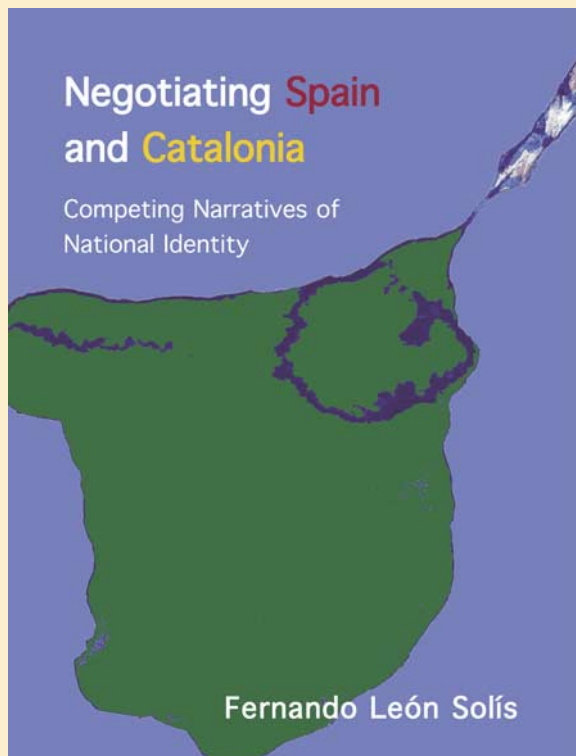


# Negotiating Spain and Catalonia

## Competing Narratives of National Identity

By Fernando León Solís



What is Spanish identity? The stereotype conjures up images of 'temperament', 'passion' and 'difference' from the rest of Europe. But, within Spain, is there a single image all Spaniards identify with?

The two case studies included in this book (dealing with the Football World Cups of 1994 and 2002, and the general elections of 1996 and 2000) examine competing discourses of Spain, Catalonia and their national identities, as constructed in the Spanish press.

The conservative discourse offers traditional and unified images of Spain close to the stereotype, whereas more liberal visions of the country regard 'Europeanism' and 'reason' (not 'passion') as the values Spain should aspire to. From a peripheral perspective, Catalan self-definition is of a people that is hardworking, thoughtful, truly European, and different from the rest of the Spaniards.

However, these differences between the discourses are not always so clear-cut. Central to *Negotiating Spain and Catalonia* is the idea of the constant renegotiation of conceptions of Spanish and Catalan identities in order to adapt them to the political circumstance: both case studies show how radically different narratives of Spanishness and Catalanicity offered in the turbulent political past tend to merge in the more tranquil present.

Fernando León Solís, born in the Andalusian town of Cordoba in Southern Spain, is a Lecturer in Spanish at the University of Paisley.

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