



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

This is a repository copy of *The Barcelona Urban Elite, 1808–1899: Between Liberalism and Catholic Corporatism*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:  
<http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/131736/>

Version: Accepted Version

---

**Article:**

Smith, A (2018) *The Barcelona Urban Elite, 1808–1899: Between Liberalism and Catholic Corporatism*. *Journal of Modern European History*, 16 (3). pp. 399-428. ISSN 1611-8944

10.17104/1611-8944-2018-3-399

---

This is an author produced version of a paper published in *Journal of Modern European History*. Uploaded in accordance with the publisher's self-archiving policy.

**Reuse**

Items deposited in White Rose Research Online are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved unless indicated otherwise. They may be downloaded and/or printed for private study, or other acts as permitted by national copyright laws. The publisher or other rights holders may allow further reproduction and re-use of the full text version. This is indicated by the licence information on the White Rose Research Online record for the item.

**Takedown**

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing [eprints@whiterose.ac.uk](mailto:eprints@whiterose.ac.uk) including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.



[eprints@whiterose.ac.uk](mailto:eprints@whiterose.ac.uk)  
<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/>

## **The Barcelona Urban Elite, 1808-1899: Between Liberalism and Catholic Corporatism**

The central issue addressed in this article is the relationship between liberal ideology and the social and cultural world of Barcelona elites between the 1800s and the 1890s. Our focus on Barcelona can be justified from a number of angles. It was Spain's major industrial centre and the largest urban conglomeration on the Mediterranean. Furthermore, within this elite to the fore were businessmen, who are often seen as the quintessential representatives of liberal middle-class culture. And yet, as we shall see, the relationship between the Barcelona urban elite and liberal ideology and values was not unproblematic. That not all aspects of liberalism were readily assimilated by urban elites has been recognised in studies centred on Spain as a whole. Liberalism was at first propounded by an eclectic group within the cultured intelligentsia, including some clergy and aristocrats. After the promulgation of Spain's first (short-lived) liberal constitution in 1812, the urban middle and lower classes took the lead in supporting key liberal reforms. Nevertheless, when analysing the conservative constitutionalist party, the Moderates, it has been noted that it took on board elements of pre-

liberal thought. In addition, it has been pointed out that Spanish liberals found it difficult to incorporate what are normally viewed as two of the key traits of liberal ideology - individualism and religious tolerance - into their arsenal.<sup>1</sup>

I aim to move forward this debate through a detailed case study, which focuses in more depth than previous work on two interrelated areas. First, the degree to which there were continuities between the cultural practice and world view of the urban non-noble Barcelona elite and middle class in the aftermath of the liberal revolution of the 1820s and 1830s, and that of their forebears under the Old Order. Second, the extent to which the former's outlook jarred with central tenets of classical liberalism: most particularly the liberal stress on human progress and perfectibility, universalism and the support for laissez-faire economics, defence of the civil liberties and freedom of thought, the belief that social advance should be based on merit, and backing for the

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Jauristi, *El linaje de Aitor*, Madrid, 1988, Second Edition, 25-26; G. Alonso, "Corporations, Subjects, and Citizens: The Peculiar Modernity of Early Hispanic Liberalism", in: *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 22 (2016) 1, 7-22.

division of powers and for parliamentary constitutional government. I will centre on big business along with those members of the professions who, to a large extent at least, identified with their goals and who moved in the same cultural circles. I will pay most attention to those elites associated with more conservative political options (the Moderates, Unión Liberal and Conservatives) for two reasons. First, because I think it fair to say that they were dominant overall, and, second, because it was from within this milieu that, I will argue, aspects of the liberal creed were not fully assimilated and that constitutional government was increasingly criticized towards the end of the nineteenth century. This is, I believe, an important theme for our understanding of European history from the French Revolution through to the Second World War, most notably for our interpretation of the causes behind the growing crisis of liberal values in the 1900s and rise of dictatorial regimes from the end of the First World War.

### **1. Social Status and Meritocracy**

Barcelona was not the political capital of Spain in the nineteenth century but quickly became its economic powerhouse, with consumer-based industries, most notably textiles, to the fore. Economic growth also brought rapid

urbanization, with Barcelona consolidating its position as a major urban conglomeration. In 1787, it had a population of 111.410, in 1856/1857, 188.787 inhabitants, and by 1900 (when some outlying areas had been incorporated), 533.000.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, a number of medium-sized urban industrial towns, like Terrassa and Sabadell, also grew rapidly at close distance. And water-powered cotton textile factors were set up on the rivers banks to the north east. As in other major European industrial areas, like, for example, Tyneside or parts of northern Italy, a dense industrial and urban tapestry was thereby woven. The rise of Catalan industry was also accompanied by the consolidation of the professions. The richest and most prestigious were lawyers, but physicians and veterinarians, pharmacists, engineers and architects,

---

<sup>2</sup> On the rise of cotton textiles, see J.K.J. Thomson, *A Distinctive Industrialization. Cotton in Barcelona, 1728-1832*, Cambridge 1992, and the various articles by Alex Sánchez, most notably, in relation to this article, "Els fabricants d'indianes: orígens de la burgesia industrial barcelonina," in: *Barcelona Quaderns d'Història* 17 (2011), 197-219. The population statistics are taken from G. Wray McDonogh, *Good Families of Barcelona: A Social History of Power in the Industrial Era*, Princeton, New Jersey 1986, 21.

also gained in social weight and cultural prestige.<sup>3</sup> The eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed high levels of social mobility, with opportunities for small-scale merchants and shopkeepers, master artisans and specialized factory workers to rise up the social scale. Such mobility was at its height in the crisis years between the 1790s and 1830s, when many firms folded under the impact of war with Britain, invasion by France, and the loss of Spain's colonial empire on the American mainland, and when, subsequently, new opportunities to grow and prosper emerged.<sup>4</sup>

Catalan elites were not in the vanguard of the spread of liberal ideas in Spain, as could be seen in the reticence expressed by most Catalan representatives at the Cádiz Cortes, held between 1810 and 1812, towards the new liberal constitution. It was an attitude that, it seems,

---

<sup>3</sup> S. Jacobson, *Catalonia's Advocates: Lawyers, Society and Politics in Barcelona, 1759-1900*, Chapel Hill 2009.

<sup>4</sup> R. Fernández, "La burguesía barcelonesa en el siglo XVIII: la familia Gloria", in: P. Teide (ed.), *La economía española al final del Antiguo Régimen*, vol. II., Madrid 1982; Sánchez, "Els fabricants d'indianes", 204; J. M. Sanjuán, "Los orígenes de la oligarquía comercial. La evolución de la élite económica barcelonesa en el siglo XVIII", in: *Historia Social* 87 (2017), 3-24.

was generally echoed in merchant and manufacturing circles.<sup>5</sup> However, after the new constitution's promulgation in 1812 these groups were drawn to liberal ideology. They were wholeheartedly behind the liberal claim that property should be held in private hands in order to promote economic growth, and were enthusiastic backers of the sale of Church lands, which frequently ended up in their hands. Opposition to corporative privileges also led them to identify with constitutional government. At local level, this meant breaking the dominance that the aristocracy had enjoyed over municipal government under the absolutist Bourbon monarchy.<sup>6</sup> They emphasised that that entrance to elite cultural circles should be based on merit rather than simply on birth, as was reflected in the obituaries of mid-nineteenth century

---

<sup>5</sup> L. F. Toledano González, "El projecte català per a Espanya. La classe dirigent catalana i el procés constituent de les Cortes (1808-1814)", in: *Afers* 68 (2011), 71-96; M. Zylberberg, "Huguet i Dupré, una societat comercial de Barcelona (1796-1808)", in: *Recerques* 12 (1982), 115-116.

<sup>6</sup> R. Arnabat Mata, "Elits i control de les institucions polítiques locals durant el procés de la revolució liberal a Catalunya", in: C. Mir / E. Vicado (ed.), *Control social i cotidianitat*, Lleida 2002, 281-325.

entrepreneurs, which showed great pride in the fact that they had modest origins and had got to the top through hard graft.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, middle-class professionals, like lawyers, tended to embrace liberalism, both for the reasons outlined above and because it would reduce the controls that had been imposed by the absolutist state.<sup>8</sup> And yet, despite the fact that nineteenth century bourgeois or middle class culture is often seen as marking a clean break with the past, there were continuities with the culture and values of the Old Order.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> J. de Argullol y Serra, *Biografía del Excmo Sr D. Juan Güell y Ferrer*, Barcelona 1881, 9; *Homenaje de la Ciudad de Barcelona al Excmo. Sr D. López y López*, Barcelona 1883, 12 and 23; R. Torelló Borrás, *Necrología de D. Claudio Arañó y Arañó*, Barcelona 1888, 5-6; J. Sallarés y Pla, *José Ferrer y Vidal y su tiempo*, Barcelona 1895, 7-9 and 16-17; A. Artiñano, *Tributo a la buena memoria del Exmo y Ilmo Sr D. José Ferrer y Vidal*, Barcelona 1895, 5-6; A. J. Bastinos, *Necrología del Excmo. Sr D. José Sert y Rius*, Barcelona 1898, 38.

<sup>8</sup> Jacobson, *Catalonia's advocates*, 29-34.

<sup>9</sup> The most important work on Spanish middle class or bourgeois culture is J. Cruz, *The Rise of Middle Class Culture in Nineteenth Century Spain*, Baton Rouge 2011.



In the first place, one is struck by the similarities between a guide book on "urbanity" and "courtesy", aimed at "honourable people" and translated from the French by the canon, Raymundo Sala, "with additions by him" in the early-to-mid eighteenth century, and works on the same theme published in Barcelona between the 1830s and the 1860s. They all focused on the way one should behave with one's "superiors", "equals" and "inferiors".<sup>10</sup> There were even similar comments in the eighteenth and nineteenth century guides on the need to be affable towards one's "inferiors" and only play for money for fun, with small

---

However, this work emphasizes the culture's novelty. This is perhaps surprising given that previous works by the same author have pointed to political and cultural continuities between the Old Order and liberalism.

<sup>10</sup> *Reglas de la buena crianza civil y christiana utilísimas para todos y singularmente para los que cuidan de la educación de los niños*, Barcelona, n.d [1730-54?]); D.F.A. y G., *Manuel de la urbanidad y del decoro, o reglas y consejos para bien parecer en sociedad*, Barcelona 1830; D.F.A. y G., *Tratado de urbanidad arreglado a las costumbres del día*, Barcelona: Imp. de Herederos de Roca, 1841; J. Cortada, *La educación social. Tratado completo de cortesanía para todas las circunstancias de la vida*, Barcelona 1868.

amounts, never showing great pleasure at winning or displeasure at losing. In addition, the early nineteenth century guide books included instructions on behaviour in Church (one suspects the eighteenth century guide took this as a given) and, in general, the norms of conduct advocated were informed by the asceticism and self-repression of Catholic Counterreformation ideology rather than the (elite) consumer culture which took root from the eighteenth century. For example, the 1841 guide indicated that one should be modest, not laugh out loud, sneeze strongly or walk eccentrically. And when invited to dinner one must avoid giving the impression that "one had an interest in the pleasures of the table".<sup>11</sup>

It is true that aspiring businessmen or professionals had, from 1829, an alternative guide published in Madrid to which to turn. It was a translation of two works by French authors. The tone of the first two parts was more egalitarian than that of its Catalan counterparts, with the argument advanced that to know how to behave in society was not based on background, and concern expressed for the man of relatively modest means who wanted to dress fashionably. There were also few religious references (but charity and alms giving was commended), though recommendations on the need to be

---

<sup>11</sup> D.F.A. y G., *Tratado de urbanidad*, 47-48.

discrete, courteous, agreeable and modest had, I think, Catholic cultural roots. Nevertheless, it was assumed one would have servants and we still get references to one's conduct with "superiors", "equals" and "domestics". Moreover, the final part, which centred on dress codes, was more reactionary, celebrating the fact that the fashion for loose-fitting suits would ensure that a distinction was maintained with artisans and workers, who "although they might adopt it temporarily ... cannot wear it permanently".<sup>12</sup>

Second, there were similarities between elite non-noble and noble social life styles. In the late eighteenth century, in both cases its cardinal points were the visit, stroll, banquet and ball (*sarao*), with masked balls very popular. At the turn of the century, the reactionary nobleman, the Baron of Maldà, complained at upstart businessmen imitating the nobility. And prosperous businessmen were, indeed, anxious for noble titles, which from the accession of Fernando VI to the throne in 1746 through to the outbreak of the Peninsular War in 1808 could be acquired at a price. Furthermore, businessmen were keen to buy land, build a mansion, buy a

---

<sup>12</sup> M. de Rementería y Fica, *El hombre fino al gusto del día, o manual complete de urbanidad, cortesía y buen tono*, Madrid 1829, 165.

horse and carriage and adopt an upper-class lifestyle. This led to frequent contacts with the nobility. For example, nobles attended functions put on by Barcelona's richest factory owner, Erasme de Gónima, and both rich businessmen and nobles had boxes in the Ramblas Theatre (Teatro Principal from 1821).<sup>13</sup>

The liberal revolution of the 1820s and 1830s disturbed this equilibrium. Considerable numbers of young professionals and businessmen were wholeheartedly behind the liberal transformation of society, and, between 1835 and 1837, the more radical did not shy away from (albeit uneasily) backing urban insurrections to force the authorities to adopt a liberal constitution. Moreover, the world of the liberal cafés in which they ardently discussed politics and plotted was far removed that of the urbanity guides. But if they made it to the top their

---

<sup>13</sup> E. de Imbert, *Erasmo de Gónima, 1741-1821. Apuntes para un biografía y estudio de su época*, Barcelona 1952, 76; Fernández, "La burguesía barcelonesa", 15-16, 99-101; 112-114; Zylberberg, "Huguet i Dupré", 114-115; R. Creixell / T.-M Sala, "Retrat de família: els secrets dels Gónima", in: *Barcelona Quaderns d'Història* 12 (2007), 183; M. L. Retruerta de Jiménez. *El fam de terres dels fabricants de Barcelona. El cas d'Erasme de Gónima al Baix Llobregat, 1790-1821*, Sant Feliu de Llobregat 201

reaction did not seem to differ much from that of their eighteenth century predecessors. They bought an impressive abode in the city, a house (*torre*) outside Barcelona, a horse and carriage, employed servants, bought a box at the Liceo or Teatro Principal, and joined an elite gentlemen's club. And they ensured that their children enjoyed a high-quality private education. Such features were visible, for example, in the case of the financier Francisco Fontanellas, who was the son of a modest owner of a paper mill, but became one of Barcelona's richest men between the 1820s and 1840s. He was also, I believe, the first businessman to receive an aristocratic title after 1814.<sup>14</sup> The indications are, therefore, that businessmen were, to a degree at least, integrating into a pre-existing cultural world - one that was influenced by noble lifestyles.

In this respect, it is no coincidence that businessmen adopted the opera as the pinnacle of elite nineteenth century culture. In Spain, it first became popular in the seventeenth century, but was restricted to nobles and courtiers.<sup>15</sup> In Barcelona, Italian opera then gained

---

<sup>14</sup> S. Jacobson, "Francisco Fontanellas. El comerciante banquero en la época del capitalismo Romántico", in: *Historia Social* 44 (2009), 53-78.

<sup>15</sup> Cruz, *Middle Class Culture*, 177-178.

growing popularity in non-noble elite circles in the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>16</sup> The Teatro Principal was the most distinguished venue in the early nineteenth century, but in 1847, a luxurious permanent venue for the Liceo Theatre was opened, to a large extent financed by the Girona banking family. And its gentlemen's club, the *Círculo del Liceo*, quickly established itself as the most exclusive in town. By championing the opera business elites imbued themselves with an aristocratic aura and derive legitimacy as the new custodians of one of western cultures finest achievements.

In Barcelona, this concern with hierarchy was also reflected in the condescension with which urban elites treated the poor, with references to the scum (*chusma*), plebs (*populacho*), lowest of the low (*plebe* or *clases ínfimas*), and, when they protested, the mindless mob (*turba*). Again, one can see continuity here with elite attitudes to the poor in the eighteenth century, with the turn-of the-century aristocrat, the Baron of Maldà, and the mid-nineteenth century Romantic writer, Joan Cortada,

---

<sup>16</sup> J. Fontana, *La fi de l'antic règim i la industrializació (1787-1868)*, Barcelona 1988, 111.

agreeing that the lower orders were *chusma*.<sup>17</sup> To be sure, the prosperous middle class rejected the aristocracy's view of such distinctions as being based on accident of birth. But they were real nevertheless. In the case of the Liceo, while wealthy patrons had boxes on the second "noble" floor, those of more modest means entered via a separate door and viewed the spectacle from the top floors.<sup>18</sup> Such stark constructions of social hierarchy sat easily with meritocratic liberal values and with the pride shown by early and mid-nineteenth century businessmen in their modest background. But one should remember that their parents were not generally labourers or peasants and that they could see themselves as having risen up the social scale by dint of their special qualities. At the same time, as we shall see in the final section, the rise of radical liberal mass movements between 1835 and 1843, pushed business elites and wealthy professionals to the right and no doubt hardened attitudes towards the urban poor. Moreover, despite liberal rhetoric, social mobility slowed and the new social hierarchy became more

---

<sup>17</sup> R. de Amat i de Cortada, Baró de Maldà, *Calaix de sastre*, vol. VII, Barcelona 1994, 16; Cortada, *La educación social*, 264.

<sup>18</sup> Wray McDonogh, *Good Families*, 189-194.

solidified from the 1840s. This trend was encouraged by the growing gap in status and wealth between business elites and other social strata. In part, this was a result of the increasing size of fortunes thrown up by Catalan industrialization, which meant that it would become more difficult to ascend the social hierarchy.<sup>19</sup> In addition, while endogamy was by no means new, intermarriage between bourgeois families was increasingly effective in building stable business empires.<sup>20</sup> Finally, the growing distance between the social strata was reinforced at the end of the century by spatial segregation as elites moved out of downtown Barcelona to the new more salubrious suburban development, the *Ensanche*. And in these circumstances the mid-nineteenth century saw the rise of a more established generation of businessmen, who were much less likely than their

---

<sup>19</sup> J. M. Sanjuán Marroquin, "When is an Oligarchy Formed? The Origins and Evolution of an Elite. Barcelona, 1850-1920", UB Economics Working Papers, 2016/337, <http://www.revistas culturales.com/revistas/79/historia-social/num/87/>.

<sup>20</sup> Sánchez, "Els fabricants d'indianes", 204; Wray McDonogh, *Good Families*, 84-107 and 158-163; G. Ranzato, *La aventura de una ciudad industrial. Sabadell entre el antiguo régimen y la modernidad*, Barcelona 1987, 137-145.



predecessors to have had to fight to build up the family firm. Contemporaries noted the impact of these changes in patterns of consumption, pointing to the luxurious shops that opened on the new thoroughfares of Fernando and Princesa in the 1840s, the rise of elegant cafés on the Ramblas, the opening of the Liceo, and the pleasure park and café-gardens that were springing up on the Paseo de Gracia outside the city's walls (which were torn down in the mid-1850s).<sup>21</sup>

One reflection of this trend was, it seems, the emergence of the term *buena sociedad* (good society) to refer to the Barcelona elite from the 1850s.<sup>22</sup> It was above all made up of the families of financiers, rich property owners, merchants and manufacturers, and those members of the liberal professions who were family members and/or had acquired the necessary wealth and prestige to move in elite circles. At the bottom end, it shaded into the

---

<sup>21</sup> J. Coroleu, *Memories d'un menestral de Barcelona, 1792-1864*, Barcelona 1888, 479-484; A. Masriera, *Los buenos barceloneses. Hombres, costumbres y anécdotas de la Barcelona ochocientista, 1850-1870*, Barcelona 1924, 85-89.

<sup>22</sup> The first reference I have found is J. Manjarrés, *Guía de señoritas en el gran mundo*, Barcelona 1854, 7. It subsequently became common.

broader middle classes, made up of smaller-scale businessmen, rentiers, urban professionals and the like, who generally aspired to high status, but who would not have a box at the Liceo or be invited to the most exclusive balls and banquets. Overall numbers of this conglomerate were small. Historians of this period see the solid middle and upper class as roughly comprising those individuals who were given the vote in the wake of the 1845 Constitution. In Barcelona in the mid-1840s, they made up 2,47 per cent of the population or little more than 3000 persons.<sup>23</sup>

This growing social distance was manifested in various ways. Angels Solà has pointed out that inscriptions on graves of elite male businessmen in the Poble Nou cemetery emphasized the subject's entrepreneurship in the first half of the nineteenth century but their social status from the 1850s.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, following the

---

<sup>23</sup> O. Luján Feliu, "Reclamant espanyolitat des de la catalanitat. Un estudi dels dirigents escollits a Barcelona durant la dècada moderada (1843-54)", (Unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of Barcelona, 2016), 149.

<sup>24</sup> À. Solà, "Tres notes entorn les actituds i valors de l'alta burgesia barcelonina a mitjan segle XIX", in:

Monarchist Restoration of 1874 stronger links were established between big business and the Catalan aristocracy. There had been tension between aristocrats and non-noble elites during the liberal revolution, with some Catalan aristocrats joining the reactionary Carlist cause between 1835 and 1839 during the First Carlist War.<sup>25</sup> And until the 1870s, there seems to have been reluctance on the part of Catalan aristocrats to mix with new money. Up to these years one can therefore, with some justification, refer to a distinct urban middle class. Yet, this distance was never absolute and any hostility felt towards aristocrats within the business community seems quickly to have evaporated. Thus, the first president of the Liceo was an aristocrat, the Fifth Marquis of Sentmenat. Aristocrats were present in the Moderate Party, which had strong business backing. And aristocratic and non-aristocratic landowners (including businessmen and urban professionals who had bought into land) collaborated in the landowners' association founded

---

*Quaderns de l'Institut Català d'Antropologia* (1981) 3/4, 108.

<sup>25</sup> J. M. Mundet i Gifré, "La base social del carlisme català a la primera guerra", in: J. M. Solé i Sabaté (ed.) *El Carlisme i la seva base social*, Barcelona 1992, 87.

in 1851, the Instituto Agrícola Catalán de San Isidro (Saint Isidro Agrarian Institute).<sup>26</sup>

Closer ties from the 1870s were visible in three major respects. First, while sons usually married into other business families, daughters of some of the richest business empires began to marry into the Catalan aristocracy.<sup>27</sup> This was much weaker than its great Castilian-Andalusian aristocracy, but still comprised some of the richest families in mid-nineteenth century Catalonia.<sup>28</sup> Second, in order to integrate businessmen into the regime, the monarchy began to offer them

---

<sup>26</sup> E. Escartín, "La història del Cercle i el Cercle en l'història", in: F. Fontbona (ed.), *El Cercle del Liceu. Història, art, cultura*, Barcelona 1991), 21; J. Mestre, "Les dues cares de la política liberal a Barcelona (1837-1843). Eleccions i revoltes populars", in: *L'Avenç* 87 (1985), 51; C. Cañellas / R. Toran, "Dominis socials i poder local a Barcelona. Del Sexeni Democràtic a la Restauració borbònica", in: *Afers* 16 (1993), 444-445; Montserrat Caminal i Badia, "La fundació de l'Institut Agrícola Català de Sant Isidre: els seus homes i les seves activitats (1851-1901)", in: *Recerques* 22 (1989). 117-135.

<sup>27</sup> Wray McDonogh, *Good Families*, 86-89 and 141-164.

<sup>28</sup> Solà, "Tres notes," 102-3.

significant numbers of noble titles. While a few refused them, believing that such a title was improper for self-made entrepreneurs, most were to accept.<sup>29</sup> This represented a reversion to the trend visible between 1746 and 1808. Finally, the wealthiest businessmen began to adopt an aristocratic style of life and demeanour. In 1849, the Girona family set the trend, buying the abode of the Count of Santa Coloma, and in 1870, Antonio López y López, founder of one of Catalonia's two largest business empires, bought the Mojà Palace.<sup>30</sup> The son and heir of Joan Güell i Ferrer, the founder of the other great business empire, Eusebi Güell i Bacigalupi, took a different route and in the 1880s had the architect Antoni Gaudí build to order a fantasy neo-gothic-cum-art nouveau (*modernista*) palace in central Barcelona. From the end of the nineteenth century, as noted, many elite families began moving to the new *Ensanche*. Significantly, they called the houses they put up "little palaces" (*palauets*). These were subsequently replaced by large

---

<sup>29</sup> Á. Bahamonde / J. A. Martínez, *Historia de España Siglo XIX*, Madrid 1994, 452-453; F. Cabana, *La burguesia catalana. Una aproximació històrica*, Barcelona 1996, 22-23; Wray McDonogh, *Good Families*, 112.

<sup>30</sup> L. Pla i Toldrà, *Els Girona. La gran burguesia catalana del segle XIX*, Barcelona 2014, 206-208.

constructions, but the most impressive followed Güell's lead in commissioning *modernista* architects, whose designs were reminiscent of fantasy castles and palaces.<sup>31</sup> Hence, at the top end of the Barcelona social scale one starts to get the articulation of what Jürgen Kocka has, in a broader European context, described as a new composite elite.<sup>32</sup> The most distinguished businessmen took on the mantle of the modern equivalent of an idealized beneficent, lettered, aristocracy, emphasizing their role as patrons of Catalan music and the arts. Most notable was the case of Eusebi Güell, who held "artistic soirées" for his "intimate friends" and supported a number of Catalan poets, musicians, architects and the like (including Antoni Gaudí), along with a series of cultural institutions. Similarly, López y López acted as the patron of Catalonia's greatest poet, Jacint Verdaguer, until, as we shall see, they fell out over the latter's indiscriminate charitable instincts.<sup>33</sup> Thus, to use the

---

<sup>31</sup> L. Permanyer, *L'Eixample. 150 anys d'història*, Barcelona 2011, 99.

<sup>32</sup> J. Kocka, *Industrial Culture and Bourgeois Society. Business, Labor, and Bureaucracy in Modern Germany*, New York, Oxford 1999, 246-247.

<sup>33</sup> E. Güell i Bacigalupi, "Tres discursos", in: *Lectura Popular. Biblioteca d'autors catalans*, Barcelona, n.d.,

expression associated with the British entrepreneurial elite, they became "gentleman capitalists".<sup>34</sup> This trend was visible throughout much of continental Europe and Great Britain. Arno J. Meyer castigated these men for, as he saw it, selling out to the aristocracy.<sup>35</sup> Yet, cocooned in their exclusive world, these men had no sense that they were struggling against privilege. Being given an aristocratic title was a recognition that they had truly arrived at the top of the social tree. And in the case of Eusebi Güell and Antonio López it meant moving in the circles on the old Spanish nobility. The latter, who had links with Basque and Madrid capital, had a palace in the Santander town of Comillas that the royal family visited on two occasions. Moreover, they could use this image to their advantage. They could hardly argue that they

---

386; J. Padró i Margó, "Fundació i inicis de la Colònia Güell", in: À. Calvo (ed.), *El pas de la societat agrària a industrial al Baix Llobregat*, Barcelona 1995, 150; M. Rodrigo y Alharilla, *Los Marqueses de Comillas, 1817-1925. Antonio y Claudio López*, Madrid 2000, 270.

<sup>34</sup> M. J. Daunton, "'Gentlemanly Capitalism' and British Industry, 1820-1914", in: *Past and Present* 122 (1989), 119-158.

<sup>35</sup> A. J. Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War*, New York 1981, 14.

comprised *primus inter pares*; ordinary men who through sheer determination had made it rich. The alternative was to present themselves as paternalist father figures, who were due deference from the lower orders. But unlike feudal aristocrats, their wealth and power was not based on a noble lineage. Hence, their hagiographers argued that they were extraordinary figures, which a title served merely to confirm.<sup>36</sup>

The imbrication between the defence of privilege and the reconfiguration of noble values can, finally, also be seen in the adaptation of the spoil system of the Old Order.<sup>37</sup> This was, in the first place, apparent within the administration. In Barcelona, social elites and the more established middle classes were largely able to control local and provincial government between the 1840s and the

---

<sup>36</sup> J.M. Boix, "Un procer social. D. Eusebio Güell y Bacigalupi, primer Conde de Güell", in: *Revista Social* (1918), 415; P. M. d'Esplugues, *El primer Compte de Güell. Notes psicològiques i assaig sobre el sentit aristocràtic a Catalunya*, Barcelona 1921, 137-185; *Homenaje de la ciudad*, 19-20.

<sup>37</sup> J. Cruz, *Gentlemen, Bourgeois and Revolutionaries: Political Change and Cultural Persistence among the Spanish Dominant Groups*, Cambridge 1996, 173.



1890s.<sup>38</sup> And in order to see off challengers it became necessary to resort to electoral manipulation, with the bloating of the census with non-existent persons the favourite recourse at local level by the century's close.<sup>39</sup> And though this is a subject that has been little studied, the operation of patronage must have required interfering with the independence of the judiciary. Furthermore, such networks of patronage and favour went beyond the political system, and were the means by which the wealthy and powerful got their family and friends posts in major companies, the judiciary, Church and

---

<sup>38</sup> J. F. Sobrepere, "Els regidors de Barcelona a la Dècada Moderada, 1843-54. Composició socioprofessional i dinàmica política", in: *Barcelona Quaderns d'Història* (2004) 10, 87-201; Cañellas /Toran, "Dominis socials", 439-452; C. Cañellas / R. Toran, "La classe política barcelonina. Sustrat socio-econòmic dels consistoris , 1875-1901", in: C. Mir (ed.), *Actituds polítiques i control social a la Catalunya de la Restauració, 1875-1923*, Lleida 1989, 37-58; C. Cañellas / R. Toran, "La representación política en Barcelona bajo signo caciquil", in: *Historia Social* 11 (1991), 97-124.

<sup>39</sup> J. Pla, *Cambó. Materials per a una història*, Barcelona 1973, 158-160.

army.<sup>40</sup> This practice was, at least until the end of the nineteenth century, in general not condemned. A guide on urbanity from 1830 affirmed that it was acceptable to ask a "powerful one" a favour for a friend, though one should not be unrealistic. And it reminded its readers that they should visit their "protectors" at Christmas and in the New Year. Similarly, the most popular etiquette guide of the late nineteenth century, written by a major figure within the *buenas familias*, included a section on writing "petitions".<sup>41</sup>

In sum, while the hagiographic obituaries of mid-century entrepreneurs claimed that they personified the liberal ideal of social progress based on merit, they took a lead-role in reconstructing a stratified society on different terrain; one in which, by the century's close, businessmen at its apex adopted the pose of a lettered post-feudal nobility. Moreover, they adapted the spoil system in place under absolutism in order to help them maintain political control. And in this process, they re-worked the cultural and political tools aimed at

---

<sup>40</sup> Rodrigo y Alharilla, *Los Marqueses de Comillas*, 271-275.

<sup>41</sup> D.F.A. y G., *Manuel de la urbanidad*, 9 and 19; C. Fabra, *Código o deberes de buena sociedad*, Barcelona 1883, 42-46.

achieving social control in the pre-liberal world in order to ensure social stability under the new capitalist order.

## **2. Urban Elites and the Catholic Church: Paternalism, Charity, and the Stabilization of the New Social Order**

This attitude becomes even clearer when one looks at the relationship between business elites and their allies, the Church and Catholic doctrine. Catholicism was still central to Spanish culture in the early nineteenth century with, as Javier Fernández Sebastián has emphasized, the first liberals finding it difficult to conceive a world in which it did not act as the glue holding society together.<sup>42</sup> Hence, the refusal of these men to extend freedom of speech to the religious sphere and permit the practice of other religions in public. As we have seen, this found its reflection in Catalonia in the importance given to religious practice in etiquette and urbanity guides. At the same time, to use the language of the time, middle class and elite "respectable

---

<sup>42</sup> J. F. Sebastián, "Toleration and Freedom of Expression in the Hispanic World between Enlightenment and Liberalism", in: *Past and Present* 211 (2011), 159-197.

liberals" or "liberals of order" looked to work closely with the Church. They wanted to bring it in line with the new capitalist society and so they disentailed Church land (deemed more productive in the private sector) and disbanded the male religious orders (who were not seen as contributing to the public good and as conspiring against liberalism). This led to a break with the Church. But they were keen to mend fences and this to a large extent became possible after the conservative Moderates came to power in 1844. And this despite the fact that rather than assimilating liberal doctrine, the Church largely rejected liberalism and reaffirmed a reactionary Tridentine Catholicism whose roots lay in the Counterreformation.<sup>43</sup>

The continued influence of a Catholic world view was visible in the concern expressed within "respectable" liberal circles from the 1840s at the state of the lower orders. Medical professionals, known as hygienists were to the fore, claiming that industrialization had led to the physical and moral degradation of the urban poor, resulting (in some unexplained fashion) in social and

---

<sup>43</sup> W. J. Callahan, *Church, Society and Politics in Spain, 1750-1874*, Cambridge, Mass. 1984, 186-208.

political radicalization.<sup>44</sup> It was a view echoed by conservative members of the professions, for whom "the moral character of our country is [being] adulterated", and one had to rebuild "the old love of the country's traditions, giving importance to religious and popular festivities".<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, it was reinforced by Catalan literary figures like Pau Piferrer and Manuel Milà i Fontanals, who from the late 1830s embraced conservative Romanticism, eulogizing rural society and its folkloric traditions, praising the Church for having provided society with a sense of social and moral order, and looking back longingly to a medieval world which now seemed safer and more ordered than the strife-ridden

---

<sup>44</sup> For the visión of two contemporary Catalan hygieneists see P.F. Monlau / J. Salarich, *Condiciones de vida y trabajo obrero en España a mediados del siglo XIX*, Barcelona 1984. The two works reproduced in this book were first published in the 1850s.

<sup>45</sup> Introduction by Pròsper de Bofarull to G. Forteza y Valentín" in: *Juicio crítico de las obras de D. Antonio de Capmany y de Montplau*, Barcelona 1857, xviii; J. Mañé y Flaquer, "Cataluña", in: idem, *Colección de artículos*, Barcelona 1857, 453.

present.<sup>46</sup> The conservative-ruralist discourse of these Romantics proved to be to the taste of Barcelona elites, as shown, for example, in the success of the yearly poetry competition celebrated from 1859, the Jocs Florals, which was supposedly based on the precedence of the medieval troubadours, and in the reverence in which the arch-conservative Romantic painter, Claudi Lorenzale, was held in mid-nineteenth century elite society.<sup>47</sup> It was a discourse that sat uneasily with the optimistic belief in progress generally associated with liberalism, and, indeed, at least in part echoed warnings in Church circles that liberalism was inevitably leading to "libertinism" and moral decline.

The Romantics' recreation of idyllic medieval and rural settings served as a balm to soothe the concerns of their patrons.<sup>48</sup> In addition, claims that the poor had degenerated acted as a springboard for action aimed at "moralizing" them. The view that the poor needed

---

<sup>46</sup> See, above all, J. M. Fradera, *Cultura nacional en una sociedad dividida*, Madrid 2003, second edition, especially 59-85 and 138-176.

<sup>47</sup> J. Miracle, *La restauració dels Jocs Florals*, Barcelona 1960; M. Font, "La vida i obra de Valentí Almirall", in: *Anuari dels Catalans* (1926), 129.

<sup>48</sup> Fradera, *Cultura nacional*.

moralizing built on arguments developed during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and was present in liberal circles throughout Western Europe. What should, however, be stressed is that in the Spanish case this moralization was seen in terms of reinforcing Catholic indoctrination. As the Catalan hygienist, Pere Felip Monlau, put it, "compliance with the precepts of the Church and the practice of devotion powerfully influences the morality of the worker, improving his customs".<sup>49</sup> This meant reworking the role that the Church was believed to have played in maintaining social peace under the Old Regime to new times. Through its charitable activities the Church was viewed as having established a tacit pact with the poor, who in return for Church munificence showed obedience to authority and respect for its social superiors.<sup>50</sup> The goal was now to reestablish this supposed pact and so once again achieve the deference of the urban lower classes. In fact, by the eighteenth century, and no doubt before, merchants and manufacturers had already stepped up to the plate, supported religious institutions generously and provided relief for the poor.<sup>51</sup> Thus, when

---

<sup>49</sup> Monlau / Salarich, *Condicions de vida*, 102.

<sup>50</sup> Callahan, *Church, Society and Politics*, 62.

<sup>51</sup> Fernández, "La burguesía barcelonesa", 26-30, 115-116; P. Molas Ribalta, "Refleccions sobre la societat

Barcelona's richest cotton textile industrialist, Erasme de Gónima, died in 1821 his obituary above all stressed his religiosity and concern for the poor.<sup>52</sup> Subsequent generations of businessmen followed in these men's footsteps, except that given their increased wealth they would now take a more prominent role.

In the crucial area of poor relief, building on the practice of the eighteenth-century absolutist monarchy the liberal authorities took the lead. Key institutions, they believed, had to be put in place by the state. It set up a number of centres in provincial capitals that catered for foundlings, infants and children whose parents could not maintain them, the aged, sick and mentally ill, and young unmarried or abandoned mothers. All these groups were seen as worthy of special attention, but were subject to a strict regime of moral instruction. At local level, committees also provided

---

barcelonesa del segle XVIII,"in: *Barcelona Quaderns d'Història* 7 (2002), 64; Imbert, *Erasmus de Gónima*, 56, 78-79.

<sup>52</sup> "Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona", Fons Privats/Fons Familiars, Família de Janer (Casa Erasme de Gónima), 5D 107, 29/61.



food and medicine to the poor, who were paid home visits to ensure that they led a moral life.<sup>53</sup>

However, to a large extent the state allowed local elites, together with the Church, to run these institutions, and also encouraged private initiatives. It was a role they were more than happy to play. This could be seen in the main Barcelona-based centre for poor relief, the Casa Provincial de La Caridad. Its board was made up of local politicians, leading businessmen, representatives of the professions (with physicians particularly well represented) and of the Church hierarchy.<sup>54</sup> Social elites also had a significant role in funding the centre. In the late 1880s over 50 per cent of its funds came from the state, but private donations were also important. And the Church was heavily involved in its activities. Three priests conducted services, while

---

<sup>53</sup> For an overview of the state-sponsored system of poor relief see Pedro Casa Soto, "Beneficiencia y control social en la España contemporánea," in: Roberto Bergalli and Enrique E. Mari (eds.), *Historia ideológica del control social* (España-Argentina, siglos XIX y XX), Barcelona 1989, 175-237.

<sup>54</sup> S. Bocanegra, "Les juntes de govern a la Casa Provincial de la Caritat, 1876-1913", in: *L'Avenç* 169 (1993), 44-53.

66 members of the Company of Daughters of Charity of Saint Vicent de Paul gave classes to younger children and taught domestic duties to the girls.<sup>55</sup>

In addition, Barcelona's urban elites engaged in their own charitable activities, in which they worked closely with the Church. Alms giving was still the norm and busy businessmen occasionally employed alms givers

(*limosneros*) to undertake their charitable activities.

The poet-priest, Jacint Verdaguer, who acted as the alms giver of the business magnate Antonio López y López, each week received a mass of paupers and the disabled in a flat set aside. Unfortunately, the arrangement did not end well. Verdaguer was eventually sacked because he doled out charity to all-and-sundry without taking into account the strict distinction that had been established between the "deserving" and the "undeserving poor".<sup>56</sup> The well-to-do also raised funds through charity balls and gave monies when there were catastrophes, during epidemics and economic crisis, forming committees to

---

<sup>55</sup> R. Codina Länglin, *Organización de la Casa Provincial de Barcelona. Memoria presentada al Congreso Internacional de Beneficencia Pública celebrado en París desde el 28 de julio al 4 de agosto de 1889*, Barcelona 1889; Bastinos, José Sert, 23-30.

<sup>56</sup> Rodrigo y Alharilla, *Los Marqueses de Comillas*, 270.

manage the relief effort.<sup>57</sup> The most eccentric such donation must surely have been the decision of the Círculo del Liceo in 1909 to use 5000 pesetas "to present poor pregnant women with chickens".<sup>58</sup> At the same time, they set up their own voluntary associations and supported Church initiatives. The former were run by nuns and also received subsidies from the authorities. Typically, wives of businessmen would take the lead and make up the committees that ran the institutions. The foremost example was Dorotea de Chopitea, the wife of the shipping magnate Josep M<sup>a</sup> Serra.<sup>59</sup> In this respect, business elites portrayed themselves as munificent father figures who cared for those who were authentically in need.<sup>60</sup> Eusebi Güell was pictured as a "patrician gentleman" who represented the new "social aristocracy",

---

<sup>57</sup> A. de Artiñano, *Biografía del Exmo Sr D. José María Serra y Muñoz*, Barcelona 1882), 15-17; J. Bassegoda Nonell, *El Círculo del Liceo, 125 aniversario, 1847-1972*, Barcelona 1973, 40.

<sup>58</sup> Escartín, "La història del Cercle", 37.

<sup>59</sup> P. Jaume Nonell, *Vida ejemplar de la excelentísima señora D<sup>a</sup> Dorotea de Chopitea*, Barcelona 1892.

<sup>60</sup> Monlau / Salarich, *Condiciones de vida*, 199-200 and 72.

and whose position was "cemented by this protection of the poor".<sup>61</sup>

This was combined with initiatives aimed at "moralizing" workers by encouraging them to save, join mutual-aid societies and pension funds. The same combination of goals was also visible in the world of work. Attempts were made by some industrialists to operate "mixed" employer and worker Catholic unions. Most notably Claudio López Bru, the son of Antonio López y López, founded the Consejo Nacional de Corporaciones Católico-Obreros (National Commission of Catholic Worker Corporations) in 1894, though its emphasis on the moral redemption of workers rather than the defence of their interests meant that it had a limited impact.<sup>62</sup> Similar was the aim of the regimes established by cotton textile industrialists within the industrial worktowns (*colònies industrials*) that operated outside Catalonia's major industrial centres from mid-century. Economic historians have argued that they were established to take advantage of cheap

---

<sup>61</sup> Boix, "Un procer social", 415.

<sup>62</sup> F. Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy: The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875-1975*, Oxford 1987, 146-169.

water power.<sup>63</sup> Be this as it may, as they grew their owners made a concerted effort to "moralize" the workforce. The religious orders and clergy were given a key role in schools operated by the towns, and obligations placed upon workers to attend religious services. In addition, some of these towns promoted stable family structures, operated savings banks that would build the habit of prudence, opened food stores to keep workers out of the tavern, and banned reading material that ran counter to Christian precepts.<sup>64</sup> The worktowns were widely praised in Catalan conservative circles, for whom, given that urbanization was leading to moral decline, the dispersal of industry was a way to deal with the social problem.<sup>65</sup> This was of course utopian. Nevertheless, after a period of serious industrial strife Eusebi Güell shut down his textile mill in Barcelona, and opened a steam-powered company town in

---

<sup>63</sup> A. Carreras, "El aprovechamiento de la energía hidráulica en Cataluña, 1840-1920. Un ensayo de interpretación", in: *Revista de Historia Económica* 1 (1985) 2, 31-63.

<sup>64</sup> C. Enrech, *El Pla contra La Muntanya. La industria tèxtil del Pla i la colonització fabril de La Muntanya*, Barcelona 2003

<sup>65</sup> Mañé y Flaquer, "Cataluña", 453.

the lower Llobregat valley in 1891. A report by the company affirmed that his goal was to take advantage of cheap land and employ "women and young girls and boys", of peasant families, who retained "the spirit of tradition that maintains respects for authority".<sup>66</sup> The factory owners portrayed their worktowns as an extension of the family. In the same way as they were dominant in the sphere of their own family so they were also lords of the industrial manor, distant and superior to but also paternalistically concerned for the welfare of their worker-children.<sup>67</sup> In pursuing this line of thought, it should be stressed, these men were reaching back to a pre-liberal corporatist vision of the world, in which the family was the key building block of society, which

---

<sup>66</sup> Colonia Güell y Fábrica de Velludos, *Breve reseña escrita con motivo de la visita hecha a dicha colonia por los señores congresistas de la semana social*, Barcelona 1910, 44. This, incidentally, shows that nota all Company towns were formed to take advantage of cheap water power.

<sup>67</sup> For a defence see the 1894 doctoral thesis by E. Prat de la Riba, "La ley jurídica de la industria. Estudio de filosofía jurídica seguido de bases para la formación de un código industrial", in: A. Balcells / J.M. Mainaud de Lasarte (eds.), *Obra completa de Enric Prat de la Riba*, vol. 2, Barcelona 1998, 191-200.

comprised a pyramid of families held together by paternalism and deference.<sup>68</sup> It is a subject to which we shall return.

This identification with the Church required social elites to vigorously promote Catholic values. Like that of Erasme de Gónima, the mid/late nineteenth century obituaries commented on previously stressed the subject's profound religiosity. Frequently, in line with Catholic stress on asceticism and self-repression, this was accompanied by the argument that despite their wealth the person had maintained a modest lifestyle and had not been tempted by the individualism, materialism and "libertinism" so criticized by the Church. Hence, one of the obituaries of Joan Güell affirmed that "few men were as frugal and restrained as he. Luxury didn't interest him". Quite similarly, we are informed that Antonio López y López's hunting estates (20.000 hectares in the provinces of Cáceres and Toledo) were for his friends not for him. And Dorotea de Chopitea's hagiographic biography claimed that she only reluctantly wore dresses "which corresponded to her social position" to please her

---

<sup>68</sup> Wray McDonogh. *Good Families*, 53-58.

husband.<sup>69</sup> Once again, urban elites distanced themselves from the consumer culture economic growth was encouraging. Obituaries also frequently included a section on the subject's bountiful charitable donations, although, again in line with Catholic cultural norms, it was also stated that they were so modest that they had kept their activities secret. This was actually not strictly the case. The trick was to be discrete but let one's paternalist sentiments be known. Patrons who donated large sums to the Casa Provincial de la Caridad, for example, could expect a plaque to be put up in their name or have an area named after them.<sup>70</sup> And when the donation was to the Church there was no need for discretion. Manuel Girona, Barcelona's most prestigious banker, was most forthcoming regarding the large donation he made in order to construct a neo-gothic façade and dome for the Cathedral of Barcelona between 1887 and 1917, and was buried in the cathedral out of gratitude.<sup>71</sup> Of course, there was a distance between rhetoric and reality. A couple of accounts of early and mid-nineteenth

---

<sup>69</sup> Argullol y Serra, *Güell y Ferrer*, 17; Rodrigo y Alharilla, *Marqueses de Comillas*, 268; Nonell, *Vida ejemplar*, 74.

<sup>70</sup> Codina Länglin, *Organización*, 19.

<sup>71</sup> Pla i Toldrà, *Girona*, 214.



century entrepreneurs do indicate that, focused on building their businesses, their instincts were puritanical. Nevertheless, this was not always the case and where it was such instincts were not necessarily passed down to the next generation. López y López was known for his extravagant tastes and Sabadell's richest businessman, Pau Turull, would no doubt have found it difficult to justify to the local parish priest if called upon the 1566 pesetas he spent on a trip to Paris in 1889 (when the average male workers wage was less than four pesetas a day).<sup>72</sup> Displays of ostentation led to accusations of double standards on the left and to some criticism in Church circles. And yet what is most striking is that, despite the Church's antiliberalism, close links were built between the Church hierarchy and the elite urban world from the 1840s. Big business had in its favour that the Church still clung to a Counterreformation world view that saw inequality as inevitable and charity as the only means of alleviating poverty, together with the fact that shorn of its landed wealth it needed financial support. Accordingly, the Church proved willing to play the role of putative guarantor of the social order, as could be seen from the

---

<sup>72</sup> Pla i Tolrà, *Girona*, 201-218; Ranzato, *Aventura*, 169-177.

frequent admonitions of leading Church figures for workers to be subservient to their employers, safe in the knowledge that they would reap eternal happiness in the next world.<sup>73</sup>

### **3. Conservatism, Corporatism and Nationalism**

However, it was in the more overtly political sphere that tensions between big business and professionals close to them and key tenets of liberal ideology and values was most evident. As was to be expected, big business and its allies stood full-square behind the general argument of "respectable" liberals, in Spain as elsewhere, that voting rights should be limited to the "capable", property owning minority. Between the 1830s and 1860s, these men were, as a whole, little supportive of the most retrograde Moderates. Nevertheless, attitudes were hardened by a series of revolutionary upheavals between 1835 and 1843, in which radical liberals, who had gained a strong popular urban base and demanded the democratization of the country's political life, took the lead. The fear, heightened by the historical memory of the French Revolution, was that it unless action were taken chaos and anarchy would ensue, with the result that

---

<sup>73</sup> Callahan, *Church, Society and Politics*, 228 and 338.

the exclusion of radical liberals from the political process became a major concern. From the 1840s, the so called "Catalan conservative school" took the lead in articulating such anxieties. It comprised a group of professionals, lawyers above all, who articulated a vision of politics and society that was (to a significant degree at least) to the liking of the *buena sociedad*. And who, along with big business, formed a Catalan parliamentary lobby which was particularly concerned with defending Catalan industry in the face of a degree of marginalization of these elites from the centre of power.<sup>74</sup> And what in this context needs stressing is that these men's key concern became the defence of the new social and political status quo. Such views were expressed by the eminent lawyer, Manuel Duran i Bas, the man who between the 1850s and 1880s perhaps most ably defended Catalan business interests in the press and in parliament. He rejected universal manhood suffrage, lamented that the "social mass" was prey to "uninhibited passions", and affirmed that the people's "duty" was to

---

<sup>74</sup> R. Solà i Montserrat, *L'Institut Industrial de Catalunya i l'associacionisme industrial des de 1820 a 1854*, Barcelona 1997.

"not rebel against the social hierarchy".<sup>75</sup> This rather contradicted the liberal vision that while it may be the case that only the educated, property-owning minority could at present have political rights, in the long run they would be enfranchised as they became wealthier and more educated.<sup>76</sup>

Such a conservative stance was closely interrelated with these men's vision of society as an organism. This was not, in fact, unusual. As María Sierra has pointed out, anti-individualist discourses had become generalized in "respectable liberal" circles in continental Europe by the 1840s, most particularly on their more conservative wing.<sup>77</sup> In Spain, it was no doubt in part rooted in the continued influence of the medieval scholastic tradition, which saw society as an organic whole, comprised of parts

---

<sup>75</sup> M. Duran y Bas, "De la soberanía", and "El poder real", in: ídem, *Estudios políticos y económicos*, Barcelona 1856, 32 and 60-61.

<sup>76</sup> A. S. Kahan, *Liberalism in Nineteenth Century Europe: The Political Culture of Limited Suffrage*, Basingstoke 2003, 50.

<sup>77</sup> M. Sierra, "La sociedad es antes que el individuo: el liberalismo español frente a los peligros del individualismo", in: *Alcores* 7 (2009), 63-85.

such as the family, Church and medieval parliament.<sup>78</sup> In addition, the European Romantic movement, which spread to Spain from 1808, conceived of society as an organism and also took the lead in promoting cultural nationalism. It conceptualized the nation as a cultural community and typically elaborated a heroic and often nostalgic portrayal of the past, most particularly the Middle Ages, as the sacred roots of this nation.<sup>79</sup>

Seeing society as an organism was not necessarily incompatible with liberalism. Within an organicist framework one could argue that parliament was a legitimate institution that should be defended. However, the conservative variant studied here did question elements which are usually seen as central to liberal ideology. In the first place, there was a particularly

---

<sup>78</sup> J. Álvarez Junco, "En torno al concepto de 'pueblo'. De las diversas encarnaciones de la colectividad como sujeto político en la cultura política de la España contemporánea", in: *Historia Contemporánea* 28 (2004), 83-94.

<sup>79</sup> M. Biddiss, "Reason and Romanticism: Currents of Social and Political Thought", in: P. Pilbeam (ed.) *Themes in Modern European History, 1780-1830*, ed. London 1995, 223-247; H.S. Reiss, *The Political Thought of the German Romantics, 1793-1815*, Oxford 1955, 38-40.

strong emphasis on tradition. Men like Duran i Bas focused attention of society's historical institutions. As long as they moved, with the times, as was the case of the monarchy and the Church, they should remain influential. It was from this organicist perspective that he rejected the doctrine of national sovereignty, because of what he saw as its individualist foundations.<sup>80</sup> This stress on the connection between past and present was reflected in the positive reception that the ideas of Friedrich Carl von Savigny and the "German historical school" from the 1840s. Savigny was a key figure in the conservative German Romantic movement, and argued that laws (especially civil law) should not be imposed from on high by self-appointed intellectual elites but had to be in tune with the traditions, customs and "spirit" of the country.<sup>81</sup> His ideas were taken up by the likes of Duran i Bas and his close colleague Estanislao Reynals i Rabassa, and became the principle source of inspiration for the Catalan school of legal scholars.<sup>82</sup> Such concerns were

---

<sup>80</sup> Duran y Bas, "De la soberanía", 9-14.

<sup>81</sup> Reiss, *Political Thought*, 38-40.

<sup>82</sup> M. Duran y Bas, "La escuela jurídica catalana", in: idem., *Escritos del Exmo Señor D. Manuel Duran y Bas. Primera serie. Estudios jurídicos*, Barcelona, 1888, 352.

henceforth on show in the forceful defence by conservative Catalan opinion - along, it should be added, of broader sectors of Catalan society - of the Catalan tradition of civil law.<sup>83</sup> And it was from this perspective that, echoing anti-liberal reactionaries, these men attacked the Enlightenment *philosophes* and French revolutionaries for riding roughshod over sacred traditions. Thus, Mañé i Flaquer, a key figure in the conservative camp because of his position as director of Barcelona's most influential newspaper, *Diario de Barcelona*, from 1853, referred scathingly to "terrible doctrines" of the Enlightenment "Encyclopaedists" and of their followers, while Duran i Bas celebrated that fact that in his youth his friend, Francesc Permanyer, had not been drawn to "the impious Voltarian spirit".<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> S. Jacobson, "Law and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe: the Case of Catalonia in Comparative Perspective," in: *Law and History Review* 20 (2000) 2, 307-347; A. Smith, *The Origins of Catalan Nationalism 1770-1898*, Basingstoke 2014, 60-61 and 189-92.

<sup>84</sup> J.M y F., "Carlos VII entres sus vasallos", *Diario de Barcelona*, 27 January 1848; M. Duran y Bas, *Noticia de la vida y escritos del Excmo Sr D. Francisco Permanyer y Tuyet*, Barcelona 1870, 12.

However, these men had to walk a fine line in this respect. An all-out defence of the Old Order and rejection of the post-feudal world would put them in the reactionary, anti-liberal camp. Thus, the conservative professionals closest to business circles never embraced the unremitting pessimism with respect to present-day society elaborated by some Romantic poets and literary figures. While they wished to adapt elements of the Old Regime ideology and morality to the new capitalist world, they did not aim to undermine that world. Hence, they affirmed that one could not "resuscitate and impossible past", showed pride in Catalonia's industrial renaissance, and expressed the hope that Catalan modernization would rejuvenate Spain, allowing her once again to reclaim a place at the table of the Great Powers.<sup>85</sup>

This balancing act between the old and the new was reflected in the (Spanish) nationalist ideology elaborated by business elites and the conservative Catalan school. On the one hand, there was a strong backward-looking component. The conservative intelligentsia argued that patriotic spirit was based on

---

<sup>85</sup> Duran y Bas, *Francisco Permanyer*, 56; J. Mañé y Flaquer, "Necrologia de Sol y Padrís," in: idem, *Coleccion de artículos*, 289-290.



attachment to the Church and monarchy. It was being undermined by "materialist philosophy" and could only be recovered by re-empowering these institutions, most especially the Church.<sup>86</sup> But, at the same time, they called for an interventionist state which would promote the country's industry through protectionist measures. On this subject the voices the businessmen themselves came to the fore. They saw protectionism as part of a long-term semi-autarkic economic and also cultural model. This gave their nationalist discourse a hard edge, which rather contradicted the universalist component present in classical liberalism. Hence they bitterly attacked the individualist laissez-faire doctrines that had influenced Spanish governments between the 1840s and 1880s, claiming that their advocates were "cosmopolitans" who were selling Spain out to Britain.<sup>87</sup> In addition, they affirmed that the terrible consequence would be the obliteration

---

<sup>86</sup> L. Feu, "Datos y apuntes para la historia de la moderna literatura catalana", in: *Memoria de la Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona*, Tomo II, Barcelona 1863, 501-502.

<sup>87</sup> Smith, *The Origins of Catalan Nationalism*, 98-110, 134-9; Pol Dalmau, *Press, Politics and National Identities in Catalonia: The Transformation of La Vanguardia, 1881-1931* Brighton 2017, 58-70 and 76-81.

of national identity. In typically organicist terms, the leading textile manufacturer, Josep Ferrer i Vidal, stated that nations were "political molecules", each of which had "their religion and their traditions, their customs and forms of being", and that to mix them would bring "death and chaos".<sup>88</sup> And it was within this context that in the late nineteenth century they were drawn to imperialist and social-Darwinism currents of thought.<sup>89</sup> Most importantly, the adoption of an organist view of society, combined with the emphasis on tradition, would make these men susceptible to arguments elaborated by the Catholic right that society should be organized on corporatist rather than liberal lines. The key point the latter advanced was that it was not individuals (though suffrage) who should elect their representatives, but society's venerable institutions. This could be seen in the case of Estanislao Reynals i Rabassa, as noted a man close to Duran i Bas, who at the end of the 1850s broke with liberalism, eulogizing medieval Catalonia, where, he affirmed, noble Christian ideas had flourished, and

---

<sup>88</sup> Sallarés y Pla, *Ferrer Vidal*, 32-33.

<sup>89</sup> Smith, *The Origins of Catalan Nationalism*, 137.

favourably contrasted the rights of corporations, households and local bodies to modern individualism.<sup>90</sup> Such corporatist discourses were to penetrate elite Catalan society much more deeply from the 1870s. An important factor in this respect was renewed social and political conflict. During the Democratic Sexennium of 1868-1873 more radical liberals entered central government, and 1873 saw the proclamation of a republic. Furthermore, Barcelona was shaken by a number of pro-republican insurrections, the labour movement grew rapidly and for the first time Anarchist and Marxist ideas made their presence felt. As in the years 1837-1843, this drove elite Catalan opinion to the right, with Catalan business elites channelling large sums into the coffers of Antonio Cánovas del Castillo and his supporters, who were plotting a Bourbon restoration.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> E. Reynals y Rabassa, "Discurso leído por el académico Estanislao Reynals y Rebassa", in: *Sesión pública anual de apertura celebrada por La Academia de Jurisprudencia y Legislación de Barcelona el día 27 de noviembre de 1859*, Barcelona 1859, 29-54, and "R" (Reynals y Rabassa), "Codigo civil en proyecto", in: *Diario de Barcelona*, 17 June-25 November 1852.

<sup>91</sup> M. Espadas Burgos, *Alfonso XIII y los orígenes de la Restauración*, Madrid 1975.

This was achieved through a military intervention (*pronunciamiento*) at the end of 1874.

Duran i Bas and Mañé i Flaquer though pleased by the Bourbon restoration criticized Cánovas for trying reach an understanding with centrist liberals, calling instead for an opening to elements close to the Church who showed themselves disposed to work with the regime.<sup>92</sup> Unlike the situation between the 1840s and 1860s, Catalan conservatives were, therefore, now on the right of the new regime. Unsuccessful in their efforts, Mañé i Flaquer then took an overtly anti-liberal stance, affirming that the people's customs and traditions represented their real "freedoms", rather than the hollow liberties of the liberal order.<sup>93</sup> His stance was important given his role as director of *Diario de Barcelona*, but in elite business circles it seems likely that he was viewed from the 1870s as rather a loose cannon. Men who remained most closely

---

<sup>92</sup> See B. de Riquer i Permanyer, "El conservadurisme polític català: del fracàs del moderantisme al decencís de la Restauració", in: idem, *Identitats contemporànies. Catalunya i Espanya*, Vic 2000, 132-136.

<sup>93</sup> J. Mañé y Flaquer "Catalanismo," published in *Diario de Barcelona* between 18 August and 13 October 1878; idem., *El regionalismo*, Barcelona 1887.

linked to this milieu, like Duran i Bas, continued to support the constitutional monarchy.

And yet, from the 1880s amongst businessmen themselves corporatist ideas began to make an impact. This took place in a context in which conservative opinion was taking an increasingly negative view of liberal parliamentarianism. There were fears that renewed labour agitation and reforms by the Liberal Party, which widened civil liberties and introduced what Duran i Bas referred to as the "great farce" universal manhood suffrage, would threaten the social order.<sup>94</sup> In addition, Catalan economic elites continued to see themselves as marginalized from power, and the 1880s saw conflicts with the central state over protectionism and civil law.<sup>95</sup> Finally, the concern that Spain was falling further behind the Great Powers led to criticism of the regime's nepotistic practices for supposedly holding the country back. The argument on the liberal left was that these problems could only be solved through democratization. On the Catholic right, on the other hand, because the liberal elite was viewed as

---

<sup>94</sup> Cited in B. de Riquer i Permanyer, *Epistolari polític de Manuel Duran i Bas. Correspondència entre 1866 i 1904*, Barcelona 1990, 89.

<sup>95</sup> Smith, *The Origins of Catalan Nationalism*, 104-106 and 189-192.

having put in place a regime that had broken with the teachings of God, the political world was seen as inevitably marked by corruption, greed, ambition and vanity.<sup>96</sup>

Criticism of the political order became widespread within the Catalan business community, with Ferrer i Vidal going so far as to state that "the ambition and viciousness of the political parties" was a key reason for Spain's decadence.<sup>97</sup> And businessmen who had entered parliament typically affirmed that they were not engaged in the dirty business of politics but were simply defending "national production" or "Spain's prosperity".<sup>98</sup>

Furthermore, the impact of Catholic corporatism could be seen in the distinction elements of the business community began to make between the "productive classes"

---

<sup>96</sup> J. M<sup>a</sup> Vigil Gallego, *La política de la antipolítica. Una aportación a la teología política desde la historia*, Valencia 1975.

<sup>97</sup> J. Ferrer y Vidal, "Discurso del presidente del Ateneo Barcelonés", in: *Acta de la sesión pública celebrada en el salón de cátedras de la misma el día 26 de noviembre de 1874*, Barcelona 1875, 52.

<sup>98</sup> Artiñano, *José María Serra*, 13-14; Artiñano, *Ferrer y Vidal*, 11-12; Sallarés y Pla, *Ferrer y Vidal*, 20; Torelló Borrás, *Arañó y Arañó*, 17.

and the parasitic political class, leading to calls for the "productive classes" to be directly represented in parliament.<sup>99</sup> The Sabadell manufacturer Joan Sallarés i Pla, president of the key business association the Fomento del Trabajo Nacional between 1897 and 1899, suggested in 1890 that only corporatist elections to parliament would produce a "legitimate representation".<sup>100</sup> Such corporatist ideas had spread more widely in Catalan milieux. In its 1891 blueprint for a future autonomous Catalonia, the conservative Catalanist association, the Unió Catalanista (which, however, had little support within big business), envisaged the electoral body being divided up into three estates: manual labour, "capacity" (the professions, representatives of the universities), and "capital".<sup>101</sup>

These demands gained greater weight in the aftermath of defeat in the war against the United States and loss of Spain's remaining colonies in the Americas and Asia in 1898. Business elites, together with the Unió

---

<sup>99</sup> M. Bravo / J. Palomas, "Les corporacions industrials catalanes com a grups de pressió (1875-1895)", in: *Congrés Internacional Catalunya i La Restauració, 1875-1923*, Manresa 1992, 259-264.

<sup>100</sup> Sallarés y Pla, *Las ocho horas*, 102.

<sup>101</sup> Smith, *The Origins of Catalan Nationalism*, 193-202.

Catalanista, supported the formation of a government under the "Christian general" Camilo García de Polavieja, which would signify a break with the old parties of the Restoration Monarchy. And they argued that Spanish elections should be based on a corporative franchise along the lines of the three estates outlined previously. Polavieja only agreed to some form of corporatist representation at local level. Nevertheless, these groups continued to give him their support as he also offered administrative decentralization, and business representatives were even willing to back a military coup to bring Polavieja to power. For the first time, the shadow of an "apolitical" military "saviour" made its presence felt on the Spanish political stage.<sup>102</sup>

Sallarés i Pla was also a key figure in the attempt to adapt another component of the old regime to the modern capitalist world; the guild system. Catholic writers argued that in order to deal with the social question the bond between master and men needed rebuilding. This would

---

<sup>102</sup> S. Bengoechea, "La burguesia catalana davant la desfeta colonial de 1898", in: *Revista de Catalunya* 132 (1998): 36-51, and M. Marín i Corbera, "Joan Sallarés i Pla, industrial i polític", in: *Quaderns d'Arxiu de la Fundació Bosch i Cardellach* 89 (2000), 37-39.



be achieved by recreating the guilds, thereby once again establishing the employer as the benevolent head of his industrial family.<sup>103</sup> Writing in 1890, Sallarés y Pla similarly argued that the abolition of the guilds and the imposition of "the liberal individual" had broken the affective link between masters and men and produced conflict. To remedy this he envisaged the establishment of a nationwide state-sponsored system of guilds. Sallarés i Pla was convinced such a body would bring workers and employers together and revive their Christian spirit.<sup>104</sup> What was particularly important in this respect was that ideas rooted in Catholic anti-liberalism, whose aim at first was to recreate an idealized Old Order, were now being adapted to the world of industry and had become part of an alternative anti-liberal project for the organization of the modern state and workplace.

#### **4. Conclusions**

---

<sup>103</sup> M. López-Cordón Cortejo, "La mentalidad conservadora durante la Restauración," in: J. L. García Delgado (ed.), *La España de la Restauración*, Madrid 1985, 71-109; S. Bengoechea, "El catolicisme social a Catalunya (finals del segle XIX-1919)", in: *Butlletí de la Societat Catalana d'Estudis Històrics*9 (1998), 71-109.

<sup>104</sup> Sallarés y Pla, *Las ocho horas*.

This article has shown that between the 1800s and the 1890s the relationship between the culture and values of the Barcelona elite and established middle class on the one hand, and classical liberal doctrine on the other, was a rather ambiguous one. Catalan businessmen and their allies supported key liberal economic and political reforms after the promulgation of the 1812 Cádiz Constitution, but in many respects stymied the liberal ideal of meritocratic social advance, and, from the late 1830s, the dominant conservative wing put its weight behind defence of the social status quo and was not open to democratic progress. In an age in which the new capitalist social edifice looked extremely unstable they also looked to adapt those elements of old-regime thought and practice which, they believed, could serve to stabilize the new social order. To the fore was the need to reestablish, on a new footing, the pre-liberal pact that supposedly operated between the Catholic Church, the state and social elites in order to "moralize" the poor and achieve its acquiescence. In addition, after the first phase of the industrial revolution marked by high levels of social mobility came to a close the new business elite reinterpreted aristocratic codes of conduct, and presented themselves as a beneficent, lettered, post-feudal aristocracy.

At the same time, the conservative Catalan school defended an organic vision of society, which stressed the need to retain, while adapting, historic traditions and institutions, most notably the monarchy, Church and the patriarchal/paternalist family. Such ideas enjoyed the sympathy of business elites and were combined with a strident nationalism, which emphasized the need for state intervention and protectionism in order for Spain to catch up with the Great Powers. In this late nineteenth century, this was accompanied by the assimilation of imperialist and social Darwinist currents of thought. Such perspectives were not necessarily incompatible with an attachment to constitutional government. Nevertheless, anti-individualist organicism could provide a basis on which overtly anti-liberal ideas could take root. This was to prove the case above all in the aftermath of the Democratic Sexennium (1868-1873), when business leaders began to import elements of the Church's anti-liberal agenda, making the distinction between the "productive classes" and parasitic liberal elite, and taking an interest in corporatist employer-worker unions and in corporatist forms of representation. As with their support for charity and poor relief, faced with the dangerous world of social and political strife they were again grasping at those institutions and practices that

had maintained, as they saw it, order and hierarchy under the Old Order, and trying to reinterpret them for new times.

Some Catalan historians have - rather like Arno J. Mayer in his European-wide study - seen "the bourgeoisie" as in the process selling out. Most recently, Josep Fontana has affirmed that by not supporting the radical liberal "centralist" movement of 1843 the landed and industrial bourgeois were guilty of "betrayal" and of siding with its enemies (the Spanish state and military authorities).<sup>105</sup> Such a vision has a long pedigree in western historiography; its roots the classical Marxist vision of the bourgeoisie as a revolutionary class, whose mission it was to liberalize economy and society (before the socialists stepped in to undertake their own revolution). The position defended here is more prosaic. Urban elites and their allies had no mission. They backed those elements of liberal ideology that they saw as in their perceived interests and either tacitly or openly reworked or rejected those that they did not. Indeed, as has been stressed, after the "Disaster" of 1898, with the regime increasingly discredited, corporatist-authoritarian alternatives to liberalism were

---

<sup>105</sup> J. Fontana, *La formació d'una identitat. Una historia de Catalunya*, Barcelona 2014, 274-275.

for the first time forcefully put on the table. This would prove an intimation of things to come. Between 1900 and 1918, it appeared that the new mass Catalanist party, the Lliga Regionalista, would guide big business in a more liberal direction. But, as several studies have shown, when labour conflict reached unprecedented heights from 1919 and the regime entered into what proved to be its definitive crisis, authoritarian proposals once again raised their head. And Catalan business elites subsequently gave their wholehearted support to the coup launched by the captain general of Barcelona, Miguel Primo de Rivera, on September 13 1923.<sup>106</sup> Economic elites in other parts of Spain tended to be more closely aligned to the Monarchist Restoration and were generally slower to react. The differentiating factor, it seems, was the sheer intensity of social and political conflict in Barcelona, together with long-term alienation of Catalan elites from central government. Nevertheless, this was

---

<sup>106</sup> S. Bengoechea, *Organització patronal i conflictivitat social a Catalunya*, Barcelona 1994; A. Smith, "The Catalan Counter-Revolutionary Coalition and the Primo de Rivera Coup, 1917-23", in: *European History Quarterly* 37 (2007) 1, 7-34; F. J. Romero Salvadó, *The Foundations of Civil War: Revolution, Social Conflict and Reaction in Liberal Spain, 1916-1923*, London 2008.

only a matter of degree, with elites from other parts of Spain growing increasingly critical of the regime by 1923.<sup>107</sup>

As many studies have shown, such trends were not limited to Spain. From the late nineteenth century within the middle classes it was common for more aggressive nationalistic, imperialistic and social-Darwinist ideologies to take hold.<sup>108</sup> At the same time, there was a growing disaffection with liberal parliamentarianism, which in southern Europe in particular was expressed through attacks on the nepotism and corruption of the political class. Thus, in Italy from the 1900s bourgeois opinion became more favourably disposed to authoritarian political structures. And in the aftermath of the First World War, northern Italian business interests showed sympathy for authoritarian alternatives to the liberal

---

<sup>107</sup> F. Gómez Ochoa, "El Partido Conservador y el problema social durante la crisis final de la Restauración: la sindicación profesional y obligatoria", in: *Estudios sobre la derecha española contemporánea*, Madrid 1993, 269-288.

<sup>108</sup> E. Weber, *France: Fin de Siècle*, Cambridge 1986; D. Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder C. 1848-1918*, Cambridge 1989; M. Teich / R. Porter (eds.), *Fin de Siècle and its Legacy*, Cambridge 1990.

state.<sup>109</sup> Quite similarly, in the early twentieth century German big business collaborated with the authoritarian German Reich, and business and broader middle class circles would subsequently be hostile towards the Weimar Republic.<sup>110</sup> This serves to remind us that in Europe there was no easy, straightforward relationship between industrialization and democratization. Currents emerged that elaborated an alternative authoritarian road to modernity to that defended by liberals. And in this respect our study will help to build up a broader picture, one which emphasises the wide-ranging nature of such challenges to constitutional liberalism.

Typically this shift is seen as one in which the middle class and urban elites originally identified with liberalism but became more critical towards the century's

---

<sup>109</sup> M. Meriggi, "The Italian Borghesia", in: J. Kocka / A. Mitchell (eds.) *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth Century Europe*, Oxford 1993, 434-437; A. J. De Grand, *The Italian Nationalist Association and the Rise of Fascism in Italy*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1978.

<sup>110</sup> H. Kaelble, "French Bourgeoisie and German Bürgertum", in: Kockka / Mitchell, *Bourgeois Society*, 276-282; D. Blackbourn, "The German Bourgeoisie an Introduction", in: idem. / R.J. Evans (eds.), *The German Bourgeoisie*, London 1991, 40-45.

end. And while this picture has much to be said for it, with respect to the early and mid-nineteenth century it does rather elide what is on the one hand an ideology (classical liberalism) and what is on the other a social conglomerate (the middle class/urban elite). As the Barcelona example shows, not all aspects of classical liberalism were readily assimilated and in a number of spheres ideas and practices borrowed from the Old Order were adapted to new times. The adoption of a largely Catholic-inspired organicist vision of society was particularly important in providing a grounding for the assimilation of authoritarian perspectives. It is probably the case that in Spain as a whole the continued influence within the middle class of Tridentine anti-liberal Catholic doctrine meant that the country was particularly susceptible to the advance of authoritarian alternatives to liberalism. Where, as in the case of France for example, anti-clerical tinged secularism was assimilated by important sectors of the middle class continued allegiance to constitutional government was more probable. And yet, the example of Barcelona indicates that one needs to look more closely at those components in the ideology and values of the middle class and bourgeois elites that jarred with liberalism and ask



whether this would subsequently make them more open to anti-liberal authoritarian currents of thought.