

# Different Paths to Modernity

A Nordic and Spanish Perspective

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## Preface

In recent years co-operation has grown up between Spain and Sweden in holding conferences in the field of history as a university subject. This is in large degree thanks to Tomas Bertelman. In 1995, soon after his appointment as Swedish Ambassador in Madrid, he took an initiative which was to prove particularly fruitful. He wanted to see the contacts between Spain and Sweden illuminated over a long time-perspective by prominent researchers in the two countries. Bertelman had a hunch that this theme had been almost entirely ignored in earlier research.

The Swedish Latin America specialists, Professor Magnus Mörner and Dr. Roland Anrup, and their colleagues at the Complutense University of Madrid, Professors Magdalena Pi Corrales and Enrique Martínez Ruiz, were engaged as co-ordinators and succeeded in putting in hand successful co-operation between a number of universities and disciplines in the two countries. This activity, which from the outset was intended to continue over a five year period, has in each of the two countries been conducted by a special co-operation unit which has ensured that a series of conferences with rather different objectives and centres of gravity have taken place. Among the examples which may be mentioned are, first, the major baroque conference held in Madrid in 1997, dealing with various aspects of the contacts between the two countries during the 17th century, not least the role played by Queen Christina.

The following year there was a meeting on the theme "The Spanish Civil War in Swedish poetry, art and debate" at Stockholm University, run by the Spanish, Portuguese and History of Literature departments. Other themes have been the trade connections between the two countries in the 18th century, Carl von Linnæus' role in the Spanish-speaking part of the world and the dissolution of the union between Sweden and Norway in a Catalan perspective. Taken alto-

gether, the historic relationships between the two countries have emerged as being of greater importance and relevance to the future than previously suspected. In Spain the Berndt Wistedt Foundation has played a key role as a financier. The Foundation was also, partly, the organiser of the symposia, large and small, by now totalling no less than ten *Encuentros Históricos Suecia España*.<sup>1</sup>

The previous conferences have all dealt with earlier periods of time and primarily those in which the contacts between Spain and Sweden have been relatively close. In planning the conference which has been the basis for the present volume we concentrated on the later development in the two countries. The thematic point of departure has been different aspects of *the modernisation of traditional societies*, the conditions for it and the course it has taken. In distinction to earlier conference programmes, the modernisation perspective means that aspects such as social science and economic history have come to the forefront. Even though our meeting on modernisation falls outside the earlier organisation, it rests on five years of very successful collaboration experience.

It was in late 1998 at one of the Spanish Encuentros – in Cadiz, on navigation and trade – that some of us Swedes visited the Dragados shipyard. We found, to our surprise, enormous steel girdles built for the huge, new Öresund Bridge between Sweden and Denmark and to be directly transported to it by sea on specially made vessels.<sup>2</sup> Construction of the bridge was made possible thanks particularly to Spanish engineering skill in the field of shipbuilding and engineering industry, which shows that the North West European countries' lead in the technological sector has now been caught up by other European nations.

The idea then arose of comparing Spain and Sweden in their development during the 19th and 20th centuries. The conference should be held in Scania and the comparisons extended to Denmark, our neighbour on the other side of the Sound which the new bridge crosses. It was thus natural for the Öresund Bridge to become the symbol of the conference, marking the new possibilities of co-operation between states which are members of the EU.

The conference took place in Lund on 18th – 20th April, 2001 as a joint arrangement between the Centre for European Studies at Lund University and a Spanish-Swedish network under the leadership of Professors Magnus Mörner and Gabriel Tortella. Professors Sune Åker-

man and Magnus Jerneck also took part in the planning committee.<sup>3</sup> As its Chairman Magnus Jerneck had administrative responsibility for conducting the conference and has also served as principal editor of the present volume. Sir David Ratford has translated some chapters, as well as done a first proof-reading of the manuscript. Gwylim Williams did a second and final proof-reading of the whole book.

Lund, Mariefred, Madrid and Gothenburg

*Magnus Jerneck, Magnus Mörner,  
Gabriel Tortella & Sune Åkerman*

## Notes

- 1 See co-operation by Swedish and Spanish historians 1996–2001, Newsletter No. 7, May 2003, Institute of Ibero-American Studies, Gothenburg University, pp. 44–46.
- 2 Dragados, *Presentación del Proyecto Puente de Öresund*, u.o. 1998.
- 3 The Lund researchers, Lennart Schön (Economic History) and Kim Salomon (History), together with Roland Anrup and Martin Fritz from Gothenburg, all participated at an early stage, as did PhD-candidate Christian Fernández.





*Gregorio Núñez*

## Spanish Cities in a Forgotten Modernising Process

### Backwardness and modernity

The predominant opinion about early twentieth century Spain is still that formed by contemporary critics, shocked and dismayed by the disastrous events of 1898. These critics sought to emphasise all the features that bore witness to the obsolescent, old-fashioned nature of the country, in comparison with more advanced societies in Europe. Politicians and intellectuals bitterly expressed their disillusion and lack of confidence in the political system, in a movement that expressly demanded "a genuine democratisation of all the institutions".<sup>1</sup>

In the particular case of the cities of Spain at this time, deficiencies of all kinds were evident and manifold. Not only were death rates consistently higher than in surrounding towns and villages, but any comparison with similar cities in Northern Europe, which some Spaniards knew well, was intolerably unfavourable. This has been reflected by Raymond Carr, one of the most perceptive foreign analysts of contemporary Spain, citing protests such as those of Juan Valera in 1883 against the passivity of the Málaga City Council. He also aimed harsh criticism at the Madrid authorities of 1920 and blamed them for the "African" death rates registered in the capital.<sup>2</sup> He accepted as self-evident the continuity and homogeneity of this phenomenon. "Neither provincial authorities nor city councils", he wrote "have sufficient income [...]. With such an income, a small town could only stave off the collapse of the Town Hall building and pay a pittance to the schoolmaster, the doctor, the veterinary surgeon, the bailiff and the neighbourhood night-watchman. The large cities were renovated

by private companies in the late nineteenth century, but even here basic services were inadequate and not in keeping with the new 'European' appearance, and attempts to provide them only led to the municipal indebtedness characteristic of the period."

The point of view was somewhat different among those who more directly addressed the economic and business issues of the early twentieth century. Their attitude was more active and open-minded, their analyses more precise. Thus, for example, in the opinion of the economist Flores de Lemus "the catastrophe of 1898 brought at least one good thing, namely the certainty that Spain's recovery could not be expected from good luck or from a miracle, but could only come from hard work and that the complacent belief that 'It doesn't matter' was absolutely false".<sup>3</sup> And a contemporary writer, Sanz y Escartín, underlined the apparent paradox that Spain, as "an ancient nation, and like all such, possesses abundant capital; and like all backward nations, has abundant unproductive capital".

As we shall see below, Carr's assessment of Spanish cities, like that of many others both before and after him, was based on certain data and relied on certain assumptions and conditions, although these have not been studied in much depth.<sup>4</sup> What is undoubtedly true, and significant, is that while some municipalities barely managed to prevent the collapse of their Town Hall, others were busy building a new one. While some local Administrations were unable to pay their school-teachers – which was why the State took over responsibility for their wages – others regularly fulfilled their obligations, and even built new schools.<sup>5</sup> While there were some town halls that were badly administered and that managed to become deeply indebted without obtaining any benefit for the community, others made good use of long term debt, found appropriate sources of finance and invested in useful projects.<sup>6</sup> Of course, there existed significant differences between all such administrations and, logically, "it was the most vigorous sectors of the economy and the most modern-minded thinkers that made most impact on policy decisions".<sup>7</sup>

Let us examine the facts. Urban death rates were clearly high; nevertheless it should also be noted that there was a slow but sustained decrease after the 1880s, and that this fall accelerated during the first decade of the new century. Three decades later, "by 1930 the reduction in death rates had gathered momentum in virtually the whole country, and little by little the gap between the death rates in Spain

and those in other European countries was being reduced [...] few specialists would dispute that this period was a key one in the history of population trends in Spain".<sup>8</sup> Oscar Jürgens, studying the urban development in Spain during the 1920s, used very restrained terms to describe Spanish backwardness, a condition that determines both the problems found and the solutions proposed. "Although Spain", he wrote, "does not yet possess cities of several million inhabitants and therefore, even in the largest municipalities, suitable provision for the population has not yet provoked situations as critical as in other countries, this is gradually becoming a pressing question. Both in the capital and in other large cities, the construction of new accommodation has not matched population growth."<sup>9</sup> And if we turn our gaze from population growth to urban development, we also see that "it was during these three decades [the early ones of the century] that the process of contemporary urbanisation, considered separately from industrial development and the modernisation of the cities, took on standard western European forms of expression", especially in cities of more than 150,000 inhabitants.<sup>10</sup>

Xavier Tafunell gives data on building in provincial capitals, which basically concurs with the above.<sup>11</sup> Another writer, David Ringrose, after reviewing the history of Spain and Spanish cities during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, concludes that "towards 1900, Spain was already closer to its present state than accepted opinion leads us to believe".<sup>12</sup> My personal feeling is that the critical period should be extended to include the final decade of the nineteenth century – notwithstanding the war in Cuba – up to 1914, with respect to a parameter that is both indicative of and a force behind modernisation, that is, local affairs and the strategies adopted by the different groups involved. In more general terms, we shall recall that this was the stage that Gabriel Tortella identified as the moment when the gap between Spain and the more advanced European economies began to close.<sup>13</sup>

### Chronological and geographical aspects

At the turn of the century, 69 per cent of the Spanish active population still lived in rural surroundings and there were very few large cities, basically Barcelona and Madrid, with over 500,000 people, and another five with over 100,000 inhabitants. From this time on, the urban population grew slowly but steadily, to reach 39 per cent in

1930.<sup>14</sup> In general, the appearance of these cities was not that of a modern urban landscape.<sup>15</sup> Last, but not least, the network of old cities was distributed in such a way that it prevented the growth of new urban nuclei. All these were ancient cities that had grown slowly, reflecting both Spain's tardy industrialisation and the delay in modernising the cities themselves. A more balanced network of central places was the one consisting of municipalities of over 10,000 inhabitants.

Using the criterion proposed by Marjatta Hietala we will study the growth of each city with the purpose of identifying the geographical and chronological aspects of the phenomenon. 'Growth' is defined as that rate which is greater than or equal to the national mean rate of urban growth in each period.<sup>16</sup> The first point to note is that growth was concentrated in only a few Spanish cities. Only 19 among the 90 largest municipalities presented a long-term growth pattern, in relative terms, and expanded steadily between 1860 and 1930. Another 17 joined this pattern of expansion after 1900. On the other hand, 25 cities grew slowly in the same period, while 24 exhibited a long-term pattern of retardation, a pattern that was to continue steadily for a hundred years.

The geographical distribution of the expanding cities is very significant. The great metropolises, Madrid and Barcelona, above all, grew in an uninterrupted fashion and represented a large part of the increased urbanisation of the country. The influence of the latter was very strong in its industrial periphery and led to significant growth in surrounding small cities such as Badalona, Sabadell and Tarrasa. Other large cities, such as Valencia and Zaragoza, also grew, though not as much as the first two.

A process of regional diffusion extended growth along the Cantabrian coast, from the Basque country to Asturias, which were the hubs of the burgeoning iron and steel industries. This led to the considerable and sustained expansion of numerous towns: two of the three Basque cities (Bilbao and San Sebastián) and four of the eleven towns in Asturias (Oviedo, Gijón, Langreo and Mieres). This wave of growth also extended irregularly in Galicia, affecting first Vigo, and then, in the twentieth century, Orense, Ferrol and the historic town of Santiago de Compostela. Only one Galician town (Lugo) experienced long-term negative growth. Even more evident and positive is the expansion pattern observed in the Canary Islands, where the main

port cities (Tenerife and Las Palmas) grew steadily between 1860 and 1930.

The above regions, except for the Canary Islands, are very representative of industrialising Spain, comprising the Northern and Mediterranean triangle, which during this period was becoming established as the predominant area of industrial activity. In contrast, in inland Spain (with the exception of Madrid and Zaragoza), that is, La Mancha, Castilla and León, Extremadura, Aragón, Rioja and Navarre, the pattern was very different. Among twenty cities lying within this area, only two (Logroño and León) grew from 1860 to 1930 in relative terms, although another ten did so only after 1900, in a kind of end-of-century revitalisation. These regions were clearly agricultural and, like the industrial regions, benefited from a protectionist commercial policy and experienced the first stirrings of modern food-producing industries.

The situation changes, however, along the Mediterranean coast. Only the largest cities – Barcelona and its immediate surroundings, and Valencia – grew consistently in relative terms. The older cities and agricultural towns, all the way from the French border to the Bay of Cadiz, including the Balearic Islands, tended to shrink in relative terms. This tendency was more marked in the more southern areas. Thus, of the 20 largest towns and cities in Andalusia, only one (the mining town of Huelva) grew consistently, while Seville, Cordoba and Jaén did not begin to grow until the twentieth century. Other cities, such as Malaga, Granada, Cadiz and Jerez de la Frontera, showed very little demographic vitality between 1860 and 1930. In the neighbouring region of Murcia, a similar situation was apparent, and of its six main cities, none grew in relative terms, while two of them (Murcia and Lorca) steadily shrank.

### Municipal investment as an indicator of modernisation

The second stage of industrialisation presented cities with a new set of problems but also offered new opportunities. This was a contradictory process, involving heterogeneous technologies, diverse necessities, different goods and services and a large number of agents, all of them closely interconnected. This process led to a significant element of social friction between those involved, indicating that the process of modernisation was moving forward.<sup>17</sup> Some of this friction

was caused by the provision of new goods and services, their finance and their technological support. Another cause of problems was related to the nature of supply and demand. This was particularly true of the natural monopoly character affecting many services in this sector, and their relations with responsibilities that were an exclusive feature of the Public Administration. A final source of friction derived from decision-making processes and the complex interaction between public and private bodies. Therefore, we can see how Public Services, in the context of the second stage of industrialisation, constitute a decisive indicator of modernisation and a good showcase of the problems involved.

To study municipal investments, we have compiled a new database from a source that had not been previously examined: the tenders for public works and services contracts offered throughout the country by each Municipality.<sup>18</sup> This study, due to the nature of the source consulted, deals with the period 1897-1920. The compiled data enable us to identify, one by one, the investment decisions made by each Local Administration: amount, type and date of adjudication, and sometimes the duration foreseen for the work to be carried out, and other details. What we do not know are the motives or the models on which these initiatives were based, which are fundamental in identifying the processes by which innovations are transmitted and become extensive. Nevertheless, a serial analysis does enable us to draw certain conclusions in this respect. Neither are we told anything about the financing of such projects, with only a few exceptions.<sup>19</sup>

We believe that an analysis of the series of the call for tenders offered by Municipal Authorities would provide invaluable data on the questions we are examining: information about the needs and opportunities, as perceived by different authorities, about the strategies designed and those finally adopted, about financial limitations on policy decisions, and about many other aspects. Of special importance is the management pattern preferred by the Municipalities in question; some of these initiatives were regularly ceded to private companies or entrepreneurs, in one form or another. All these questions are addressed in the following two sections. In discussing styles of municipal investment, we shall examine various municipal services and attempt to identify patterns of activity that enable us to follow the strategies adopted by different city councils.

## Styles of municipal investment – the services

First of all, we will consider planned investments in modern water and sewage networks (MWSN) by Spanish local authorities a phenomenon which indicates that the modernisation process of water-supply systems had begun, albeit in a limited way, by the mid nineteenth century in some early cases.<sup>20</sup> As a result, it was already at an advanced phase at the beginning of the twentieth century in the most dynamic cities. It is evident that in the early decades of the century these improvements were spreading in industrialising regions while in other parts of the country possibilities were tried out in an irregular way. It also seems clear that the modernisation of water-supply networks was later followed by the improvement of sanitation networks, with a gap of at least one generation. We have identified 362 tenders concerning water-supply systems (for a total combined amount of 48.93 million pesetas) and another 336 corresponding to sanitation works (118.31 million pesetas). They represent 19 per cent of the aggregate investment put out to tender by Spanish Local Authorities in the period. It is not surprising that an entire new generation of young engineers adopted this sector and the associated emerging technologies – in particular the technology of concrete and hydraulic works – as a foundation for their professional future.

The most important tenders for the MWSN were concentrated in demographically dynamic areas, such as Madrid, the north-Mediterranean triangle and their immediate peripheries. And not only were big cities the ones adopting this investment pattern in these areas, but also many small towns nearby found both the impulse and the resources to promote important works in this field.

Of course, tenders offered by the main cities represented the largest proportion of such investments, but they do not lack other interesting features. The more advanced cities were completing or improving their projected water systems, but at this time they focused most of their efforts on the construction of sewers. The remaining leading cities intended, as a priority, to improve their water-supplies but they were not able to undertake the modernisation of their sanitation networks. Usually, private companies were in charge of water supply services, preventing the municipal budgets from becoming a burden. On the other hand, apart from some not very brilliant exceptions, such

as the case of Seville,<sup>21</sup> the sanitation networks were usually directly promoted by local authorities.

In a similar context, during the first decade of the century we can see that the broad expansion of the new technologies – public lighting, trams and telephones – even in small towns, was achieving a vigorous expansion in all the regions. This is true even in rural areas and was encouraged by the positive managerial and financial achievements at the beginning of the century.<sup>22</sup>

The public ownership of electricity generating-stations was unusual in Spain and only when the networks reached a regional scale, quite late in the twentieth century, could we find some municipal power distribution companies. Also in this field the norm in Spain was the private administration of public concessions, including the right – often under conditions of monopoly – to the use of the thoroughfares for private provision. Tenders offered for those investments reached an aggregate amount of 14.14 million pesetas.

The arrival of electric lighting in Spanish cities began in the 1880s and the electrification of tramways started from 1896. Then, the numerous tenders for public lighting services found in the first two decades of the twentieth century, usually correspond to initiatives in small towns, most of them in less developed regions. Something similar can be said in relation to the telephone systems whose installation process seems to be only slightly slower than the electric lighting.<sup>23</sup> And, finally, electric trams show a similar pattern, although with a limited spread, because few Spanish cities could afford to set up this service. Their installation phase seems to fit quite exactly into the stage under study.

In Spain there had already been a previous generation of horse trams in the main cities in the 1880s and 1890s. Starting from 1896, the electrification of the existing networks and some entirely new concessions endowed *ab initio* with electric traction, began. Nevertheless, even as late as 1904 and 1905 some horse tram lines were tendered. The most important tram networks, such as those of the main cities, Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, and many others were electrified at the end of nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth without any new auction. The electrification process of Spanish trams led quickly to their financial control by foreign groups – mostly Belgian – specialised in the construction and management of tram companies.<sup>24</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the political crisis after



the loss of Cuba and the growing urbanisation and related problems caused the traditional welfare system to go bankrupt. Provincial and Municipal Administrations had to find resources for a new set of welfare policies; sometimes there was little money available and less experience and, on occasion, there was no clear commitment to spend money on the matter. Also at this point private charities were invited to contribute. When dealing with welfare investments in the context of the second industrial revolution, we find three different types in the period under study: social housing, school buildings and social residences and hospitals.

Concerning the promotion of social housing, we can conclude that public intervention in Spain had not yet started in an effective way during the years that we are considering. Already in the twentieth century new initiatives were promoted in the context of some Local Councils for social housing; during the 1910s, the first Municipal Housing Councils were created – especially those of Barcelona, Madrid, Seville and Valencia – under the impulse of the laws on Low-cost Housing, passed in 1911 and 1921; but one had to wait for the Municipal Law, passed in 1924, to see this type of promotion emerge.<sup>25</sup>

For the building or improvements to school centres we found tenders for a total sum of 20.4 million pesetas. These projects were relatively significant and were fairly widespread, particularly, although not exclusively, in rural environments. This suggests that we are faced with quite a general effort to make good a deficit in educational matters inherited from the nineteenth century;<sup>26</sup> this effort was undoubtedly pushed along by well established political reforms such as the setting up, in 1900, of the Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts and the inclusion of the payments of the salaries of teaching staff within the national budget.

Finally, medical attendance and related activities (such as hospitals, hospices, asylums, and first-aid clinics) were covered by a number of Public Corporations – the hospitals, for example, mostly depended on Provincial Administrations – and by many private organisations. Their regulatory ruling was established by the “Instruction” approved on 27 January 1885 (Public Welfare) and 14 March 1899 (General and Private Welfare). In general, the municipalities supported initiatives for primary health-care within the system of municipal welfare and, later, some of them became the main regular bodies with a wide and diversified medical staff.<sup>27</sup> In accordance with the so called “Instruc-

tion for Public Health", passed in 1904, the Municipalities received specific and significant competences, whereby a doctor had the faculty not only to inspect private properties such as homes and buildings, but also to order patients either to go to hospital or to be quarantined in their own homes.

But investments made in this sector in different cities seem to have been limited (13.6 million pesetas in total) and few of them were directly promoted by municipal administrations themselves.<sup>28</sup> The size of municipal projects for social services suggests that their main objective was the supply of equipment to schools and health-care establishments. This latter policy flourished mainly, and most efficiently, in big cities but its influence and results were very limited. Although it was also attempted in this sector, insofar as possible, to attract private funding, the biggest financial weight fell on the same local and provincial authorities themselves. This showed, yet again, the serious problem involved in limiting financial municipal resources by law, which prevented the development of more active policies in this field.

Traditional municipal responsibilities were also subject to this new approach. In this field we consider cemeteries, slaughterhouses and food markets, on which Spanish municipalities had public, enforceable and exclusive authority. It could seem strange to include in one single category these three municipal services, but all three shared some common characteristics: their administration was simple and straightforward, they only required a low level of investment and they provided a regular income.<sup>29</sup> In return, these services gave rise to monopolies in their conditions supply and the subsequent use of enforceable measures. Investments devoted to these three fields reached, in the period under study, relatively significant figures – 51.5 million pesetas – distributed almost equally among the three services. In the same way, the number of projects was large and mostly reserved for repair works and improvements to facilities which already existed. However, there were also many projects for the building of brand new installations and the extension of old ones. Although the law prohibited the municipalities from setting charges in excess of the real expenses of these establishments, the fact is that they became a significant source of municipal income in cash, without creating any managerial problems. Slaughterhouses and public markets also became a key element in the inspection mechanism for hygienic food control and for the collection of taxes on consumer goods. This leads to two conclusions.

On the one hand, at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth, many Spanish cities and rural municipalities were in a phase of consolidation and generalisation of this rent-oriented strategy. And, on the other hand, once again, the institutional limits imposed on the financial autonomy of Spanish municipalities during the liberal regime are evident.

We must at least mention a wide range of other investments carried out by Spanish municipalities in buildings for direct uses: municipal halls, office buildings devoted to the use of the Municipal Authorities themselves or more or less dependent organisms such as tribunals. These included some courthouses, jails and municipal detention centres, police and fire stations, laboratories, post offices, theatres, bull-rings and public amenities. This list also includes a variety of monuments and a range of public works, usually limited, including very atypical buildings such as barracks for the army or a certain "Labour Exchange" tendered by the City Council of Castellón. Spanish municipalities pledged 25.9 million pesetas during the first two decades of the twentieth century for these types of buildings. The more significant items of this construction work involved the remodelling or rebuilding of town halls with no regard for the cost.

### Urbanisation and town-planning projects

A final group of investments, promoted by the Spanish City Councils, includes those devoted to enlarging and equipping the new urban sites with the appropriate infrastructure. This includes paving works and basic urbanisation projects – including large-scale demolitions – ranging from sections of a single street to large-scale re-construction projects for a whole neighbourhood. Also in this field, initiatives were numerous and some of them very expensive and complex.

Urbanisation in Spain followed a twofold path: enlargement (*ensanche*) of surrounding rural space, adding modern infrastructure to incorporate it into the city after the requisite project, and internal reforms for the renovation of the existing urban network.<sup>30</sup> Both required immediate cash profitability for private and public promoters alike. Without this immediate profitability the projects ran the serious risk of collapsing. Enlargement was preferred because it could be carried out easily and cheaply, but it also had costs such as the abandonment of the old city centres by the middle classes who often moved

their commercial and professional premises from old districts to new developments. At the same time it imposed a high-cost of infrastructure, hindering dispersed urbanisation and excluding low-cost housing.

The "Law of 1864", concerning the administration of enlargements, was clearly faulty; it did not regulate crucial topics of urbanisation and building discipline; nor did it assign the cost and benefits of the urbanisation process in an efficient way. Only the Law on Interior Reform and Improvement of Cities, passed in 18 March 1895 – followed by a long series of municipal Ordinances in many different cities – provided a new, more modern regulation of activities, giving impetus to public and private investment. The Law on Mandatory Expropriation passed in 1879 permitted local public corporations to promote their works projects by assigning them to private firms, and of course to expropriate private property for municipal projects.

In any case, during the first two decades of the twentieth century town-planning investment became one of the main promotional activities of large Spanish municipalities. To these two types of investment Madrid and Barcelona committed 93.1 and 29.7 million pesetas, respectively. Street paving was a relatively secondary activity. Basic urbanisation projects demanded complex design and financial processes – even international competitions – and they attracted the attention of big building and financial companies. Madrid figured clearly at the top regarding investments in this field; the city developed two big town-planning projects: the construction of the Preciados street district, in the heart of the city, and the sanitation of the Manzanares river – both very ambitious projects (a budget of 12.6 and 8.3 million pesetas, respectively) the execution of which turned out to be complicated and was therefore considerably delayed. If we include the budget for both projects, the amount of investment for urbanisation in Madrid would rise to 22.5 million pesetas; but if we exclude it, the remaining urbanisation works, mainly new streets in the enlarged districts, drop to a mere two million, a modest figure even in comparison with other municipalities; Barcelona, for example announced 47 contracts for 1.9 million pesetas, and it also prepared its great project for internal re-design (the Layetana street), that would connect old historical districts with the new quarters (the *ensanche*). Other cities investing heavily in this field were Valencia, Gijón, Palma de Mallorca, la Coruña, las Palmas de Gran Canaria and Huelva, apart from Bilbao and San Sebastian, which were without any doubt the leaders in that strategy.<sup>31</sup>

We can conclude that some big Spanish municipalities, and also several among the most dynamic smaller cities, were developing, before the end of the nineteenth century, a precise strategy of urbanisation in their double scope of remodelling historical, uncomfortable and unhealthy quarters, and of expanding the urban perimeters by means of enlargements. But the limitations of these strategies were obvious. Commitments usually around five pesetas per inhabitant cannot be considered ambitious, or really promising. Once again the aid of private capital and initiatives were the norm by necessity, at least for big projects; but their long-term profitability in general was doubtful. Modern historiography has underlined these problems, which some considered intrinsically 'bourgeois' or 'liberal-patrimonialist'. But we prefer to ascribe them to a 'moderate' or liberal-conservative model of local life, perhaps the results of a failed liberal progressive dream in Spain.<sup>32</sup>

### Styles of municipal investment – the strategies

In the preceding pages we made a functional classification of the investment of Spanish urban municipalities in search of a criterion to understand how these 417 million pesetas were distributed. Now we will attempt a summary description of the investment decisions of the 28 cities that committed more than a million pesetas to these projects.

The main and more dynamic cities of Spain towards 1900 have been classified by Brigitte Magnien into at least five categories: large cities, commercial maritime cities, mining centres and leisure or tourist cities. In a separate category she mentions "cities with a glorious past",<sup>33</sup> that, in fact, usually showed quite an unpromising present.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Spain had only two very large urban centres, Madrid and Barcelona. Between 1897 and 1920 these cities invited tenders for urban investment to the value of 195 and 67 million pesetas respectively (361 and 125 pesetas per inhabitant), 46.8 and 16.1 per cent of the total for Spain. The share and bond capitalisations of the two largest Spanish industrial firms at the time were 148 and 85 million pesetas. In both cities municipal investments were relatively diversified, although both encouraged investment in sewage disposal and street-paving, and allowed smaller but significant sums for cemeteries and hospitals. Madrid also promoted two important urbanisation works, slaughterhouses and a wide range of investments

in the public water network, while Barcelona preferred the building of food-markets and schools. Much of the investment was intended to promote urban building sites, to control the markets and municipal rents and, in a very marginal way, to build the equipment of social, health-care and educational services.

Around the big metropolises the new investing mood spread irregularly. Near Madrid, some residential cities such as San Lorenzo del Escorial or Alcalá de Henares promoted relatively significant and diversified investments, while some other provincial capitals were only investing in a limited range of sectors. In the case of Madrid it was the National Public Administration which was responsible for providing key services.

In the province of Barcelona, more highly populated and dynamic than the province of Madrid, even small industrial municipalities such as Tarrasa, Sabadell, Mataró, Igualada and Manresa developed diversified and relatively ambitious investment programmes, while another forty small towns in that province promote some reforms, however limited.

Some time later and with a more modest budget, the municipality of Valencia also followed the steps of the two big metropolises and began a plan of enlargement and modernisation of municipal services. That led it to announce investments for 19.5 million pesetas and many small surrounding towns followed suit.

Other medium sized cities also followed these steps actively; while the amounts invested in these cases were smaller, in relative terms they reached a very high proportion on some occasions. All of them invested in different sectors – more than three, a fact that leads us to believe that there was a wide and sustained programme of local investment focused on the building and modernisation of new infrastructure and services (see the enclosed map). The Basque country, for instance, accommodated in a limited stretch of land the biggest concentration of heavy industry in Spain and the largest number of investing municipalities, with San Sebastian and Bilbao at their head. A study we have in progress on the structure of Basque municipalities suggests that they showed remarkable organisational and professional complexity. Cities on the coast adopted these initiatives more thoroughly and extensively. Following the Cantabrian coast, Asturian mining and industrial cities, and in smaller measure the port of Santander, showed similar strategies. Cities on the Galician coast almost up to the Portuguese

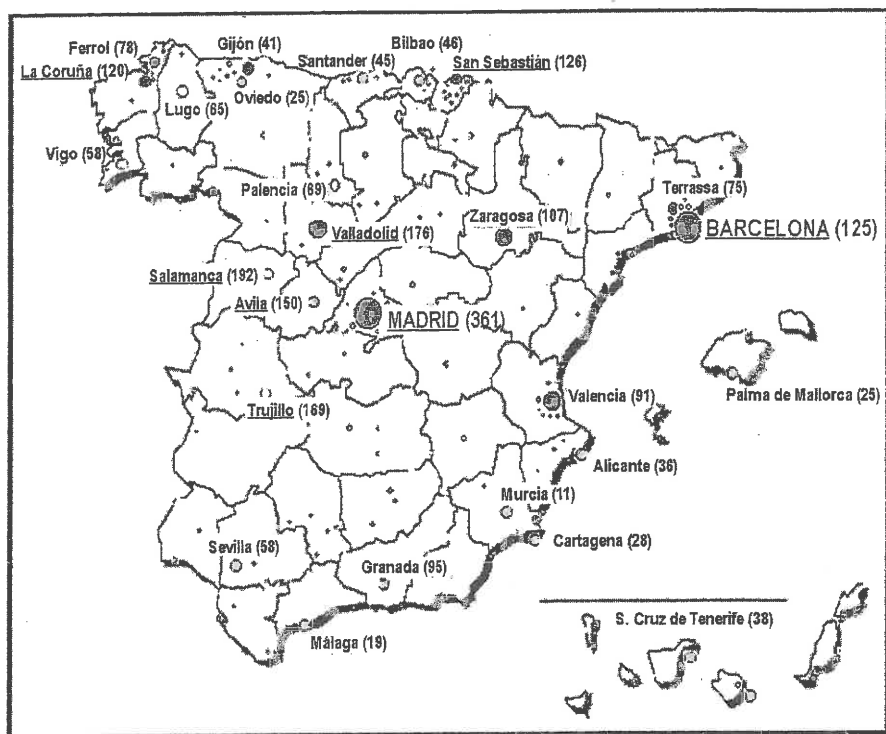
border could be included in this dynamic group. Other big cities of the interior, with Valladolid and Zaragoza – both with more than 10 million in projected investment – leading the list, followed by Seville, Granada, and Salamanca also belong to the modernising group.

Except for the two Andalusian main cities, the expenses in relative terms surpassed one hundred pesetas per inhabitant and, although in smaller proportions than the metropolises, they also developed diversified investment programmes. But, unlike those two, their influence on neighbouring towns seems to have been insignificant or nonexistent. On the Mediterranean coast, south of Barcelona, investment was also diffuse and reached the industrial area around Alicante and the great military and mining port of Cartagena. The geographical pattern of this type of city reflects closely the industrial geography of contemporary Spain and we can also contrast it with the geographical distribution of local public debt included in our 1998 book.

The large number of initiatives promoted in Old Castile are worth mentioning. Some provincial capitals – cities that, if we are to believe Julio Senador, were “in rubble”<sup>34</sup> – such as Valladolid, Salamanca, Ávila and other smaller municipalities, promoted many investment initiatives, although only in Valladolid did they reach the proportions and characteristics of a wide urban renovation programme. What is remarkable in this case is that this is not an industrial region, but rather agricultural and cattle raising, in general with an extensive farming pattern. The municipalities in this region were small in size, but on many occasions they promoted very high investments in relative terms (e.g. 182 Pta per inhabitant in Salamanca; 176 in Valladolid). Perhaps it could be concluded that, rather than a link between industrialisation and municipal investment, there was a correlation between urban investment and tariff protection, an advantage shared by the three mentioned regions.

The large southern cities stand in contrast with the northern ones because, although some of them developed certain investment initiatives – on occasion very significant ones, such as Seville or Granada – the investment figures always remain at very low levels, as could be expected from their size. Cases such as Málaga and Murcia were characteristic in this sense. Without any doubt the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth were for them a period of stagnation and urban crisis, only surmounted long after the Civil War.

MAP I. *Geographical distribution of the municipalities that promoted investment projects over 0,1 million pesetas between 1897 and 1919.*



*The size of the circles is in proportion to the volume of the investments. The figures in brackets after some cities indicate the cost per person assumed in each case.*

## Conclusions

The standard historical view of Spain, based on the critical attitudes widely shared in the final years of the nineteenth century – known as “Regenerationism of ’98” – and the beginning of the twentieth, is being re-considered one hundred years later. Indignation prompted by the “disaster of 1898” led many to qualify the whole period, extending into the new century, in a negative, pessimistic way. This view is now being revised by historians. The anger and shame felt by many at the time, although possibly justifiable, led them to make an excessively negative interpretation of a difficult period in Spanish history and to underestimate many of the achievements and initiatives taken, particularly in the fields of economics and finance.<sup>35</sup> More recently, business historians in Spain described an impressive rise in the number of modern companies which, at the beginning of the century, introduced new



financial methods and industrial practices.<sup>36</sup> Today, the main problem facing Spain during the period under study is perceived to have been political and institutional, and perhaps even cultural, rather than purely economic. Fundamentally, the Spanish government, within a State that was deeply divided and weakened, was politically incapable of modernising the fiscal system in order to increase the capabilities and resources of Public Administrations.<sup>37</sup>

Local policy, which was much more homogeneous than inter-regional policy, provides a clearer example of the diversity of tendencies and opportunities for modernisation, either potential or already put into practice in many parts of Spain. Furthermore, it was within the municipal ambit that the greatest and most direct needs were felt for the modernisation of the Public Administration and for the supply of collective services. Thus, some growing cities provided fertile ground for the implantation of new social and political strategies, and a hitherto unknown form of accomplishing municipal activities was developing in Spain. The achievements in this respect – and even the failures – were positive steps in acquiring some of the “political skills, economic activities, technological awareness and organisational capabilities” sought by David Ringrose in his quest for the “cultural, institutional and economic experience” that made economic development possible.

The investments made by Spanish municipalities suggest that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the larger, more dynamic cities were at an advanced phase towards establishing the basic services that correspond to the stage of accelerating growth identified by Marjatta Hietala as occurring between 1871 and 1914 for large cities in Germany.

With regard to the cities in Spain, two concepts should be stressed: the marked regional disparities and the acceptance of new technologies and modernising attitudes. Firstly, there was a clear-cut division between two groups of varying population and economic dynamics: on the one hand there were expanding cities, which sought and frequently achieved strategies and resources to improve the standards of living and collective action in their surroundings. On the other hand, other cities considered the political and institutional traditions of established conservative liberalism to be sufficient for their necessities, or perhaps they felt they had no alternative. The geography of industrialisation and the effects of protectionism – which during this period

achieved a pattern that was to remain stable for many years, based on a coalition of Catalonian textile industries, iron and steel plants on the Cantabrian coast and flour producers in Castile – left a lasting mark on the investment dynamics of the respective cities.

The second aspect that should be noted is that, even subject to the liberal-conservative model of Local Administration – or, rather, conforming to this style – Spanish cities were capable of assimilating and extending the technologies of the second industrial revolution after the consolidation of the political regime arising from the Restoration, basically, after the 1880s. The introduction of the second wave of industrialisation was achieved under much more advantageous conditions than those corresponding to the first, as noted recently by Alexandre Fernández in comparing Bilbao and Bordeaux.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the first few decades of the twentieth century saw the generalisation of modern water-supply networks, new drainage systems, street lighting, urban transport and even incipient social services. The existence and extent of these latter services is a sign of significant achievements in the most dynamic cities even during the nineteenth century. However, as the conservative style became more firmly established, it became more and more necessary to rely on private initiatives and finance, which limited investment to the most directly profitable sectors. In a context of slow economic growth, this impeded expansion and the attainment of scale economies that perhaps would have been achieved by a more ambitious scheme.

In the regions of Spain that were economically and socially most advanced, there soon arose powerful trends towards modernisation and municipal autonomy, doubtless encouraged by their experience in the management of new local enterprises. Thus, a municipalist movement soon became well established, one that was modestly-sized but totally comparable with those developing in other countries in western Europe. The fact that in Catalonia and the Basque country, the most developing regions, these tendencies would soon shift to regionalist, and then nationalist attitudes led to a weakening of the municipalist movement within the rest of the country.

In the institutional framework, it was not until the legislative renovation of the Municipal Law of 1924 – when, as wrote Raymond Carr “the Dictator’s (General Primo de Rivera) technocrats made a striking attempt at modernisation, hitherto underestimated” – that the local public sector began a promising, but short-lived, period of expansion.

It was first halted by the 1930s depression and then further impeded by the change of political regime. A drastic interruption was then imposed during the regime of General Franco. Thus, by the time democracy was restored in Spain after 1975, the municipal authorities were suffering from an acute deficit of public infrastructure and of management experience, with corresponding negative effects on social welfare and economic productivity in general.<sup>39</sup>

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## Notes

- 1 De Miguel, 1987, p. 147; see also Pan-Montojo, 1998.
- 2 Carr, 1978, pp. 358–361.
- 3 Cited by Maluquer, 1997.
- 4 Cf. Oyón, 1993, p. 59.
- 5 See Figueroa y Torres, 1917.
- 6 See Núñez & Castellano, 1998.
- 7 Sierra, 1992.
- 8 Dopico & Reher, 1998, p. 101. See also Reher, 1986.
- 9 Jürgens, 1992, p. 249.
- 10 See Sánchez Jiménez, 1984, p. 419.
- 11 Cf. Tafunell, 1989.
- 12 Ringrose, 1996, p. 523.
- 13 Tortella, 1994.
- 14 See Luna Rodrigo, 1988.
- 15 See Gómez Mendoza, 1986.
- 16 Hietala, 1987, p. 36.
- 17 Cf. Rosen, 1986, p. 13.
- 18 See Núñez & Moreno, 2001.
- 19 See Núñez, 1996, and Núñez & Castellano, 1998.
- 20 See Matés, 1999.
- 21 See Bernal & Arenas, 1992.
- 22 See Tafunell, 1998 and Núñez, 1994.
- 23 See Calvo, 1995 and Capel, 1994.
- 24 See López Bustos, 1984, Núñez, 1999 and 1991, and Martínez López, 2001.
- 25 See Ferrer Aixalá, 1985.
- 26 See Núñez, C. E., 1992.
- 27 See Villacorta, 1989, and Núñez, 2000.

- 28 See Capel & Tatjer, 1991, González Portilla et al., 1998.  
 29 See Núñez, 1996, Gómez Mendoza, 1994.  
 30 See Monclús, 1992, Coudroy de Lille, 1999 and López Trigal, 1999.  
 31 See Larrinaga, 1997.  
 32 Fernández García 1997; Pan-Montojo, 1998; López Trigal, 1999.  
 33 Magnien, 1991, p. 108–109.  
 34 See Senador, 1978.  
 35 Cf. Maluquer, 1999.  
 36 See Tafunell, 1996, Carreras and Tafunell, 1997.  
 37 Comín, 1996.  
 38 Fernández, 2000.  
 39 Cf. Argimón et al., 1993.

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