier cyclist avoid Spain's premier cycling race? However, although *ABC* contained some negative commentary this was not on the systematic level seen in *La Vanguardia* where negativity towards the race was of a more general nature.

The most salient research finding in *ABC* for this middle period emanates from another sport, that of football, with *Athletic Club*<sup>164</sup> winning the league and *ABC* dedicating an entire front page to their efforts:

*"Ayer, el fútbol volvió a ser el gran fenómeno sociológico capaz de paralizar la vida nacional y hacer olvidar durante unas horas los problemas y agobios de la crisis que vivimos".*<sup>165</sup>

The "great sociological phenomenon" referred to here is football, Spain's main sport, and yet we can use this as a yardstick from which to measure if *La Vuelta* ever attained a similar potency in the national imagination. This front page illustrates the role that sport can or is seen to play, a transitory role, but a role nonetheless, and one that we can now

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<sup>164</sup> Its official name although it is more commonly known as Athletic Bilbao.

<sup>165</sup> [Yesterday, football again became the great sociological phenomenon capable of stopping all national life and allowing people to forget, for a few hours, the problems and issues of the current crisis]. Editorial. 1984. *ABC*, 6th May, p. 1.

measure the growth of *La Vuelta* against. Was *La Vuelta* ever able to paralyse national life, to enable people to forget, even for a short period, the problems and crises that Spain faced? Did it, in short, ever become a “great sociological phenomenon”?

With Chico Pérez as correspondent, a rise in articles from previous years and a marked differentiation between the positive attitude of *ABC* and the negative one of *La Vanguardia*, 1985 is pivotal. One noticeable factor is the frequent praise given by Pérez to the organisation *Unipublic*, the opposite of the negativity that was far more common in *La Vanguardia* in this period. Pérez even lauds the activity of the *Guardia Civil*<sup>166</sup> in helping organise the race, illustrating the wider conception of society and politics within which each newspaper is embedded.<sup>167</sup> A flurry of positive comments on a new era of Spanish cyclists, on an improved race, on crowd numbers and of increased awareness of cycling in the wider Spanish public (backed up by the statistics we saw in the introduction) are evident throughout the reports for the 1985 race, which coincidentally was won by the Spaniard Pedro Delgado. The awareness in the wider Spanish public pinpoints *La Vuelta*'s achievement of national symbolism to the mid-1980s in this conservative Spanish newspaper.

The following years, 1986-1989, are replete with similar examples of the success of the race, its impact on wider areas of society and the concomitant increase in coverage of the race in *ABC* in a triptych which propelled the race forward after 1983. The reports view

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<sup>166</sup> The Spanish national police force founded in 1844 and closely tied to the representation and protection of the bourgeois and aristocratic families in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Its evolution, especially through patronage and use by Franco, has left it as a symbol of the central Spanish state with some Autonomous Communities having their own police forces i.e. the *Ertzaintza* (1982) in the Basque Country and the *Mossos d'Esquadra* (1983) in Catalonia. See: Greer (1995) for a discussion of the *Ertzaintza*. López Corral (2009) provides the historical background.

<sup>167</sup> This is not the only time that Pérez lauds the wider organisations involved. Pérez, C. 1985. *ABC*, 3rd May, p. 59.

the race in national terms, speaking of national successes, frequently using the possessive and going above and beyond the limited appeal that the race had had before the revolutions in ownership (1979), broadcasting (1983) and reportage (1984). A sign of *La Vuelta* as a national symbol, at least within *ABC* - as *La Vanguardia* was not party to the same level of enthusiasm - is the growing incursion of the race into different parts of the newspaper, surpassing the pure sporting level of reportage. In 1986, for example, the emergent Spanish cycling star Pedro Delgado is given a profile and an interview in *ABC*'s magazine, illustrating not only the wider significance of the race for *ABC*, but the importance of individuals:

*"Pedro Delgado viene a estas páginas porque es hoy por hoy uno de los deportistas más populares y admirados de España".<sup>168</sup>*

The development between *La Vuelta* rarely featuring in *ABC* to having its sports stars interviewed in its magazine finely illustrates the national symbolism that the race had reached by the mid 1980s. The changes in organisation (1979) and broadcasting (1983) were necessary but not sufficient conditions for this symbolism to occur, with the embedded nature of the correspondent and the emergence of Spanish cycling stars as crucial. The move from being a popular and successful cyclist to being a popular and successful sportsperson is typical of the move made in this middle period by the race itself as it began to transcend the traditional sporting boundaries and appeal to the average Spaniard. Although the methodological choice to examine broadsheets rather than the sporting press goes some way to minimise the problems of concentrating on a subsection of the population (those who are interested in sport), evidence of *La Vuelta* appearing

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<sup>168</sup> [Pedro Delgado comes to our pages today because in these times he is one of the most popular and admired sportsmen in Spain]. Pérez, C. 1986. *ABC*, 4th May, p. unknown.

outside of the sport section is a further important sign of wider significance within the general population.

By 1989 Pedro Delgado had won *le Tour de France* and was leading *La Vuelta* during the last few days of the race, leading to a series of headlines awash with national symbolism:

*El ciclismo ha vuelta a concentrar el interés de todos los aficionados al deporte”, “los españoles se sienten orgullosos de que un compatriota sea el ciclista número uno del mundo”.*<sup>169</sup>

A few concepts stand out: the “national pride” one is supposed to feel with a Spaniard leading the race (probably heightened by the fact that he had also been successful internationally in *Le Tour*). That cycling had returned to a previously attained level (or Golden Age)<sup>170</sup> of national significance, allowing *La Vuelta* to attract cycling and non-cycling fans within the larger sporting rubric (as well as more casual observers).<sup>171</sup> This was the same sociological phenomenon quoted concerning *Athletic Club* above, which cycling, by 1989, had come to emulate. By this point *ABC* was ready to dedicate a whole front page to the issue with the heavily emotive words of: “España entera, pendiente del esfuerzo de Delgado para ganar la Vuelta”.<sup>172</sup> The perception of the whole of Spain waiting

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<sup>169</sup> [Cycling has again caught the interest of all sport fans], [Spaniards feel proud that a fellow national is the top ranked cyclist in the world]. Pérez, C. 1989. *ABC*, 15th May, p. 60.

<sup>170</sup> As highlighted elsewhere the similarity in parlance over golden ages in sport and golden ages in nationalist histories hints at the close relationships between these two areas of society.

<sup>171</sup> *Le Tour* is known to design its coverage to appeal to the casual observer, with the sporting aspect only part of a wider rubric which includes geography, landmarks and history.

<sup>172</sup> [The whole of Spain, hanging on Delgado’s attempt to win the Vuelta]. Ibid. p.1

on the effort of one man demonstrates the symbolism that *La Vuelta* had reached in this period. For *La Vanguardia*, in contrast, this was not even the main sporting story.<sup>173</sup>

Returning to the research questions it thus becomes possible to date the emergence of *La Vuelta* as a symbol of banal nationality in *ABC* from the mid 1980s, an effect not visible to the same degree in *La Vanguardia* (although units of analysis also rose in the Catalan paper). Both newspapers report the race as growing and successful from 1979 onwards, but *ABC*, representing the conservative strand of Spanish nationalism, is far more vociferous in tracking this change. We can now assume that independently of how each newspaper saw it the race itself reached a certain level of success in this period, particularly after 1979/1983 and it is how this success is mediated that matters. Looking back to *La Vanguardia*, we should remember how Spanish national and Catalan national identities were flagged at the same time, in a 'dual identity' conception that has become the paradigmatic way of looking at identity in Catalonia.<sup>174</sup> Change was also visible, as Catalan identities strengthened over time, with a local city aspect concerning Barcelona (where the paper is based and published) part of the way in which the paper structured coverage. Having confirmed the rise in success of *La Vuelta* to a level where it could be said to have national symbolism, we must now examine how identities were flagged in *ABC*, how this compares to *La Vanguardia* and thus what we can learn from this about Billig's theory of banal nationalism as well as Spanish nationalism in the post-Franco period.

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<sup>173</sup> Much media theory looks at how consumers of media are changed by what they read. The current understanding (see: Briggs & Cobley 2002. Esp. Chapters 7 & 9) is that media can change the relative positions of consumers' interests i.e. make one issue more important, but are less likely to actually change positions since consumers choose media which is close to their position (which was previously established). Here *La Vanguardia* chooses to place Delgado below other sporting stories, whereas *ABC* places this above both sporting and non-sporting events.

<sup>174</sup> The recent post-2008 rise in Catalan independence sentiment to above 40 per cent of the population has changed this, although this remains outside my historical period.

As expected, *ABC* flags Spanish identity on a daily basis in its coverage of *La Vuelta*. Whether it is the number of Spaniards in the top ten, a particular Spanish rider, a Spanish team or the possessive adjective “our”, *ABC* consistently uses Spain as a pivot from which to construct the coverage. The Catalan paper *La Vanguardia* had also used Spain as a main item of the coverage, but *ABC* goes far beyond this with Spain being central to all reports on the race. Local identity, especially concerning Madrid where the paper was based, is not absent, which confirms other studies that have seen a multi-level of identity flagging (Rosie et al 2004; Rosie et al 2006; MacInnes et al 2007; Skey 2009), but Spain remains the most important territorial item in the coverage.

Beyond these initial considerations there are a number of ways in which coverage in *ABC* can be distinguished from that of *La Vanguardia*. The Spanish newspaper flags the homeland by using the possessive far more often than for that in the Catalan paper, which prefers to use the adjective “Español” instead of “nuestro”.<sup>175</sup> While both of these words construct a homeland for the reader, the second is a far stronger term, not merely describing but actively including the reader. The possessive is ubiquitous in *ABC*, where it had not been in *La Vanguardia*, representing one of the major differences in how these newspapers flag identities. This is largely in step with Billig’s original theory as well as some subsequent studies (Yumul & Özkirimli 2000), with one nation being flagged, but the intense form that this takes within *ABC* will have to be measured against *El País* before we can decide whether this is mainly a territorial or political difference.

The flagging of identity seen in *ABC* was consistent throughout the period (Spain was always the nation flagged) without the change in identity or dual identity that we had

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<sup>175</sup> [Spanish], [ours].

seen in *La Vanguardia*. However, as the race grew and *ABC* dedicated more resources to it we can see growth in the number and also the intensity with which the Spanish paper flagged this mononational identity. We have already amply demonstrated this for the 1980s, but it continued throughout the 1990s too showing how *La Vuelta* had again reached a Golden Age. This is reflected in 1991 with the remark that “ahora que el pueblo español está mentalizado con el ciclismo”.<sup>176</sup> As the race grew the opportunities for it to flag national identity increased with it at a similar time to when the re-emergence of overt political Spanish nationalism has been dated (Núñez Seixas 2005, p. 123).

Similarly in 1995 we find that “[ciclismo] se ha instalado en el corazón de millones de españoles”,<sup>177</sup> demonstrating again that, from *ABC*’s point of view at least, cycling had become a national sport and *La Vuelta* an area where Spanish identity was repeatedly flagged. The same article continued:

*“Hoy la afición en España al ciclismo constituye un fenómeno de dimensiones sociales particularmente relevante”*.<sup>178</sup>

Earlier we asked if *La Vuelta* had ever become the “gran fenómeno sociológico” attributed to *Athletic Club*’s league victory in 1984 and it is without doubt that this became true in the mid 1980s. A similar narrative of success was evidenced in *La Vanguardia*, but there is a strong difference in degree vis-à-vis *ABC* as the Spanish paper not only produced more content of a more positive nature but also used this to flag Spanish identity in a more visceral way.

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<sup>176</sup> [Now that the Spanish public understands cycling]. Pérez, C. 1991. *ABC*, 2nd May, p. 86.

<sup>177</sup> [(Cycling) has been taken to the heart by millions of Spaniards]. Carabias, J. 1995. *ABC*, 2nd September, p.15.

<sup>178</sup> [Cycling enthusiasts today are a particularly relevant social phenomenon]. Ibid.

The Spanish paper's conception of identity was made clear in the interview with Pedro Delgado, cited above to confirm the growth of the race, but used here to demonstrate *ABC*'s framing of identity. In the extended interview we find the words: "Este es Pedro Delgado, segoviano, castellano y, por encima de todo, Español".<sup>179</sup> Delgado, then, is not just Segovian or Castilian, although these clearly matter too, but above all, Spanish, marking out the hierarchy of identities in *ABC*. Within *La Vanguardia* we had seen interplay of Spanish and Catalan identities and although local identities are also visible in *ABC* this quote shows how it was an unproblematic and singular Spanish national identity that formed the most important territorial attachment here. This confirms Billig's original hypothesis of the daily flagging of a nation that exists above and beyond other territorial attachments and yet, given what we have seen in *La Vanguardia*, hints at the differentiated nature of identity flagging in a country with one or more substantial substate nationalist movements.

The establishment of *La Vuelta* as a national sport visible in both newspapers is backed up by an investigation into the sporting habits of Spanish people by the *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas*<sup>180</sup> (CIS) in 2000.<sup>181</sup> As we saw in the introduction the underlying trend is a rise in the interest of Spanish people in cycling in general, including higher levels of bicycle ownership (63% of the population, a 11% rise since 1990), more people attending races (a jump from 3% to 9% in the 1990s) and cycling as the third most practised sport in Spain (with 22.2% of people practising it, below swimming and football). Cycling is also registered as the sport with the third highest amount of amateur racing licenses again following swimming and football. In the qualitative remarks on this general

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<sup>179</sup> [This is Pedro Delgado, Segovian, Castilian, but above all Spanish] Delgado had won the race the previous year and was, along with Miguel Induráin, a major icon in Spain. Chico Pérez. 'Pedro Delgado: hombre de bien y Ciclista popular'. *ABC*. 4 May 1986. p. 166.

<sup>180</sup> [Centre for Sociological Investigation].

<sup>181</sup> CIS. 2000. Los Hábitos Deportivos de los Españoles, Estudio no. 2,397.



rise, we find the authors using a resurgence of interest in cycling in the 1990s as the explanation for this as recreational and competitive cycling grew in a symbiotic relationship. Other studies also indicate record television audiences for cycling races in Spain in this period (Pérez 2011, p. 4), validating the positive quotes from *ABC* shown above. Cycling really had become a national sport with *La Vuelta* as part of the wider equation.

Within the previous chapter we analysed Melcior Mauri's triumph in the 1991 *Vuelta*, with *La Vanguardia* illustrating a strong emphasis on Catalan identity within a wider Spanish identity that formed the backbone of much of their coverage. Here we will analyse a different example, looking at Miguel Induráin's withdrawal from the 1996 edition of the race. Induráin spent the mid-to-late 1980s competing annually in *La Vuelta*, however between 1991 and 1995 he did not race Spain's national cycling tour. Therefore even though *ABC* claimed him as "el mejor deportista español de todos los tiempos" who "se ha convertido en el ídolo de toda España" this was not likely to impact positively on *La Vuelta* given his preference for the French event.<sup>182</sup> Repeated pressure was put on him by the organisers of *La Vuelta* each year to return to his 'home' race, but it was not until 1996 that this finally occurred as Induráin bowed to the wishes of his team, *Banesto*.<sup>183</sup> This fixation in having Spain's best sportsperson take part in Spain's premier cycling event shows the national imperative that often occurs in sport, although Induráin's continual avoidance of the race suggests that the national does not always prevail.

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<sup>182</sup> [The best Spanish sportsperson ever], [he has become an idol throughout Spain]. Carabias, J. *ABC*, 21st September, p. 75.

<sup>183</sup> The involvement of large national sponsors such as *Banesto* (one of the main Spanish banks) in this period is akin to the modern sponsorship by Sky. See footnote 142.

After a dismal *Tour de France*, Induráin finally gave in to the pressure from the organisers and his team *Banesto*, agreeing to appear in *La Vuelta* for the first time in five years. Induráin, however, abandoned the race on the 13<sup>th</sup> stage,<sup>184</sup> illustrating the problematic nature of forced national symbolism, but it was the way in which *ABC* met this withdrawal that signifies both the elevated nature of *La Vuelta* as a national symbol by the 1990s and the way in which the paper flagged national identity. In a departure from the norm *ABC* dedicated a whole front page to the race, a move it had never made before with *La Vuelta* only appearing on the front page 6 other times across the period and never as the leading media item. It was the textual side, however, that conveyed the deep conservative Spanish identity in *ABC* as the paper claimed “en la victoria y en la derrota, Induráin, orgullo de España”.<sup>185</sup> This eulogy epitomises the way in which *ABC* handled Spanish identity in reportage on *La Vuelta* with individuals such as Induráin and Delgado providing an extra impetus for the flagging of the conservative Spanish identity that forms the basis of *ABC*. The direct reference to national pride shows how a cycling race such as *La Vuelta*, once at the level of a national sport, could begin to flag identity on a similar, if inferior, level to football.

The Spanish paper’s conception of identity can be further identified in the comments on how the “corredor navarro peleó como un bravo” with a “demostración de casta y coraje”.<sup>186</sup> This represents the peak in a general tendency for the paper to flag Spanish identity through *La Vuelta* with opportunities to do this growing as the race became more successful. Technical innovations also heightened the symbolism of *La Vuelta* in this period, improving the race so that it reached a similar level to *Le Tour de France* in

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<sup>184</sup> Although Induráin was diplomatic about being forced to participate, he was open about his lack of preparation for the race, making his withdrawal more or less inevitable.

<sup>185</sup> [In victory and in defeat, Induráin, pride of Spain]. Editorial. 21 September 1996. ‘En la Victoria y en la Derrota, Induráin, Orgullo de España’, *ABC*, p. 1.

<sup>186</sup> [the] Navarran rider fought like a thug], [demonstration of quality and courage]. Ibid.

domestic audience and reach (it would remain far behind the French race internationally). The calendar change from April/May to September allowed the race space to develop, no longer bringing it into direct competition with *Il Giro*. A second innovation was the inclusion of new climbs, as improved broadcasting technology and road surfacing led to new mountains being included in the route (comments had always been directed towards the poverty of road surfaces in Spain compared to France).

Such was the excitement with which a particular new climb, *L'Angliru*, was greeted that incredibly high levels of television share were recorded in the 1999 edition.<sup>187</sup> A confluence of factors were involved, a race that had been developing steadily over 20 years, a change in dates, a new generation of Spanish cyclists, established television coverage and technical innovation. On the day that the race went up this (now mythical) climb, television shares of over 50 per cent were recorded - the most watched programme broadcast on any Sunday throughout the year:

*“La retransmisión de TVE captó la atención de todos los públicos sin distinción de sexo, edad or clase social. Como es habitual, el público vasco fue el que mayor atención prestó a la prueba”.*<sup>188</sup>

Despite the race being excluded from the region for 20 years it was the Basque Country and not Madrid that provided the most viewers. The explanation for this lies in the extensive cycling culture of the Basque Country, as previously discussed.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Mountain stages have been shown to increase the number of viewers by 25% (Pérez 2011, p. 18).

<sup>188</sup> [The coverage from TVE was watched by everyone without any distinction by sex, age or social class. As per usual, the Basque public showed the highest interest in the race]. L, J. 1998. *ABC*, 14th September, p. 87.

<sup>189</sup> Among other things the Basque Country hosts two important annual cycling races - *La Vuelta al País Vasco* and the *Donostia Klasikoa* or *Clásica de San Sebastián* - its own mixed public/private funded cycling

A number of conclusions can be taken from this data, all falling under the general idea of *La Vuelta* reaching a very high level of national symbolism in the 1990s, after its first re-emergence as a national symbol in the 1980s. The audience share of over 50 per cent is highly significant in that it yet again illustrates the way in which cycling had developed to match football on occasions as a “gran fenómeno sociológico”.<sup>190</sup> Moreover, the regional breakdown of coverage, often used to demonstrate the low viewing figures for *La Selección* in Catalonia and the Basque Country, instead demonstrates *La Vuelta*’s continued ability to unify the centre with its most different *nacionalidades históricas*.<sup>191</sup> *La Vuelta* returned after 33 years to the Basque Country in 2011 without incident and yet the Spanish football team has not played in the region since 1967. With some suggesting that it was *La Selección* that was the only unifying symbol in post-Franco Spain (2005, p. 743), is it perhaps not the case that this was instead *La Vuelta*?<sup>192</sup>

#### IV - Conclusion

This chapter is the second of four based on content analyses carried out on newspapers chosen to represent the main strands of Spanish nationalism(s): *ABC* for Spanish conservative, *El País* for Spanish liberal, *La Vanguardia* for Catalan differential and *Avui* for Catalan disjunctive (León Solís 2003, pp. 13-23). With the completion of the second analysis it is now possible to start to draw more cogent and extensive inferences

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team (it ran from 1994-2013), a strong amateur racing scene and coverage of the main cycling events on regional TV.

<sup>190</sup> [Great sociological phenomenon].

<sup>191</sup> [Historic Nationalities]. Comprising Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia, it refers to those areas of Spain that have long held an identifiable and different culture.

<sup>192</sup> The Basque parliament, which has to approve the hosting of a football or cycling event, is more open to cycling than football. Indeed, Juan José Ibarretxe, the former Basque President or *lehendakari*, was known to cycle the last few kilometres of stages that finished in neighbouring regions, such as L’Angliru in Asturias in 1998. <http://www.rtve.es/noticias/20090212/ibarretxe-ciclista-tenia-plan/229294.shtml> [accessed: 20/02/2014].

from this body of work. In the previous chapter a general trend of increased reportage in *La Vanguardia* was identified, rising throughout the period with three distinct mini-periods of activity. The low incidence in other units of analysis such as advertising and a proclivity to turn to agencies to provide articles in the mid-to-late 1990s, however, revealed the limited nature of this quantitative increase. Similarly, in the qualitative field we found a turn from earlier positive coverage to more neutral and negative aspects after 1980. In conclusion this was taken to mean increased information, but without heightened interest i.e. quantity but not quality.

Within *ABC* we have a similar but differing numerical picture, with 324 more articles over the period with a distinct rising trend. Advertising (a non-factor in *La Vanguardia*) was prevalent in *ABC* specifically after 1984 where a quantum leap in coverage took place, reflected in the employment of Chico Pérez as lead correspondent. These units of analysis taken together suggest a clear division between coverage at the Spanish level and that at the Catalan one with *ABC* ahead on a series of factors, notwithstanding prominence, which was negated by the paper's design. The Spanish newspaper also flagged identity in a different way with its usage of the possessive "nuestro/a" emblematic of the strong Spanish national identity of the paper. This was markedly different to *La Vanguardia* and although both newspapers flagged other micro identities (such as the cities and regions where they are published) there was little evidence of the dual identity pervasive in the Catalan paper.

The qualitative data provide a rich seam of examples on the transformation of the race from a lacklustre event to a national, or indeed international, showcase in the pages of *ABC*. A similar evolution of the race had been visible in *La Vanguardia*, but *ABC* goes

above and beyond the level found in this Catalan newspaper with its coverage becoming more positive over time as *La Vanguardia* moved in the opposite direction mirroring changes in how it viewed its place in Spanish society (i.e. becoming more Catalan over time). The institutional underpinnings of 1979, which saw an overhaul of the race in terms of its increasing professionalisation and commercialisation (a change also visible in other sports, see: Miller et al 2001), bore fruit 4 years later with the instigation of proper television coverage - a central aspect of any modern sport (commonly referred to the media/sport complex, see: Rowe. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2004, pp. 31-35; Whannel 1992, pp. 30-39). This revolution was tracked in *ABC*, which did not lend credence to the race until television coverage had been assured, unlike *La Vanguardia*, which had invested in race coverage beforehand. These changes culminated in a strong period of activity between 1987 and 1993 - temporally analogous with the plethora of symbolic events in 1992 and the re-appearance of Spanish nationalism as a political force in 1992/1993. Individual aspects were also present, particularly the success of Pedro Delgado and Miguel Induráin, and yet the difference in the treatment of this by the two newspapers allows us to infer above and beyond the previous chapter.

The development of *La Vuelta* as a symbol of banal nationality in this period is now not in question with the range of quantitative and qualitative data from both papers evidencing the broad momentum that the race gained after 1979. In this central Spanish conservative newspaper we see a clear affinity with the Spanish race. The use of the possessive, the lauding of Spanish cyclists such as Induráin and Delgado and the choice of correspondent all point to the important role *La Vuelta* held in this period for *ABC*. It is in the qualitative data where we find the rich examples that illustrate just how important *La Vuelta* had become by the 1990s and, by extension, how the flagging of a singular

Spanish identity increased. The sociologically relevant phenomena of which *ABC* speaks, justifying its own use of a whole front page in 1989 dedicated to Delgado's attempt to win *La Vuelta* ("España entera", the whole of Spain), illustrates perfectly the level this race reached in this constituency in the 1980s and 1990s as well as the clear division between how this was reported in Catalonia and Spain. Our attention now turns to *El País* to see how Spain's newspaper of record fits into this incipient pattern of divergence.

## 6 - El País

### I - Introduction

Since its launch on 4 May 1976 the liberal newspaper *El País* has consistently dominated the Spanish newspaper market. Its meteoric rise - within the first 6 months sales reached 117,053 and by 1982 it was outselling its nearest competitor, *ABC*, by two to one - was a rare success for new media within the incredibly competitive media environment of the post-Franco years (Negró 2006, p. 9). On the death of Franco there were 115 newspapers published in Spain, this quickly rose to 143 in the following years as a spate of new publications hit the market before falling back to 103 by 1979 (Wert 1980, quoted in Gunther et al. eds. 2000, p. 48). Although claims of its importance during the Transition have been subject to recent revision (Ibid, pp. 7-19) its role as Spain's biggest newspaper make it central to any analysis of the period. Yet more than its consistently high levels of absolute and relative readership it is its wider influence in politics and society that necessitates its inclusion in this study.

The rapid growth of the paper can be explained by the long gestation period that the paper enjoyed prior to publication (leading back to the establishment of *Alianza Editorial* in 1966) and the breadth of shareholders involved in the original foundation of *El País*, which published a list of shareholders as a sign of its transparent vocation.<sup>193</sup> José Ortega

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<sup>193</sup> *El País* was fortunate to emerge after the death of Franco, thus avoiding the original sin of being active during the dictatorship. This was largely due to machinations between shareholders and the lengthy period from the founding of *Alianza Editorial* in 1966, to the first launching of the *El País* company in 1972 and then the belated launch of the paper in 1976 should be seen as a continuum.



Spottorno formed the parent company of *El País* (*PRISA*) in 1972 and key shareholders such as Manuel Fraga (ex-Franco minister) and Jordi Pujol (at the centre of Catalan politics)<sup>194</sup> underpinned the project.<sup>195</sup> They, among others (the original subscription also included a number of academics), provided a sound basis for the paper although they would both later leave unable to exert the influence they craved. This is in direct contrast to the Catalan newspaper *Avui*, which was launched without sufficient planning and quickly ran into difficulties. *El País* can thus be used as a metaphor for the wider changes in society that had begun under Franco in the 1960s but became visible after his death in 1975 (it was Fraga, for instance, that as Minister for Information and Tourism removed prior censorship of newspapers in the 1966 *Ley de Prensa*).<sup>196</sup>

The growth of the paper along with its founder's previous interests in book publishing culminated in the *PRISA* conglomerate of today, with wide interests comprising magazines, newspapers, television and publishing (similar to *La Vanguardia's Grupo Godó* and *ABC's Grupo Vocento*). It is the paper of record in Spain, roughly modelled on the French paper *Le Monde*, with a reputation and profile (both domestically and internationally) that supersedes its national rivals. No analysis of the Spanish press could overlook its central structuring role since its foundation in 1976. Put simply *El País* matters. Its closeness to the PSOE should be noted (although this waned in the late 1980s as a series of Socialist scandals came to light),<sup>197</sup> along with a clear internationalist projection (international news actually precedes national news, which is very uncommon). *El País*,

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<sup>194</sup> Other important shareholders included José Maria de Areilza (the head of the the Royal household of Juan Carlos during the Franco regime and a key player during the Transition), Julián Marias (a disciple of Ortega y Gasset), Pio Cabanillas (a Franco minister and key player in the right after 1975) and Ramón Areces (the founder of *El Corte Inglés*). See: J Palou. 1999. *La Quinta Columna*.

<sup>195</sup> Ortega was the son of Spain's most famous philosopher José Ortega y Gasset.

<sup>196</sup> Commonly known as the *Ley Fraga*.

<sup>197</sup> For an overview of the growing division between the PSOE and the press see: J Caverro. 1991. *El PSOE contra la Prensa: historia de un divorcio*. Madrid: Temas de Hoy.

then, represents the Spanish Liberal strand of Spanish nationalism, the third of four analyses carried out here along with Catalan differential (*La Vanguardia*), Spanish conservative (*ABC*) and Catalan disjunctive (*Avui*).<sup>198</sup> Given its recent founding, modern design and location in Madrid, I expected *El País* to devote more coverage to *La Vuelta* than the Catalan newspapers with front-page exposure perhaps higher due to its technical design being closer to *La Vanguardia* than *ABC* (which used a univocal one story per front page design). The coverage was also expected to be largely positive and supportive of national (Spanish) success as *La Vuelta* was taken as a symbol of the new democratic and modern Spain.

The data extracted from *La Vanguardia* gave us significant raw information on the connections between *La Vuelta Ciclista a España* on the one hand and national identity on the other, but little context. It was with the addition of the analysis on *ABC* in the second chapter that trends and differences began to appear (similarity in content, for instance, along with *ABC*'s numerical superiority in the key units of analysis and a possible distinction between coverage in Catalonia and Spain). With three newspapers, however, the process is further improved with comparisons between Catalan and Spanish newspapers, as well as between liberal and conservative Spanish newspapers, possible (a process that will be completed in the next chapter on the Catalan newspaper *Avui*). It is this cross referencing that allows us to substantiate not only the development of the race between 1975 and 2000, but, more importantly, how that development was viewed by multiple media outlets located in specific geographical and political spheres (thereby approximating the individual level).

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<sup>198</sup> As argued previously, *La Vanguardia* was analyzed first to set up a basis from which we could then turn towards central Spanish newspapers and then the Catalan disjunctive one, with *La Vanguardia* a bridge between the two extremes (a concept not considered within Billig's original theory of banal nationalism where national identities are, for the most part, exclusive and singular).

As we have seen in the preceding chapters *La Vanguardia* moved from early positive coverage centred on a strong authorial presence to a neutral/negative position with use of agencies in the 1990s. There was a rise in most units of analysis over the period, but this was not concomitant with a rise in interest in the race. *ABC*, on the other hand, moved from early ambivalence visible in the heavy use of agencies towards an appreciation of the race with the most evident characteristic being the employment of Chico Pérez in 1984. Again a rise across most units of analysis was visible, but this time linked to a positive interest in the race. This move from a regional to a central basis as cycling grew in popularity is one that needs to be tested below. Is there a clear central/regional demarcation in the amount and interest of coverage provided on *La Vuelta*?

Although the number of articles rose across the period in both newspapers *ABC* published 324 more than *La Vanguardia* (a lead also visible in the control unit of analysis of article size). Advertising was also preponderant in *ABC* with five times more than *La Vanguardia*, an economic indicator that needs to be compared with *El País*. Despite rising coverage in both newspapers, did advertisers linked to *La Vuelta* limit themselves to newspapers based in Madrid? A unit of analysis with a lead for *La Vanguardia* was front-page exposure that, as alluded to above, is due to technical differences in design and is of little significance. Other units of analysis such as visual media and relational prominence were more or less equal in *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* and here *El País* will be instructive. In qualitative terms *La Vanguardia* shifted from positive to neutral/negative coverage as the period wore on, yet *ABC* moved in the opposite direction. Moreover the Catalan paper flagged a dual Catalan/Spanish identity that seemed to introduce more Catalan elements over time, while *ABC* was limited to a mononational flagging of Spanish identity,

characterised by heavy usage of the possessive. The introduction of data from *El País* should allow a further delineation of the data as we try to answer the key research questions: How did *La Vuelta Ciclista a España* develop as a symbol of banal nationality between 1975 and 2000? And how was this demarcated across political, geographical and chronological boundaries?

## II - Quantitative

The first unit of analysis under consideration here, article number, is entirely consistent with the rise in units of analysis across the period noted above. With no data available for 1975 and 1976 the 1,372 articles published by the paper is similar to the 1,329 of *ABC* and markedly above the 1,005 recorded in *La Vanguardia*. Thus the idea of two distinct levels of coverage, Spanish and Catalan, is substantiated with the addition of *El País* to the dataset. In average terms the Spanish newspapers are significantly ahead of *La Vanguardia* for each decade. For the whole period *El País* published an average of 57.17 articles per year, above that of the 51.12 for *ABC* and the 38.65 for *La Vanguardia*. On a decadal basis, *El País* is ahead in the 1980s and 1990s and below *ABC* but above *La Vanguardia* in the 1970s.

In terms of publication density an early peak in 1983 matches the arrival of television coverage and continued incidence in the 1990-1993 range fits well with that recorded for *ABC*. The symbolic year of 1992 - in terms of the quincentenary of the discovery of America, the Barcelona Olympic Games and the Seville World Expo - shows a higher amount of articles for *El País* (89) and *ABC* (94) than *La Vanguardia* (61). This number is also significantly above the average for the 1990s and fits in a pattern of rising

article numbers organised into particular clusters of activity that need to be explained qualitatively. The salience of increased article numbers in the early 1990s is heightened by the fact that this is commonly noted as the period when Spanish nationalism re-emerged after a 20 year hiatus (Núñez Seixas 2005, pp. 130-138).

These initial figures can be compared with the control unit of analysis of article size, which analyses the page space for each report - ensuring that different styles of article writing (many small ones or one larger one) do not obscure the numbers. The overall figures show 498.37 pages of coverage in *El País* for the entire period, below *ABC* (583.57) but above *La Vanguardia* (349.2). The averages for each decade again give us a low figure for the 1970s of 5.09, below that of 13.07 for *ABC* and 7.02 for *La Vanguardia*. However, the 1980s sees the 13.38 for *El País* overtake the 8.14 for *La Vanguardia* but stay below the 19.38 of *ABC* before moving into a lead of 31.77 against 29.49 for *ABC* and 21.15 for *La Vanguardia* in the 1990s. Article numbers and article size both see a slow start before the fillip of 1983, with a move from 4.37 the year before to 21.29 in 1983, signalling a drastic increase in both units of analysis in *El País*. The correlation between the Spanish papers published in Madrid seems to be the key factor with the Catalan *La Vanguardia* dedicating less space and articles to *La Vuelta*. Thus at an early stage we can contemplate the differential between *La Vuelta* in Spain and Catalonia with the latter less likely to receive information on the race and thus less likely to feel part of it. This is especially relevant when we take into account that *La Vanguardia* had started the period being more positive about *La Vuelta* than *El País* and *La Vanguardia*. Was the price of *La Vuelta's* success a move from the periphery to the centre?

The pivotal year of 1983 has already been discussed in terms of the arrival of television coverage - with a substantial increase in live images - with the aid of French technology from *Le Tour de France*. This saw a fivefold increase in the amount of pages dedicated to the race in *El País*, far more than that of the other papers and a dramatic example of how television transforms sport. The amount of information was not the only change, however, as a dedicated race correspondent (Juan José Fernández) was also brought in. This leads us to authorship, which has important consequences in terms of the economic layout of the coverage, with an agency/author dichotomy. A dedicated correspondent adds significant cost to the coverage, but is essential in conveying the importance with which the paper treats a particular sport. After 1983, it seems, *El País* could not afford to continue with agency coverage as the race grew in stature.

*El País* started the period with 6 years of agency-led coverage with a low article count and little page space between 1977 and 1982. Thus the biggest selling daily in Spain provided less coverage than the regional *La Vanguardia*, which informs us about the transitional nature of the race at this time (yet to be centralised and still with a strong regional focus). The arrival of TV changed this: from 1983 to 2000 we see agency use only twice even though it had been the main way of providing information before that. This finding directly correlates with that of *ABC*, which made the agency-to-author switch a year later in 1984, and distinguishes these Spanish newspapers from the Catalan *La Vanguardia*, which moved in the opposite direction (author to agency). *El País* produced so few articles before 1983 that agency-provided content is 1.67% for the whole period despite a reliance on this for the early period. This compares with the higher figures of 18.97% for *ABC* and 8.19% for *La Vanguardia* with *ABC*'s agency usage mainly coming before 1983 and *La Vanguardia*'s after. While we were able to establish a clear profile of

the correspondents in *La Vanguardia* and *ABC*, *El País*' employment is less stable with 36 authors used over the entire period (in comparison with 31 in *ABC* and only 13 in *La Vanguardia*). Although there was some stability in authorship between 1988-1991 (with Robert Álvarez) and between 1992-1997 (Carlos Arribas) this pales in comparison along with the two main authors who provided coverage for *La Vanguardia* between 1975-2000, something that may actually increase our ability to pinpoint the *El País*' view rather than a particular correspondent since a commentator is likely to develop his or her own style over time.

Thus far we have analysed article size, the number of articles and the provenance of them but a key unit of analysis is relational prominence - where these articles reside within the paper. It was my initial intention to analyse those articles solely found within the sports section but, as stated in the earlier chapters, articles found outside the confines of the sporting pages generate a richer dataset (and thus a more comprehensive answer to the research questions). In this way, special supplements, interviews outside the sport's section and leaders are all key signals of the race becoming nationally relevant and thus I have incorporated these into the data when applicable. The main figures for the period are as follows: *La Vuelta* led the sports section in *El País* 157 times, double that of *ABC* (83) and *La Vanguardia* (75). Thus Spain's biggest selling daily had *La Vuelta* lead its sports section twice as often than the other newspapers, giving us a clear example of the centrality of the race for this particular Spanish paper. The incidence of this unit of analysis is similarly instructive with the period 1983-1993 providing for 114, or 72%, of the data. Thus *El País* gave *La Vuelta* precedence far more than the other papers and it did this in a 10-year period already highlighted for being between the TV revolution of 1983 and the wider Spanish symbolism of 1992. As we have seen the end of this period is recognised

as the *locus classicus* for the re-emergence of Spanish political nationalism, leading to questions which link the renovation of formal Spanish nationalism with the previous growth of informal symbols i.e. as Spain emerged from decades of dictatorship did informal symbols play a restorative role for the later reappearance of formal nationalist symbols and ideologies (Balfour & Quiroga 2007, p. 197-198; Núñez Seixas 1999, p. 168; León Solís 2003, pp. 39-80; Quiroga 2013, pp. 76)?

Front-page exposure is similar to relational prominence counting how many times *La Vuelta* reached the front page over the given period and thereby moving the analysis from sporting to general interest - a key indicator of the strength of *La Vuelta* as a national symbol. The technical nature of this unit of analysis has been noted above with the 41 times that *La Vuelta* appeared on the front page of *La Vanguardia* well beyond that of the 7 for *ABC* due to newspaper design and not linked to national symbolism. However with *El País* having a similar modern design to *La Vanguardia* we are able to compare like for like, which was not possible with *ABC*. *El País* carried *La Vuelta* on its front cover 105 times in the period, more than double that of *La Vanguardia* and over 10 times that of *ABC*. Thus in both units of analysis relating to prominence *El País* holds a clear lead over the other newspapers, showing that Spain's biggest newspaper gave *La Vuelta* the most visibility - enhancing its ability to act as a symbol of banal nationality. Dividing the whole dataset for this unit of analysis into sections we again find that 1983 acts as a centre point for enhanced coverage with 99.05% of the front page coverage occurring after this date (104 out of 105 times). This clearly links television coverage, authorship and front-page prominence in a bundle that brings *La Vuelta* forward from a competition that was structured in a regional fashion (mainly the Basque Country but also Catalonia) to one that is increasingly centred on Madrid. This dense nexus of factors - television coverage,



authorship in the main Spanish newspapers and re-organisation of the race itself - explain how *La Vuelta* grew to become a national symbol in the mid-to-late 1980s, far stronger in the central Spanish constituency represented by *El País* and *ABC* than elsewhere.

Visual media was chosen as a unit of analysis because of the potential it has to communicate a sense of nationhood with flags, maps, national images and symbols of the nation. On a general level this has been discussed in many of the classic tracts of nationalism or national identity: *Banal Nationalism* (Billig 1995, pp. 39-43), *Imagined Communities* (Anderson 1983, pp. 163-186), *Invention of Tradition* (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983, p. 11) and *Realms of Memory* (Nora 1996).<sup>199</sup> Empirical examples within the discipline of Spanish history include *Making Spaniards* (Quiroga 2007, pp. 116-122), *Creating Spaniards* (Holguin 2002), *Mater Dolorosa* (Álvarez Junco 2001) and *Llocs de memòria dels Catalans* (Balcells 2008). However, this unit of analysis produced little in the analyses of *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* and although *El País* contained far more visual media than the other newspapers, little in terms of national imagery can be taken from it. It is probable that the longitudinal design of this study did not help and a semiotic or semiology-based approach on pictorial content could reveal more.<sup>200</sup> On the other hand, advertising (a separate unit of analysis) did begin to display signs of national branding at the very end of the period - particularly the well-known Spanish *toro*.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Billig discusses the flagging of identities through informal symbols such as sport while towards the end of Anderson's seminal work we see a discussion of maps similar if more general in tone. Nora, on the other hand, discusses a range of items that include *Le Tour de France*, which was one of the reasons why I decided to turn my hand to an analysis of *La Vuelta a España* (especially given the intertwined histories of France and Spain).

<sup>200</sup> This is a cost of the longitudinal research design employed here, but hopefully the tracking of long-term trends compensates for the lack of detail that would come from discourse analysis or semiotics.

<sup>201</sup> A symbol that is commercial in origin but has now been adopted wholesale as the symbol with which to sell Spain. It is highly visible within Spain itself, particularly in state-approved bull sculptures on the side of main motorways. For a further discussion see: Prout, R. *A Load of Bull: Cultural Patrimony, Machismo, and Merchandise*. In: Godsland, S. White, A. 2002. *Cultura Popular*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

Advertising more than compensates for the failure of the visual media unit of analysis as its significance extends beyond economic aspects of adverts to encompass the national branding which was initially thought to be more likely to appear in the visual media unit of analysis itself. *El País* carried 219 adverts pertaining to the race across the period compared to 279 for *ABC* and 47 for *La Vanguardia*. Again a clear Catalan/Spanish dividing line is present, but this time moving from the quantity of articles and their location to the economic rationality of where to place an advert, who places the advert and how often. Similarities between the Spanish newspapers extend beyond the numbers with the now-commonplace Spanish advertising using the *Toro* from *Televisión Española* (see appendix) evident in *ABC* and *El País*, but absent in *La Vanguardia*. The bulk of the advertising in *El País* is between 1987 and 1992, imitating the 1985 to 1995 period found in *ABC*. The data, however, does not just show the Spanish newspapers leading as *La Vanguardia* actually received more advertising before 1984. Again the regional to national turn is present, correlating with the other units of analysis and reaffirming the idea of two different areas of reception for *La Vuelta*: Spanish and Catalan.

With three sets of data we can perceive more about the types of companies that advertised in each paper. The main advertisers in *La Vanguardia*, for instance, were *Antena 3* and *Fiat*, with 15 adverts each over the period, although these advertising runs tended to be highly concentrated: *Fiat* advertised 6 times in 1991 and 9 times in 1992 with *Antena 3* mainly running adverts in 1983 and 1984 - perhaps fighting migration to the new medium of television.<sup>202</sup> Only 6 different companies advertised in *La Vanguardia* while *ABC*, on the other hand, saw 23 separate advertisers across the period led by *Antena 3* (83), *COPE* (71) and *Fiat* (38). Two advertisers were shared, albeit with far more

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<sup>202</sup> Fiat is, to this day, a longstanding sponsor of cycling across many levels and countries.

advertising being placed in *ABC*. The third advertiser, the private Catholic broadcaster *COPE*, only advertised in *ABC* - a clear delineation of how advertising and politics combine. But how did *El País* compare?

There were 32 different companies that ran adverts in *El País* although the overall total was less than that of *ABC* (219 vs. 279). The main advertisers in *El País* were *SER* (67) and *Fiat* (37) with other companies either too concentrated in one year or too minimal to be of interest. The divide between Spanish newspapers, *El País* with 219 adverts and *ABC* with 279, and Catalan ones, *La Vanguardia* with 47, is clear. Advertisers that solely or mostly worked with one newspaper should be noted: *COPE* with *ABC* and *SER* with *El País*. *Fiat*, on the other hand, advertised across all three newspapers. Moreover *SER* advertised frequently in *ABC* before 1987, but was more common to *El País* thereafter. This reflects wider movements in the media environment as *SER*'s parent company *Unión Radio* came under the majority control of *PRISA* (the parent company of *El País*). Given that *COPE* and *ABC* are part of the same group (*Vocento*) we can see how ideological polarisation extends beyond the press to economic and wider interests.<sup>203</sup>

In this quantitative section we have introduced the analysis of *El País* with relation to the two preceding analyses, allowing for comparisons to be made in a broader context. This process will be completed in the next chapter with the addition of the Catalan disjunctive newspaper, *Avui*, but some tentative conclusions can already be made. Apart from the leading role of *El País* across many units of analysis, we see that that fits into a division between two distinct frames: Spanish and Catalan. This difference is not static, however, with an important chronological qualification being that *La Vanguardia* was

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<sup>203</sup> TVE, for example, is known to lean one way or another given the prevailing political winds (Paptheodorou & Machin 2003; Hallin & Papathanassopoulos 2002; López-Escobar & Faus-Belau 1985).

relatively more important before 1983, gradually losing its prominence after this date. The broad similarities between *El País* and *ABC* are present across a wide range of units of analysis including the number of articles, advertising, article size and authorship. Other units of analysis, including relational prominence, visual media and front-page exposure show a clear lead for *El País* over both *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*. The similarities between the two Spanish newspapers, especially after 1983, suggest that the centralisation of the race that occurred as ownership passed from Bilbao to Madrid in 1979 had ramifications in the broader aspects of newspaper coverage. All three newspapers show a rise across most units of analysis through the period as the race entered a new Golden Age, but this geographical division in the size, the importance and the relevance of coverage illustrates how *La Vuelta* became a national symbol in an uneven fashion. Catalonia, yet again, was left out in the cold. Attention now turns to the qualitative part of the analysis as we explore the main themes and flagging of identity within *El País*.

### III - Qualitative

In the previous two chapters we have been able to chart the growing momentum of the race on the qualitative side. Changes in ownership (1979), television coverage (1983) and the quality of Spanish cyclists (1984) were crucial. In 1979 the race had been close to disappearing as the threat from the Basque terrorist group *ETA* towards the conservative Basque newspaper organising it, *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco*, made it unviable. By 1998, on the other hand, *La Vuelta* had become so strong as a national symbol that it reached 50 per cent audience share on the main state television channel (TVE).<sup>204</sup> This

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<sup>204</sup> This was after the liberalisation of the television market had taken place, allowing some limited private channels to launch (for the continued politicisation of television see: Bustamente 2000; for a general overview: Gunther, Montero & Wert in Gunther et al. eds. 2000. pp. 28-84). These, along with the channels

revolution in symbolic significance - from a low to a high level - is corroborated by the qualitative data in *El País* with the defining characteristics examined below. The broad qualitative similarities that have been noted between *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* extend to *El País*. The use of the possessive to signify Spanish riders, the criticisms towards the organisation and the frequent commentary on weak participation (particularly foreign participation) are all visible in the coverage. Although the amount of one attribute of coverage (say criticism towards the organisation) may be higher in *La Vanguardia* rather than the other two, it remains part of all the newspapers' coverage i.e. it is a difference of degree. While the Spanish newspapers illustrate the correlation between a rise in the positive comments on the qualitative side, and a rise in unit of analysis numbers on the quantitative side, *La Vanguardia* posits a quantitative rise without a concomitant growth in positive commentary.

A report in 1979 evokes the deep disillusionment *El País* felt towards the race in this era. We are told that “El ciclismo ha pasado a ser un deporte de segunda fila”<sup>205</sup> as well as “Desaparecido Luís Ocaña...las grandes carreras han perdido casi todo su interés para los aficionados”<sup>206</sup> in a report that gives us the base level from which *La Vuelta* was to grow in the subsequent period. This comment, along with evidence from the other two newspapers allows us to structure the history of *La Vuelta*, and Spanish cycling, in this period. Cycling had become a secondary sport with the disappearance of one particular star being linked directly to a loss of interest by the wider public. Thus at the end of the 1970s the sport held little to no value as a national symbol despite the fact that it had once been much higher up in the national imaginary. The depth of this malaise is illustrated in two further

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broadcast from the autonomous communities (On a European scale, see: Garitaonandia 1993; Moragas Spà 1995; for Catalonia, see: Prado & Fernández 2006; for Andalusia, see: Gutiérrez Lozano 2010), makes this level of audience share all the more impressive.

<sup>205</sup> [Cycling has become a secondary sport].

<sup>206</sup> [With the retirement of Luis Ocaña... the main races have lost almost all their interest for fans].

comments from the same article: “Este es, sin duda, uno de los deportes con los que acaba la sociedad desarrollista”<sup>207</sup> and “El ciclismo está mortecino y sólo un milagro puede darle nueva luz”.<sup>208</sup>

The pervasive conception of cycling’s halcyon days (echoed in the citation of Luís Ocaña above) and present problems continues throughout the pre-television years:

“El propio declive del ciclismo español, donde han desaparecido las figuras que en épocas pasadas arrastraban el interés de los aficionados, ha influido decisivamente”.<sup>209</sup>

The similarities with the other two papers allow us to take this as a general conclusion on the race at the time with *La Vuelta* facing a series of issues ranging from a lack of marketable stars to a decline in audience figures. A further problem, exacerbated by the malaise, was the tendency for Spanish-registered teams to compete far more often in Europe than in Spain, an issue directly dealt with by the paper in 1982. This was a primarily a financial decision as the differential in prize money made it uneconomical to compete in Spain on a regular basis. This leads us back to the consideration of the national vis-à-vis another imperatives, and, as we already saw with Miguel Induráin, it is the economic that often rises to the top despite what we may assume about the importance of the nation-state. The article links this to the reticence of *Televisión Española*

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<sup>207</sup> [This is, without doubt, one of the sports that is killed by modern society].

<sup>208</sup> [Cycling is dying and only a miracle can see it reborn]. All from: Unknown, 1979. *La Vuelta* [Online]. Available at: [http://elpais.com/diario/1979/04/24/deportes/293752801\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1979/04/24/deportes/293752801_850215.html) [accessed: 5 September 2013].

<sup>209</sup> [The decline of Spanish cycling, where the figures who used to provoke interest are gone, has influenced decisively]. Unknown, 1980. *Comienza la Vuelta a España* [Online]. Available at: [http://elpais.com/diario/1980/04/22/deportes/325202408\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1980/04/22/deportes/325202408_850215.html) [accessed: 5 September 2013].

to show the sport they claim “siempre tuvo una gran aceptación en nuestro país”.<sup>210</sup> In the pre-television era we thus have confirmation of a previous high level of symbolism for *La Vuelta*, as per the last quote, but a clear idea of why this has not continued i.e. the lack of television coverage. The potential for national symbolism was there (given a rich cycling history in Spain in the pre-television era), but television coverage was a necessary but not sufficient condition for this to continue in the modern era. As with all modern sport visibility and viability were enmeshed with the provision of television coverage.

Although the main narrative of success coming after 1983 is visible across the three newspapers there are some nuances to be found. *La Vanguardia* is more positive than the other two before 1983 and this correlates well with what we have found for the quantitative units of analysis i.e. *La Vanguardia* provided more coverage relative to the other newspapers before 1983 than after it. If we compare headlines for the transcendental 1983 edition, however, the coverage is broadly similar: *El País* led with “La nueva Vuelta a España”<sup>211</sup> akin to *La Vanguardia*’s “Hinault y Saronni relanzan la Vuelta Ciclista a España”<sup>212</sup>, although the latter did also bring in a regional element in noting the 4 stages to be held in Catalonia, a slight derivation from the other two central Spanish newspapers.

After 1983 a confluence of factors were to affect the race with the direct impact of live television coverage feeding off the emergence of Spanish cycling stars in Pedro Delgado and, a little later, Miguel Induráin. Both these changes can be directly linked to

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<sup>210</sup> [...was always popular in our country]. Unknown, 20th April 1982. *Televisión sólo facilitará resúmenes de la Vuelta Ciclista a España* [Online]. Available at: [http://elpais.com/diario/1982/04/20/radiotv/388101603\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1982/04/20/radiotv/388101603_850215.html) [accessed: 5 September 2013].

<sup>211</sup> [The new Vuelta a España]. Juan José Fernández, 19th April 1983. *Gran nivel ciclista en la Vuelta que comienza hoy* [Online]. Available at: [http://elpais.com/diario/1983/04/19/deportes/419551204\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1983/04/19/deportes/419551204_850215.html) [accessed: 5 September 2013].

<sup>212</sup> [Hinault y Saronni relaunch the Vuelta a España]. Enrique Canto, 19th April 1983. *Hinault y Saronni relanzan la Vuelta Ciclista a España* [Online]. Available at: <http://hemeroteca.lavanguardia.com/preview/1983/04/19/pagina-38/32966640/pdf.html> [accessed: 5 September 2013].

the introduction of authored content in *El País* and *ABC* although *La Vanguardia* had provided this since 1975. A division seen earlier between *ABC*, which heralded the aforementioned Spanish stars, and *La Vanguardia*, which did this along with the Catalan Melcior Mauri, is also visible in *El País*, which saw the latter as Spanish and not Catalan (unlike *La Vanguardia* which seemed to mix both identities). The growth of the race in itself has little significance for national identity, especially when there were few Spanish stars for the public to identify with. Delgado's emergence, as well as the generation that followed him, altered this however, providing the personification needed for the race to move beyond the limited national significance it had had since the 1970s. This is most clearly visible in the 1985 race, won by Delgado, who claimed: "mi victoria es de toda España".<sup>213</sup> The sport-national link that had been lost and bemoaned above with reference to Luís Ocaña, was reborn. Incidentally it was this edition of the race that would see a young Miguel Induráin take the leader's jersey for the first time in his career with *El País* first calling the little known rider 'Mikel' (the Basque version of a Spanish name), although Induráin himself (from Navarre) has never entered the identity debate despite much prodding from journalists i.e. "do you feel Basque or Spanish?".<sup>214</sup> The three newspapers' coverage of this victory is broadly similar with *La Vanguardia's* divergence from the main Spanish central newspapers coming later.

In 1989 Pedro Delgado, now a household name, won *La Vuelta* for a second time, a useful point to analyse each newspaper's coverage. All three newspapers celebrated this with a similar level and breadth of coverage. Numerous articles were provided with

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<sup>213</sup> [My victory is from all of Spain]. José Maria Sirvent, 12th May 1985. *Pedro Delgado da un 'golpe de mano' y se convierte en líder de la ronda española* [Online]. Available at: [http://elpais.com/diario/1985/05/12/deportes/484696805\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1985/05/12/deportes/484696805_850215.html) [accessed: 5 September 2013].

<sup>214</sup> Born in Navarre Miguel Induráin has always stayed clear of any pronouncements on identity and this usage of Mikel rather than Miguel is down to ignorance rather than any other spurious motive. His answer to questions such as this was simple: I'm a cyclist from Navarre.



Delgado on the front cover of both *La Vanguardia* and *El País* (ABC's front cover centred on the Royal Family). The only noticeable difference between the papers is a negative comment in *La Vanguardia* as to the number of people celebrating the victory (compared to Delgado's Tour triumph the year before)<sup>215</sup> and a comment from *El País* that echoes the debate on Spanish nationalism itself:

“Todo ello no es sino la parábola de un cambio, de una mutación no sabemos si genética, o fruto simplemente de la aculturación. La España del nacionalcatolicismo producía una cierta épica cutre y astrosa; y a la que vive ahora cómodamente integrada en la Comunidad Europea corresponde una prosodia serena y calculada. Que nadie diga que cualquier tiempo fue mejor”.<sup>216</sup>

Here *El País*, within its sports commentary, brings out a comparison between the old Spain and new Spain, which continues with “Pedro Delgado era mucho más propiamente un ciclista del Mercado Común”<sup>217</sup> i.e. he represents the post-transition Spain. This is a fine illustration of the approximation of sport and society whereby Delgado is looked at as embodying the Spain that had emerged after four decades of dictatorship. It is in this way that *La Vuelta* became nationally relevant, able to act as a symbol of national identity and a way to understand the new social, political and economic fabric of Spain.

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<sup>215</sup> A pervasive sense of negativity despite myriad Spanish triumphs (or because of them) is perhaps the greatest difference between the Catalan and Spanish newspapers so far analysed and shows how *La Vanguardia* became progressively more Catalanized throughout the period.

<sup>216</sup> [All that is but a sign of change, a shift, perhaps genetic or simply through acculturation. The Spain of National-Catholicism produced a certain coarse and shabby image; and the Spain that is now comfortably part of the European Community corresponds to a serene and calculating rhythm. Nobody can say which was better.]. Miguel Ángel Bastenier, 16th May 1989. *La España de Anquetil* [Online]. Available at: [http://elpais.com/diario/1989/05/16/deportes/611272812\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1989/05/16/deportes/611272812_850215.html) [accessed: 5 September 2013].

<sup>217</sup> [Pedro Delgado is much more a cyclist of the Common Market]. *Ibid.*

It is important to note that factors beyond questions of national and regional identity could also affect the cohesive role of *La Vuelta* as a national symbol. Some disaggregating ecological factors are present in the coverage for 1991 with a mention that the mythical Lagos de Covadonga climb - a 12.6km ascent in Asturias - was not able to run in the recent past because of environmental concerns (holding a mass spectacle in a national park produces considerable negative externalities in a delicate landscape, especially if repeated over time).<sup>218</sup> Cycling, then, may have acted as a beacon of national identity around a star such as Delgado but this is delineated depending not only on geographical and political units of analysis (the ones under consideration here) but also wider personal or social views. Gender can also not be discounted with Billig pointing to the strong masculine edge to the sport pages that he studies (Billig 1995, pp. 119-126). Besides the race being limited to male participants only 5 out of 80 authors featured in the dataset are female.<sup>219</sup> *La Vuelta* may have become a national symbol in connection with Spanish cycling and Pedro Delgado, among others, but there are limitations to this across a broad range of social, economic, political and geographical factors. Environmental concern has also been visible in *Le Tour de France* and *Il Giro d'Italia*, but has historically been passed over with the running of the race seen as more important. Despite exponential growth and success, *La Vuelta* clearly did not appeal to everyone.

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<sup>218</sup> Apart from becoming the first climb to attain mythical status in *La Vuelta*, in that it was utilized in the route frequently from 1983 and often brought the highest number of roadside and television spectators, *Los Lagos de Covadonga* also retains a deep historical significance. Covadonga, the town situated below the *lagos* or lakes, was the scene of the first significant victory military for the Christian forces, thereby launching the *Reconquista*. Although no direct attempt is made to symbolize this within the race, it is a sign of how indirect usage of geography can overlay events with deeper historical significance.

<sup>219</sup> A one day women's race aligned with the last stage of *La Vuelta* is planned for either 2014 or 2015, following intense pressure for *Le Tour* to instigate a similar event based on Paris (a women's *Tour* was ruled out for logistical reasons given the problems associated already with the event's size). These are the first steps in constituting a women's professional cycling scene that is similar to the men's, although sadly a huge distance remains before any level of equality is reached.

The growth of *La Vuelta* as a national symbol from 1983, visible in *El País* just as in the other newspapers, can be seen in editorial decisions on how to provide coverage. In 1993, for instance, *El País* supplied the coverage within a separate dedicated supplement entitled '*La Vuelta*'. This was repeated the following year and symbolises the growth of coverage that had occurred over the previous decade. Given the huge increase in articles a supplement was the logical conclusion, which stands a long way away from the proclamations of the death of cycling as a sport made just 14 years previously. Supplements for *La Vuelta* are now the norm in *El País*, but this was a relatively recent invention soon followed by the other papers. It is in this way that we see the broadsheet with the highest readership in Spain, with Sunday figures of over a million in a country that is well-known for its low readership of the press, back up its quantitative lead in units of analysis with structural changes (the new supplement). With the visibility that broad coverage from *El País* allowed *La Vuelta* can be said to have become a common symbol of banal nationality in the Spanish liberal constituency that this newspaper represents.

In the other papers frequent ex post facto commentary was common, explaining the rise of *La Vuelta*, a factor also prevalent here in *El País*. In 1994 the explanation was given that: "Su entrada coincidió casi con el boom televisivo y con el nacimiento de una nueva época en el ciclismo español, con la llegada de Pedro Delgado".<sup>220</sup> Given the breadth of quantitative and qualitative evidence there is no doubting this and the questions surround more the relative importance of each factor and the relation between the two. Which are the necessary and sufficient conditions? It is no surprise that television coverage had a positive impact on *La Vuelta* but given that this predated Delgado's emergence it is likely

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<sup>220</sup> [His entrance almost coincided with the television boom and with the birth of a new era of Spanish cycling with the arrival of Pedro Delgado.]. Carlos Arribas, 26th April 1994. *Las razones de Unipublic* [Online]. Available at: [http://elpais.com/diario/1994/04/26/deportes/767311214\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1994/04/26/deportes/767311214_850215.html) [accessed: 5 September 2013].

to mean that both factors were separate - although reinforcing each other once established. A further problem pertains to the relationship between Spanish cycling and *La Vuelta* itself since Induráin's multiple successes in *Le Tour de France*, for instance, remained contentious for the *La Vuelta* organisers throughout the period, yet at the same time sparked a resurgence of interest in Spanish cycling.

Further investment in coverage by *El País* is noticeable in 1995 with a rider from the peloton chosen to write a chronicle on the day's events - a practice continued to the end of the period. It is this type of feature, coupled with the standalone supplement that shows how the qualitative side developed along with the increase in article numbers in the 1990s. *La Vuelta*, far from the agency-driven one article per race situation that *El País* provided in the 1970s, developed into a package with a range of articles, graphics and writers illustrative of the rise in popularity and standing it had gone through since 1983. The budget for the race, incidentally, had risen from 40 million pesetas in 1978 through 80 in 1983 to 1,065 in 1995 - a 26-fold increase. While this rise in standing is visible in each newspaper analysed so far, the differences are equally important, and with the addition of a correspondent in the peloton by *El País* corresponding with increased agency coverage by *La Vanguardia* we have two papers moving in opposite directions.

The last stage of the race in 1995, *El País* reports, was attended by Prince Felipe, the French Sport Minister and 11,000 blind members of *ONCE* (National Organisation of Blind People), another sign of the growing momentum of the race.<sup>221</sup> *ONCE* were a prominent investor in Spanish cycling running a team between 1989 and 2003 whose main competitor on the Spanish scene was *Banesto* - a large Spanish bank who also sponsored

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<sup>221</sup> ONCE or Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles [National Organization of Spanish Blind people].

a team between 1989 and 2003, showing how team sponsorship had developed from local regional companies (*Kas* from 1958 to 1988, *Teka* from 1976 to 1990, *Kelme* from 1980-2003, *Clas Cajastur* from 1988 to 1994, *Amaya Seguros* from 1990 to 1993) to national companies (*ONCE* from 1989 to 2003, *Banesto* from 1989 to 2003, *Festina* from 1989 to 2001) as *La Vuelta* became a national symbol.<sup>222</sup> Thus the rise across all units of analysis, quantitative and qualitative, that we see in *El País* is matched by increased economic investment from important Spanish companies in a context of wider economic investment linked to regional governments and regional savings banks.<sup>223</sup> This direct investment in sponsoring *La Vuelta*, and Spanish cycling more generally (including other races and teams) is yet more evidence of the central role that the race and the sport had come to play.

As we saw in the previous chapter in 1996 Miguel Induráin returned to his ‘national’ tour. This was at the behest of his sponsors, *Banesto*, and fulfilled the wishes of *Unipublic*, who had tried unsuccessfully for years to bring Spain’s best cyclist to his home race. This represents an opportunity to gauge the symbolic strength of *La Vuelta* against the interwoven aspects of Spanish cycling, Spanish cyclists and other cycling events like *Le Tour de France*. The first thing we can take from this is that the continued avoidance of *La Vuelta* by Induráin shows that despite the clear upward trajectory of the Spanish race, it in no way came close to the exalted status of *Le Tour de France*, which remained dominant.

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<sup>222</sup> There is significant crossover between these companies, but it seems likely that the involvement of regional and local companies led to national investment as cycling and *La Vuelta* became more successful. Banesto and ONCE were the most professional teams of their day, investing significant amounts of money into their projects, but their main period of activity was the 1990s. A number of smaller teams linked to and funded by regional governments also arose over this period (i.e. Xacobeo-Galicia between 2007 and 2010, Euskaltel-Euskadi between 1994 and 2013, Comunidad Valenciana between 2004 and 2006, Caja Rural between 1988-present and Andalucía between 2005 and 2013). The only significant Spanish cycling team still in operation is sponsored by Movistar, acting in a similar way to the British professional squad Sky i.e. promoting domestic talent through significant investment in technology and development.

<sup>223</sup> For a discussion of how regional saving banks may favour regional development over profit maximization if controlled by the regional government, see: García-Cestona Surroca 2008.

All three newspapers provide significant coverage of Induráin's return to *La Vuelta*, with *El País* making way for an interview on 15th September. Interviews are rare in the dataset; only starting to appear in the 1980s once the race had reached a certain level of maturity. Although this particular interview was run in the sport section of the newspaper, in *ABC* we saw an interview with Delgado in the magazine section as *La Vuelta* moved beyond the back pages. The key data from *El País* relates to television audiences before and after Induráin's departure from the race: "Dos millones de personas han dejado de seguir la Vuelta a España por televisión tras el abandono de Miguel Induráin".<sup>224</sup> No source is given for these figures, but it indicates how the health (and thus national symbolism) of *La Vuelta* was, and continues to be, very closely related to the participation of well-known Spanish cycling figures. Spanish cycling can thus be healthy with success for Induráin in *le Tour*, but *La Vuelta* is separate from that in a related but different field of action.

Induráin's subsequent retirement in late 1996 led to some negative comments in the 1997 race as the leader of the race was qualified as "es que no es español" along with "y las esperanzas de ciclismo nacional tras la retirada de Induráin están en buscar sustituirlo".<sup>225</sup> The first comment pertains to the fact that national riders are preferred to foreign ones, a key dividing factor throughout all three newspapers' coverage, while the second concentrates on the problem of succession. The emergence of national figures creates both opportunities and risks - how do you replace the irreplaceable (Induráin)? However, the period under investigation here ends rather well for Spanish cycling with strong positive comments from *El País* accompanying this. A paean included in the 1999 preamble to the race is instructive: "Comienza la Vuelta. La nuestra. La Española, con sus

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<sup>224</sup> Carlos Arribas, 27th September 1996. *Dos millones menos después de Induráin* [Online]. Available at: [http://elpais.com/diario/1996/09/27/deportes/843775210\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1996/09/27/deportes/843775210_850215.html) [accessed: 5 September 2013].

<sup>225</sup> [It's that he's not Spanish] and [the hopes of Spanish cycling after Induráin's retirement are in replacing him]. Juan José Fernández, 29th September 1997. *La Vuelta de la supervivencia* [Online]. Available at: [http://elpais.com/diario/1997/09/29/deportes/875484011\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1997/09/29/deportes/875484011_850215.html) [accessed: 5 September 2013].

vicios y sus virtudes, sus naturales excesos y su entusiasmo”.<sup>226</sup> Along with the possessive we get a feeling that in being Spanish the race is slightly devalued, a sentiment that has been expressed before as if a Spanish race could never compete with *Le Tour* or *Il Giro*. However, by 1999 the race had come a long way, establishing itself in the Spanish sporting calendar and as a symbol of banal nationality, stronger in central Spain, but reported on throughout the country.

It was noted in an earlier chapter that the introduction of the Asturian climb, ‘*L’Angliru*’, had a beneficial impact on the race with an impetus directly visible in terms of television audience share. The spectacle of a Grand Tour climbing stage, especially if the climb has a lengthy history in the race (such as *L’Alpe Du Huez* in *Le Tour de France*), has always brought in the highest audience shares for all races (Perez 2011, p. 9). This is similar to the introduction of the ‘*Los Lagos de Covadonga*’ climb (also Asturian) in 1983 and forms one part of the equation needed for a successful cycling tour. Like *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*, *El País* reports favourably on the inclusion of ‘*L’Angliru*’ with its headline for the day an emphatic: “nace otra Vuelta a España”. The article itself goes further with an emotional: “se habla de un mito, de un santuario, de un símbolo para la Vuelta a España”.<sup>227</sup> The discussion of myths and symbols is redolent of Barthes’ *Mythologies* (1957, pp. 103-113), which includes a discussion of *Le Tour de France*. A similar discussion of *Le Tour* is found in *Realms of Memory* (Nora 1996, pp. 469-500) and it is this level of symbolism that I believe *La Vuelta* had begun to possess by the mid-80s. *La Vuelta’s* rediscovery of the north through the utilisation of these climbs in Asturias forms an important part of the narrative and symbolism of the race in this period and feeds into the

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<sup>226</sup> [La Vuelta begins. Ours. The Spanish one, with its vices and virtues, its natural excess and its enthusiasm]. Luis Gómez, 4th September 1999. *La mejor Vuelta... sobre el papel* [Online]. Available at: [http://elpais.com/diario/1999/09/04/deportes/936396005\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1999/09/04/deportes/936396005_850215.html) [accessed: 5 September 2013].

<sup>227</sup> [Another Vuelta a España is born] and [...people speak of a myth, a sanctuary, a symbol for La Vuelta a España]. Ibid.

intractable issue of the Basque Country and *La Vuelta*. Even though the Spanish race did not enter Basque territory between 1979 and 2011, *Le Tour de France* was actually welcomed to San Sebastián in 1992.

A different side to this issue is illustrated in 1999 when *El País* reported that the President of the Basque Autonomous Community, Juan José Ibarretxe, cycled the route of one of the stages in Asturias. This is indicative of the deep cycling culture in the Basque Country and the problematic nature of *La Vuelta* not being able to visit the Spanish region with the deepest cycling heritage and culture, as discussed earlier. Indeed even when *La Vuelta* went close, such as to the neighbouring regions of La Rioja or Navarre, it was threatened and/or disrupted by Basque protestors on numerous occasions.<sup>228</sup> This represents an important limitation to the cohesion that *La Vuelta* built in the 1975-2000 period and shows that while on the whole it was successful as a national symbol, especially after 1983, this must be properly delimited. A national tour of Spain that does not visit all parts of Spain, despite the deepest interest in the sport emanating from the region it cannot visit, is quite contradictory. We should also remember that *La Selección*, held by some as one of the few unifying symbols of the post-Franco period, also failed to visit the Basque Country during this period.

#### **IV - Conclusion**

The reports for the 2000 race, closing out the period, have a mixture of themes already present within the dataset in *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*. Billig's deixis of homeland is perhaps the most salient: "Los sprints por fin hablan español" and "Las

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<sup>228</sup> These incidents can be split into explicit bomb threats from ETA and other less incendiary public protests.



llegadas en masa se han españolizado”<sup>229</sup> as Oscar Freire, a Spanish sprinter rose to prominence. *El País*, the largest newspaper in Spain, repeatedly flags Spanish identity through reports on the 2000 edition of *La Vuelta* as it had done throughout the period, evidence of how this particular event became a national symbol that could reaffirm Spanish national identity. The flagging of national identity is not the only theme however, with Spain’s ‘difference’, a term of considerable historical baggage that can be directly linked with Francoism, noted: “Sí. Es la Vuelta a España. Una carrera diferente”.<sup>230</sup> Thus the revitalisation of the race that has been abundantly clear in *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* is still subject to a self-criticism whereby it cannot quite compete with its international rivals. The growth of the race itself, however, is more than clear, with evidence from *El País* corroborating the findings from *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* as we see the revolutions in ownership (1979), broadcasting (1983) and reportage (1984) leading to a new *Vuelta a España*.

The temporal framework for growth of the race itself and its growth as a national symbol is now clearer. 1983 stands out as the date that cannot be ignored, building on the re-organisation of 1979, but providing the financial and broadcasting impetus without which modern sport would not exist. The data seem to suggest that live television coverage was a necessary but not sufficient condition for the change in the role of *La Vuelta* and it is in the emergence of particular Spanish cycling stars that we see the qualitative shift in attitudes and coverage of the race. The fact that *El País* reported an audience drop of two million after Induráin left *La Vuelta* in 1996 confirms the variability

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<sup>229</sup> [The sprints finally speak Spanish] and [Mass sprints have become Spanish]. Eduardo Ortiz de Arri, 18th August 2000, *Freire españoliza los ‘sprints’* [Online]. Available at: [http://elpais.com/diario/2000/08/28/deportes/967413629\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2000/08/28/deportes/967413629_850215.html) [accessed: 5 September 2013].

<sup>230</sup> [Yes, it’s La Vuelta a España, a different race]. Eduardo Ortiz de Arri, 11th September 2000, *Desfile de amarillos* [Online]. Available at: [http://elpais.com/diario/2000/09/11/deportes/968623228\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2000/09/11/deportes/968623228_850215.html) [accessed: 5 September 2013].

involved in television viewing figures and the effect that one single rider could have. Similar corroborating claims for the success of the race are technical in detail, as we have seen in the usage of special supplements and interviews. In terms of the specific provision of evidence from *El País* we can say that it primarily provides a corroborating role for evidence that was previously uncovered. However, the importance of the leading newspaper in Spain being ahead in most quantitative units of analysis should not be overlooked.

The numerical and symbolic reach of *El País*, the most important newspaper in Spain since 1976, is crucial for determining the reach of *La Vuelta* as a national symbol in this period. If *El País* had not covered the race in such detail we would have to seriously consider the extent to which national symbolism was reached. The reality, however, is different as *El País* consistently led most units of analysis (including article count, front page exposure, relational prominence along with the least use of agencies), meaning the race reached a larger proportion of the Spanish population that we have previously been able to identify. Another key element to come out of this analysis is the deepening understanding we have of two levels of coverage: Spanish and Catalan, with a shift towards the former after 1979. Advertising is a prime example of this as we see a binary demarcation between the high number of adverts placed in *El País* and *ABC* and the low number in *La Vanguardia*. It now remains to take these findings and apply them to the last analysis presented here, that of the Catalan disjunctive *Avui*.

## 7 - Avui

### I - Introduction

*Avui* was launched on 23 April 1976 and in what has been termed an “exceptional journalistic period” (Zugasti 2012, p. 207) was the first Catalan language newspaper to appear after the death of Franco. The date was chosen specifically to coincide with Catalonia’s national day, *Sant Jordi*,<sup>231</sup> an act of deep political and symbolic significance. After almost 40 years of repression and marginalisation the re-emergence of a Catalan public sphere was a landmark in the Transition signalling the birth of a new era of democracy and territorial governance in Spain.<sup>232</sup> Although originally funded by popular subscription serious financial difficulties resulted in a significant annual subsidy from the *Generalitat* (Papatheodorou & Machin 2003, p. 36), an arrangement that would continue until the paper was merged with its regional rival *El Punt* in 2011 (Guillamet 1996, p. 166). In a sign of serious political interference in the media members of Jordi Pujol’s coalition party, CiU, sat on the board of the newspaper with individuals such as Antoni Subiràs i Claus who was not only a member of the regional parliament but also the party’s spokesperson (Ibid.). This type of institutional influence structures the wider Catalan language media environment (across radio, TV and the press) and brings issues of political bias that differ from the pressures facing the other newspapers included here.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> St. George, a patron Catalonia shares with England, among other countries.

<sup>232</sup> Freedom of thought and the press was officially established in Article 20, 1a, of the Constitution: 1. Se reconocen y protegen los derechos: a) “A expresar y difundir libremente los pensamientos, ideas y opiniones mediante la palabra, el escrito o cualquier otro medio de reproducción.” [1. The following rights are recognised and protected: a) the right to freely express and spread thoughts, ideas and opinions through words, in writing or by any other means of reproduction]. [http://www.congreso.es/portal/page/portal/Congreso/Congreso/Hist\\_Normas/Norm/const\\_espa\\_texto\\_ingles\\_0.pdf](http://www.congreso.es/portal/page/portal/Congreso/Congreso/Hist_Normas/Norm/const_espa_texto_ingles_0.pdf) [accessed: 12/06/2014].

<sup>233</sup> This has been seen as affecting the independence and quality of work in Catalan, see: Crameri 2008, p. 2. Although the other papers do not have similarly direct links to the political apparatus, indirect links are common i.e. *El País* and the PSOE have always been seen as close.

Despite its symbolic and political relevance readership has always been low with an initial optimistic print run of 80,000 stabilising around the 29,000-32,000 mark from 1979 (Huertas & Alberch 1995, p. 504). A small market with consumers accustomed to reading in Spanish and a well-documented lower level of newspaper consumption than other European countries, explain this.<sup>234</sup> This is hardly comparable to the mass readerships of *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* and thus it must be made clear that the inclusion of this paper is due to its evocation of what can be termed the Catalan disjunctive strand of Spanish nationalisms. *Avui*, then, has a symbolic importance that outweighs its numerical inferiority.<sup>235</sup> This is the last of four analyses after the Spanish conservative (*ABC*), Spanish liberal (*El País*) and Catalan differential (*La Vanguardia*) ones that precede this chapter.

During its existence *Avui* held a strong Catalanist/Catalan nationalist editorial line and it was expected that this would impact heavily on how it framed the *Vuelta Ciclista a España* due to the explicit Spanish provenance and projection of this event. It was not initially clear that *Avui* would report on *La Vuelta* to any significant degree, a fear that was resolved as archival material was accessed. Like the other newspapers surveyed here *Avui* published an article on every single day that *La Vuelta* ran between 1975 and 2000 (in this case, from 1976), although as with the other papers there are some editions that I was not able to locate due to archival lacunae.<sup>236</sup> Beyond this initial fear I expected to see a very definite Catalan framing of events with articles and related content increasing as the

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<sup>234</sup> Daily copies per 1,000 inhabitants: Spain (99), Italy (104), Greece (153), Britain (331), Sweden (445) and Norway (590) (Papatheodorou & Machin 2003, p. 35). Although it should be noted that ‘paper sharing’ has been a part of the culture of newspaper readership in Spain, see: Lewis 2008.

<sup>235</sup> *Avui*'s symbolic importance can be noted in the high levels of subscription it had as well as comments such as: “poques vegades un diari havia estat esperat com l’Avui” [not very often had a newspaper seen so much anticipation as *Avui*] (Guillamet 1996, p. 202).

<sup>236</sup> Before 1982 Mondays saw no newspaper publication, a historical quirk related to Francoist newspapers having a monopoly on this day. Some dates such as Easter also saw 1-3 days without publication. Where possible I have tried to triangulate different archives to cover as much of the period as possible and limit statistical imbalances, for a further discussion: See Appendix.

race entered Catalonia and/or as Catalan riders did well. I was also interested in the chronological development of the coverage (did it become more Catalan over time? Did certain topical events affect coverage?) as well as the comparison at certain specific points in the period (such as 1991, when the Catalan Melcior Mauri prevailed). In wider terms I thought that coverage may well compare with that provided in *La Vanguardia* rather than the two big national dailies also covered here, *El País* and *ABC*, which would be coherent with the two areas of coverage (Catalonia and Spain) that has been outlined above.

Given that *Avui* was first published on 23 April 1976 the earliest data we have on *La Vuelta* corresponds to the fifth day that this newspaper was published: 27 April 1976. This is an attribute shared by *El País*, also launched that year, and forms part of a media environment split between new media outlets such as *El País* and *Avui* and the older ones of *La Vanguardia* (1881) and *ABC* (1903). *Avui's* structural development went through three phases: an early difficult phase with less than 30 pages, a steady phase of 40-56 pages from 1979 and a move to 60-84 pages from 1994 – although it always remained financially reliant on subsidy from the regional government. In terms of content, politics, culture and opinion comprise the main elements of the newspaper with other sections such as sport in a secondary position. The steady expansion of the paper reflects the way in which the paper was able to overcome the financial shortcomings experienced in the earlier years. From the 1980s it approximated the other newspapers surveyed here in length, if not breadth (the *Països Catalans* being the epicentre of the coverage).<sup>237</sup> Early sections of the newspaper devoted to *Religió* and *Excursionisme* compound this view,<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> [Catalan countries]. An umbrella term with irredentist connotations that includes Valencia, the Balearic islands, Andorra, a small strip (*La Franja*) of Aragon and the southern part of the French *département* 'Pyrénées-Orientales'.

<sup>238</sup> [Religion], [literally Hiking or Trekking but with a far more comprehensive meaning including Catalan culture and language. It was one of the few outlets for Catalan culture allowed during the Franco regime and has been the subject of many books]. See: Marfany 1995.

with the paper's modernisation concomitant with the solid financial footing provided by funds from Jordi Pujol's *Generalitat*.

Although the minutiae of quantitative and qualitative data will be fully discussed below a general overview of reportage in *Avui* over the period can help to provide a wider framework as we have seen in previous chapters. Clear parallels with the other papers, especially *La Vanguardia*, emerge on a general scale with the growth of the race, the divisions between foreign and Spanish riders as well as mixed criticism and praise of the organisation all visible. Despite fundamental differences, such as the political viewpoint and the particular nation that is flagged, similarities exist in both structure and content. Again a general rise across most units of analysis is visible in the data. As in *La Vanguardia* we find football, and specifically *Futbol Club Barcelona*, as the dominant sporting item in the paper both on the front page and in the sport section. Like *Real Madrid* in *ABC* and *El País* we see a localised angle showing how each readership received a complex multilevel flagging of identities that had both deep differences and broad similarities. Tennis, motor racing and cycling also figure frequently, again behind football, *el deporte rey*.<sup>239</sup> The key element of *Avui*'s coverage throughout the entire period is a consistent and pervasive Catalan framing of *La Vuelta* with Catalan stages, Catalan riders and wider Catalan concerns the most important feature of this paper's coverage. The structuring of reportage around a Catalan theme is consonant with the editorial line of the paper and shows how different elements of the Spanish public consumed this event in differing, yet similar, ways. A Catalan success in *Avui* was a Spanish success for the other papers (including *La Vanguardia*) and it is in this way that we see a direct link between *La*

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<sup>239</sup> [The leading sport]. A term often used in Spain to refer to football. For a discussion of sport in Spain see: Puig in Coakley et al. eds. 2000, pp. 559. Also: González Aja & Stumm in Riordan & Krüger. eds. 2003, p. 139.

*Vuelta Ciclista a España* and national identity starting to emerge as well as evidence with which to interrogate Billig's theory of banal nationalism.

## II - Quantitative

Across the whole dataset there were 4,732 articles published on *La Vuelta* in the four newspapers between 1975 and 2000. *Avui* provided 1,026 of these, or 22%. As expected this compares closely with the figures for *La Vanguardia*, with 1,005 (21%), but is below those for *El País* (1,372 or 29%) and *ABC* (1,329 or 28%). These figures seem to suggest that the distinct Catalan and Spanish areas of coverage outlined above do hold, although there is significant annual variation. Splitting the data into averages for the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s shows us that *Avui* generally coincided more with *La Vanguardia* than with the other Spanish newspapers being the lowest of all four through the first two decades before seeing a significant jump in articles in the 1990s, particularly the latter half of the decade, which requires some explanation (see below). Again as we saw with the other newspapers the number of articles rises in 1983, mirroring the expansion of television coverage, and 1992, concomitant with the Barcelona Olympic Games. The overall average number of articles published each year for the whole period are as follows: *Avui* with 45.48, *La Vanguardia* with 38.65, *ABC* with 51.12 and *El País* with 57.17. Thus *El País* is confirmed as the newspaper that produced most articles on *La Vuelta* throughout the period. Previously the highest number of articles published on *La Vuelta* in one calendar year had been *La Vanguardia's* 101 in 1999, but *Avui* surpassed this on three separate occasions at the end of the period with 119 in 1998, 107 in 1999 and 102 in 2000 - outliers that will be explained below. These numbers confirm two areas of

coverage, Catalan and Spanish, while also showing that the Catalan nationalist publication *Avui* published consistently on *La Vuelta*.

Moving into article size, the control unit of analysis for article number, we see a slightly different picture. In this unit of analysis *Avui* is the lowest across all four newspapers with 315.15 pages of content for the whole period, below that of 349.2 for *La Vanguardia*, 498.37 for *El País* and 583.57 for *ABC*. Again the Spanish/Catalan divide is evident. For each decade the page space roughly correlates to the article numbers above with growth in 1983, the early 1990s and a peak in the last three years of the period. *Avui*, then, provided the least amount of coverage on *La Vuelta Ciclista a España*, which is entirely consistent with its position as a Catalanist newspaper with a focus on Catalan rather than Spanish events. *Avui* did not ignore the event, but the coverage that it provided took up less space, delimiting the reach of *La Vuelta* as a national symbol in its readership. Thus although *La Vuelta's* broad growth as a symbol of banal nationality in this period is confirmed the readers of *Avui* received less of the race and thus could be said to be less connected to this particular symbol of Spanish identity. Moreover, any attention that was given to the race mainly flagged Catalan, and not Spanish, identity, making this a further case of heightened information without heightened interest, except when a distinctly Catalan angle could be taken.

Due to unforeseen archival issues I was unable to determine the provenance of the articles for a substantial part of the early period, mostly between 1976 and 1986.<sup>240</sup> This is likely to indicate agency reportage but as this cannot be verified I have classified these articles as unknown. Significant archival problems also prohibited me from viewing any

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<sup>240</sup> Archival issues also meant I was unable to determine page numbers for the majority of articles before 1990 for *Avui*, with comprehensive digital archives only available after this date.



articles in 1987, 1988 and 1989, meaning that *Avui's* numbers will be lower than they should be in comparison to the other newspapers.<sup>241</sup> A relatively high number of authors were used across the period, 26, compared with 37 in *El País*, 31 in *ABC* and 15 in *La Vanguardia*, which should make distinguishing between the paper's voice and an author's one easier. The first named author providing more than the odd article, Joan Casadevall, appears in 1981. Although this predates the introduction of live television coverage for the race, which acted as a catalyst for *ABC* to revolutionise its coverage (with the employment of Chico Pérez), he reported from Barcelona making this less important than it could seem. Robert Álvarez, who wrote for *El País* after 1988, provided coverage in *Avui* between 1984 and 1986 demonstrating that was at least some movement between papers.

The arrival of an *enviat especial*<sup>242</sup> signifies an increased interest in the race by the newspaper, although perhaps not always to the extent of *ABC's* employment of Chico Pérez in 1984. Although *Avui* contained authored content from as early as 1981 the use of a dedicated correspondent who travels with the race did not occur until relatively late in 1991 with J. M. Oliván taking on the coverage. This shift from one level of coverage to another coincides with an increase in the articles and article space devoted to the race showing the correlation between authorship and the other units of analysis analysed here. Although it could be argued that a lack of financial capacity kept *Avui* from employing a dedicated correspondent, the fact that it took 5 years longer than any other paper here broadly reflects the lower level of interest it has shown across the board.

As we will see later the Catalan framing of the coverage is notable in the 1992 edition, which took place in the wider context of a Catalan winner, Melcior Mauri, in 1991.

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<sup>241</sup> The microfilm for these years held at the British Library (Colindale) was corrupted and/or missing and I was unable to secure microfilm from any other sources.

<sup>242</sup> [Correspondent]. *Enviado especial* in Spanish.

Mauri was the first Catalan to win *La Vuelta* since 1976, when Josep Pesarrodona triumphed, and it is the latter who was employed as an additional correspondent from 1992. *Avui's* decision to employ the previous Catalan winner of *La Vuelta* is significant in that it shows how their investment in the race mirrored Catalan success, although Mauri would not go on to repeat his victory and Pesarrodona (ironically “round thing” in Catalan) would only continue until 1995. This series of events provides strong correlative evidence not only of the Catalan framing of events, as we will see in more detail in the qualitative section below, but also how Catalan success could lead to an increase and development of the resources dedicated to the race in the following period. This, then, shows how a symbol such as *La Vuelta* can become more widely known while also being appropriated in different ways depending on the context - Mauri remained resolutely Spanish for the other papers (although *La Vanguardia* did quote him in Catalan as the paper developed its Catalan credentials).

Agencies provided 16.06% of *Avui's* articles over the period, slightly below that of *ABC* (18.96%), but far above that for *La Vanguardia* (8.18%) and *El País* (1.67%). A spike in agency usage in 1998, 1999 and 2000 not only explains the rise in the number of articles in this period but may also illustrate a turn away from direct coverage of the race: agency provision of articles rose from 0% in 1997, to 15% in 1998, 65% in 1999 and 52% in 2000. *Avui* certainly developed and increased its coverage over the period and a dedicated correspondent is an important part of this, but the late arrival of the *enviat especial* and the heavy turn to agency usage at the end of our period signify a lower level of interest than that in *ABC* and *El País*, especially when coupled with the previous quantitative data on article number and size. *La Vanguardia* also experienced a similar turn to agency content in the 1990s, giving an interesting Catalan parallel.

The locational units of analysis have heretofore shown us the dominance of *El País* as its modern design and interest in *La Vuelta* meant it was roughly twice as active in the overall and relational prominence units of analysis as the other two newspapers. *Avui*, here, contained 22 instances of front-page coverage above that of 7 for *ABC* (which was technically affected), but below the 41 for *La Vanguardia* and 105 of *El País*. With *ABC*'s low figure due to design we see that *Avui* is one of the newspapers that is least likely to carry *La Vuelta* on its front page whereas it was noticeable that *Futbol Club Barcelona* appeared frequently (as happened with *La Vanguardia*). As a second tier sport cycling is less likely to appear on the front page in comparison with football, but *Avui*'s lower relative numbers vis-à-vis the other newspapers shows *La Vuelta* was not thought of as central interest to its readers. This has implications on the ability of *La Vuelta* to exist as a cohesive national symbol throughout Spain with the Catalan disjunctive strand of Spanish nationalism being represented by *Avui* particularly difficult to penetrate.

A key question to be asked relates to the 22 times that *Avui* did feature *La Vuelta* on its front page: if *La Vuelta* did not appear often on the front page what were the special circumstances that made it front page news? There are certain features that seem to lift *La Vuelta* on to the front page of all newspapers: the retirement of Miguel Induráin from the race in 1996 being a prime example of this. Induráin was a sportsman of such stature that news of his premature departure from the race could not be ignored even in *Avui*. Some front-page exposure in *Avui* seems to be down to the general increase in coverage through the 1990s with small by-lines more frequent than larger articles or pictures. Other events that bring *La Vuelta* from the back of the newspaper to the front include *ETA*'s bombing of the race in 1990 and well known Spanish figures such as Pedro Delgado in 1984 and 1992. However, the main contributor to front-page coverage in *Avui*, particularly in terms of

the larger articles, is anything that can be directly related to Catalonia - which ties in with the pervasive Catalan framing of the race that is the defining feature of *Avui*'s coverage.

This Catalan aspect is most visible in 1991 when a Catalan rider, Melcior Mauri, won *La Vuelta* - the first time a Catalan had done so since 1976. This event saw *La Vuelta* appear on the front page on 3 separate occasions: a small headline on 13th May, a large picture and article on 18th May and another large picture and headline on 20th May. Furthermore, with the paper referring to "El ciclista català"<sup>243</sup> we see how *Avui* claimed Mauri as Catalan in a way not applicable to *El País* and *ABC* whose reportage saw him as Spanish. *La Vanguardia*, on the other hand, is to be found between the two extremes, a bridging conservative role that the paper has always played. Mauri would also be the reason for another front page in 1997 when he won a stage, and this, coupled with a front page dedicated to the race entering Barcelona in 1995, typifies the Catalan frame through which *Avui* pictures *La Vuelta*. The race is still reported on here as it is in the other three newspapers, but the nuances of coverage allow us to understand and delimit the status of *La Vuelta* as a national symbol both geographically and politically.

The relational prominence unit of analysis follows a similar pattern. Over the whole period *La Vuelta* lead the *Esports* section in *Avui* 58 times below that of the 75 for *La Vanguardia*, the 83 for *ABC* and the 157 from *El País*. Yet again *El País*' dominance is visible which shows the extent to which the Spanish liberal newspaper reported on *La Vuelta*. The series high for the Catalan paper in 1976, with *La Vuelta* leading the section 11 times, correlates to a Catalan victory. The proximity of this event to the launching of the paper itself may have pushed the race higher up the agenda than would later be the case

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<sup>243</sup> [The Catalan cyclist], *Avui*, 18th May 1991. p. 30.

as the paper was finding its way and no template for coverage would have been in place. Another period where *La Vuelta* leads the section more often is in the early 1990s, which is similar to what we saw in other papers in this unit of analysis and indeed more generally across all units of analysis. The end of the period sees *La Vuelta* lead the sports section relatively few times and it is evident that across the period, but especially in the 1990s, *Futbol Club Barcelona* in particular, but also football more generally, displaces all other sporting reports. *Avui's* results in this unit of analysis confirm the superiority of *El País*, which over a period from 1983-1993 consistently gave *La Vuelta* a leading role in its sporting coverage. *La Vuelta* did lead the sporting section in *Avui* at times, but this was far less than in the other papers and limited to two specific time periods, 1976 and the early 1990s, coincidentally the two periods when Catalan success in *La Vuelta* was at its peak.

Up to this point the quantitative units of analysis discussed have given us a picture of *Avui* as a paper which although reporting frequently on *La Vuelta* does so through a distinct Catalan frame. This is shown through the correlation between its numbers and those of *La Vanguardia*, the other Catalan newspaper, as well as through the selection of the winner of the 1976 *Vuelta* to be its correspondent from 1992 following another Catalan victory. It is this appropriation of *La Vuelta* through a Catalan lens that allows us to construct a history of *La Vuelta* as a symbol of banal nationalism in Spain. Although the main Spanish papers would herald Spanish success, this was different in *La Vanguardia* and *Avui* with the latter explicitly changing Spanish to Catalan where applicable. With some variation the Spanish newspapers also produced more content than the Catalan newspapers, dividing the coverage geographically between Catalonia (with less coverage) and Spain (with more). All papers reported on the race, but their coverage varied quantitatively and qualitatively, giving a nuanced picture of how one sporting event is

received across different political and geographical boundaries as well as through time. Newspapers, of course, only form one part of the media coverage of an event and thus of how an event is consumed (if it is at all, since only x amount of people will read or buy a newspaper and only a certain percentage within that set amount will peruse the sporting pages) with television and radio other ways to connect to *La Vuelta*.<sup>244</sup>

The last two units of analysis, visual media and advertising, have been shown to be anodyne and useful, respectively. Visual media has not provided the rich information received from the other units of analysis and seems to be of little significance.<sup>245</sup> Like the other papers *Avui*'s visual media tracked the changes in technology as the introduction of live television coverage led to a jump in the unit of analysis in 1983. Again, comparatively, *El País* led the unit of analysis with 1016 visual media across the period, ahead of *ABC* with 705, *Avui* with 678 and *La Vanguardia* with 672. Advertising, on the other hand, has provided evidence as to the economic logic of the race with *El País* and *ABC* as the main recipients of advertising spend reinforcing the Spanish/Catalan division. In *Avui*'s case we see an extremely low level of advertising with only 6 adverts placed across the whole period, compared to 47 in *La Vanguardia*, 219 in *El País* and 279 in *ABC*. In every year bar one in the 1983-2000 period *ABC* saw more adverts than *Avui* did in the entire period - a clear sign of advertising priorities.

The reasons for this lack of advertising are clear: firstly, with *Avui*'s avowed Catalanist credentials advertisers were unlikely to view this as a good place for adverts based on a large Spanish sporting event (although Catalan events did see targeted

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<sup>244</sup> The choice of newspapers as the source material is discussed in the introduction and methodology sections, where their ability to map certain strands of public opinion as well as the ease of comparability with other studies of banal nationalism is highlighted.

<sup>245</sup> If I were to pursue similar research, the design would avoid this unit of analysis and instead triangulate semi-structured interviews, content analysis and survey data.

advertising). Secondly, given the very low circulation figures for the Catalan paper throughout the period advertisers would be more likely to look elsewhere, which is why *La Vanguardia* received far more adverts. Thirdly, and related to the first point, the paucity of adverts in general, especially in the early years of the paper, is noticeable with far fewer advertisers than in *El País*, *ABC* or *La Vanguardia*. *Avui's* advertising share across the four newspapers is 1% illustrating the little economic relevance it had at this level. This further delineates the strength (or weakness) of *La Vuelta* as a symbol of banal nationality as although *Avui* reported relatively frequently this saw little repercussion in advertising. The limits of *La Vuelta* in this constituency are made clear, something further illustrated by an advert placed by the *Banc de Bilbao* for the *Volta a Catalunya*,<sup>246</sup> a race which has not matched *La Vuelta's* rise in popularity even though it would have made a good vehicle to project an international image of Catalonia.

On 29 April 1976 the *Banc de Bilbao* placed a full-page advert on the back page of *Avui* concerning the *Volta a Catalunya*, which at the time coincided with *La Vuelta*.<sup>247</sup>

“Si el Banc de Bilbao està a la Plaça de Catalunya, la més catalana de les places, com no ha d'estar a la <Volta a Catalunya>, la més catalana de les competicions?”<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> [The Tour of Catalonia].

<sup>247</sup> *La Volta a Catalunya* has a confused history. It predates *La Vuelta*, being founded in 1911, and was part of a wider series of events that ran in Catalonia, of which it is the sole survivor. Despite its historical precedence it has not been able to sufficiently establish itself, suffering from being moved around the sporting calendar and not receiving direct television coverage. After a series of annual crises after 2008, the *Generalitat* stepped in with funding with television coverage from TV3, the autonomous community broadcaster. This is yet another example of the extent to which the regional government intervenes in cultural practice in Catalonia, although cycling has not been one of the priorities with high culture receiving the dominant share of funding under Pujol's CiU government, 1980-2003.

<sup>248</sup> [If the Banc de Bilbao is located on Catalonia Square, the most Catalan of places, how could it not be at the Tour of Catalonia, the most Catalan of competitions?]. 29th April, 1976. *Avui*. p. unknown.

This advert illustrates the direct link between place, competition and advertiser that is very rarely present with *Avui* and *La Vuelta*. Whereas the *Banc de Bilbao* specifically linked its location as a business in the heart of the Catalan capital, Barcelona, to a Catalan event this was less likely for *La Vuelta* since, especially after its re-organisation in 1979, it was increasingly centred on Madrid. With *El País* and *ABC* sharing 91% of the total adverts throughout the period *La Vuelta* became a national symbol that was far stronger in the Spanish liberal and Spanish central constituencies that these newspapers represent than elsewhere with our two Catalan papers hardly featuring in this key economic unit of analysis.

### III - Qualitative

It is in the qualitative side where we see the deep and pervasive Catalan framing of *La Vuelta*, which we have been able to notice in the quantitative data, come through most strongly as *Avui* uses its formulation of nationality (*Països Catalans*) and the possessive in a very different way to that of the other newspapers. This appropriation of *La Vuelta* in a Catalan sense not only differs from what we have previously seen but is also further evidence of a far more differentiated flagging of national identity than Billig leaves space for in his seminal work. *Avui's* Catalan angle does not wholly abrogate a sense of Spanish nationality, which is also noticeable at a reduced level of incidence, but it does introduce a further layer of complexity that is broadly in line with a number of post-Billig studies. In a broader sense this mirrors claims that have been made as to the flagging of municipal, regional and national levels at the Barcelona Olympic Games (Hargreaves 1992; Hargreaves & Ferrando 1997; Hargreaves 2000).



The Catalan framing of *La Vuelta* is visible at all levels with a basic example being the unevenness with which *La Vuelta* itself was addressed: *La Volta a Espanya* (Catalan), *La Vuelta a Espanya* (half Catalan) and *La Vuelta a España* (official) were all used (even within the same article). This shows some similarity to the coverage within *La Vanguardia*, which printed comments in Catalan from Melcior Mauri in 1991, but remains highly divergent from that of *El País* and *ABC*. This changeable way of naming the race evokes the way in which Catalan itself as a language as well as the Catalan public sphere was establishing itself in the post-Franco era. This would take definitive shape after the first elections to the *Generalitat* in 1980, which produced a government determined to ‘normalise’ use of the language.<sup>249</sup> It was within this process of development for the Catalan language that *La Vanguardia* began to use the term ‘nation’ for Catalonia (Zugasti 2012, p. 214) remaining short of the more profound Catalan nationalist ideology of *Avui* that we see here.

On 24 April 1979 a report discussed the race and the sport of cycling itself in the common Spanish dichotomy of centre vs. periphery, raising some key issues:

“Quan ha viscut el franquisme, Euskadi i Catalunya han estat factotums de l’esport i singularment de l’esport de la bicicleta, per bé que sempre s’hagi intentat que el center estigués a Madrid”.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> *normalització* in Catalan and pertains to language use in schools, courts and other public places as well as the wider environment of Catalan as a language. It was particularly divisive for the political right who claimed this would lead to Spanish being a persecuted language in Catalonia, much as Catalan was under the Franco regime. A greater danger is perhaps the socialization practices that surround being taught in Catalan, which may lead to rising affiliation to the Catalan nation and perhaps support for independence.

<sup>250</sup> [Under Francoism, the Basque Country and Catalonia were great supporters of sport in general and cycling in particular, even though attempts were always made to make Madrid the centre]. 24th April, 1979. *Avui*. p. unknown.

We already know that the Basque Country and Catalonia, through newspapers published in the regions, had been the main supporters of *La Vuelta* between 1955 and 1978, but this provides additional information. Although we need to be careful not to overestimate the evidence we can glean from one article from one paper the suggestion that Spain's most distinct regions had been central to sport in the Franco era, but particularly cycling, is intriguing in the range of possibilities that it opens up. Did *La Vuelta's* first Golden Age tie into a wider nexus of events whereby cycling played an important role in national regional identity? Moreover, that the writer believes that these regions had accomplished this whilst facing centralising pressures from Madrid expands the historical background we can give to *La Vuelta* with centralisation of the race only achieved after the dictatorship had ended.

Examples of *Avui's* Catalanism are also to be found in the way the paper refers to Spanish cyclists as "corredors de l'Estat"<sup>251</sup> and *La Vuelta* itself as "la primera prova estatal".<sup>252</sup> This is a common form of expression in *Avui* and other Catalanist/Nationalist publications and speech: as Catalonia is a nation Spain becomes just a state, although a plethora of different configurations exist.<sup>253</sup> *Avui* is the only newspaper analysed here which uses this division between riders from the Spanish state and riders from Catalonia - a dichotomy that follows its editorial line and shows how *La Vuelta* was viewed from this Catalan perspective. This leads us to the use of the possessive, central to identity formation in the 'us and them' dialectic and also a key part of *Banal Nationalism* (Billig 1995, pp. 70-73). Billig highlighted the importance of the sporting pages since "all the papers...have a section in which the flag is waved with regular enthusiasm...the sports section", marking it out as a special area of attention even though most of his study stuck to the other parts of the paper (Ibid. pp. 119).

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<sup>251</sup> *Avui*, 21st April, 1983. p. unknown.

<sup>252</sup> *Avui*, 16th May, 1991. p. 33.

<sup>253</sup> An ambiguity also found within the Spanish Constitution.

For Billig sport is one of the areas where banal nationalism is most evident, a fact supported by the wide variety of examples of Catalan identity flagging in *Avui* along with the previous Spanish examples of the other newspapers. In *Avui* the use of the possessive, *els nostres*,<sup>254</sup> is mostly used to refer to riders from Catalonia as we would expect. The use of this expression is not uniform, however, with some limited usage of the possessive to refer to Spanish riders as well showing the variability even within this Catalanist newspaper. Thus *Avui* not only demonstrates a tendency to flag a different national identity from the main statewide one (Spanish), but also mixes both even within the same article or edition. This goes beyond the conception of change or internal diversification shown by most authors in similar studies (e.g. Rosie et al 2004) to encompass a day-to-day flexibility. For the most part we find *Avui* separating clearly between Catalan and Spanish riders, but the few times this distinction is blurred show us the nuanced nature of identity as well as developing the idea of dual or nested identities which has been broadly accepted in the discipline (Moreno 1998; Medrano & Gutiérrez 2001; Miley 2007; Serrano 2013; Balfour & Quiroga 2007; Muñoz 2009, 2012; Núñez Seixas 2001; León Solís 2003).

The use of the possessive goes beyond the limited “els nostres”, “nostra” and “nostre” to accommodate other semantic constructions too:

“Han hagut de passar 15 anys perquè un altre corredor de casa nostra es posés novament el mallot groc de la cursa espanyola”.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> [Ours].

<sup>255</sup> [15 years have had to pass before another native rider puts on the yellow jersey of the Spanish race]. *Avui*, 1st May, 1991. p. 25.

Here the author is not just referring to our rider(s) but a rider from our country, a small change building on the identification of Catalonia as a nation and *La Vuelta* as something where Catalan identity can be flagged. The Catalan frame goes further with a number of riders throughout the period that although not born in Catalonia can be claimed to have some link to the Principality. Examples of this include “fill de Catalans”,<sup>256</sup> “El líder basc d’ascendència catalana”<sup>257</sup> and “El català nascut a Còrdova”,<sup>258</sup> all furthering the deep and pervasive Catalan framing. However tenuous the link Catalan connections are named, a situation echoing the long-term debates on ethnic vs. civic nationalism.<sup>259</sup> It is in this way, through the possessive and other links to national identity, that a Spanish event such as *La Vuelta* can be viewed through a Catalan lens to such an extent that it actually flags Catalan identity. *Avui* reports frequently on *La Vuelta*, but this does not necessarily reinforce Spanish identity through association with a Spanish event, instead we find Catalan identity being mapped onto *La Vuelta*.

The Catalan agenda moves beyond these aspects to include reports on how many Catalan riders are riding each year (“hi ha catorze corredors catalans”),<sup>260</sup> how many Catalans are in the top ten at any time and assessments of Catalan cycling - as opposed to Spanish cycling in the other three newspapers. Frequently we see comments on the health of Catalan cycling, such as “El ciclisme català està en un baix moment”<sup>261</sup> and “una empenta al ciclisme català”,<sup>262</sup> yet this forms only part of the coverage. In other periods

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<sup>256</sup> [(the) son of Catalans]. *Avui*. 1st May 1985. p. unknown.

<sup>257</sup> [The Basque leader with Catalan heritage]. *Avui*, 3rd May, 1985. p. unknown.

<sup>258</sup> [The Catalan, born in Cordoba]. *Avui*, 12th May, 1985. p. unknown.

<sup>259</sup> Catalonia has historically been seen as more civic in its conception of nationalism, with the Basque Country as more ethnic. However, this has been disputed lately and I am inclined to agree with Keating (various) who argues that nationalisms contain both elements, a position firmly evidenced in these quotes.

<sup>260</sup> [There are fourteen Catalan riders]. *Avui*. 23rd April, 1985. p. unknown.

<sup>261</sup> [Catalan cycling is in a low moment]. *Avui*. 13th May, 1992. p. 38.

<sup>262</sup> [A boost for Catalan cycling]. *Avui*. 9th May, 1993. p. 31.

comments on Spanish cycling appear, for instance “renascut ciclisme espanyol”<sup>263</sup> and “el nou ciclisme espanyol”,<sup>264</sup> which not only chart the positive attitude with which Spanish cycling was viewed after 1983 but show the (limited) variation present in *Avui*'s coverage. This newspaper, therefore, frames its reportage through a Catalanist lens, but it does not do this in an exclusive fashion with Catalan and Spanish riders alluded to as “nostres” and both Spanish and Catalan cycling referenced. Most coverage is found on the Catalan side, but the (infrequent) mention of Spanish cycling and riders (in the possessive) shows how the reportage can vary in terms of identity formation. *Avui* diverges from the other newspapers in this area especially from *La Vanguardia* which we may assume could carry similar characteristics, but this divergence has certain limits.

This mixing of Spanish and Catalan identities, which although not equal, does occur regularly enough to warrant attention is most clearly visible in two quotes published 8 May 1994:

“Pamplona va estar a un pas de veure la primera victòria catalana de la Vuelta”,  
“Mauri va estar molt a prop d’aconseguir el primer triomf espanyol”.<sup>265</sup>

The coverage at this point has grown to several articles per day, centred on two main authors, one reporting on the details of the stage with the other summarising - much like in traditional British football commentary. The first quote comes from the summariser, Josep Pesarrodona, an ex-cyclist who won *La Vuelta* in 1976 and was brought in to *Avui*'s reportage after the Catalan Melcior Mauri won the race in 1991. As his employment is

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<sup>263</sup> [Reborn Spanish cycling]. *Avui*. 17th April, 1984. p. unknown.

<sup>264</sup> [The new Spanish cycling]. *Avui*. 26th April, 1985. p. unknown.

<sup>265</sup> [Pamplona was a step away from seeing the Vuelta's first Catalan victory], [Mauri was close to securing the first Spanish triumph]. Both: *Avui*, 8th May, 1994. p 31.

directly attributable to previous Catalan success it is unsurprising that he chooses to use the term “primer victòria catalana”. Yet the second quote, provided by the *enviat especial*, Josep M Oliván, sees things differently in that this was nearly the “primer triomf espanyol”. This example of dual or shared identities shows that some multiplicity existed within the otherwise clear Catalan framing of *La Vuelta* found in *Avui*. Even in a Catalan language newspaper, strongly tied to and funded by the Catalanist regional government, identity flagging is not uniform, a conclusion that may extend to the other historic nationalities as well.

The aforementioned Josep Pesarrodona was brought into *Avui*'s newsroom due to the success of a Catalan, Melcior Mauri, in 1991 and it with this event that we see the most explicit Catalan framing of *La Vuelta* across the period. As we have seen above *La Vanguardia* printed the winner's comments in Catalan, verbatim, and yet did not quite see his victory as a Catalan one as per *Avui*. The manifold Catalan framing of the 1991 edition where Mauri held the yellow jersey from start to finish is evident in almost all of the reportage and represents the zenith of Catalan framing for *Avui*. In the report on the second stage we see a clear link between Mauri and Catalonia: “Mauri dedica el seu triomf d'ahir a la Vuelta a tota l'afició catalana”, which was close to the winner's actual words: “Dedico aquest triomf a la meva família, als amics i, per descomptat, a tota l'afició catalana”, although the report decided to concentrate on the national part of Mauri's dedication rather than the parts referring to his friends and family.<sup>266</sup> This Catalan framing continues throughout the 1991 reportage with comments upon how Catalan cycling has suffered a long period below the top level, “Durant molts anys el ciclisme català ha deixat d'estar en la primera línia” as well how Mauri has changed this: “Melcior Mauri, de 25

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<sup>266</sup> [Mauri dedicates yesterday's victory in the Vuelta to all Catalan fans], [I dedicate this victory to my family, my friends, and, of course, to all Catalan fans]. Both: *Avui*, 30th April, 1991. p. 32.

anys, és la prova més evident que el nostre ciclisme torna a estar viu”.<sup>267</sup> The same article continues: “Catalunya és on hi ha més llicències de corredors i sempre ha vibrat molt amb el ciclisme”<sup>268</sup>. This can be related to a report cited above that discussed the cycling heritage of the Basque Country and Catalonia. Indeed, their respective tours (*La Volta a Catalunya* and *Euskal Herriko Itzulia*) predated *La Vuelta* showing how the centralisation of the race in 1979 ran contrary to historical precedent.

The positive coverage continues throughout the edition with the double symbolism of a Catalan leading the race as it enters Catalonia on 7 May 1991. With the other newspapers seeing this as a Spanish leader of the race we have Melcior Mauri representing two different national identities - a factor not foreseen in Billig’s work perhaps due to his focus on “established nations”.<sup>269</sup> The headline utilised on the day Mauri entered Catalonia with the leader’s jersey is instructive: “Mauri plora d’emoció en saber que avui serà líder a Catalunya” with clear reference to the emotive content of nationhood.<sup>270</sup> Mauri’s leadership in *La Vuelta* is linked back to that of Josep Pesarrodona in 1976 and statements such as “l’esquadra catalana al món del ciclisme” and Mauri as “el nou ídol del ciclisme català” show the wider implications of this individual accomplishment.<sup>271</sup> Mauri’s success leads to an intensification of the previous Catalan framing of *La Vuelta* with Mauri as the image of a new generation of Catalan cyclists. This is akin to the other newspapers’ evocation of Pedro Delgado and Miguel Induráin as distinctly Spanish cycling stars, the national identity utilised here is, however, different.

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<sup>267</sup> [Catalan cycling has not been at the highest level for a number of years], [25 year old Melcior Mauri is the proof that our cycling is alive and well again]. *Avui*, 1st May, 1991. p. 25.

<sup>268</sup> [It is Catalonia that has the most racing licenses and has always lived and breathed cycling]. *Ibid.*

<sup>269</sup> Yet Spain must also be considered an established nation and it is in this way that Billig’s work has been criticised as it fails to take into account the contested nature of even the most established of nations i.e. even the United Kingdom is facing a constitutional crisis if Scotland votes for independence in 2014, although it forms one of Billig’s core banal nationalisms.

<sup>270</sup> [Mauri weeps with emotion on knowing that today he will be the leader in Catalonia]. The emotive side of this is evident. *Avui*, 7th May, 1991. p. 31.

<sup>271</sup> [The Catalan team in world cycling], [the new idol of Catalan cycling]. Both: *Avui*, 16th May 1991. p. 33.

Mauri's triumph on 20 May 1991 received front-page coverage as well as ample reportage within the *Esports* section (which it led) - all attributes of enhanced coverage that have been discussed previously. As with most winners he was received in his hometown, Balenyà, as part of wider celebrations marking the end of *La Vuelta*. A part of this was an institutional reception led by Jordi Pujol, president of the *Generalitat*, which illustrates how *La Vuelta* could move beyond culture to politics. As Mauri's win was seen as Spanish by the other newspapers we see municipal, regional and national levels all represented in what can be seen as a negotiation of various levels of identity. i.e. national identity is not necessarily preponderant.<sup>272</sup> Furthermore, *Avui* viewed this victory within a wider sphere of recent Catalan sporting success with the headline "l'esport català cotitza a l'alça",<sup>273</sup> drawing together cycling, basketball and handball. This broad positive evaluation of Catalan sport brings in wider considerations such as the possibility of a Catalan team for the Olympics which at this point were just a year away from being held in the capital of Catalonia, a fact which probably explains the rise in coverage on *La Vuelta* that we find in this period across most units of analysis in all newspapers. The article continues:

"Aquest cap de setmana ha estat insuperable per a l'esport català. Únic. Potser mai no s'havien aconseguit tants éxits en tan poc espai de temps".<sup>274</sup>

This glut of triumphs, represented pictorially on the front page with pictures of Mauri, *El Joventut*<sup>275</sup> and Barcelona's handball team are a demonstration of how *Avui* used sport to

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<sup>272</sup> As we saw in the Introduction it is my view that national identity is given too much relative weight vis-à-vis other parts of identity - gender, class, age and culture. National identity remains a key structuring factor in most lives, with the weakness of supranational identities and the recrudescence of national identity both relevant, but it is not the only game in town.

<sup>273</sup> [Catalan sport is on the up]. *Avui*, 20th May, 1991. p. 37.

<sup>274</sup> [This weekend has been unbeatable for Catalan sport. Unique. It's possible that there have never been so many successes in such a short period of time.]. Ibid.



reinforce a sense of Catalan identity. Sport can thus play an integral part of identity formation and flagging (as per Billig) especially within a period where interest in sport was higher due to a range of Catalan successes (as well as the pre-1992 Olympic surge in sporting coverage).

In the first part of the qualitative section we have seen how a persistent Catalan theme was pursued in reportage on *La Vuelta* with particular salience in 1991 when a Catalan won the race. Although not exclusively limited to Catalan nationality for the most part we see a strong identification with riders from the Principality, above and beyond the limited sense of Catalan identity present in *La Vanguardia*. Whereas the latter only drew inferences to Catalan identity when that was most salient, in 1991, for *Avui* this year was the culmination of 16 years of framing *La Vuelta* in this way. The Catalan newspaper did not only refer to Catalan riders as “els nostres” but the exceptions to this were few and far between. The significance of Mauri’s victory in *La Vuelta* extends beyond 1991 with the employment of Josep Pesarrodona as a correspondent only part of a wider change in coverage. He would not repeat his overall triumph, yet *Avui* would subsequently use Mauri as a pivot on which to base their coverage even when other riders from Spain were outperforming him, an elevation of the national (Catalan) over other metrics. Clear examples of this approach are to be found in the 1997 edition when Mauri won the time trial leading to a front page headline of “Mauri venç en la primera contrarellotge de la Vuelta”<sup>276</sup> and later on: “amb el català Melcior Mauri com a gran protagonista”.<sup>277</sup> *Avui* had found its star, but this differed from those chosen by the other three newspapers with national identity (Catalan not Spanish) as the prime cause of this divergence.

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<sup>275</sup> Catalonia’s main basketball team, playing in the *Palau Olímpic*, a venue built for the Barcelona Olympic Games. Basketball is far more popular in Spain than in the UK, existing along with cycling, Formula One and tennis in the second tier of sports behind football.

<sup>276</sup> [Mauri wins the first time trial of the Vuelta]. *Avui*, 15th September 1997. p. 1.

<sup>277</sup> [With Melcior Mauri as the main protagonist]. *Avui*, 27th September. p. 58.

This section of the chapter has so far examined difference and yet it is important to note that some similarities exist in *Avui*'s coverage with features that we have found earlier - the growth in stature of the race, organisational issues, foreign/domestic juxtaposition - all present. Previously we have charted the growth of *La Vuelta* as a race with important organisational changes in 1979, the financial and technological fillip of television coverage in 1983, the emergence of Spanish cycling stars from 1984 (a lesser factor here) and the general sporting aura of the early 1990s. *Avui* provides strong corroboration of the growth of *La Vuelta* with important links to its strength as a symbol of banal nationality, particularly in 1983 when it reports on “una gran <vuelta> animada por Hinault y Saronni” and the “millor celebrada des de fa molts anys”.<sup>278</sup> *Avui* reports frequently and positively on the race (as with the other newspapers there are some limited negative comments towards the organisation) and it is in this way that we can fully establish the trajectory of *La Vuelta* in the period after 1975. Some small discrepancies remain, however, with the 1979 re-organisation received more cautiously in *Avui* than in the other newspapers due to its possible centralising effects.

The organisational changes in 1979, led by Luís Puig,<sup>279</sup> a Valencian who headed the *Federación Española de Ciclismo* (Spanish Cycling Federation) and would go on to lead the *Union Cycliste Internationale* (International Cycling Union), is not the universal success proclaimed broadly in the other newspapers since *Avui* sees it as disregarding the regional basis of Spanish cycling, an opinion probably shared in other regional newspapers. This features in the commentary on the change where it is stated that “calia salvar-la malgrat

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<sup>278</sup> [A race animated by Hinault and Saronni], [the best celebrated in Spain for many years]. Both: *Avui*, 19th April, 1983. p. unknown.

<sup>279</sup> *Avui* uses the Catalanised version of his name, Lluís.

que només fos per prestigi malentés nacionalista”.<sup>280</sup> The headline used for this article, “Un recorregut que defuig la perifèria”,<sup>281</sup> makes the connection between this change and a lack of stages in the peripheral regions. This is a position that would be repeated in 1990 when *Avui* claimed:

“D’aquesta manera es trencaria amb un llarg període de temps en que Catalunya ha estat sempre en un segon pla per als organitzadors d’aquesta prova ciclista”.<sup>282</sup>

A different picture thus emerges with a successful race, but one that is seen to ignore the very regions that kept the sport alive under Franco. As we will see below, *Avui* also saw the race improving over time, but this was coupled with cynicism towards the organisation based in Madrid, a distinctly Catalan way of analysing the race’s development.

Further positive evaluations of the race appear sporadically throughout the 25-year period allowing us to form a broader picture of the growth of the race itself as a symbol of banal nationality. Across all newspapers we see broad signs of development in the race’s stature within a clear chronological framework, the importance and specifics of which will be discussed in the next chapter. In 1984, the year after the introduction of full television coverage, *Avui* reports on how two French publications (whose presence at the race alone points to nascent international interest): “coincidién en les seves edicions d’ahir a assenyalar que és enorme la revalorització de la cursa espanyola”,<sup>283</sup> giving external evidence of the growth of the race in this period. The following year also sees various

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<sup>280</sup> [It needed to be saved despite that it was only for a misunderstood national pride]. *Avui*, 24th April, 1979. p. unknown.

<sup>281</sup> [A route that avoids the periphery]. Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> [In this way a large period of time when Catalonia has always been in on a secondary level for the organisers is closed]. *Avui*, 28th April, 1990. p. 25.

<sup>283</sup> [both agreed in yesterday’s editions that the renewal of the Spanish race is huge]. *Avui*, 19th April, 1984.

comments upon how the race “ha passat a ser desitjada per les figures”<sup>284</sup> while cycling is even seen to temporarily displace football, as “els diaris s’oblidaran uns dies de la síndrome del futbol”,<sup>285</sup> with clear parallels to what we have seen in earlier chapters. *La Vuelta* would never displace football permanently in this period, but it could challenge its supremacy periodically under the right conditions.

The development of the race in *Avui* leading through from the 1970s into the 1980s is also visible in articles from the 1990s as the race reached a new maturity. In 1993 *Avui* reports on *Televisión Española* (TVE) buying the rights to the race among competing interest from the new private television channels *Antena 3*<sup>286</sup> and *Telecinco* - a fact which was not picked up on by the other newspapers.<sup>287</sup> At the beginning of our period TVE had shown no interest in the race and had indeed been paid to provide coverage, illustrating the complete reversal in the race’s position. Television coverage is vital for modern sport, a point made by all the newspapers surveyed here and the money it can bring in terms of media rights, international broadcasts and enhanced advertising revenues show how *La Vuelta*’s development since 1983 has been almost wholly dependent on it. As we saw earlier a competing race, *La Volta a Catalunya*, had until very recently not had live television coverage, one of the key factors leading to its relative decline vis-à-vis *La Vuelta*.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> [The race has become desirable to the star riders]. *Avui*, 23rd April, 1985. p. unknown.

<sup>285</sup> [Newspapers will forget for a few days their football syndrome]. *Ibid.*

<sup>286</sup> This was a radio station that took out adverts in the other newspapers surveyed here, but not *Avui*, in the 1980s. It became one of Spain’s first television channels once the market had belatedly been liberalised in the late 1980s.

<sup>287</sup> Another private television channel that began buying up rights to develop its content and audience in the early 1990s.

<sup>288</sup> The reluctance of the *Generalitat* to invest in *La Volta a Catalunya* is probably down to the preferment of high culture over low, with the race only receiving money when it was on the brink of disappearing altogether, and when CiU had been replaced in government by the PSC-ERC-ICV/EUiA coalition.

For our argument the control of coverage by TVE, the state broadcaster domiciled in Madrid, throughout the period would have had an important impact on the flagging of identity especially given the dominance of the medium vis-à-vis newspapers. The flagging of a mostly mononational Catalan identity that we have seen here, for example, as well as the more nuanced dual identity found in *La Vanguardia* would be counterbalanced by the prevailing attitude of TVE in providing coverage that centred on an unproblematic Spanish national identity. Although it remains difficult to understand the dynamics of this multimedia flagging, as people could receive different messages from different media, what we can say is that this resolutely confirms that a multilevel flagging of identity is present when we talk about sports in Spain. A Catalan who watched the live broadcast only to read about it the next day in *Avui* would receive contradictory information on the identity of riders at certain points, confirming that Billig's theory is in need of considerable alteration to fit multinational states.

Another factor present in *Avui* but not elsewhere is that in 1995 *La Vuelta* not only changed dates, another key organisational change, but also stopped utilising French state television equipment originally used for *Le Tour de France*.<sup>289</sup> TVE's belated purchase and utilisation of its own equipment to broadcast live footage of its home race illustrates the development, not only of the state broadcaster itself in financial and organisational terms, but also the importance that *La Vuelta* had reached in the national sporting imaginary. *La Vuelta*, far from being a race close to disappearance as it was in the late 1970s, was a race that deserved the significant outlay on technological equipment required to broadcast the race to an international audience (a complex triangulation involving multiple helicopters, motorbikes, mobile studios and other infrastructure). This development leads

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<sup>289</sup> *Avui*, 2nd September, 1995. p. 44.

naturally to the point noted in an earlier chapter whereby audience share for the live broadcast of *La Vuelta* reached over 50% in 1998 as the race went over a new unprecedented climb, *L'Angliru*. These articles from *Avui* reinforce what we had learnt from the other newspapers: *La Vuelta Ciclista a España* had become what it is today, one of three Grand Tours that all hold an integral place in the professional cycling calendar and the national imaginary of each respective country (France, Italy and Spain).

#### **IV - Conclusion**

Through the analysis of *ABC*, *Avui*, *El País* and *La Vanguardia* we have been able to achieve two separate but related tasks: firstly, we have been able to analyse how *La Vuelta* developed as a symbol of banal nationality between 1975 and 2000, including, *inter alia*, the re-organisation (and centralisation) of the race in 1979, the introduction of television in 1983 and the emergence of Spanish (and Catalan) cyclists who could surpass the level of mere sporting success. Secondly, we have seen how each newspaper reported on the race in quantitative and qualitative terms giving us a rich dataset which has allowed us to draw two distinct areas of Spanish and Catalan interest, to examine the economic implications of advertising, to observe the Catalan framing of *Avui* and the lead which the liberal Spanish newspaper *El País* held on most units of analysis. While some parts of the data analysis have been less useful, such as the visual media unit of analysis, overall the mix of quantitative and qualitative data has given us a rich tapestry of information from which to answer the central questions posed at the beginning of this thesis: How did *La Vuelta* develop as a symbol of banal nationality in the post-Franco period? And how did this vary across geographical, political and chronological boundaries?

When the *Banc de Bilbao* placed a full page advert on the back page of *Avui* on 29 April 1976 invoking “la més catalana de les places” and “la més catalana de les competicions”<sup>290</sup> we saw the direct linkages that can be made between a sporting event and a national or regional identity (in this case *La Volta a Catalunya* and Catalonia). This mirrors the pervasive Catalan framing we have seen in *Avui* with Catalan riders, Catalan successes and Catalan stages all seen as above and beyond the Spanish level of interest. The depth and constancy of this Catalan framing is entirely consistent with *Avui*’s editorial line and clearly demarcates between the Catalan disjunctive line of this newspaper and the Catalan differential line of *La Vanguardia*. There is a deep qualitative difference in content between these two Catalan newspapers which only widens if you compare *Avui* with the Spanish newspapers previously analysed: *El País* and *ABC*.<sup>291</sup> Some equivocation exists in *Avui* in that with a few cases Spanish riders are called “els nostres”, which is similar to the indeterminate usage of *La Volta a Espanya*, *La Vuelta a Espanya* and *La Vuelta a España* - but these remain insubstantial when compared with the pervasive and general Catalan framing. The linkage between a Catalan winner in 1991 where we see the zenith of this way of framing *La Vuelta* and the subsequent employment of the previous Catalan winner of the race, Josep Pesarrodona, as correspondent, is highly instructive of the overall way in which *Avui* approached coverage of the race.

In quantitative terms we have been able to further develop the divide between Catalan and Spanish newspapers, especially within the units of analysis of article number, article size and advertising as well as designating *Avui* as the newspaper that provides least coverage over all units of analysis through the entire period. As with most statistical

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<sup>290</sup> [The most Catalan of places], [The most Catalan of competitions]. Both: *Avui*, 29th April, 1976. p. unknown.

<sup>291</sup> If this were a Venn diagram, *La Vanguardia* would be in the overlapping middle part, with *Avui* on the one hand, and *El País* and *ABC* on the other, in the two circles.

procedures there is some uncertainty and lacunae in the data with the rise in article numbers towards the end of the 1990s being slightly offset by an increased usage of agency coverage i.e. the heightened level of information without a subsequent heightened level of interest concept that we previously outlined for *La Vanguardia*. In a similar fashion to the other newspapers, and most valid in referring to the growth of *La Vuelta* as a symbol of banal nationality, we have been able to pinpoint 1983 and the early 1990s as areas of increased activity across most units of analysis, illustrating the chronological development of the race as well as the broad geographical and political boundaries which it managed to elide. Advertising, however, was minimal in *Avui* showing that the economic interest and potential of this race was restricted to newspapers of large readership and mostly ones published in Madrid. Overall, then, we see a clear flagging of Catalan identity onto a Spanish event within a broader picture of the successful development of the race over the whole period. It is now time to put these four analyses together in order to answer the central research questions that structure this thesis.



## 8a - Discussion

### Part I – Data, Method and Approach

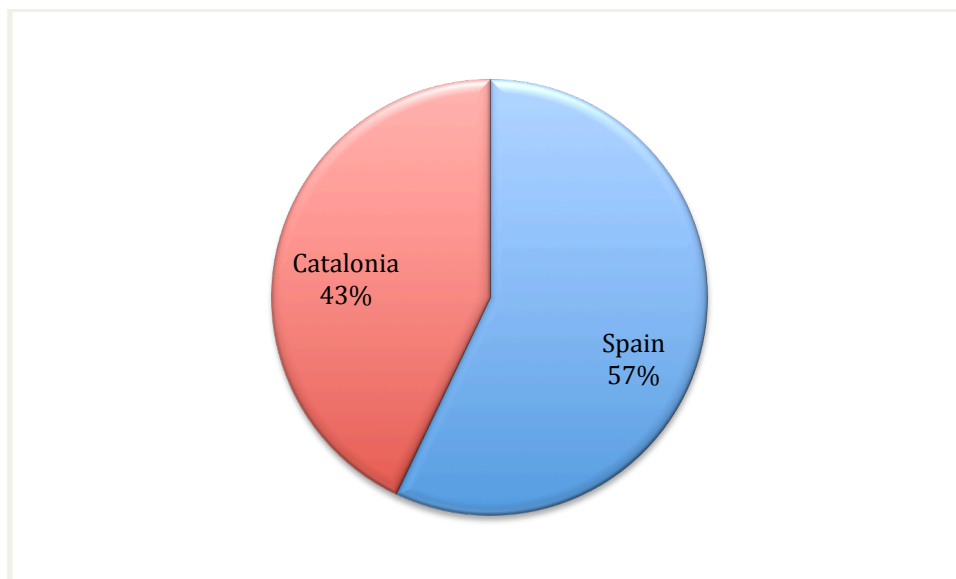
This thesis germinated from a single question: Why had *La Vuelta Ciclista a España* not developed as a national symbol within Spain to a similar degree as for *Le Tour de France* and *Il Giro d'Italia* in France and Italy? Caught up in the way that the Spanish problem had become a *cause célèbre* in academia as well as in wider society I had not considered the veracity behind this initial assumption. It soon became clear that not only was I mistaken on the failure of *La Vuelta* to act as a national symbol, but that the race had actually demonstrated a rare unifying tendency that could momentarily supersede even football, the *deporte rey* in Spain, under certain conditions. Far from being a failure the race was a broad, if qualified, success. The event had already experienced an early Golden Age in the 1950s and 1960s helped by the spread of radio and the “culture of evasion” under Francoism, a role it reprised in the 1980s and 1990s as it recovered from a series of crises in the early post-Transition period. The questions turned away from an analysis of failure to the mediation of the race’s success: Where, when and how did *La Vuelta* symbolize Spain in the post-Franco period? What were the political and territorial limits to its success and how did this change across time? Given the lack of work on *La Vuelta* these questions are important by themselves but are of even more value due to the comparable studies done on *La Selección* (León Solís 2003; Quiroga 2013). By combining my work with those on *La Selección* we can come to a far better understanding of any putative role for sport in the revalorisation of national identity in the post-Franco era.

This concluding chapter is split into two. The first section is dedicated to a discussion of the quantitative data, some of the lower-level research questions as well as an appraisal of the methodology. Part II moves into the qualitative data as well as the macro level concepts involved in this thesis: Spanish nationalism in the post-Franco era and the theory of banal nationalism. This thesis started out as an empirical analysis utilising Billig's theory of banal nationalism, but in its development moved to an interrogation and then alteration of the theory, a change that will be explained below. First, however, we will turn to the quantitative part of the dataset and examine the changing role of *La Vuelta* as a national symbol as well as the mediation of this across political and territorial boundaries.

Casting our eyes over the entire dataset we can quickly disabuse ourselves of the notion that *La Vuelta* did not act as a national symbol over the 1975 to 2000 period. Every single stage of *La Vuelta* was covered with no newspaper missing a report outside of normal circumstances (there were no Monday publications before 1982 and Easter often meant 2-3 days without newspapers). This, in itself, goes some way to demonstrating the breadth of appeal of a national race such as *La Vuelta*, especially in a country where cycling is one of an elite group of secondary sports found behind football, which remained the leading sport throughout the period. Huge variation occurred in the level of coverage across the newspapers as well as the quality, location and how this was presented, but the fact that it was never ignored, not even within the Catalan nationalist daily *Avui* is notable. This hints at the broad unifying potential of *La Vuelta*, a role that has routinely been suggested for *La Selección* in this period (Núñez Seixas in Balfour. ed. 2005, p. 139). Did *La Vuelta* represent, along with football, a second sport where Spanish national identity could be readily flagged?

The Spanish liberal newspaper of record in Spain, *El País*, leads the quantitative unit of analysis of the number of articles over the entire period. Between 1975 and 2000 it published 1,372 articles on *La Vuelta*, ahead of the comparable 1,329 in *ABC* and 1,026 and 1,005 in *Avui* and *La Vanguardia*, respectively. This represents an overall article share of 29% for *El País*, 28% for *ABC*, 22% for *Avui* and 21% for *La Vanguardia*. A divergence between Spain with a cumulative 57% of the number of articles and Catalonia with 43% is shown in figure 2, a clear imbalance between the two territorial areas:

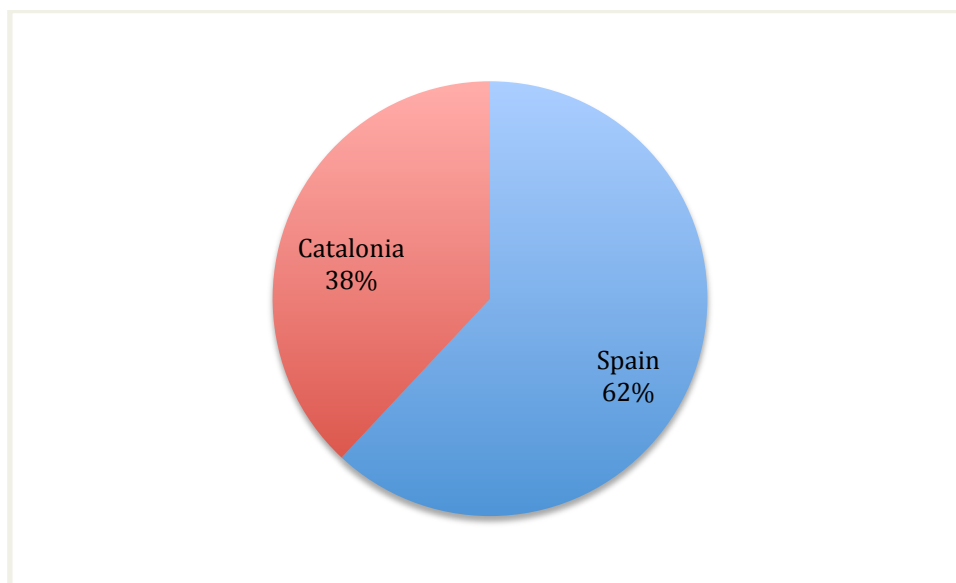
**Fig. 2. Cumulative Article Share By Number.**



While this could be expected it does confirm that although *La Vuelta* was a universal item of news, the quantity of coverage differed across the main territorial cleavage in Spain. Article share was not constant over time with a particular shift coming between the 1970s and 1980s when *Avui* slipped from 21% of articles in 1975-1982 to 17% from 1983-1989. In the same period *El País* experienced a growth from 27% to 34%, illustrating a marked shift from Catalan to Spanish newspapers.

The control unit of analysis of article size gives us a similar picture. *ABC* leads this measure with 583.57 pages of content above *El País* with 498.37 and the Catalan papers, *La Vanguardia* with 349.2 and *Avui* with 315.15. Although leadership has passed from *El País* to *ABC* the split between Spanish and Catalan newspapers not only holds but increases significantly, as shown in Figure 3:

**Fig. 3. Cumulative Article Share By Size.**



Temporally the divergence between Catalan and Spanish newspapers highlighted in the previous unit of analysis is also present. The percentage of overall article size dropped for *La Vanguardia* from 23% to 18% between the 1975-1982 and 1983-1989 dates with *Avui* dropping from 13% to 10%. At the same time both Spanish newspapers grew with *ABC* going from 40% to 51% and *El País* from 13% to 32%. As *La Vuelta* became more successful as a race during the 1980s it saw more coverage in Spanish newspapers than in Catalan ones marking it out as a symbol of Spanish nationhood that was visible in Catalonia but not quite as ubiquitous as it had become in central Spain.

The lead shown in article size and article number for Spanish newspapers as well as the swing towards these as we enter the 1980s needs to be anchored to the history of the race itself which underwent huge change in this period. As we know in 1979 organisation of the race switched from Bilbao in the Basque Country to Madrid. Would the race have developed similar national symbolism if it had not moved to the capital? While it remains intriguing to pose the counterfactual it is more useful to consider the political and economic pressures that forced the race to abandon the north. With attacks on the infrastructure of the race as well as the riders competing within it coupled with financial problems, *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco* dropped the race in 1978, a sign of its negative national symbolism for a small minority of pro-independence Basques. This attests to the symbolism a Spanish event could attain, albeit negatively on this occasion, whilst also signalling the divergence between centre and periphery that came to dominate contemporary Spanish politics.

This move engendered further changes in the race as it moved from being based in the Basque Country to being based elsewhere with a new finale in Madrid echoing *Le Tour's* recent instigation of a circuit finish on the *Avenue des Champs-Élysées* in Paris. The changes we have seen in article number and article size came after this shift with the possibility of a correlation between where the race was based and which area of Spain devoted most coverage to it in newspapers. While there may be other factors involved the fact that the Basque newspaper *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco*, along with a Catalan counterpart *El Mundo Deportivo*, had jointly sponsored the race before this change, with the race having an elevated number of stages within the Basque Country and Catalonia because of this, does tend towards the explanation that there was a considerable shift in symbolism attached to the race after 1979. Far from being a race with a strong regional

ethos it had become more like *Le Tour* in representing the centre, the capital and thus a particularly uniform conception of the country.

The addition of a Basque newspaper would have greatly added to this analysis, providing a perspective from the region that was most closely tied to the race in the pre-1979 period and yet entirely absent from it after this date despite higher levels of audience share than any other *Comunidad Autónoma*. My choice of Catalonia as a region from which to analyse the non-central aspect of *La Vuelta* was driven by my prior linguistic and overall knowledge as well as the question of feasibility. An analysis that looked at the connections between *La Vuelta* and the Basque Country would, however, add substantially to our understanding of this topic providing rich information on the role of sport among contested regional/national boundaries. Furthermore there is perhaps the opportunity to dig deeper here, looking at the balance between actively discouraging *La Vuelta* (which was not able to enter the Basque Country from 1978-2011) and promoting a regional cycling tour (*La Vuelta al País Vasco*) and a regional cycling team (*Euskaltel-Euskadi*). Questions also abound on the successful return of *La Vuelta* to the Basque Country in 2011, a feat not replicated by football since *La Selección* has not competed there since 31 May 1967.<sup>292</sup> Having mapped out the boundaries of *La Vuelta* here it is to be hoped that I can bring in a consideration of the Basque Country in subsequent work.

The narrow focus of the study - four newspapers in two areas of Spain – means that that only a certain part of the country is covered with the Basque Country as an important area that is not considered. The exclusion of other media such as radio and television is also another limiting factor, although the imprint of these two media is still visible in many

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<sup>292</sup> Both *Euskaltel-Euskadi* and the return of *La Vuelta* to the Basque Country are deeply political. The cycling team received most of its funding from the regional government, controlled by the Basque nationalist *PNV*, while the return of *La Vuelta* was brokered by the Socialist-led regional government of Patxi López.

articles and particularly in advertising.<sup>293</sup> Newspaper choice was driven by two requirements: a high readership and a high symbolism of a particular strand of Spanish nationalism, although *Avui* only met the latter unit of analysis. This mechanism allowed us to operationalize the study and make inferences on general attitudes in the population, but an increase in the number of newspapers would enhance the dataset. A further level of detachment between the content of the newspapers and the attitudes and actions of people themselves must also be noted. As in any content analysis the question of audience reception looms large and here we can only state that we do not know what people thought of the articles that they read, but we do know that they increased over time across a number of different mediums (radio, television and the press). The use of broadsheets instead of sporting papers such as *Marca* and *AS* and the fact that *La Vuelta* expanded beyond the sporting section from the mid 1980s also contribute to a sense of national symbolism for the race in the general population. The fact that Spanish papers increasingly took the lead in terms of positive broad coverage of *La Vuelta* shows how the theories of agenda-setting and framing, traced in the Methodology chapter, are present here.

Perhaps a triangulation of other methods – content analysis, interviews and survey data – would go some way to ameliorating these issues. The mixed nature of my approach, utilising quantitative and qualitative units of analysis, was designed to start this process with macro level numerical data to identify patterns that could then be examined qualitatively. This design has largely met the research needs, but some adjustment in units of analysis would further enhance the method. As we have seen above the visual imagery unit of analysis largely failed to produce the kind of rich graphical data we were expecting

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<sup>293</sup> An larger study could look at national symbolism across a range of media – newspapers, magazines, television and radio – cross-tabulating information to create a sense of the broad impact of a sporting event such as *La Vuelta*.

and could be removed from any subsequent study. Moreover, a more robust qualitative design would probably aid the research, particularly in terms of counting the use of adjectives and proper nouns flagging the homeland, which would provide empirical evidence of the trends that we have picked up on here. If I were to repeat this study I would probably seek to utilise more advanced formal tools of analysis than I have used, particularly the quantitative and qualitative software packages that have become common in the Humanities and Social Sciences.<sup>294</sup> However, given the exploratory nature of this study it was always going to be difficult to analyse the data as we did not know the type or amount of data we were going to receive before major parts of the study had been done. A study of this type will always remain limited due to feasibility issues and it is my hope to continue to develop this methodology in the long-term, building a rigorous toolkit to enhance our knowledge of banal nationality in the contemporary era.

Looking at the locational units of analysis we can posit the huge impact of enhanced live television coverage on *La Vuelta* from 1983. Across all newspapers *La Vuelta* hit the front-page 372 times, divided into 13% (50) before 1983 and 87% (322) after. More comprehensive television coverage does not only correlate with the amount of front-page coverage across the newspapers, but also the relative weight of front-page coverage between them. Before 1983 both Catalan papers had put *La Vuelta* on the front-page more often than the Spanish newspapers with a cumulative 72% of front pages in this period coming from *La Vanguardia* and *Avui*. Putative suggestions to name the race *La Vuelta a las Regiones* or *La Vuelta a las Provincias Españolas* in 1979 were closer to the mark than was thought as the race was more peripheral than national in scope,

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<sup>294</sup> The numerical data was crunched through Microsoft Excel with the qualitative data examined in a non-formal reading common to the historical method. Using more advanced statistical software, such as SPSS, as well as qualitative analysis software, such as NVIVO or Atlas.ti, would represent the next logical step.



although this was soon to change.<sup>295</sup> After this date, however, the Spanish newspapers contained 70% of the front-page coverage dedicated to *La Vuelta*, marking a huge shift in the territorial demarcation of front-page production. As the race turned from a regional to a central structure Spanish newspapers started to expand their coverage in a number of ways, with regional newspapers losing ground. Television ensured a wider public for *La Vuelta*, as well as financial stability, but it also correlates with a strong divergence in how these two territorial areas and the papers contained within them covered the race in this period, with important effects on national symbolism.

The divergence between newspapers based in Catalonia and those based in Spain is also visible in the advertising unit of analysis where advertising share changed from 39% to 8% for Catalonia between the early and later periods and from 61% to 92% for Spain. This confirms one finding and suggests another. Again the change from 1983 is noticeable in the extremely uneven percentage between Catalonia and Spain in the later period. However, advertising, in giving us an economic attribute also shows how national symbolism was perhaps more demarcated than we had previously thought, with the weighting between the two territorial areas more uneven than in previous units of analysis. Companies were ten times more likely to place adverts connected to *La Vuelta* in Spanish newspapers than in Catalan ones, a sign of what they considered *La Vuelta's* likely symbolism to be. The 1980s saw the rise of regional television stations, such as Catalonia's *TV3*, and it is likely that *La Vuelta's* place on Spanish state television strongly enhanced its appeal to Spanish advertisers while moving it away from its previous peripheral position. Again the shift in emphasis from Catalonia to Spain is key.

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<sup>295</sup> [Tour of the Regions], [Tour of the Spanish Provinces]. Although *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco* dropped the race it retained naming rights, which then had to be formally ceded before the race could officially run as *La Vuelta Ciclista a España* in 1979.

The marked regional aspect of *La Vuelta* before 1982 and the effects this had on various units of analysis is also visible in the mode of authorship. Both *Avui* and *La Vanguardia* had correspondents for the early part of *La Vuelta*, a sign of the importance of the race to the paper and the effort that they were willing to put into coverage of the race. This, in turn, would link into the findings we have already seen, such as the balanced advertising market that existed before 1982 and the way this became skewed in favour of Spain after 1983. The Spanish papers, on the other hand, show a marked tendency towards agency content in the early period (62% of articles in *ABC*, 14% in *El País* against 0% in both Catalan papers), only changing this stance after 1983 when they started to contain far more authored content than the Catalan papers, which moved the other way towards an increased use of agencies.

Looking across all units of analysis in a general fashion, before we examine further micro periods and quirks in the data below, we can reach a number of conclusions as to the national symbolism of *La Vuelta* between 1975 and 2000. Above all, given the depth and spread of coverage that we have seen in the newspapers there can be no doubt as to the general and widespread national symbolism that the race had over the entire period. Furthermore, the race became more prevalent in terms of the quantity (article number, article size) and quality (front page, leading the sport section) of coverage after 1979 and 1983. Structural changes in the race ownership, therefore, had important effects on the race's potential to become a national symbol. A second major point, however, is that this symbolism can be divided into two distinct macro periods. Before 1983 Catalonia was relatively more involved in the race, both through the sponsorship of it by a Catalan newspaper and through the coverage of it in the newspapers we analyse here. Spain, on the other hand, became relatively more involved in the race after 1979, leading to a huge

growth in the interest (across a wide set of units of analysis) after this date. Both territorial regions watched *La Vuelta*, read about *La Vuelta* and likely felt something was symbolised by *La Vuelta*, but this increasingly turned away from Catalonia towards Spain after 1979 and 1983, the two pivotal dates in the modern history of the race. It is likely that a similar pattern would be found for the Basque Country, but the differing political climate as well as the fact that the race had been centred and based there may alter the characteristics of this change.

Having dealt with change on a general macro-level scope we will move into a more nuanced microanalysis of the dataset, bringing out some of the more important finds within the analysis. Were there certain peaks in the data? Are there important temporal cleavages that can be identified? Can we disaggregate certain units of analysis, such as advertising, to enhance the analysis? Two important nodal points in the data have already been covered comprising the 1979 change of hands in terms of the organising body of *La Vuelta* and the 1983 inception of full television coverage. These explain to a great extent the shift in focus of *La Vuelta* and its corresponding newspaper coverage from the periphery to the centre, but they do not inform us about when the race became relatively more nationally relevant throughout the 1980s and 1990s, a key finding taken from the main chapters of this thesis.

The race always received newspaper coverage with the following argument more about degree than any binary absolutes of coverage or no coverage (except in advertising). The degree of coverage is pivotal since it is only with a sufficient level of coverage that any sort of national symbolism could be assumed. In the late 1970s it is unlikely that *La Vuelta* signified much for a large proportion of the populace, even perhaps

within the category of the average sport fan. Not only was the race in decline but it also received attention at a rough one-article-per-day level, below that of what could constitute sufficient exposure. The peripheral structure of the race in this period also limited its national scope. National symbolism would only arrive when *La Vuelta* was broadly visible across a wide range of newspapers, not just in numerous articles per day, but where those articles were placed as well as other intervening units of analysis such as advertising and visual media. With this cacophony of coverage would come national symbolism, as a large number of Spaniards watched, read and listened to a common event that flagged their homeland on a daily basis.

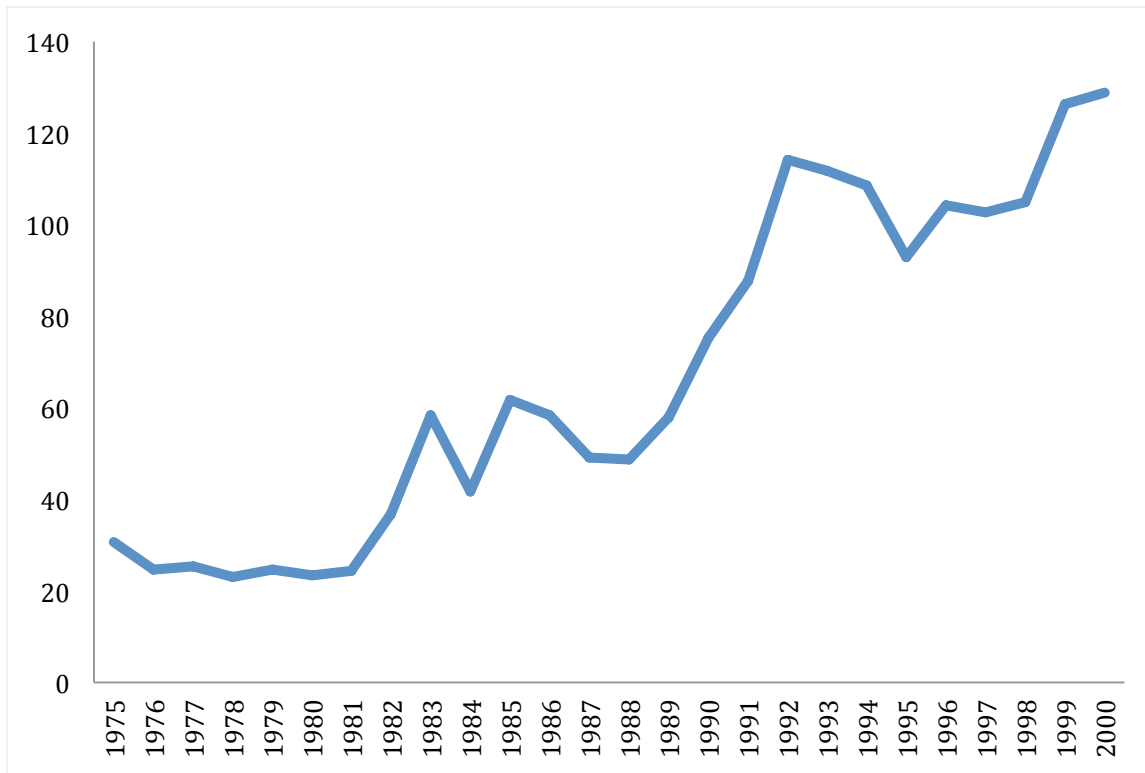
Two main peaks of interest can be identified in the data, one around 1983 and another one between 1989-1993, although there is some uncertainty. The 1980s saw a rise from one-article-per day to two articles, although this was only in *El País* and *ABC*. The Catalan newspapers, on the other hand, also showed a small rise, but only to a level between one article and one and a half articles per day, below that of their Spanish counterparts. Again the change in organisation in 1979 and the instigation of full television coverage in 1983 should be highlighted as the probable causes of this uptake in coverage. This small increase in article numbers, visible across all newspapers but stronger in the Spanish ones, is overshadowed by a greater increase occurring in the 1990s when average article number for the decade doubled for *La Vanguardia* (from 26.5 to 57.1), grew strongly for *ABC* (43 to 64.4) and *El País* (43.1 to 77.2), and saw exceptional growth for *Avui* (23.1 to 70.8). We can quickly disregard this outlying figure for *Avui* by looking at the control unit of analysis of article size, showing how *Avui* focused on many smaller articles (basically bullet points) rather than any meaningful increase in information, illustrating the usefulness of measuring both article number and article size.

Article size also grew after 1983, again roughly doubling from the 1970s to the 1980s in Spanish newspapers, but less so in the Catalan cohort. Corresponding with the previous unit of analysis article size grew in *La Vanguardia* from 7.02 pages of content per year in the 1970s to 8.14 in the next decade. The other Catalan paper *Avui* moved from 3.1 to 5.2 in this period, with *El País* shifting from 5.1 to 13.4 and *ABC* from 13.1 to 19.4. The dominance of *ABC* in this important measure of the absolute number of pages dedicated to the race, as well as the exponential growth experienced for *El País* reaffirm what we had found in the previous unit of analysis, in that there was a substantial increase in the space devoted to the race in the 1980s, suggesting that the race became nationally relevant and thus potentially nationally symbolic at this time. Although the structure of newspapers changed in this period, with a growth in the overall number of pages in each edition, this was not to an extent that would explain the rapid growth in article space for *La Vuelta*, given that the number of pages within each newspaper did not double (as article space for *La Vuelta* did). The changes in the quality of provision also hint that structural developments in the overall number of pages in each newspaper were not the main driving force behind the growth in content.

The increase in article size followed through from the 1980s into the 1990s with growth registered across all newspapers. It seems as if *La Vuelta*, enjoying a higher level of visibility after 1983, reached a whole new level of interest in the 1990s, particularly linked to the wider symbolic events of 1992. The series peak across the whole dataset for article size, which is a more reliable unit of analysis than article number, was reached in 1992, with 114.13 pages of coverage included within the four newspapers, significantly above the 87.69 recorded in the previous year and the 25.3 recorded in 1977, the first year where we have data for all newspapers. Another peak is reached at the end of the period

but given the lack of context and subsequent data it is hard to pinpoint the factors behind this. This growth is shown in figure 4:

**Fig. 4. Cumulative Article Size, 1975-2000.**



Anecdotal comments included within the papers themselves point to the enhanced status of sport within this period, linked to the Olympic Games held in Barcelona between 25 July and 9 August 1992. Yet this is also where the re-emergence of Spanish nationalism has been placed, suggesting a temporal correlation between the banal symbolism of sport and the rehabilitation of Spanish nationalism, a link we will examine in the second part of this chapter.

The series peak for front-page exposure was also recorded in 1992 with *La Vuelta* reaching the front page 15 times across all newspapers, although more than half of these (8) appeared in *El País*. The race also led the sporting section more often in 1992 than in

other years, with another series peak of 29 recorded. Similarly advertising recorded its second-highest point in 1992 with 58 adverts placed, although the figures for 1990 do exceed this. Looking at the advertising unit of analysis we can see a progression from local advertising, prevalent in the early pre-1979 period, to companies of a national and international ambit in the 1980s and 1990s. This development across a range of units of analysis demonstrates the wider visibility of the race after 1979/1983, with 1992 containing special significance. The development of advertising over this period is also important, since national companies would not invest and attach their brand to *La Vuelta* if it did not make economic sense to do so. The growth of the race itself and the growth of coverage of the race in the press (as well as across radio and television) provided this economic incentive, which in turn can be used as evidence to suggest *La Vuelta's* role as a national symbol in this period.

The race had experienced a Golden Age in the 1950s and 1960s, a precedent that hinted at the potential for *La Vuelta*, and cycling more generally, to play a similar role in Spain as it had with *Le Tour de France* in France. The impact of this Golden Age is visible within my own dataset with a high number of articles in *ABC* for the years 1975/1976 before a decline in article numbers that would only be reversed in 1982/1983. What we have captured here in the quantitative first part of the discussion chapter is a number of things of which the development of *La Vuelta* over the period is central. The race reprised its early role within the national ambit, becoming once again an event that meant something to a majority of Spaniards. It did not surpass football, and neither did it play a central role in Spanish national identity, but it did reach the status as a national symbol after 1983, with the zenith of 1992 illustrating an interesting correlation with events in the wider symbolic sphere vis-à-vis Spanish sports and Spanish nationalism.

The divergence that is visible between Catalan papers, on the one hand, and Spanish papers, on the other, is important for a number of reasons, not least that it demonstrates where *La Vuelta* became relatively more symbolic. The race did not only develop as a national symbol, but subtly shifted from periphery to core, in a wider environment where regions began to assert capacity and Spanish nationalism suffered from delegitimisation. At this early juncture we can confirm *La Vuelta* as a national symbol, illustrate its turn towards the centre and show how it was relatively more symbolic within central Spain than in Catalonia, although this had shifted over time. It is not that *La Vuelta* was ignored in the periphery, far from it, but that its hold in the central Spanish imagination was likely to have been greater given the quantitative difference we have found between Catalan and Spanish newspapers across most units of analysis. We must now turn to the qualitative side of the equation before moving on to the higher-level issues of Spanish and banal nationalism.



## 8b - Discussion

### Part II – Spanish Nationalism and Banal Nationalism

In 'Part I – Data, Method and Approach' we examined the quantitative data extracted from the four content analyses performed within this thesis as well as looking at the methodology. It is now time to assess the qualitative data as well as turning to the two main themes in this project: Spanish nationalism and banal nationalism. The qualitative data will be added to the quantitative data first before we extrapolate this to the larger level themes set out in the introductory chapters. Throughout we will link the data to the research questions posed at the start of this work: Did *La Vuelta* act as a national symbol in this period and how does this compare with other sports such as football? What were the elements that drove the national symbolism behind *La Vuelta* and how was this mediated across political and geographical boundaries? Does the history of *La Vuelta* fit into the re-legitimization theory of Spanish nationalism in the post-Franco period? How does this case study develop Billig's theory of banal nationalism, particularly in light of recent and sustained empirical criticism?

The qualitative part of this analysis formed a crucial connecting role with the macro-level quantitative data discussed above and was an important part of the methodology developed here. Given feasibility issues, a loosely structured non-discourse content analysis approach was taken on the qualitative section, feeding into the empirical data created by the other units of analysis. Quantitatively a number of themes emerged, such as the growth of the quantity and quality of coverage, particularly in Spanish central newspapers, as well as a divergence between Catalan and Spanish newspapers as we

moved through the period. Some political differences were also visible. Yet what does this textual part of the analysis provide above and beyond that already seen in the quantitative section? At a general level we can see that the reportage contained within these articles roughly coincided with what the quantitative and background data tell us: a declining *Vuelta* re-organised and rejuvenated between 1979 and 1983 before becoming relatively more successful. A few *leitmotifs* emerge within the textual data, such as the separation of ‘Spanish’ and ‘foreign’ riders under what Billig has termed ‘deixis’ as well as the wide use of the possessive ‘our’ and the adjective ‘Spanish’ and/or ‘Catalan’. Following Billig (Billig 1995, 2009) as well as subsequent scholars (Rosie et al 2004; Rosie et al 2006; MacInnes et al 2007; Yumul & Özkirimli 2000), national flagging is widely apparent in the data but there are some important qualifications to this.

Beginning with the mode of authorship, which is a bridge between the quantitative and qualitative sections of the analysis, we can expand on the early division between autochthonous content in the Catalan papers and agency provision in the Spanish ones that we saw above. Pre-1979 the most positive reportage comes from *La Vanguardia*’s Enrique Canto, illustrating the strong regional aspect of *La Vuelta* before its eventual re-orientation towards Madrid. The provision of a correspondent is likely to favour positivity over negativity, since otherwise there would be little incentive to provide one in the first place (at least over the long-term, as negative events could also necessitate a correspondent over short periods of time). Not only did the Catalan papers provide correspondents in this period, when Spanish newspapers did not, but also their correspondent-led coverage was largely positive. Correspondents became the norm for the Spanish papers only from the early 1980s with *El País* making the change in 1983 and *ABC* a year later. Again the revolution in broadcasting looms large, propelling the Spanish

newspapers into further and better coverage and also turning Catalan newspapers away from the race. At the same time that *Televisión Española* started to provide full coverage of *La Vuelta*, regional channels such as the Catalan TV3 were starting to emerge, creating markedly different public spheres (with *La Vuelta* only available via the central state broadcaster).

After 1983 we see an inversion of the previous model as the Spanish newspapers became more positive in terms of their general coverage of the race and Catalan newspapers became less positive. This can, in turn, be related to a tectonic shift in the mode of authorship as the Catalan papers turned towards agency use in the 1990s while the Spanish papers continued with dedicated correspondents. Not only, then, did the amount of coverage diverge between Catalonia and Spain in this period, but the quality and mode of coverage also changed, signalling that *La Vuelta* was a national symbol within Spain and Catalonia, but to a lesser degree in the principality as it lost its former hegemony (which it had shared with the Basque Country).<sup>296</sup> Coverage was neither always negative in the Catalan papers nor wholly positive in the Spanish ones, but a clear division can be made. An example of this is found in the frequent criticism aimed at *Unipublic*, the organisers of the race from 1979/80, by *La Vanguardia*, whereas the same body received praise in the pages of *ABC*. Indeed, *ABC*, representing the conservative strand of Spanish nationalism, even praised the *Guardia Civil's* (Spain's national police) role in shepherding the race through the country, a political difference since this was not followed in the other statewide newspaper *El País*.

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<sup>296</sup> Sponsorship of the race changed too with the Basque newspaper *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco* and the Catalan *El Mundo Deportivo* being replaced by statewide sponsors such as *Caja Postal*, *SER* and *Antena 3*.

In the future it would be advantageous to extend the analysis to the Basque Country, which would enable us to determine whether this growing negativity was a particularity of Catalonia, or an attribute that can be extended to the other main competing nationalism within modern Spain. Other important geographical areas of Spain could also be included, whether that be in the form of Galicia or Andalusia. An examination of foreign coverage, akin to that found within *Football and National Identities in Spain* (Quiroga 2013), could also be useful. Similarly, the inclusion of other newspapers such as the Spanish *El Mundo* and the Catalan *El Periódico de Catalunya* would help us to further demarcate and examine the diffusion of *La Vuelta* across Spain and Catalonia, but the main political and geographical cleavages are visible here.

We know that *La Vuelta*, across all newspapers, generated more page content, more favourable page locations and more advertising as we move through the period, especially after 1979/1983 and around the symbolic year of 1992. We also know that this shifted from Catalonia to Spain over time, with the qualitative data here buttressing what we have already seen in the quantitative data assessed in part I. Yet how does a growing and to a certain extent large amount of information contained on *La Vuelta* represent national symbolism, and by extension, banal nationality? The amount of page space dedicated to a certain sporting event is not directly attributable to national identity and it is the exact content within that that really matters. Do we see elegies of Spanish success? Can we spot a pervasive and general idea of Spanish national identity within the text? How does the evocation of identity contained within the newspapers work across the territorial cleavage of Catalonia and Spain? Are other substate and suprastate identities prevalent in the data (as is suggested by recent empirical analysis of Billig's theory e.g. Rosie et al 2004; Rosie et al 2006; MacInnes et al 2007)? It is here where the qualitative data, and by

extension the methodology, is validated as we see the various ways in which the reportage flagged identity at local, regional and national levels.

There is a profound flagging of Spanish national identity within the central statewide press. Across almost all stage reports we find the typical elements, contained within Billig's ideas of 'deixis', of a national identity being flagged. Whether it is a simple reference to foreign riders as opposed to national riders (which in the nationalism oeuvre is represented as "us" and "them" or "othering" – Billig 1995, pp. 70-73), the number of Spanish riders in the top ten or an evocation of "our" race and "our" teams, we find a huge array of ways in which the homeland is flagged. This way of reporting in which the nation is the pivot from which the report is drawn is common to Billig's analyses and yet also demonstrates the wide variety of guises it can take. The first Spanish success, the map of Spain included in the guide to the race, the location of the stages within the geography of Spain, the separation of foreign from local teams, the unquestionable divide between those that represent Spain and those that do not, all point to the everyday flagging of national identity of which Billig speaks. The constant nature of this also demonstrates that Spanish national identity at least within sport was untroubled even within the late 1970s and thus must be decoupled from elite issues concerning Spanish nationalist discourse. This confirms data that we have already seen in the World Values Survey (where national pride was elevated for the 1975-2000 period) and acts as a corrective to any blanket claims of a troubled Spanish identity in the post-Franco era. From the first report in 1975 to the last one in 2000 the Spanish statewide central newspapers flagged Spain on a daily basis, fully concordant with Billig's theory.

The original conception of the theory of banal nationalism (Billig 1995) conveyed a sense of national identity as the supreme value above other identities, such as the region and the city, which is comparable to the hierarchy of local-regional-national often given in works on nationalism. Billig's insistence upon this structure has not only been criticised (Skey 2009) but also found empirically deficient (Rosie et al 2004; Rosie et al 2006; MacInnes et al 2007) and although he is willing to entertain a broader suite of identities, his most recent words in this area reaffirm his conception of national identity as the supreme value (Billig 2009, pp. 350-351) i.e. the regional and the local may also be flagged but they remain below the ideological superstructure of the nation. Yet how does this case study fit into the discussion of banal nationalism, both at its conception and how it has been developed by Billig himself, as well as other authors, over the past two decades?

We have already seen that to a large extent national identities are flagged on a daily basis in most of the reports that make up our study (*El País* and *ABC* flagging Spanish identity, *La Vanguardia* flagging Spanish and Catalan identity and *Avui* Catalan). This is a confirmation of Billig, in that the nation exerts a strong pressure that binds coverage together, acting as the narrative glue for the reportage over the entire period. Billig repeatedly included sport within his wider schema and it is clear that this is replicated in the central statewide newspapers of *El País* and *ABC*. Further, given that the coverage sometimes exceeds the sports section, moving to the front pages as well as to the magazine and editorial sections, we can see how this flagging through sport is not just confined to the back pages of the newspaper but instead can symbolise national identity more widely, given certain conditions. The presence of adverts signalling radio and television coverage significantly increases the scope of this, particularly given the

importance of television as a cultural medium in Spain (Gunther et al in Gunther et al. eds. 2000, p. 29). However, the regional and local identities picked up by other analyses, especially those performed on the United Kingdom (Rosie et al 2004; Ibid 2006; MacInnes et al 2007), are also to be found within the Spanish statewide central newspapers, illustrating how it is not just national, but also regional and local identity that is flagged here.

Both *El País* and *ABC* are replete with references to national, regional and local identity, showing that Billig's theory needs to be slightly adapted to fit the case study here since national identity is not the sole identity marker used. This broadly fits within Billig's later argument (Billig 2009, pp. 350-351) that although there are manifestations of other levels of identity, these remain subsidiary to national identity which resides at a higher level of abstraction. This hierarchy of identities is clear in an article devoted to Pedro Delgado in 1986. In an extended interview within *ABC* we find the words: 'Este es Pedro Delgado, segoviano, castellano y, por encima de todo, español'.<sup>297</sup> No clearer example of the subjugation of local and regional identity to the national level could exist, but two important caveats need to be addressed. Firstly, this represents a time when a Spaniard won *La Vuelta*, which means that identity flagging in this case was stronger than normal, and secondly, this was only found within *ABC*, which represents the Spanish conservative strand of Spanish nationalism (León Solís 2003, p. 32), bringing in a political division within the Spanish statewide central newspapers which are otherwise broadly comparable. *La Vuelta* could be extremely symbolic at times, but the extent of this remained subject to specific circumstances.

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<sup>297</sup> See footnote 182.

The flagging of identity can thus also be politically distinguished, with *ABC* being markedly more frequent in its use of the possessive “our” than *El País*. Spain’s leading newspaper, *El País*, instead demarcated the homeland through the use of the word “Español”, “Extranjero” and “España” instead of “nuestro/a” or “nacional”,<sup>298</sup> although this still represents the division of people into “us” and “them” and an assumed homeland i.e. the main tenets of banal nationalism (Billig 1995). Further research combining a larger number of newspapers with cross-country comparison would improve our understanding of these practices, but they do seem to fit an established pattern of the nation being more central to political discourse on the right of the political spectrum (Hart & Lim 2011).

If we turn to the second half of the analysis, comprising the Catalan newspapers *Avui* and *La Vanguardia*, we find a similar, if differentiated pattern of identity flagging. It is here that Billig’s theory even in its reformed state needs significant alteration. Starting with *La Vanguardia*, which represents the Catalan differential strand of Spanish nationalism (León Solís 2003, p. 34), we find that the Spanish nation is also flagged on a frequent basis, as it was for the central statewide newspapers. If this were the only national identity flagged then it would fit neatly into Billig’s theory of banal nationalism and yet the fact that it is not, with Catalan national identity also present, provides one of the primary research findings of this study. It remains difficult to differentiate between the Spanish and Catalan identities flagged and it is likely that while Spanish identity is always flagged as national, Catalan identity is flagged as both regional and national depending on the author and the date it was published (with Catalonia as a national reality becoming an accepted political fact in *La Vanguardia* during the Transition). Yet the existence of two or dual national identities is widespread throughout *La Vanguardia*, mirroring what has already been found

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<sup>298</sup> [Spanish], [Foreign], [Spain], [Ours], [National].



for the United Kingdom and suggesting that serious alterations need to be made if the theory is to fit within established nations with important substate nationalisms.

This brings us to the idea of change over time, a crucial part of the identity landscape in Spain (with the growth of dual identity as well as a growing acceptance of Catalanism and then Catalan independence), which is not dealt with by Billig. Within *La Vanguardia* we find a clear trend of Catalanisation over time, with the paper by 1991 quoting the Catalan Melcior Mauri's winning words in Catalan: 'Sóc l'home més feliç del món'.<sup>299</sup> Yet the paper had only dropped the adjective *Española* from its masthead in 1978 and it is this concept of change in identity, even at a national level, that forms an important additional finding here. It is not only that two identities are flagged, which has been highlighted elsewhere in the literature (Rosie et al 2004; Ibid 2006; MacInnes et al 2007), even by Billig himself (Billig 2009, pp. 349-350), but that this is volatile and subject to change given certain conditions within a country. Change has been posited as an important factor missing in the original theory of banal nationalism (Rosie et al 2006, p. 327.), although Billig does hint at it (Billig 1996, pp. 128-153). The qualitative data we have here suggests, however, that this should become an integral part of the theory rather than a mere addendum.

It is this dual flagging of national identity subject to changes across time that throws doubt on the veracity of some elements of Billig's theory, adding to the problems that have already been highlighted elsewhere. Intriguingly national identity may still be the supreme value, but in this case it may be a dual national identity instead of a singular one. The compatibility of Spanish and Catalan identities, linked in to a tie between their respective

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<sup>299</sup> [I'm the happiest guy on earth]. Luque, X. 20<sup>th</sup> May 1991. 'Mauri: Sóc l'home més feliç del món', *La Vanguardia*, p. 12 (sup. Deportes).

nationalisms, has been an area of substantial academic debate (e.g. Guibernau 2006; Moreno 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2006; Núñez Seixas 1999, p. 168; 2001, p. 740; in Balfour. ed. 2005, p. 138; Balfour & Quiroga 2007, p. 197) and the data from *La Vanguardia* reflects this. The fact that this equilibrium has recently changed (with the rise of Catalan independence sentiment after 2008) does not alter the long period in which the balance was held. This can be extended as a general theoretical principle to other countries with the hypothesis that inside a country with one dominant nationalism coupled with other well-developed substate nationalisms there is likely to be a public sphere (visible in newspapers and sports) where both identities are flagged and where change in the relative position of these identities is also a factor. Billig's theory remains a cogent tool for drawing attention to the flagging of identity on a daily basis, but this must fit the identity structures existent within a given society. One putatively unperturbed national identity does not even fit his paradigmatic case of the United Kingdom and is even less consistent in Spain, but his theory can still be adapted to contain these variations and provide data on the role of sports in symbolising multilevel identities.<sup>300</sup>

The importance of *La Vanguardia* in terms of the inferences we can make from it cannot be exaggerated. It has consistently led the Catalan newspaper market with a position close to the hegemonic political coalition *Convergència I Unió* and for a time during the Transition was even the biggest selling newspaper in Spain (before being overtaken by *El País*). It remains, however, the fourth biggest selling daily and the largest in Catalonia. Its readership and its symbolic attachment to a particular brand of Catalanism mark it out as a bellwether for identity and thus the way in which it interacts with *La Vuelta* gives us a strong idea of the general way in which the race was received in this area. It is

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<sup>300</sup> Billig is aware of this and yet his focus on the United States, an atypical example of nationalism and national flagging, is perhaps not the best case study in order to build a generalized theory of banal nationalism.

not a perfect correlation and it is an area where more work is needed, but it does clearly reflect majority trends in the Catalan population at large. This is in contradistinction to *Avui*, however, which was symbolically important but numerically inferior.

It was expected that within *Avui* we would find a daily national flagging, but one that represented Catalonia instead of Spain. This expectation, in itself, diverges from Billig's original theory of banal nationalism, since it did not consider the possibility of competing nationalisms within the same territorial borders, an odd omission as he was contemplating the constitutionally multinational United Kingdom and not a Spain that is constitutionally defined as an indissoluble nation.<sup>301</sup> The flagging of other national identities within a country has been considered in the wider literature however and *Avui* demonstrates, in a different way to *La Vanguardia*, that this can be extended beyond the United Kingdom to Spain. The expectation of an everyday flagging of Catalan national identity was largely met with the same practices of 'deixis' employed here as in the other three papers, an important exception being that the nation was Catalonia and not Spain and that dual identity, while not completely absent, was less prevalent than in *La Vanguardia*. Catalan riders, not Spanish ones, were the structuring element of the reportage with Catalan victories, especially those of Josep Pesarrodona in 1976 and Melcior Mauri in 1991 particularly well covered. At all moments a pervasive Catalan angle was utilised with riders who had been born in Catalonia (although they now lived elsewhere) or those who had come to Catalonia (but been born elsewhere) claimed as Catalans. Talk of how many Catalan riders were in the top ten and the possibility of a Catalan team also appeared with Catalan victories (of any type) prominently eulogised, largely echoing what we had found for the Spanish papers (albeit with a different nationality).

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<sup>301</sup> The United Kingdom is one of the few countries that does not have a constitution, however its multinational status is widely accepted.

Several elements that are typical within Catalan nationalist discourse were also present, demonstrating the way in which sport reportage can easily become infused with concerns of a more political nature. The usage of the word “Estat” or “State” to refer to Spain along with a wider conception of *Països Catalans* including Valencia, the Balearic Islands and Andorra are prime examples of this. Yet *Avui* could also blur boundaries with Spain sometimes slipping in without the appended word “Estat” and Spanish victories at times met with similar positivity to Catalan ones. Even within this Catalan nationalist newspaper, then, there is some evidence of the dual identity paradigm that has come to dominate how scholars look at identity in contemporary post-Franco Spain, although this is time-limited. This fits into the criticisms that Billig’s theory has received (Rosie et al 2004; Ibid 2006; MacInnes et al 2007; Skey 2007) in that it is incapable of dealing with other identities within a supposed homogenous nation, whether regional or national in scope. However, some theorists have confirmed Billig’s mononational theory (Yumul & Özkirimli 2000) and a separation between those countries where one nation is flagged (Turkey, the United States) and those where more are flagged (Spain, the United Kingdom) seems appropriate.

Taking the analyses together a number of criticisms of banal nationalism can be made, some that fit into Billig’s recent restatement of his theory (Billig 2009) as well as the criticisms that it has received (Rosie et al 2004; Ibid 2006; MacInnes et al 2007; Skey 2009) and others that extend beyond that. We have already seen how the Spanish statewide newspapers largely confirm Billig’s theory, but the Catalan papers cannot be easily reconciled and thus we must turn to the problems that his theory faces. Firstly, it is clear that a number of identities at different levels (local, regional and national) are flagged in the reportage of *La Vuelta* regardless of the provenance or political persuasion of the

newspaper. Billig was cognizant of this in his original work (Billig 1995, p. 111), a position he reaffirmed recently (Billig 2009, pp. 349-350). This is especially relevant to *El País* and *ABC* with the latter explicitly stating its regional-to-national hierarchy on at least one occasion, while *El País* contained a strongly local identity linked to Madrid, where it is based. Local identities, closely linked to Barcelona, are also present in the Catalan papers, although normally the regional/national Catalan aspect is far stronger than this.

The flagging of other national identities, however, as in the Catalan national identity found in *Avui* and *La Vanguardia*, stands in direct contrast to Billig's theory where one national identity (be it British or Spanish) is superimposed over others (which are regional in nature) across a whole territory. Instead we see a multitude of national identities flagged, a fact that could be easily extended were we to look at newspapers in the Basque Country or Galicia, where similar competing nationalisms exist. The failure of Billig's banal nationalism can largely be put down to his volition to demonstrate the everyday flagging of (national) identity rather than provide a watertight theory, a point he has made clear himself (Billig 2009, p. 347). This is in line with other major case studies of banal nationalism where, for instance, the United Kingdom media market has seen British, English, Scottish and Welsh national identities all flagged in a supposedly mononational press landscape (Rosie et al 2004; Ibid 2006; MacInnes et al 2007). The presence of two national realities, to use the terminology of the nationalists themselves, is an obvious political fact in Spain and thus blending theory with history is crucial if we are to utilise banal nationalism. Any application of banal nationalism must take into account the structure of a given state, especially where the multinational status is a long-term historical fact as in Spain or the United Kingdom. Once we have built this into the structure of our

analysis, however, we can go on to extract useful information since Billig's theory remains an important corrective to most works of nationalism that ignore the present day.

The Catalan paper *Avui* is not, however, the only challenge to Billig's theory as currently constituted. Within *La Vanguardia* we find two elements that contradict the theory. Firstly the idea that two national identities can exist together in a position that has come to be known as dual identity. This is one step further than what we have seen above, where two separate national identities exist within the same state, and is where both identities are represented and flagged more or less as equals within one publication. Secondly the idea that the relative balance of these identities can change over time with the finding here being that Catalan identity gained vis-à-vis Spanish identity throughout the 1975-2000 period, with most development coming in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The existence of two national identities that are both flagged within the same newspaper forms an important finding that does not match with either of Billig's iterations of his theory (Billig 1995, 2009). This type of structure is, however, considered within the wider literature (Rosie et al 2004; Ibid; MacInnes et al 2007), particularly in English/British, Welsh/British and Scottish/British constructions, but we can now extend this to a new case.

Another way in which we can extend current knowledge of banal nationalism in concrete empirical situations is in the idea of change in national (and other) identities over time, a central feature of coverage in *La Vanguardia*. Similar shifts have already been shown for the United Kingdom and reflect a wider uncertainty whereby the "complex, ambiguous and shifting use of national terminology and markers" (Rosie et al 2006, p. 327) should be highlighted. Shifts in identity and the dual identity paradigm form a central part of understanding contemporary Spain and it is with recourse to the discipline of

Spanish history that we can combine both theoretical development and historical certitude. Billig's theory remains a cogent tool for analysis, but it is implausible not to consider change or the existence of various levels of identity (that may combine) within a given country. By marrying Billig's theory with the discipline of contemporary Spanish history we can explain some of the lacunae present in the theory as well as start to develop it for future use. Having discussed banal nationalism this chapter will now move into the implications of this work for the wider post-Franco Spanish nationalism debate.

The re-organisation of *La Vuelta* that took place between 1979 and 1983 was crucial in anchoring the race in Madrid at the same time as developing it as a commercial, professional and thoroughly modern event. The first Golden Age of the 1950s and 1960s is also important, demonstrating the way in which *La Vuelta* could act as a national symbol and providing a collective memory that could be rekindled given certain conditions. Cycling was one of only a few secondary sports in Spain that had the potential to reach a majority of the population, never matching football but still important in its own right. The restructuring of the race was a necessary but not sufficient condition for the national symbolism that it would later develop, providing a basis from which the race could re-establish its prior potency. Technology had played a critical part in the earlier Golden Age through the wide diffusion of radio sets and the instigation of full television coverage in 1983 represents a similar development. Again, technological tools provided the mechanism for wider national symbolism, echoing how the development of "print capitalism" has been cited as central in the development of nationalism itself (Anderson 1983, p. 18). This provided not only a financial and symbolic stimulus but also created a vehicle through which a majority of Spaniards could access the race. Television is the dominant medium in Spain and apart from the nascent regional channels (which may

explain partly why Catalans were less interested in *La Vuelta* after 1979) the state broadcaster would not face any competition from private channels until the 1990s.<sup>302</sup>

These elements alone did not give *La Vuelta* what we could term national symbolism. Developments such as re-organisation and live television coverage provided a framework for this and the quantitative evidence we have outlined above does strongly suggest it, but further elements were needed in order for a deep and lasting national symbolism to occur. The main driver of national symbolism seems to be the emergence of successful Spanish cyclists, led by Pedro Delgado and Miguel Induráin in the 1980s. People, rather than infrastructure and technology, were pivotal. The previous reforms gave the riders a platform from which their successes could be followed, experienced and known by a majority of the Spanish population. It is the two million people who stopped watching *La Vuelta* after the withdrawal of Induráin from the race in 1996 and the audience share of above 50% recorded in 1998 that demonstrate this. The race had become a central part of the national imaginary, limited to three weeks of the calendar year, but important nonetheless. With *La Vuelta* enjoying full live television coverage, widespread newspaper attention high in both quantity and quality, individual Spanish success, growing national sponsorship and even international recognition, national symbolism was reached. Thus the answer to the first research question posed in this thesis (Did *La Vuelta* develop as a national symbol in this period?) is a resounding yes.

Some technical innovations, in route design and equipment were part of this but Spanish cyclists provided the impetus for national symbolism to rise above the normal everyday flagging of the nation contained within earlier reports. A small coterie of other

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<sup>302</sup> Regional channels, such as the Basque *Euskal Telebista* (1982) and the Catalan *TV3* (1983), first broke the state monopoly in the 1980s, followed by full liberalisation from 1990. In this year *Antena 3*, *Telecinco* and *Canal+* were all launched, belatedly furnishing Spain with a more pluralistic media landscape.



Spanish cyclists (Melcior Mauri, Abraham Olano, Álvaro Pino, Marino Lejarreta) can be included, with Mauri, in particular, lauded as Catalan by *Avui* and *La Vanguardia* but Spanish by *ABC* and *El País*. Their success can be measured in the advertising unit of analysis, particularly as the number of adverts and the growing national scope of the companies behind these adverts can be coupled with the increasing levels of team sponsorship symbolised by *ONCE* and *Banesto*. Empirical evidence, taken from *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (CIS) studies, also demonstrates an uptake in bicycle ownership, in cycling as a recreational activity and of attendance at races during this period, hinting at wider circles of correlation between *La Vuelta* and the Spanish population, although, as ever, decoupling *La Vuelta* and Spanish cycling in general remains problematic.

Sport, and within that *La Selección* (Spain's first XI), has been identified (Balfour & Quiroga 2007, pp. 197-198; Núñez Seixas 1999, p. 148; Núñez Seixas 2001, p. 743; Núñez Seixas in Balfour. ed. 2005, p. 139; Quiroga 2013b) as an informal symbol of national identity that persevered despite problems with more formal symbols such as the *rojigualda* (Spanish flag).<sup>303</sup> We have already seen that it is difficult to divide formal from informal in this way, since informal symbols of nationalism were also tightly controlled and instrumentalized during the dictatorship. It has been stated, for example, that *La Selección* engendered a sense of unity despite projections that it would continue to suffer from a post-Franco delegitimisation (Quiroga 2013, p. 75). Moreover, the success that *La Selección* is currently enjoying (with important tournament victories in 2008, 2010, 2012) is also posterior to the period in question, with the local rivalries of *Real Madrid* and *Fútbol*

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<sup>303</sup> In an earlier work Seixas had cited Induráin as an important sporting symbol for Spanish nationalism, along with the more common reference to the 1992 Olympic Games (Núñez Seixas 1999, p. 148). However, later works only reference *La Selección*, perhaps showing how football came to dominate as the sporting symbol whereas cycling had been more relevant in the 1980s and 1990s.

*Club Barcelona* marking another way in which football could actually demarcate boundaries instead of symbolise national unity. But how does *La Vuelta* fit into this?

The emergence of *La Vuelta* as a broad national symbol significantly predates that of the current success of *La Selección*, occurring rapidly after 1983 before reaching a zenith between 1989 and 1992. Cycling was perhaps more important as a cohesive force in the period in question than football since *La Selección* has been posited in this period as a successful symbol despite its relative failure as a team whereas *La Vuelta* offered broad and repeated Spanish success. We also have some limited data suggesting that at certain critical junctures, such as Induráin's participation in 1996 and the inclusion of a new climb in 1998, *La Vuelta* could register audience shares of above 50%, a clear marker of pervasive, powerful and pronounced national symbolism. But linking this to the role of sport as a surrogate for a damaged national identity is highly problematic. A fundamental issue with this type of suggestion is the high levels of national pride throughout the period registered in the World Values Survey explored in the introduction. If national pride, boosted by a successful transition to democracy and a return to Europe, remained high across the period then there would be no need for sport to play a surrogate role. Instead, sport merely reflected already elevated levels of national pride, with *La Vuelta* as one way of experiencing this. The period of *desencanto*, it should be remembered, did not immediately follow the death of Franco and the first steps in the transition of Spain to democracy (Preston 1990, p. 102) i.e. there was a lengthy triumphal period before the slow pace of reforms and economic adjustments started to weigh on the population.

In post-dictatorship societies there will always be some problems with national imagery, particularly if it has been heavily used to promulgate a certain type of national

ideology, as in the Spanish case. Germany, for instance, retained a deep sense of national shame in the post-Hitler era, with important effects on the normalcy of national symbols. It has been suggested (Laetsch 2006; Muñoz 2012, p. 1) that a banal nationalism was finally restored in Germany throughout the 2004 Football World Cup, hosted in the country, and it is a similar process that has been hypothesised for Spain. Indeed, Spain itself hosted the event in 1982, but this was considered too close to the dictatorship for an effective rebirth of Spanish national pride to emerge (Quiroga 2013, pp. 61-62). However, given the high levels of national pride recorded in the World Values Survey I think that a separation of Spanish national identity from the delegitimisation of Spanish nationalist discourse is needed, with sport perhaps playing a minor role in reflecting growing national pride throughout the 1980s, but not as the “principal espacio de expresión pública del nacionalismo español” (Núñez Seixas, quoted in Muñoz 2012, p. 46), as is sometimes claimed.<sup>304</sup>

The development and eventual reintegration of Spanish nationalist discourse over the 1975-2000 period, strongly tied to the political travails of *Partido née Alianza Popular*, requires further study in order to situate it vis-à-vis Spanish national pride. If Spanish national pride was relatively high immediately after the dictatorship and grew over time (*desencanto* being mainly political), as *La Vuelta* itself became a national symbol, then we have a temporal situation where both these items precede and feed into the re-legitimisation of Spanish nationalism. The concomitant nature of the symbolic events of 1992, the Barcelona Olympic Games, a series peak in many units of analysis in *La Vuelta* and the re-emergence of Spanish nationalism are also highly indicative of correlation, but with the methodology followed here it is not possible to move from correlation to causation.

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<sup>304</sup> [...main place for the public expression of Spanish nationalism.].

*La Vuelta Ciclista a España* became a national symbol over this period, more cohesive than even *La Selección* at times, but it is likely that its success reflected developments in national identity rather than driving them. Theoretically, banal nationalism remains operable, but must be attuned to the particularities of the society in which it is to be used, with this Spanish case study broadly reaffirming prior work completed on the United Kingdom.

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## Appendix

The following section outlines the parameters of the content analysis used in this project, with examples of the quantitative and qualitative units of analysis and the coding used in each case. An example for each half of the content analysis is provided, with a summary of the decisions made in coding.

**Quantitative units of analysis:** number of articles, size of article, front-page prominence, prominence in sport section, visual Images, advertising, mode of authorship.

The quantitative units of analysis were designed to measure the extent and breadth of *La Vuelta's* national symbolism, forming a first analysis of the material before moving onto the qualitative section. These units of analysis test the manifest content of the articles, which may explain the failure of the visual imagery unit of analysis to provide any information, since this was likely to need analysis of its latent content, although I was not aware of this at the time. The units of analysis were designed by perusing a number of content analysis guidebooks as well as comparable analyses that had already been carried out in the field. The main idea was to move beyond the simple counting of the frequency of articles and their size to also include units of analysis concerned with prominence. Examining whether the articles made the front-page or not, as well as where they were placed in the sport section added greatly to the analysis, moving beyond the quantity of coverage to the quality of it, which is important when testing for national symbolism. The pilot study moulded the analysis, provoking me to include the mode of authorship unit of analysis which seemed to be of significant importance since it could

catch not only if it was a particular author or the paper in general that held a certain view of the race or framed coverage from a certain angle, but also the interest (since agency production signifies a lack of direct interest). We have already seen how visual imagery failed as an unit of analysis and given this it would be excluded from any subsequent analysis (or changed to look at latent content), but advertising provided far more than I had originally anticipated (see the example advert below). In providing information on the economic aspect of the race it allowed the analysis to look not just at what the newspapers recorded, but how and where companies invested in linking their products to their race, an added dimension that expands the analysis.

Given the breadth of the period the analysis was annualised, with the data from each data cumulated and presented for each year vis-à-vis each newspaper. A different way of approaching this could be to examine daily trends in newspaper coverage, examining how certain stages or the nationalities involved in the action each day affected the coverage and the flagging involved, but this was not feasible in a study that sought to cover such a long duration of time. The next few pages contain examples of the quantitative analysis and the coding schema before this is repeated for the qualitative units of analysis.

Fig. 1.

◀ EL PRINCIPAL TESTIGO DEL CASO ARNY SE DESDICE • PÁGINA 22 ▶

# LA VANGUARDIA

SÁBADO, 21 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 1996

Fundada en 1881 por don Carlos y don Bartolomé Godó

Número 41.249 125 pts.

**Aznar defiende la moderación frente a la ruptura y la crispación**

MADRID. — En su primer acto de masas desde la llegada al poder, José María Aznar defendió anoche sus actos de gobierno como un exponente de "la alternancia y la moderación, que es lo contrario a la ruptura y el enfrentamiento". En un mitin celebrado en el Palacio de los Deportes de Madrid, el presidente del Ejecutivo dedicó su intervención a rebatir las críticas por algunas de sus decisiones con un mensaje centrado: "Muchos apostaban a que no íbamos a llegar al Gobierno y que si llegáramos íbamos a provocar un conflicto social, a agitar las pasiones y a llegar con el deberman; pero de eso no queda nada". A juicio del líder del PP, lo que hay ahora es "un gobierno estable, que dialoga y pacta y que ha superado la política del todo o nada". **PÁGINA 11**

## El Gobierno grava los seguros con un nuevo impuesto del 4%

*La medida, que aportará unos 60.000 millones al Estado, excluye las pólizas de vida y prevención social • página 50*

MADRID. — El Gobierno ha implantado un nuevo impuesto que grava en un 4 % todos los seguros, excepto los de vida y prevención social, que reportará a las arcas del Estado unos 60.000 millones. El nuevo gravamen entrará en vigor el 1 de enero de 1997, según la ley que acompaña a los presupuestos generales y que el Consejo de

**El diferencial de intereses con Alemania baja del 2%**

**PÁGINA 51**

Ministros remitió ayer al Consejo Económico y Social (CES). El proyecto incluye, como contrapunto, la exención en el impuesto de la renta de las personas físicas (IRPF) del 10 por ciento de las indemnizaciones que se obtengan de los seguros individuales, que no computarán a efectos de sucesiones y donaciones.



Indurain abandonó la carrera justo a la altura de su hotel, situado en la carretera de Cangas de Onís, poco antes de la subida a los lagos

*El gran campeón abandona la Vuelta*

## Indurain: "No quise seguir con el calvario"

CANGAS DE ONÍS. — "No iba bien y preferí no seguir con ese calvario." A las 15.57 h de la tarde de ayer, cuando ni siquiera había acometido las primeras rampas de la etapa reina de los lagos de Covadonga, Indurain se apeó de su bicicleta justo a la altura de su hotel, en la carretera de Cangas de Onís, y abandonó la Vuelta. "Ahora lo primero es descansar unos días y después pensar lo que hago. No me he planteado el futuro", declaró el gran campeón navarro. **PÁGINAS 33 Y 34**

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*El pregón del arquitecto Rafael Moneo abre los festejos*

## Barcelona se entrega a las fiestas de la Mercè

BARCELONA. — Barcelona vive desde anoche en plenas fiestas de la Mercè con un clima de especial expectación ciudadana, pese a los augurios de la entrada del otoño. El arquitecto Rafael Moneo fue el encargado de abrir los actos oficiales con el tradicional pregón, en el que puso de relieve su amor por la ciudad y la aportación de la arquitectura a su proyección internacional. Moneo se congratuló de haber contribuido a ello con la galería Theo, L'illa Diagonal y el todavía inconcluso auditorio. **REVISTA**



Los niños, protagonistas de la Mercè



Fig. 2.

SÁBADO, 21 SEPTIEMBRE 1996

LA VANGUARDIA 33



**TENIS**  
Albert Costa da a España el primer punto en la eliminatoria de Copa Davis ante Dinamarca

37

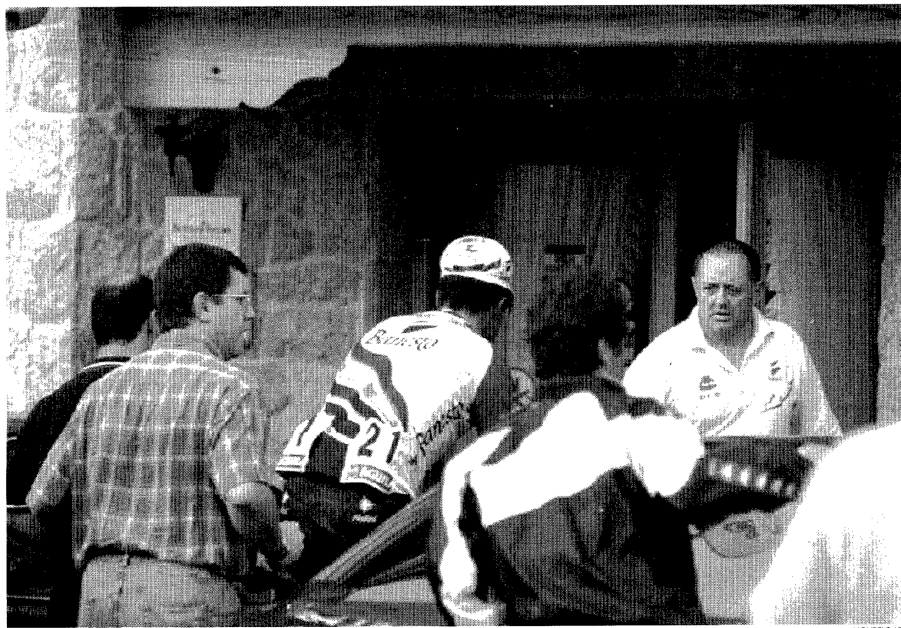
# Deportes

**FÚTBOL**  
El Espanyol se enfrenta hoy en San Mamés al Athletic de Urzaiz 34

**FÚTBOL**  
Los jugadores del Barça, satisfechos con el nuevo césped del Camp Nou 35

51 Vuelta Ciclista a España

## Indurain deja solos a los Once



Este es el momento en que Miguel Indurain llega a la puerta de su hotel tras haber abandonado la Vuelta Ciclista a España durante la etapa de ayer

**JOSÉ MANUEL DÍAZ**  
Cangas de Onís. Servicio especial



Miguel Indurain dejó ayer solos a los Once en su lucha por el triunfo final en la Vuelta a España y en especial al cada vez líder más sólido Alex Zülle. El navarro no pudo más. A las 15.57 de la tarde, a su paso por el kilómetro 135 de la decimotercera jornada y totalmente abatido, Indurain decidió poner fin a su calvario.

Le empezaron a fallar las fuerzas de forma definitiva justo cuando llegaba lo peor. En la primeras rampas de la subida del Mirador del Fito, el mito empezó a rezagarse. De

nada valieron los ánimos que recibía de los espectadores, ni las voces de apoyo de los integrantes del pelotón que irremediablemente iban pasando, ni las palabras de Manolo Saiz, director del Once, que intentó ayudarlo en su calvario. Cada vez se sentía más agotado, menos capaz de seguir adelante.

Mientras Indurain decidía su retirada junto a un auxiliar de su equipo, Jaimarena, que retrasó el coche para hablar con él, el líder Alex Zülle y su compañero Laurent Jalabert, ganador de la etapa, no desaprovecharon la ocasión para asestar un golpe que deja medio sentenciada la Vuelta '96 cuando todavía quedan nueve jornadas para el final.

La etapa, entre Oviedo y Lagos de

*El navarro puso fin a su calvario en una jornada en la que Zülle y Jalabert asestaron un golpe casi definitivo a la carrera*

Covadonga, de 159 kilómetros, comenzó muy viva. Ya en el kilómetro tres se marchaban los italianos Celestino y Petacchi y poco después se les unieron el ruso Konishev, el también italiano Zanini y el español José Rodríguez. El quinteto de cabeza llegó a tener hasta tres minutos y medio de ventaja sobre el grupo

principal que controlaba el conjunto del líder. Con este panorama se fueron quemando los kilómetros hasta que se llegó a las primeras rampas del Mirador del Fito, cuya cima estaba en el kilómetro 118.

Del grupo puntero saltaba Celestino y en el principal Rominger tensaba la carrera lanzando un ataque endiabrado al que respondió el Once y que descubrió el mal momento de Indurain.

Ese tirón ayudó a que el líder Zülle y sus compañeros avivaran el ritmo para "echar" definitivamente de la carrera al todopoderoso Miguel Indurain. Varios compañeros del navarro se quedaron a esperar, pero el campeón les hizo señas para que se fueran.

Mientras, Celestino se presentaba al pie de Lagos de Covadonga con tres minutos de ventaja con respecto a un primer grupo en el cual estaban Zülle, Jalabert, Rominger, Faustini, Escartín y Jiménez entre otros. El sueño del ciclista italiano llegaba a su fin a mitad del puerto, pues una vez conocida la noticia del abandono que marcó la jornada, el Once no dudó en comenzar su recital especial.

Comenzó el espectáculo del equipo español cuando, a unos ocho kilómetros para el final, Zülle y Jalabert salieron de un grupo de una docena de corredores y se fueron en busca del escapado Gianetti, que había lanzado un intento tras la neutralización de Celestino.

De esa forma, los dos líderes del Once comenzaban a rematar el magnífico trabajo del resto de sus compañeros, de Herminio y Leazni-

### Lisboa, salida de la edición del 97

Enrique Franco, director general de la Vuelta a España, comentó en la salida de la decimotercera etapa que la capital portuguesa tiene un noventa por ciento de posibilidades de albergar la salida de la próxima edición y que también es probable que se mantengan las actuales fechas de competición. "Todavía no está firmado el comienzo de la Vuelta '97, pero las negociaciones están muy avanzadas con las autoridades lisboetas, aunque también hay contactos con otras ciudades españolas. Lo más probable es que salgamos de Lisboa", agregó Franco.

Para el jefe de la Vuelta las dos primeras etapas tendrían por escenario territorio portugués. "Vuelvo a repetir que no hay nada concreto, pero si saliéramos de Lisboa las primeras dos etapas, como mínimo, serían en Portugal". Respecto al posible final de etapas también en territorio francés matizó que "se habla de estaciones y localidades galas cercanas a la frontera española, pero oficialmente no tenemos ninguna petición". Finalmente, de la continuidad en el mes de septiembre comentó que no hay motivos para cambiar.

barrutia en el Fito y después de Cuesta y Rincón en las primeras rampas de los míticos Lagos de Covadonga. Atrás nadie tenía fuerzas para seguir el ritmo del dúo de moda de la Vuelta '96 y tanto Rominger como Dufaux y compañía se limitaron a mantener un pedaleo que les fuera cómodo para evitar así males mayores.

Al final, Jalabert se adelantaba lógicamente a su compañero de equipo y líder de la carrera, Zülle, y volvía a ser el primero en la cima de los míticos Lagos de Covadonga donde también ganó en 1994. ●

### CLASIFICACIONES

#### DECIMOTERCERA ETAPA

Oviedo-Lagos de Covadonga (159 km)

1. Jalabert (Fra-Once)	4 h 01'48"
2. Zülle (Sui-Once)	0'15"
3. Gianetti (Sui-Polli)	0'25"
4. Rominger (Sui-Mapei)	0'31"
5. Tostching (Aus-Polli)	0'45"
6. Serrano (Esp-Kalmes)	0'52"
7. Rebellin (Ita-Polli)	0'58"
8. Faustini (Ita-Mapei)	1'04"
9. Dufaux (Sui-Lotus)	1'10"
10. Clavero (Esp-McOndal)	1'16"
11. Escartín (Esp-Kalmes)	1'22"
12. Merckx (Bel-Motorola)	1'32"

#### GENERAL

1. Zülle (Sui-Once)	56 h 19'12"
2. Jalabert (Fra-Once)	0'1'13"
3. Dufaux (Sui-Lotus)	0'5'24"
4. Faustini (Ita-Aki)	0'6'26"
5. Mouri (Esp-Once)	0'6'51"
6. Pistore (Ita-MG)	0'6'54"
7. Rebellin (Ita-Polli)	0'7'28"
8. Tostching (Aus-Polli)	0'8'46"
9. Rominger (Sui-Mapei)	0'8'41"
10. Stephen (Aus-Once)	0'6'30"
13. Zorrobeltia (Esp-Once)	0'11'21"

### Descanso después de la gran batalla

Después de la tremenda lucha de la etapa de ayer y de los esfuerzos realizados por los corredores, difícilmente pueden esperarse demasiadas emociones en la decimocuarta etapa de la Vuelta, entre Cangas de Onís y el Parque Natural de Cabarceno. Los Once, grandes dominadores de la carrera, deben controlar el pelotón a lo largo de 202,6 kms sobre un terreno sumamente ondulado, con muchos puertos aunque ninguno excesivamente complicado. Aunque la llegada, situada apenas a un kilómetro de un puerto de tercera categoría, difícilmente se producirá en grupo.

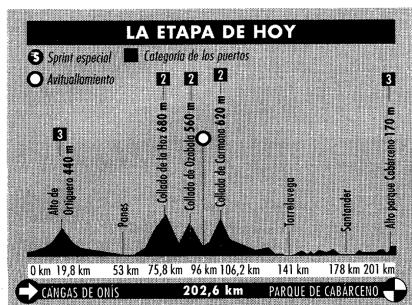


Fig. 3.

# “Me ha faltado un poco de salud”, dijo Indurain

Echavarrí: “Me gustaría que las tintas se cargasen contra mí y contra nadie más”

CANGAS DE ONÍS. Servicio especial



Faltaban algo menos de 25 kilómetros para la meta cuando Indurain se echó hacia la derecha y se bajó de la bicicleta. Para Indurain, la meta estaba situada en las afueras de Cangas de Onís, allí donde hace siete años también se vio obligado al abandono tras romperse una muñeca en el peligroso descenso del Mirador del Fito. Siete años de proezas para forjar una leyenda que contará tam-

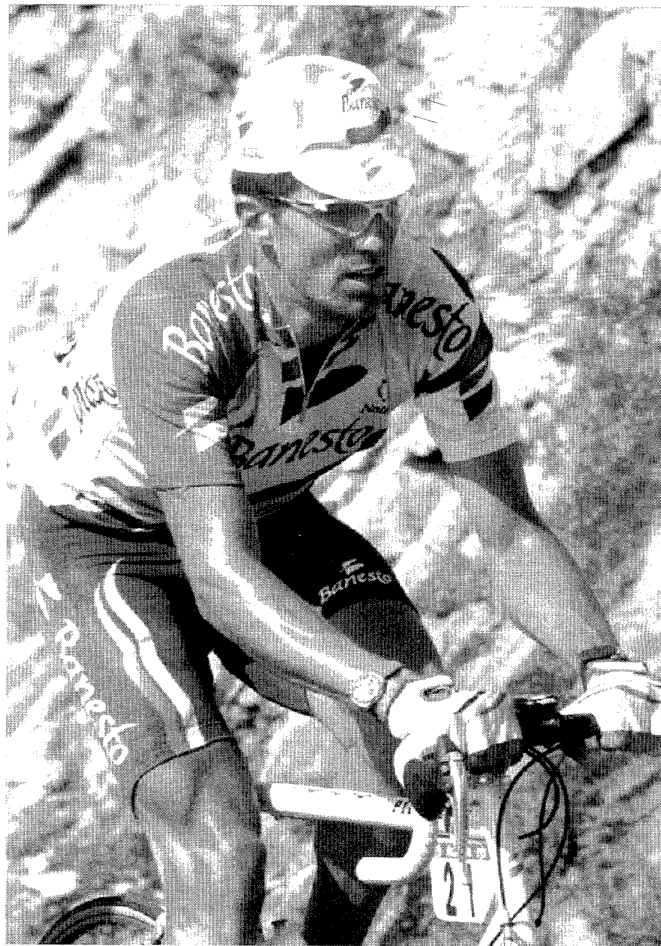
biendo abandonar. Tengo un catarro que no es grave, pero que me deja fuera de la Vuelta. Tenía una congestión desde Ávila, he intentado eliminarla, pero ha sido imposible. Y el frío y la humedad de la etapa de ayer me han afectado. Me he bajado de la bici al no poder mantener el ritmo, algo de lo que me he percatado en cuanto se ha producido el primer ataque. He hecho lo que he podido y no hay más historias”.

Indurain no admitió en ningún momento que este fuese el final de su carrera: “No he decidido si corre-

ré el año que viene, ya que para seguir es necesario estar bien y con motivación. No sé que haré, descansaré, me recuperaré y ya decidiré. Sé cómo estoy y lo que me pasa, me ha faltado un poco de salud. No tiene por qué ser una cuestión de edad; a otros les ha pasado lo mismo y no puedes darle más vueltas al asunto. Tampoco sé si haré el Mundial, no quiero pensar en ello”. Indurain reconoció que “acaba un año en el que no me ha ido mal, aunque no ha sido el mejor; los otros fueron excepcionales”.

La Vuelta y el ciclismo se tambalearon en los últimos kilómetros de la etapa reina. Todos estaban con Indurain en un momento difícil que el navarro afrontó con su señorío habitual. Se pudo constatar que Miguel tenía razón cuando advirtió que le obligaban a correr. Echavarrí cargó con las mismas responsabilidades que Indurain había asumido por la mañana en la salida de Oviedo. “Me gustaría que las tintas se cargasen contra mí y contra nadie más. Fuimos consecuentes y hoy sentimos pena”, indicó.

Fue Echavarrí quien acompañó a Indurain a su habitación tras el abandono, que es el cuarto en sus ocho participaciones en la Vuelta. “En estos momentos, la mejor con-



Miguel Indurain no quiso sufrir más en la dura ascensión a los Lagos de Covadonga

MONCELO/GE

## LAS FRASES

### ABANDONO

■ “No tenía intención de abandonar, pero un catarro me deja fuera de la Vuelta. El frío y la humedad me han afectado. Me he bajado de la bicicleta al no poder mantener el ritmo. He hecho lo que he podido y no hay más historias”

### FUTURO

■ “No he decidido si seguiré corriendo el año que viene. Cuando esté recuperado, decidiré”

bién como uno de los ciclistas más grandes de la historia acabó sufriendo como tantos lo hacen a diario.

Entró con José Miguel Echavarrí en el hotel del Banesto. “Tranquilos, me duchó y estoy a vuestra disposición.” Se duchó y ofreció las esperadas explicaciones, aceptando relajadamente la realidad: “Estoy tranquilo, he visto un poco el final de la carrera. En el Fito he decidido retirarme, pero antes no tenía pre-

versación es el silencio. Miguel debe ahora poner en orden sus maletas: el equipaje y la maleta de la mente”, explicaba Echavarrí.

Eusebio Unzué había sido el primero en saber que Indurain se retiraba. “Esto no es agradable, no nos gusta ver así a Miguel. Corrimos un riesgo por bien de todos creyendo que estaba en condiciones de disputar la Vuelta. Él prefería no venir, pero una vez tomada la decisión tra-

bajó en las condiciones adecuadas para hacer la mejor Vuelta posible. No ha podido ser.”

El director del Once, M Saiz, explicó que “es un momento muy triste para el ciclismo español, pero no pasa absolutamente nada”. Álvaro Pino, también en plena carrera, fue escueto: “No tiene por qué ser un momento dramático”. Marino Alonso, fiel escudero, quiso quedarse con él, pero su jefe le envió hacia

delante, ya había tomado la decisión. Perurera le gritó desde su coche: “¡Animo, Miguel, y a recuperarte!”.

Hizo el descenso con Herminio Díaz Zabala, antiguo compañero de equipo. Antes de darle solo, Herminio estiró su brazo y lo pasó por encima de la espalda del campeón. Miguel se quedó solo, pedalando, dejándose caer hasta Arriónadas, donde fue jaleado como siempre. Luego puso el pie sobre el asfalto. ●

## FUTBOL CLUB BARCELONA

### NOTA INFORMATIVA DEL F.C. BARCELONA PER AL PARTIT AMB LA REAL SOCIEDAD

A causa de les obres de construcció que s'estan realitzant al subterrani de la Tribuna i les d'ampliació del vestíbul principal de Tribuna, en el proper partit entre el nostre equip i la Real Sociedad, el paviment de l'aparcament de la Zona 1 de la Tribuna no estarà senyalitzat. Per tant, els abonats a aquest aparcament no podran ocupar la seva plaça numerada, per la qual cosa els agrairém que segueixin les indicacions dels empleats del Club per aparcar els seus vehicles. (Aquesta situació es mantindrà uns quants partits més, fins que les places quedin definitivament senyalitzades.)

Ateses les molèsties que comportaran aquestes obres, és del tot convenient que s'accedeixi a l'Estadi amb més antelació per evitar aglomeracions de darrera hora.

El Consell Directiu vol agrair a tots els socis i aficionats la bona predisposició que sempre han mostrat en situacions similars, tot pregant que acceptin les nostres excuses per les molèsties que se'ls pugui ocasionar.

## El Espanyol busca su primera victoria de la Liga fuera de casa ante el Bilbao de Urzaiz

JUAN MANUEL MARTÍNEZ

BARCELONA. (Redacción.) – El RCD Espanyol juega esta tarde (20 h) en San Mamés contra el Athletic de Bilbao. El adelanto de este encuentro al sábado se debe a que el equipo barcelonés ha de jugar el martes próximo el partido de vuelta de la Copa de la UEFA contra el Hapoel de Nicosia, con el que empató a dos en la ida. Toni, Raúl, Cristóbal, Herrar, Pochettino, Torres Mestre, Brnovic, Bogdanovic, Pralija, Artega, Pacheta, Fabio, Francisco, Aldana, Lardín, Luis Cembranos, Ouedec y Benítez viajaron ayer por vía aérea a San Sebastián para seguir por carretera hasta Bilbao. Dos de

estos jugadores deberán ser descartados para el partido. Tanto Brovic como Benítez están recuperados de sus lesiones, por lo que todo indica que el Espanyol repetirá su alineación tradicional.

El entrenador españolista, Pepe Carcelén, afirmó ayer que “el partido va a ser muy difícil por cuanto el Athletic necesita la victoria, ya que su inicio de Liga ha sido muy deficiente al perder dos partidos en campo contrario y quedar descolgado; el equipo bilbaíno se crece ante su afición, pero nosotros también tenemos nuestras armas y las vamos a emplear para conquistar la victoria”. San Mamés se le da muy bien al Espanyol, que en sus dos últimas vi-

sitas ha cosechado una clara victoria (1-3), hace dos años, y un empate (0-0), la última temporada.

Por su parte, Luis Fernández, entrenador del Bilbao, advirtió a sus jugadores que deberán asumir riesgos para vencer al Espanyol, según informa nuestro colaborador Francisco Rodríguez. Las bajas confirmadas de Carlos García y Andriúta han hecho que Corino entre por vez primera en la convocatoria. Si Echavarría se recupera, tras el golpe que sufrió en un hombro jugando al baloncesto, formará pareja atacante con Urzaiz, quien se enfrentará por vez primera a su ex equipo. El césped de San Mamés está muy castigado por la últimas lluvias. ●

**Source:** <http://www.lavanguardia.es>

**Coding Example, Figs. 1, 2, 3.**

Front-page prominence: 1

Relative prominence: 1<sup>st</sup> / leading

Article number: 5

Article size:  $\frac{3}{4}$ , 1,  $\frac{1}{4}$  = 2

Author: José Manuel Díaz (3), Servicio Especial (1), Unknown (1)

Visual Images: 4, including 3 of Induráin and one topographical image

Advertising: 0

## **Notes**

This collection of articles is an illustrative example of how *La Vuelta*, and especially Induráin, had come to play a part in the national life of Spaniards. The race rarely reached the front page of *La Vanguardia*, but Induráin's withdrawal from the 1996 edition changed this. The race not only made the front page but also led the sport section, with a high number of articles. The mix of authors, with one agency and one unknown, is typical for this paper in the 1990s. Although there was no advertising, the high number of visual images reveals the technological development of the paper that we saw throughout the period. The most interesting visual image, however, remains the Catalan flags that adorn the last story on the main page, levelling out the focus on Induráin above and illustrating the mindless waving of flags that was at the heart of Billig's *Banal Nationalism*.

## Qualitative units of analysis

The qualitative section was focused on broader categories, rather than quantifiable terms. Primary themes were the particular topics that emerged in each article as well as the general tone. Once the general themes and tone of each article had been surveyed attention turned to the flagging of identities – local, regional, national – with a focus on how this was done i.e. through the possessive “our” or just an adjective “Spanish” or “Catalan”. By building up an analysis on a year-by-year basis in each newspaper a general idea of coverage and how this changed throughout time could be constructed, which was then compared with the quantitative data and the other papers to arrive at answers to the research questions. This approach was chosen due to my background in history and lies on the nexus between content analysis and discourse analysis, although the focus on manifest instead of latent content means it is closer to the former than the latter.

The approach worked well on a general level, clearly indicating the tone of each newspaper as well as how this could change during the period – a main example of this being the early positive coverage in *La Vanguardia* which soon transformed into a more neutral/negative coverage. The flagging of identity was also visible, with the heavy usage of the possessive in *Avui* and *ABC* coming out from the analysis. However, a better approach would be to count the particular usages of Spanish and/or Catalan, thereby giving us data from which to construct a picture of how often these identity markers are used and how this changes. Also, using day-to-day data, instead of the annualised data here, would add to our understanding of how particular events (such as a Spanish stage

victory or stage in Catalonia) added to the cumulative identity flagging. An example of the qualitative coding is found below:

**Fig. 4.**

La XL Vuelta Ciclista a España terminó en Salamanca, donde el líder hizo buenos sus 36 segundos de ventaja sobre Millar



Una multitud se congregó en las calles de Salamanca para aplaudir el triunfo final de Perico Delgado, tras presenciar este igualadísimo sprint entre Malakohv y Dejonckheere

Delgado respiró tranquilo después del último sprint

Salamanca. (Enviado especial.) - Con triunfo del soviético Malakohv al sprint, decidido por la "foto finish" por la enorme igualdad de la llegada junto al belga Noël Dejonckheere, terminó ayer en Salamanca la XL edición de la Vuelta Ciclista a España. Pedro Delgado se proclamó vencedor absoluto de la prueba sin que su liderato, conseguido anteaer en Segovia, peligrase ni más mínimo en la última etapa.

a cederle su bicicleta si ocurría cualquier contratiempo. Pero Perurena no respiró tranquilo hasta que el pelotón atravesó la última línea de llegada. "Ahora iremos a la Vuelta a Colombia y luego al Tour. Estoy convencido de que Delgado dará muchos días de gloria en la ronda francesa." "El sueño", como lo definió Delgado, ya era realidad.

Abandono de Recio

"Afortunadamente este es el último follón de la Vuelta", decía Txomin Perurena en la línea de meta, inundada como siempre de público. Aunque su líder, Delgado, no pasó apuros en ningún momento, el director deportivo del MG-Orbea vivió en un estado de nerviosismo los últimos 175 kilómetros de la Vuelta a España. Tan sólo una caída inoportuna, siempre posible en un circuito urbano como el de Salamanca, podía arrebatarse el maillot amarillo a "Perico". Para impedir una avería mecánica, Delgado estuvo permanentemente acompañado por un gregario, dispuesto

Fueron 101 los corredores que lograron terminar esta durísima Vuelta a España. En la etapa de ayer abandonó Recio, el triunfador en Segovia el día anterior. Ni un solo equipo ha logrado llegar a Salamanca con todos los efectivos, lo que confirma las dificultades de un trazado en el que únicamente podía imponerse un ciclista completo, que no cojeara en ningún aspecto. Hacia falta dominar el llano y la contrarreloj, pero era también imprescindible ser un excelente escalador. Como el año pasado, la montaña jugó un papel decisivo. Y si en 1984 llegó un escalador francés,

Eric Caritoux, y se llevó la Vuelta, en esta oportunidad falló muy poco para que se repitiese la historia, con un protagonista también extranjero y también escalador, quizá el mejor del mundo en la actualidad, Robert Millar.

Es sumamente indicativo comparar la progresión de Millar y Delgado a lo largo de las 19 etapas y el prólogo. En este, el español le sacó un mínimo segundo al escocés. Así quedaron las cosas hasta la sexta etapa, con final en los lagos de Covadonga, donde venció Delgado, aunque Millar, segundo, sólo perdió 12". Al día siguiente, en el Alto de Campoo, llegó el desfallecimiento del segoviano, a pesar de llevar el maillot amarillo a las espaldas. Fue trigésimo cuarto, a 3'49" de Millar, nuevamente segundo de etapa. En Panticosa, novena etapa, Millar le arrancó otros 18" a Delgado, y en Tremp, otro medio minuto.

En la llegada a Andorra, el corredor de Orbea recuperó 14", pero al día siguiente, en la cronoscalada a Pal, el escocés de Peugeot estaba otro impor-

tante golpe a la Vuelta y ganaba 1'07" con relación a "Perico". Este recuperaba únicamente 3" a la meta de Sant Quirze y perdía nada menos que 1'35" de Alcalá de Henares. Quedaba descartado, en buena lógica, para el triunfo final, a 6'13" de Millar. Lo que ocurrió el sábado, en la etapa de los puertos madrileños, sigue fresco en la memoria de todos. El espectacular hundimiento del escocés y la sorprendente escapada de Delgado que le dio una ventaja en Segovia, su tierra, de 6'49". Le sobraron 36".

Recuperar prestigio

En los últimos años la Vuelta a España está recuperando el prestigio perdido. Las ediciones de 1983, 1984 y 1985, con las glorias finales de Hinault, Caritoux y Delgado, han tenido gran espectacularidad en el apartado meramente deportivo. El trazado de la Vuelta que finalizó ayer era de una dureza inusitada, que suscitó incluso las quejas de algunos equipos, como el italiano del Brianzoli, que había acudido

aquí simplemente para preparar su participación en el Giro y se encontró con una carrera "en serio" y no un paseo de entrenamiento.

La Vuelta a España está ganando expectación en el mundo ciclista internacional, por lo que no sería extraño que a partir del año próximo las imágenes de TVE siguieran su expansión. Si esta vez estuvieron en Colombia, por la presencia del Varta, a poco que se culde la participación de 1986 se puede contar con las peticiones en firma de Francia e Italia que es tanto como entrar en el santuario del ciclismo mundial.

Defectos a subsanar

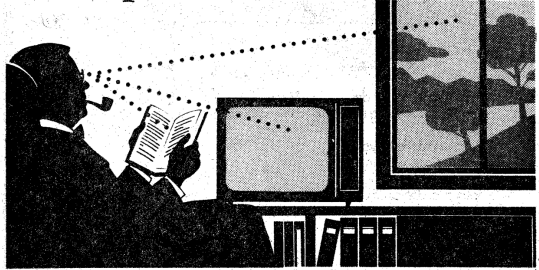
Peró mientras la Vuelta a España crece en el aspecto deportivo y va despertando cada vez más interés, se cierne sobre ella un peligro que no pasa inadvertido a casi nadie. Corredores, directores de equipo y no digamos ya periodistas se quejan de la desorganización existente en las llegadas. No es fácil controlar a

miles de personas que han tenido que permanecer de pie varias horas para ver de cerca a los ídolos del pedal. Pero no se pueden repetir escenas habituales este año, con la zona de meta completamente tomada por el público y los corredores viéndose obligados a solicitar protección policial para encaminarse hacia el hotel. Las imágenes de una carrera en la que no existe línea de meta, colapsada por los espectadores hartos de paciente espera, cuando apenas ha llegado una parte del pelotón, mejor es que no lleguen a muchos países.

Estos fracasos organizativos en las llegadas, junto a las precarias condiciones de trabajo que se mueven los informados de prensa (con algunas excepciones, pues en todas partes hay protegidos), son los dos grandes problemas de la Vuelta a España. Y en las manos de los organizadores están las soluciones, por más que el director general de la Vuelta diga que la culpa es de quienes se saltan las normas.

X. GARCÍA LUQUE

Semana de la visión de cerca en Optica 2.000 13 al 25 de Mayo



Nuevas soluciones a los problemas de la visión de cerca

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• Gafas Pocket con graduación incorporada y entrega inmediata.
• Gafas plegables muy pequeñas para llevar en el bolsillo, viajes, etc.

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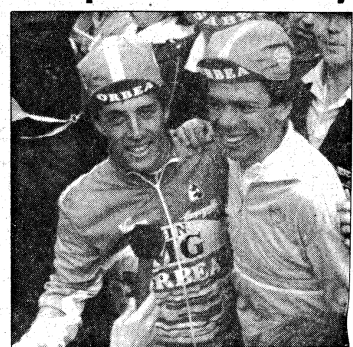


El vencedor descubre que su escapada era para hacer de puente a Cabestany

Salamanca. (Enviado especial.) - "¿Ahora? Pues tratar de olvidar lo antes posible esta Vuelta a España y centrar mis cinco sentidos en el Tour. Participaré en la Vuelta a Colombia, porque puede ser una preparación excelente para Francia."

Unas dos horas después de los abrazos y los besos, Delgado se presentó en la sala de prensa de Salamanca. Vestido con un chandal del MG-Orbea, tomó asiento y recordó los momentos más emocionantes de la carrera y descubrió una anécdota de su escapada triunfal. "Cuando salté fue para hacer de puente con Cabestany, pero las cosas me rodaron bien y poco antes de la pancarta que anuncia la meta a 10 kilómetros tuve conciencia de lo que estaba en juego. Me dijeron que llevábamos casi cinco minutos. A partir de ese instante Recio y yo tiramos con todas nuestras fuerzas. Lo curioso fue que poco después se nos acercó Rafael Carrasco y dijo que ya llevábamos 5'58" y que redoblásemos el esfuerzo, porque ya faltaba poco para derrotar a Millar. Yo me quedé sorprendido porque pensaba que estaba a 5'45" en la general, y le hice mirar dos veces a Carrasco las clasificaciones para que se asegurase. Cuando vi que estaba a 6'13" sobre un taco y dije: hay que tirar más."

Mientras "Perico" respondía a las preguntas, su compañero Ruiz Cabestany, sentado en una esquina de la sala, sonreía y ojaba las clasificaciones. Delgado explicaba su desfallecimiento en el Alto de Campoo. "El médico nos dijo que habíamos comido algo en el estado. No hay otra explicación, porque yo



Perico y Pello: el abrazo del éxito

no fui el único con problemas. Pello devolvió a mitad de carrera. Grecciano decía tener hambre pero se sentía incapaz de tomar un bocadito."

El vencedor hizo referencia a la dureza de la Vuelta-85. "Se ha rodado a un ritmo de locura. Apenas se descansó en la etapa de Logroño, la que ganó Camarillo. Esta Vuelta ha sido una carrera por eliminación, al estilo del Tour, donde vence el que se mantiene arriba y la dureza nos ha beneficiado a los españoles. Ahí está el caso de un gran rodador como Eddy Planckaert, que se ha ido con una sola victoria

mientras que hace unos años se llevo cinco."

Delgado señaló que "el primero en felicitar me ha sido Millar, pero yo no sabía que decía. Me he mantenido un poco escondido y creo que he acertado. Nunca será lo mismo, porque el Tour tiene un prestigio especial."

X. G. L.

Source: http://www.lavanguardia.es

Coding Example - Fig. 4.

This article is taken from the 1985 edition of *La Vuelta*, which saw a young Pedro Delgado take his first Grand Tour victory. The first noticeable fact is the lack of any use of the word Spanish or Spaniard in the titles to the two articles and picture, which does not compare favourably with the other papers, especially *El País* and *ABC*. The latter, for instance, led its coverage with “Triunfo del Ciclismo Español en La Vuelta”,<sup>305</sup> as well as a by-line that read “Éxito deportivo, de organización, y de público”.<sup>306</sup> The article reads in a slightly positive way, given the Spanish victory, but without the buoyancy found in the two central Spanish newspapers. The last section in the article entitled “Defectos a subsanar”,<sup>307</sup> brings out the negativity that is a constant theme in *La Vanguardia* after the retirement of Enrique Canto as a correspondent. The difference between *La Vanguardia* commenting on the negative features and *ABC* highlighted the positive ones should be noted.

The use of national identities – French, Spanish or Scottish - is noticeable in the article, but at no point is the possessive used to denote a further level of inclusion. Delgado is labelled “el español” [the Spaniard], as we would expect, but his regional identity is also referred to through the use of “el segoviano” [the Segovian]. Reference is also made to Segovia being “su tierra” or [his land]. It is in this way that we see the multilevel identities that are evident across most of the newspapers in this analysis, a factor that would probably benefit from quantification in any further study.

### Advertising example - Fig. 5.

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<sup>305</sup> [A triumph for Spanish cycling in La Vuelta].

<sup>306</sup> [Sporting, organization and public success].

<sup>307</sup> [Problems to rectify].

**LA MAGIA ESTÁ DE VUELTA.**

**DE VUELTA AL RUEDO.** TVE y RNE retransmiten diariamente y en directo la 55ª edición de la Vuelta Ciclista a España. Los mejores recursos técnicos y humanos para dar cobertura a lo mejor del ciclismo mundial. **Del 26 de Agosto al 17 de Septiembre.**

**VUELTA CICLISTA A ESPAÑA 2000**

**MÁLAGA - MÁLAGA**      **HOY 19:00h.**      

WWW.FEVB.BB

Source: <http://www.abc.es>

Throughout the period we saw a development in advertising from local to national and then international companies, with most advertising placed in the central Spanish newspapers. The end of the period saw a number of adverts similar to the one above, with a play between the bike and the *toro* as a symbol of Spain by the state broadcaster *TVE*. Advertising thus began to act much as I had anticipated the visual imagery unit of analysis would, suggesting that the content analysis could be developed further.