

PART I



Guidelines: Contemporary Ethnography
and the New World Order in Spain

1. The Best of All Possible Islands and the Miraculous Year

From 15 April to 12 October 1992, a universal exposition, the highest category of world's fair, was held in Seville, Spain. La Exposición Universal Sevilla 1992—commonly called Expo '92—was located on La Isla de la Cartuja, an island (in fact, a peninsula) of previously undeveloped land that lies between two branches of the Guadalquivir River, just to the west of the historic center of the city. On this island, the pavilions of 112 countries, 17 autonomous regions of Spain, and 29 multinational corporations and international organizations were constructed, along with more than a dozen large thematic pavilions and nearly a score of theaters, cinemas, and auditoriums. Interspersed throughout the island were hundreds of restaurants and shops, 117 fountains, and extensive gardens and parks in which 25,000 trees had recently been planted. On the inside periphery of the island was a parking lot with spaces for 40,000 cars; close to an entrance gate was a recently erected train station; and connecting the city to the island were several newly constructed pedestrian bridges. Thousands of concerts, plays, shows, ceremonies, parades, and other public events were staged on the island or in Seville. Over its six-month course, the Expo was visited by perhaps 14 million people.¹ Among these visitors were 69 heads of state or government and countless celebrities. In short, Expo '92 was a very big deal.²

The universal exposition had been conceived as an occasion to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Columbus's first voyage to the Americas. Following the advice of members of the Bureau of International Expositions in Paris, however, the Expo's Spanish organizers finally chose the much broader official theme of "The Age of Discoveries" and invited participants from around the world to explore virtually any facet of human cultural achievement between 1492 and the present. As a result, visitors to the Expo's major thematic pavilions were exposed to a persistently optimistic vision of the emergence of the modern world. While this vision represented Spain's so-called golden century of discovery, empire, and artistic achievement as a crucial turning point in the development of a universal global civilization that is still in the making, it stressed the continuing importance of overcoming natural, technological, and cultural barriers to human communication and community. Indeed, rather than just presenting the island world of the Expo as a temporary locus of international cooperation—a sort of utopian campsite—the Expo's organizers aimed to give a more comprehensive historical sense of how interactions among the cultures and peoples of the past have shaped the present world and created possibilities for future human progress. In this sense of having something about and for almost everyone, the organizers wanted the island to represent the best of all possible islands.

In addition to this high-minded aim, however, the event's organizers had the more mundane goals of attracting lots of tourists to Seville and sparking the economic development of Andalusia (see fig. 1.1), one of Spain's and Europe's poorest regions. To accomplish these goals, they encouraged massive investments to modernize the transportation, communications, and service infrastructure of the island site, the adjacent city, and the surrounding area (see fig. 1.2). On the site, construction projects included installation of a new electric power plant and a state-of-the-art satellite communications system, establishment of a world trade center, and the laying of miles of fiber-optic cable to transform La Isla de la Cartuja into a center of high-technology research and development after the conclusion of the Expo. In Seville, all of the following were newly constructed: 20 hotels, 9 bridges across the Guadalquivir River, a railway station, an air terminal, and 80 kilometers of roadway circling and feeding into town. Public works projects were undertaken to spruce up the city, restore monuments, and improve regional government facilities. The highways connecting the region with the rest of Spain were improved and, at great cost, a high-speed rail system known as the AVE was built to cut the overland travel time between Seville and Madrid to little more than two hours.

Yet as impressive as the Expo and its related projects were intended to be, they represented only one aspect of the events that occurred in Spain in 1992.

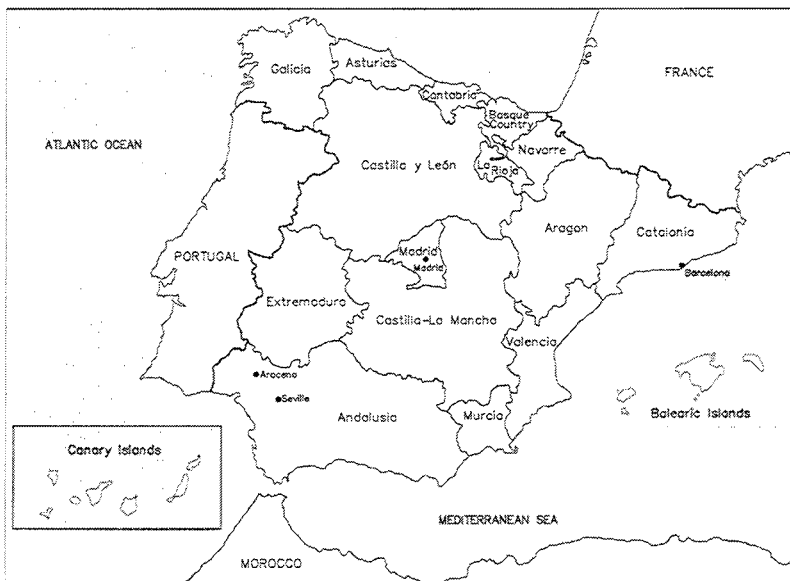


Figure 1.1 Spain and its autonomous regions

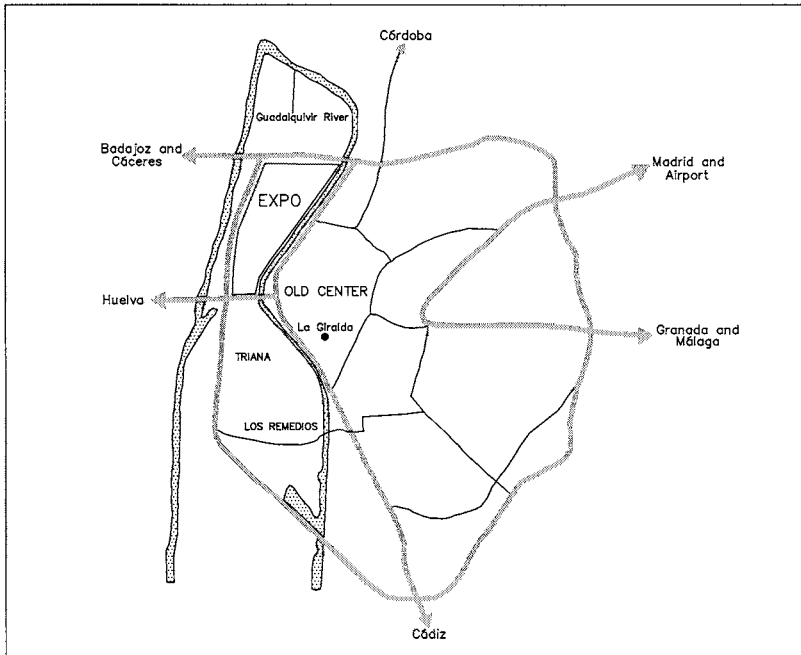


Figure 1.2 The Expo site within the city of Seville

Coinciding with the Expo were hundreds of ceremonies, exhibitions, conferences, and other activities associated with the quincentennial observations of Columbus’s first voyage, with Madrid’s tenure as the “Cultural Capital” of Europe, and with the Olympic Games held in Barcelona. All of these events were sponsored, largely financed, and ultimately controlled by the Spanish government, which through the events sought to “change the image of Spain” in the eyes of the world. Putting on a great global spectacle in Barcelona and creating the best of all possible islands in the Guadalquivir were intended to herald the definitive and irreversible arrival of the “new Spain” on the international scene. No longer would it be possible to regard Spain as a rather backward, provincial, and poor European hinterland that was still struggling to consolidate its fledgling democracy and overcome the legacies of forty years of dictatorship under the Franco regime and centuries of fading imperial glory and national decline. The events of the “miraculous year” of 1992 were designed to demonstrate that the period of national revival that had begun with the death of Franco in 1975 had come to a successful conclusion. Spain now stood ready to assume

its responsibilities as a full partner in the European Union and as a vital link connecting western Europe to Latin America and the Islamic Mediterranean. Indeed, the Spanish experience might well serve as a guide or inspiration for those countries in central and eastern Europe and elsewhere that were struggling to transform themselves into modern democracies.

But how are we to understand and judge the significance of the Expo in its proper historical and cultural context? Was the huge expenditure of money and human effort involved in mounting the exhibition and the other events of 1992 worth it? Or was it all a rather pointless expression of national or governmental self-glorification—not so much a miraculous year as a year in which pride and vanity overcame economic prudence and Spaniards were encouraged to imagine that, as one Seville wit put it, “we were Marilyn” (Marilyn Monroe)? And in any case, why should we now be much concerned about what was ultimately a brief, if massive, exercise in international public relations that has been forgotten by most people or become a matter of mild nostalgia, even for many of those who live in Seville and were most directly affected by it? What did Expo '92 reveal about life and culture in Seville, in Spain, and in Europe, and what insights continue to have value and relevance for understanding the present?

The difficulty involved in such questions is not that they have no plausible answers. It is, instead, that they are open to so many reasonable responses because of the sheer complexity of events of this type. As Umberto Eco (1986:291) observed in an essay on Montreal's Expo '67, “An exposition presents itself as a phenomenon of many faces, full of contradictions, [and] open to various uses.” For this reason, it can be interpreted from many points of view. Several organizations and individuals have already written volumes focusing on such topics as the design and architecture of Expo '92, the event's economic impact on southern Spain, and its character as a postmodern cultural event. Here, my aim is to present an account of the Expo that stresses its political character and significance. This approach inevitably neglects many specific features of the Expo but permits me to consider how the emergent post-Cold War hegemony of what I will be referring to as “cosmopolitan liberalism” manifested itself in Seville, Andalusia, and Spain in the early 1990s.

To clarify why I adopted the perspective that I did, I begin by describing how my views of what is most important and interesting about the Expo have changed over time. Next, I explain how shifts in personal and ethnographic perspective relate to changes in Spanish politics, society, and culture and to some of the problems that confront contemporary anthropologists as they seek to understand the “new Europe” and the “new world order.” My attempt to be candid is certainly in order, because much of the time—somewhat like *Candide*, endlessly agog on his travels through the wide world of the eighteenth century—I have been puzzled and perplexed about the precise relationship between the Expo's Panglossian representations of past and present realities and my own and others' quite different experiences and understandings of them.

2. Possible Expos: Academic Meanderings from Tradition to Modernity and Beyond

I first heard of the Expo in 1982, when the Spanish press reported that the Bureau of International Expositions in Paris had agreed to sponsor a universal exposition to be held in 1992. For the first time, the stories noted, a universal exposition was to have two seats—one in Chicago and the other in Seville. (The Chicago exposition was subsequently canceled, however.) Although some sort of Spanish observation of the Columbus quincentennial in 1992 seemed inevitable, neither I nor any of the Andalusians whom I knew were much interested in the news that Seville would be a site for a world's fair.

At the time, I was living in Aracena—a small town that had a population of approximately 7,000 people and is located in the hills of the western Sierra Morena, about eighty kilometers from Seville—and I was too busy bringing nearly two years of ethnographic and historical research there to a close to be concerned about an event that was still a decade away. Moreover, the aim of my research in Aracena was to investigate how local traditions and traditionalism had affected the political life of the town over the course of the past three centuries,¹ and this interest seemed remote from the topic of world fairs. Then, too, neither my personal inclinations nor my anthropological training made the prospect of investigating the Expo seem particularly attractive. Like many ethnographers, I have always been drawn to those forms of local knowledge and customary practice that are easily overlooked and seem marginal, rather than being fascinated by what is modern, central, and unavoidable. Other things being equal, I would much rather attend to such homely and provincial matters as rural fairs and hog slaughters than to mass culture and international expositions.

Indeed, I would never have paid much attention to the Expo if it had not been located in Seville and if I had not been forced to conclude that by investigating it I would better understand the circumstances of contemporary Andalusians in places such as Aracena. However, it was not until a return trip to Spain in the summer of 1985 that I became convinced of this. As I read about the Expo in Seville publications, it finally dawned on me that the Expo might provide an ideal opportunity for further exploring the tensions that exist between tradition and modernity, tensions that I had already encountered in Aracena.

On the one hand, there is no city in Spain more closely associated with imperial history and living folk traditions than Seville.² Visitors walking through the historic center of town in the early 1980s could find at every turn some impressive monument or building, such as the Giralda, the Alcázar, the House of Pilatos, the Convent of Santa Paula, and the great tobacco factory (now the university)—all of which bore witness to the centuries when Seville was the great metropolitan center of trade with the Indies. Every few steps

along the way, visitors would also encounter a bodega, a bullfight poster, a barred window and sunny patio, a chapel of one of the penitential brotherhoods of Holy Week, or the blaring notes of a Sevillana played on a cheap cassette—all reminders that long after its heyday of imperial glory, the city had become the urban focal point of an essentially agrarian folk and gentry culture of extraordinary color and variety. Such experiences have led many tourists and not a few natives of a romantic and gullible disposition to conclude that in Seville it is still possible to find the authentic essence of Spain, the “real” Spain of the conquistadors, Don Juan, the Inquisition, Carmen, lace mantillas, flashing gypsy eyes and blades, Flamenco, and death in the afternoon.

On the other hand, a visitor of Seville in the early 1980s would have had to be trapped in the middle of an extraordinarily large tour group not to realize that the city had become subject to all of the familiar pains of rapid urban growth and modernization.³ As is the case in many other Mediterranean cities, in Seville the city planners had never quite been able to keep pace with the steady growth in population. As a result, Seville was crowded and noisy and often snarled by traffic jams. Even though there was not much industry, the factories that existed managed to contribute extensively to the levels of air and water pollution. On the outskirts of town, there were whole *barrios* (neighborhoods) of shacks cobbled together by rural migrants who had been left without basic water and sanitation services for years. Closer to town, there were large areas with nothing but ugly, reinforced concrete, high-rise apartment buildings for the working class. And if the city was charged with the energy of its large numbers of young people, it also often seemed more than a little besotted by a rising tide of slick advertising for second-rate goods, strip malls, discotheques, and *carpe diem* consumerism. Worst of all, the city was plagued by a high rate of unemployment, especially among young people, and a steady increase in petty crime. The Expo was intended to ameliorate these symptoms of underdevelopment and to propel Seville into the twenty-first century, making the city the shining capital of the new autonomous region of Andalusia.

Yet despite its recent growth, Seville in the early and middle 1980s was a fairly small and provincial place. Although its population was predicted to exceed 700,000 by 1992, it would still be by far the smallest city ever to host a universal exposition. Because of this, the impact of the Expo on the city and everyone who lived in and around it could be expected to be disproportionately large. The opportunity to study this impact in terms of the dynamic interaction of modernity and tradition seemed a chance too good to miss. Moreover, examining the Expo would allow me to shift my ethnographic attention from rural communities to urban environments, a shift that many anthropologists who work in Mediterranean Europe had been advocating.⁴

Between 1985 and 1990, I corresponded with colleagues and friends in Spain about my newly envisioned project and other matters, all the while gaining confidence in the good sense of my plan to study the Expo. My confidence

was disrupted, however, when I returned to Seville in the summer of 1990 and immediately caught a case of something peculiarly akin to that fabled anthropological malady, culture shock. As I visited the site on which the Expo was being constructed (La Isla de la Cartuja), talked with a few officials, and began to gather general information on the project, I could scarcely believe the scope of the changes that had taken place in and around Seville in just five years. The city had taken on the aura of a boom town. There were plenty of jobs available, prices were rising, money was being spent freely, and lots of people were obviously trying to figure out how to cash in on the state's largesse and the anticipated bonanza of tourist spending. Some of this was predictable enough, but what was perplexing was just how modern and sophisticated Seville had become almost overnight.

In the past, the provincial tone of Seville was set by working-class consumers, petit bourgeois shopkeepers, and a small circle of regional elite. Now it seemed as if these groups had been suddenly though by no means completely displaced by a new generation of professionals, well-educated functionaries and bureaucrats, and ambitious university graduates. The new trendsetters talked a lot about European markets, finance, taxes, grants for foreign study, business degrees, the media, and software; and they displayed a taste for the same corporate products, flashy cars, cellular phones, dress-for-success fashions, music, and expensive entertainment gadgetry that prevailed in the great metropolises of Europe.

The dramatic shift in elite fashions and lifestyle threw me into a state of confusion about the significance of the Expo for Seville. The prospect of investigating this event primarily in terms of a dialectic of tradition and modernity no longer seemed very promising. The forces of modernity already at work seemed too powerful and the processes of transformation set in motion by them were too complex to be comprehended and explored adequately in such balanced and conventional terms. Even if it was not the case that everything that was solid and traditional about local life had melted into air, it did seem that a great deal had been swept into the dustbin of history at least for the moment, and it was not at all clear what new values and forms of identity might emerge. Thus, while awaiting the date when I could return to Spain in 1992, I searched for a better way to understand the relationship between the Expo and the broader contemporary changes that had already transformed the lives and outlooks of people in Seville.

I began by delving into the vast literature about the hundreds of world fairs and other types of international exhibitions that have been held since the opening of London's Crystal Palace Exhibition in 1851.⁵ This effort proved informative on many counts, but it was disappointing in several respects. In a nutshell, what I learned was that although international exhibitions have preserved features of traditional events, such as carnivals, market fairs, and holiday rituals, what initially defined them as a distinctively modern cultural genre was, as

Walter Benjamin (1976:165) put it, their role as “places of pilgrimage to the fetish commodity.” In other words, it was by putting the most impressive and economically important or promising products and technologies of industrial societies on display that the great world fairs of the nineteenth century defined and reinforced the fundamental values of capitalism and material progress.

Despite their embrace of the latest technology, most exhibitions have also served in one way or another to legitimate and, indeed, to glorify nationalism, popular or mass culture, the authority of the state, imperialist ambitions and domination, and the forms of modernity that are most closely associated with ideas about the superiority of Western civilization. The centrality of these themes is particularly well illustrated in Robert Rydell’s work (1984, 1993) on the essentially nationalistic and racist “symbolic universes” characteristic of American expositions held in the years between 1876 and 1916. But as Burton Benedict suggests in *The Anthropology of World Fairs* (1983:9), all world fairs are examples of a “distinctive form of modern international rituals” that “sell” ideas about “power relations” as well as material goods. Therefore, some of the most interesting recent work on international exhibitions tends to focus less on the commercial and directly economic functions of these events and more on the way in which they serve to create or encourage particular forms of social consciousness. For example, Tony Bennett (1994) not only invokes Marxist notions of the increasing commodification of all aspects of life but also invokes Michel Foucault’s analyses of power and knowledge and Guy De Bord’s great polemic against mass culture in the *Society of the Spectacle* (1977) in order to propose that world fairs represent one sort of strategy within a broader and still developing “exhibitionary mode of power” whose function it is to move the hearts, shape the minds, and regulate the practices of the masses through the creation of new forms of instruction, distraction, entertainment, and pleasure that complement more oppressive forms of domination and discipline.

On the whole, then, and despite some important differences in emphasis and theoretical persuasion, there is a broad consensus in the literature on world fairs that these distinctive events have been contrived by ruling elites for a variety of reasons (including, most notably, the desire for profit, influence, and prestige) but that the broader significance of world fairs has been to convey some compelling version of the ideologies of progress, capitalism, nationalism, and Western superiority to large numbers of people in a relatively short span of time.

Yet even though there was little cause to suppose that Expo ’92 would represent a radical departure from the patterns established by a century and a half of international expositions, the possibility of investigating it primarily as a set of variations on one of the key generic “traditions of modernity” did not seem much more appealing than my previous idea of viewing its relation to Seville in terms of a dialectics of modernity and tradition. For one thing, an essentially comparative approach that focused on classic modernist themes might lead me to underestimate the importance of what was most idiosyncratic and

peculiar about the event and thus perhaps to miss those aspects of the exposition that revealed most about new and emergent tendencies in contemporary life in Andalusia. For another, I wanted to avoid the pitfall of paying too much attention to interpreting the symbolic messages communicated by expositions without sufficiently considering how the messages are chosen and produced or how their various audiences actually interpret and experience them.⁶

Unfortunately, I still had no real alternative model in mind. Instead, I fell back on the rather vague idea that I should study the cultural politics surrounding the event and focus on how the various ways in which what it meant to be Sevillano, Andalusian, Spanish, European, and so forth were being represented and contested in the Expo and Seville. Fuzzy as this notion was, it did not require me to abandon the hope of studying local culture and traditions altogether. In addition, studying the politics of culture held some attraction because it was more or less in keeping with the so-called postmodern turn in American cultural anthropology and the discipline's apparently ever-expanding preoccupation with describing the politics of ethnic, gender, and other forms of identity in contemporary societies.⁷

My optimism about even this modest plan began to erode shortly after I arrived in Seville in the spring of 1992, a few weeks before the Expo's official opening. To put the problem succinctly, it seemed as if the Expo were simply going to be too bland to be of much political and cultural interest. Little about the contents of the Expo cried out loudly for scrutiny, challenge, and critique. The cruder forms of capitalist self-promotion, nationalist chauvinism, and neo-colonial arrogance of many past world fairs were hardly in evidence. Instead, multinational corporations stressed the general benefits of technical discoveries and economic enterprise for human welfare, and some even drew attention to the social and environmental problems attending the expansion of free markets. Similarly, in the pavilions of Spain and other countries, there were not many images that powerfully and unmistakably evoked the historical destinies and glories of nations, states, and empires. In one way or another, country after country represented itself as a human tapestry blessed and enlivened by the cultural traditions and ethnic diversity of its regions and peoples. The emphasis was on multiculturalism, pluralism, enlightened tolerance, and contemporary forms of global communication, represented by satellite links, computer-generated graphics, and endless banks of television screens.

The Expo, in sum, was proclaimed by organizers to be continually and self-consciously sensitive to the needs, values, and ways of life of others. But it all seemed familiar and rather imitative of the more public service-oriented efforts of global media executives and Disney imagineers, who were, after all, the real innovators in the business of making history and culture fun for one and all. I ruminated that the Expo probably represented an effort to exploit an essentially moribund modern cultural form that was unlikely to survive for long in the dawning postmodern age of instantaneous communications, global

marketing strategies, and the perpetual commodification, mutation, and recombination of signs and symbols of identity. However, my glum reflections about the enervating character of pseudo-events and the “lack of affect” induced by endless cultural pastiche were suddenly interrupted by an undeniably dramatic crisis that transformed the way I looked at the events of 1992.⁸

Not more than three weeks after the opening ceremonies, the Expo organizers announced that the sale of season passes for the Expo was being temporarily suspended and that admissions policies were under review. This announcement caused much consternation in Seville. Daily admission prices were high, and most Sevillanos felt that the bargain offered by season passes was nothing more than a just compensation for all the inconveniences that the Expo had caused them for years. The Expo organizers first argued that they feared overcrowding on Expo’s island site. Then they proclaimed that the event was not just for Sevillanos and that they did not wish the Expo site turned into a mere fairgrounds or park for the idle diversions of the local citizenry. These remarks and others like them prompted cries of protest from many quarters and were vehemently denounced by city officials, particularly the *alcalde* (mayor). Suits were filed to force the Expo officials to resume sales, and uncertainty continued for weeks until a final decision was made: No more season passes would be sold.

The conflict over season passes was puzzling both because it seemed unnecessary and because the fury and resentments it aroused were so intense. While crowds during the first two weeks of the Expo were predictably large, they were being handled without strain, and the daily attendance figures were already showing signs of dropping. So why make a decision that was going to distress large numbers of people for no good reason? Was it, as many people bitterly guessed, just a ploy to shore up the Expo’s bottom line? Even if it was, why make the announcement in such a patronizing way that it was virtually guaranteed to add insult to injury? And why prolong the agony for weeks? None of it made much sense to me. But after years of speculating about what the Expo might mean in general terms, I at last had a specific mystery to solve that might well provide some insight into my broader concerns.

What I discovered fairly quickly was that the embers of the dispute had been smoldering for a long time. Arguments about prices and admissions had been going on for at least two years, both within the Expo organization and between the Expo officials and Seville officials, and this issue was linked to wider, longer-running struggles concerning the fundamental character of the event. Once I realized that arguments such as this were not just normal petty squabbles, I began to appreciate the importance of what a cab driver had told me ten minutes after I had arrived at the Seville airport six weeks earlier. When I had asked him how the preparations for the Expo were going, he had waved his hand in annoyance and proclaimed, “*Hombre, es nada más que un choque . . . una pelea . . . una cosa política*” (“Man, it’s nothing but a collision . . . a fight . . . a political thing”).

So that was it? Expo island was not really the nicest, most tolerant, and most enlightened of islands after all? Instead, it should be construed as a site where a free-for-all over cultural and political turf had been occurring for years and would continue to involve everybody—Expo officials, local politicians, national party leaders, diplomats of participating countries, representatives of multinational corporations, residents of Seville . . . perhaps even me? And the various individuals and groups were fighting, conspiring, and cooperating with one another to influence and control various dimensions of the Expo in order to either assert their own visions or to resist others' interpretations of particular domains of contemporary life? And the features of Expo that looked like disparate parts of an incredibly intricate but bland conglomeration might be the results of particular battles for cultural hegemony, leadership, prestige, and practical control won or lost?

It was obvious that I needed to try to figure out the rules, strategies, and stakes of the game. I could see that the public style and tone of the Expo were open, optimistic, and pluralistic, but the dispute over the season passes seemed to pit the bureaucratic agents and policymakers of the state against a large segment of local civil society in a conflict that touched on some serious issues concerning the accountability and proper exercise of authority in a free and democratic society. The conflicts and strategies, I suspected, ultimately had a lot to do with the politics and culture of liberalism in Spain. To test this hunch, I set about trying to gain an understanding of the recent history of Spanish liberalism that could serve to illuminate what I had learned so far about the Expo. A summary of this history is presented in chapter 3.

3. A Pocket History of the Liberalization of Modern Spain, with Observations about Its Relevance for an Understanding of Expo '92

Used as a marker of broad political allegiance, the term "liberal" is of Spanish origin and was first applied to describe the members of the dominant group within the Cortes of 1812 who adopted a written constitution and attacked the ancient privileges of the nobility and the church (Herr 1971:73). The nineteenth century was the heyday of Spanish liberalism. As Adrian Shubert (1990:5) pointed out, "Between 1812 and 1914, Spain had more years of constitutional, representative government" than any other country on the continent of Europe (see also Payne 1987:3–18). Yet for much of the twentieth century, liberalism—both as a political and economic ideology and as a broader social philosophy of freedom—was under siege from the left and the

right in Spain, and other nations and states have made claims to the role of its principal adherents and guardians.¹

The vicissitudes of liberalism have continued to shape the sense of history of Spanish scholars, politicians, and ordinary citizens alike. After the catastrophe of the Spanish Civil War, even the victorious Caudillo himself, Francisco Franco, defined his dictatorship as the antithesis of liberalism and went so far as to proclaim that “the nineteenth century, which we would have liked to eliminate from our history, is the negation of the Spanish spirit” (quoted in Carr and Fusi 1981:109). Since the decline of Francoism, however, the overwhelming tendency has been to represent authoritarianism as a relic of the past and to describe the present and foreseeable future in terms of the urgency of promoting processes of political, economic, and cultural liberalization in order to become more “European.”²

Exactly what it means to be a member of a European liberal society is not altogether clear. These days, the terms “European” and “liberal” are both invoked in a wide variety of ways, and often what is taken for granted about them in one context is hotly disputed in another. For the present purposes, it will be sufficient to note a set of five characteristics of popular liberalism that would probably be accepted in some form or other by most contemporary Europeans. First, there is the core and largely unexamined conviction that human beings are most happy and fulfilled when they are most “free.” This implies that the preservation of the freedom to act autonomously and without the pressure of unnecessary constraints ought to take some precedence over other important values involving ideas of sociomoral order, authority, equality, and solidarity, particularly when stark conflicts between these values arise. Second, there is the idea that freedom and other values are best guaranteed in modern complex societies through the establishment and defense of a set of key institutions, principles, and practices. Examples include political self-determination and representative or participatory democracy, the rule of law, the existence of competitive but “regulated” market economies, respect for human rights, the provision of at least the most basic necessities of life to everyone, and the preservation of public and private spheres of social relations that are insulated from state power. Third, there is a recognition that contemporary European liberalism properly provides an umbrella of tolerance for a wide variety of ideological formulations, ranging from “neoliberal” laissez-faire free market fundamentalism to Christian socialism, and that the protection of this umbrella should extend even so far as to provide some shelter for positions that challenge the fundamental principles of liberalism itself. Fourth, because liberal societies are diverse and pluralistic, there is a recognition that the exercise of freedom within them will inevitably generate conflicts involving competition for leadership and involving struggles against political and economic domination but that these conflicts must somehow be limited and regulated for the good of individuals and society as a whole. Fifth, there is a general conviction that how-

ever broad the contemporary influence and appeal of liberalism may be, liberalism nonetheless primarily represents a collective, hard-won, and creative historical achievement of a family of peoples, cultures, and states whose roots lie in western Europe.³

Although many other factors and values in Spain and elsewhere shape the broader political culture for which liberalism provides a framework, the great majority of people in Spain today would, like most other West Europeans, probably assent to some version of liberalism similar to the one described above. Yet Spaniards are also acutely aware that not long ago many of their fellow citizens would have rejected crucial elements of this structure and that the processes of liberalization have been long, complex, and difficult. Indeed, recent versions of postwar Spanish history tend to describe liberalization as occurring in three overlapping phases, each of which is subject to further and more debatable subdivisions. The first phase was characterized by initially creeping and then galloping socioeconomic liberalization under the Franco regime. The second phase was marked by predominantly national political liberalization centered on the transition to and consolidation of parliamentary democracy during the mid-1970s and early 1980s. The third phase, which began in the mid-1980s and continues to date, is a period of comprehensive integration into the European Union (EU) and the broader system of transnational capitalism.⁴

In the 1950s, although Franco's ideologues proclaimed Spain's solitary grandeur as the staunchest defender of the spiritual values of Christendom against the red menace, western European states ostracized the Franco regime, which they regarded as the principal surviving fascist power on the continent. To overcome this isolation, Spain signed bilateral defense agreements with the United States and began to receive economic assistance from the U.S. government. Thus, Spain not only effectively became part of the Western anticommunist military alliance but also, and with no small irony, became heavily dependent on the diplomatic and material support of the U.S. government, the avatar of liberalism. This support did not resolve the problems created by Spanish economic autarky. But it did help clear the political way for young technocrats working within the Franco regime, who argued for economic modernization and subsequently secured World Bank assistance, courted foreign investment, and hatched numerous development schemes in 1959 and afterward. These efforts sparked a boom that transformed Spain from a backward, largely agrarian country into an essentially modern, urbanized, and industrialized society in the 1960s.

For the Franco regime, the risks involved in the transformation of Spanish society were obviously very great. The gamble was that increases in the standard of living, the provision of some basic social services, and the promise of greater prosperity in the future would lead most people to tolerate the lack of basic political freedoms in the present. Nevertheless, the social, cultural, and political forces unleashed by economic growth were difficult to control.

Urbanization, commercial expansion, and the growth of television and other mass media exposed Spanish society to the force of American and European popular culture. Industrial development created tensions that soon found expression in labor disputes and strikes. University unrest and student protests led to the creation of many quasi-political groups that nurtured a new generation of opposition leaders.

By the late 1960s, as Franco and his allies of the Civil War aged, they found themselves confronting a youthful and restive society that looked forward to sweeping reforms. Although Juan Carlos, the grandson of King Alfonso XIII, was installed on the throne, the government remained in the firm grip of Admiral Carrero Blanco, Franco's key minister and closest confidant. Meanwhile, the Franco regime continued to respond to the young opposition groups with a "bunker" plan, in which periods of tacit toleration and vocal threats were punctuated by interludes of outright and brutal repression. This scheme of control was frustrated in December 1973, when Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, the Basque revolutionary group commonly known as ETA, took responsibility for the "ascension" of the faithful admiral. Thanks to a car bomb planted by ETA, Admiral Carrero Blanco was nearly blown over the roof of the church in which he was accustomed to attending morning mass.

Despite the efforts of Francoists to shore up their crumbling regime, it fell within a few months of Franco's death on 20 November 1975. The regime collapsed under the mounting pressures exerted by the public at large and by political leaders. Foremost among the leaders was King Juan Carlos, who on 3 July 1976, to nearly everyone's surprise and the initial dismay of the regime's opponents, selected Adolfo Suárez, a second-tier and apparently "safe" Francoist, as president of a new government. With extraordinary speed, skill, and dedication, Suárez set about organizing the destruction of the existing order. In November 1976, the Francoist Cortes effectively committed suicide by approving a law of political reform that established a bicameral legislature elected by universal suffrage. This move won overwhelming popular support in a national referendum held a month later and set the direction for the second phase of postwar liberalization. In this phase, the primary aim was to create a viable set of national political institutions, parties, and practices that were, among other things, capable of removing obstacles to joining "Europe."

The first years of the Spanish transition from dictatorship to democracy were marked by a so-called *ruptura pactada*, a negotiated break from the legal framework of the Francoist state. Although it was called a rupture, the plan was engineered by Suárez in consultation with other political leaders and represented a determined effort not to create a crisis by purging and prosecuting corrupt Francoists or rooting out entrenched functionaries from every nook and cranny of the state. The plan's moderation and lack of recrimination enabled many Francoists to recast themselves as long-closeted democrats, but it also allowed the personalist and authoritarian political ethos of the dictatorship to

linger on long after the regime's demise, with some unpleasant consequences for Spanish politics that are still in evidence today.

In the spring of 1977, various political parties were reorganized or formed in anticipation of upcoming elections. The Communist party, *El Partido Comunista de España* (PCE), directed by Santiago Carillo, was legalized, despite the considerable risk of provoking a military reaction. Other parties included the following: a party of resurgent Socialists, called *El Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE) and headed by Felipe González; a broad coalition of center-right, mostly Christian Democrat groups, known as *La Unión Centro Democrático* (UCD) and led by Suárez; and a right-wing "neo-Francoist" party, called *La Alianza Popular* (AP) and led by Manuel Fraga. In June 1977, the first democratic general elections for the Cortes were held, and the UCD received a plurality (34 percent) of the votes and 168 seats in the Congress of Deputies. The PSOE closely followed the UCD with nearly 29 percent of the votes and 118 seats. The AP and the PCE both had significant and similar levels of support but trailed far behind the major parties. This nearly even split between right and left could well have led to a political stalemate reminiscent of the crisis-ridden Second Republic, but the leaders of the UCD, PSOE, and PCE decided to pursue a politics of consensus and to transform the Cortes into an assembly whose main mission was to draft a new constitution.⁵

The path for remaking the state was cleared by the Moncloa Pact of October 1977, an agreement between the government and all of the major political parties. In this pact on social and economic issues, the Socialists and Communists accepted a wage ceiling and used their influence to reduce the number of strikes occurring throughout the country in exchange for promises of agricultural, tax, and other reforms, most of which were never fulfilled. The monetarist strategy followed by the government on the basis of the pact reduced the inflation rate, but it also led to the collapse of many businesses and increased the level of unemployment to double digits, where it has remained to the present (see Camiller 1986; Salmon 1991). In addition to gaining the consent of the Spanish left to liberal policies that placed a heavier burden on workers than on anyone else, Suárez was able to win a grace period for drafting a constitution by taking steps to reassure moderate Basque and Catalán politicians that their demands for regional autonomy in the "new Spain" would be heeded.

The Constitution of Spain turned out to be a cumbersome, sometimes ambiguous charter that bears the marks of many ad hoc compromises. Even so, it clearly establishes Spain as "a social and democratic state ruled by law" in the form of a parliamentary monarchy. Under it, the king is granted substantial power as head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces, but the Constitution protects the basic rights and freedoms of all citizens; grants unions and political parties formal status; concedes the rights of "Spanish nationalities" and regions to autonomy; declares that the state has no "official religion"

(although it recognizes the important role of the Catholic church in society); and declares the legitimacy of free enterprise in a market economy.⁶ The document was approved by the Congress of Deputies and the Senate in October 1978, sanctioned by popular referendum in early December, and accepted by the king at the end of the year. Its adoption marked the formal beginning of the new liberal political order.

In light of the many accomplishments of 1977 and 1978, the leaders of the main political parties expected to see their political positions strengthened in the general elections of 1979. To their consternation, this did not occur. Although there was a sharp decline in votes for the AP and although the PSOE lost some support to regional parties in the Basque country and, most shockingly, to El Partido Socialista Andaluz (PSA) in its southern stronghold of Andalusia, the overall distribution of votes and seats among the parties was nearly the same as in 1977. Disappointment at these results sparked internal party struggles that had far-reaching consequences for each of them and for the liberal democratic order in Spain as a whole (see Colomé and López Nieto 1993; García Cotarelo and López Nieto 1988; Giner and Sevilla Guzman 1980; Gunther, Sani, and Shabad 1988; McDonough, Barnes, and López Pina 1986; Padró-Solanet 1996).

Suárez had called the elections with the aim of establishing the UCD as the dominant party of the center right. To accomplish this, he had broken with the policy of interparty cooperation and had begun directing a campaign based largely on a “red scare” strategy. When this strategy failed to achieve the desired results, it undermined the authority of Suárez and impeded his efforts to deal with intensified ETA bombings and attacks directed primarily against state security forces and to move the UCD toward the political center on a number of issues. Suárez’s weakness began to encourage a flare-up of the smoldering internal rivalries among the “barons” of the party’s many factions. By early 1981, the UCD was rapidly disintegrating, as dozens of its prominent figures fled into the ranks of the AP or the PSOE and others tried with little success to go it alone as leaders of minuscule parties. Suárez himself eventually became the leader of one of the largest, most lasting and influential of the splinter groups after resigning as prime minister and leaving the government in the hands of Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, a competent if uninspiring administrator who had few enemies in what remained of the UCD.

Unfortunately, the rise of Calvo Sotelo did nothing to reduce increasing public disillusionment with party politics or to discourage a small but well-positioned and not altogether unrepresentative group of military officers from launching a coup attempt, which had been rather transparently promoted by the various factions of the extreme right for months. Thanks primarily to the actions of the king, loyal officers, and others in the royal circle, the coup collapsed in eighteen hours—but not before providing the world with dramatic pictures of virtually the entire political leadership of democratic Spain held

captive in the Cortes under the wary eyes and threatening machine gun of Colonel Tejero of the Guardia Civil.

As awful as the coup attempt was, it had a salutary shock effect on the general public and on politicians. Millions of Spaniards participated in marches and demonstrations to reaffirm their commitment to the new democratic order, whatever its flaws. In addition, Calvo Sotelo was able to form a government that remained fairly stable, at least for a few months. His most notable achievement during this period was to tie Spain more firmly to the West by committing the country to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Although this move was opposed by the left and probably by a majority of the Spanish people, it facilitated the urgent task of “professionalizing” and depoliticizing the armed forces. Nevertheless, the increasing popularity of the PSOE indicated that the general elections scheduled for late 1982 would arrive none too soon.

The rise of the PSOE was linked to the decline of the UCD, but it also resulted from the virtual collapse of the PCE. The PCE’s acceptance of the monarchy, commitment to a series of Moncloa pacts, and embrace of remarkably bland Eurocommunist policies tended to confuse and disillusion its working-class militants but did not succeed in attracting new electoral support. As a result, Spanish voters deserted the PCE in massive numbers, and support for the party dropped by two-thirds to a mere 4 percent of the popular vote in the elections of 1982.

Meanwhile, the PSOE, steadily liberated from pressure on its left, underwent a process of internal transformation whose trajectory was nearly the opposite of the trajectories of the PCE and the UCD.⁷ Following the PSOE’s disappointing results in the election of 1979, the party’s two key leaders—Felipe González and Alfonso Guerra, both of Seville—sought to move the party to the right by sponsoring proposals to remove militant rhetoric and references to Marxism from the party platform. Although the general party congress of May 1979 rejected these proposals, González responded by resigning as general secretary and threw the PSOE into crisis. Over the summer, Guerra managed to institute new procedures for the selection of party delegates and the conduct of party meetings. In September, an extraordinary congress restored González to the leadership of a non-Marxist and indeed only vaguely socialist party whose new rules allowed far less scope for internal democratic debate and dissent from the policies of the triumphant “Felipistas.” Thus, in the run-up to 1982, the PSOE was able to present itself as a reunited and moderate social democratic party that actively sought the support of middle-class voters.

During the general election campaign, the PSOE defined itself as the party for change and criticized the opportunism of the fragmented right and the irresponsibility of the equally fragmented left. It also promised to create hundreds of thousands of new jobs and to hold a referendum on NATO membership. Much of the appeal of the PSOE lay in its ability to portray itself as a truly

modern force that would promote greater fairness and openness in government and administration and would more effectively address the complex problems involved in the creation of the new autonomous regions. The results of the PSOE campaign were stunning. The elections of October 1982 produced one of the greatest victories for the left in the history of European politics (Camiller 1986). The PSOE won twice as many votes as its nearest competitor, the AP; effectively destroyed the remnants of the UCD; won nearly 60 percent of the seats in the Cortes; and initiated a period of Socialist government that was to last fourteen years.

Once in office, the PSOE began to consolidate its emerging political hegemony by occupying every position of power that was open to it in state institutions and the public sector. It was so successful in this effort that Guerra was moved to declare that “outside the PSOE, there is nothing but a political desert” (quoted in Gillespie 1988:253). With its strong parliamentary majority, the government was able to pass a number of significant reform measures in the areas of defense, administration, taxation, and finance. In the long run, however, the PSOE’s greatest achievement, at least in conventional social democratic terms, was to universalize access to health care, education, and pensions. Efforts in this regard led to a steady rise in social welfare expenditures, which soon neared the West European average of 25–30 percent of gross domestic product.⁸

Extending the domestic welfare state was secondary to the PSOE’s overarching aim of integrating Spain into the broader liberal political and economic order of western Europe. Thus, in eager pursuit of modernization, the González government adopted economic policies that encouraged privatization and industrial concentration, controlled inflation, increased exports and foreign investment, and were generally in accord with the desires of Spanish and international finance. What the PSOE failed to do was to address the problem of increasing levels of unemployment. Indeed, rather than creating new jobs (as the PSOE had promised), the government’s policies contributed to the loss of nearly half a million more jobs within its first two years in office (Camiller 1986). In the realm of foreign policy, the PSOE leadership decided to reverse its anti-NATO position (see Gooch 1986), largely in order to pass the ideological litmus test devised by Great Britain and Germany for membership in the European Community (EC). Since it had been militants of the PSOE who had most vociferously advocated withdrawal from NATO through the device of a referendum, this placed the PSOE in the peculiar position of having to undertake a massive propaganda campaign to defeat its own earlier and erstwhile popular efforts to reestablish Spanish neutrality and autonomy in international affairs.⁹ Under the leadership of González, the PSOE announced that it would postpone the NATO referendum until March 1986. Then, having demonstrated to the political and economic leaders of the free world a willingness to sacrifice principle for advantage, the González

government reaped the reward for its historic reversals and signed the treaty for Spanish accession to the EC in June 1985.

Entrance into the EC and the recommitment to NATO marked the close of the second, predominantly political phase of postwar Spanish liberalization. The decade of transition from 1975 to 1985 had not only led to the institutionalization and consolidation of parliamentary democracy, but it had also steadily narrowed the range of viable options open to party politicians. The PSOE had gained electoral dominance and had adopted many policies and positions that were more consistent with center-right “bourgeois” conservatism than with democratic socialism. This meant that no national political force could hope to do more than steal votes from the PSOE’s disgruntled right or left flanks if it did not devise a strategy to attract support from the nonideological and moderate center, where most Spanish citizens had come rather apathetically to rest and recuperate from their recent prodemocratic exertions.

Although the PSOE lost some votes in the election of 1986, it preserved a substantial majority in the Congress of Deputies. Even so, the small decline in PSOE support reminded its leaders that as the party of government it could no longer define itself merely as “for change.” It had to present some compelling vision of the future. Increasingly, the project and rhetoric of fully integrating the country into “Europe” fit the bill because it neatly married interest to idealism by promising both a dramatic increase in domestic material prosperity and a greater involvement in the effort to overcome ancient national rivalries and promote international peace and harmony (see Holman 1996; Wigg 1988). Also, Spain’s initiation into the EC and the PSOE’s quest for revitalization roughly coincided with the passage in 1986 of the Single European Act, which set the basic course for the creation of the single European market in 1992 and also revived plans for greater political convergence and integration.

Well attuned to these developments, González was soon to be counted among the most ardent international and Spanish advocates not only of economic unification but also of greater political, social, and cultural cohesion for the EC. In fact, most other Spanish politicians were hardly less vocal in their endorsement of Spain’s “European vocation.” Regionalists in Catalonia and the Basque country saw “Europe” as a valuable counterweight to state centralism and Spanish nationalism. Leaders of the AP, who steadfastly continued to defend the “unity of Spain,” nevertheless viewed support for Europeanization as essential if they were to overcome the lingering taint of Francoism and successfully present their party as democratic, forward-looking, and moderate. This was particularly the case after 1989, when the AP renamed itself *El Partido Popular* (PP). In conjunction with this change, Manuel Fraga surrendered his position as national leader to the youthful José María Aznar in 1990. Aznar’s main appeal was that he was clearly not Fraga and could hardly be imagined in the role of a great dictator, but his political adolescence was

marred by a tendency to present himself as a wistful, oddly Chaplinesque imitation of Felipe González.

Thus, for a variety of political as well as pragmatic and idealistic reasons, Europeanism increasingly became the central unifying theme of Spanish politics in the third phase of postwar liberalization. Only a sector of the new Communist-led coalition, La Izquierda Unida (IU, or united left), expressed consistent and serious doubts about the risks entailed in jumping too quickly on board the speeding trans-Euro express.

Membership in the EC led to an astoundingly rapid transformation of many aspects of Spanish life in the late 1980s, as I had observed but not fully understood during my visit to Seville in 1990. The driving force behind this transformation was, as Alfred Tovias (1995:100) has remarked, not so much Spain's entry into Europe as it was "Europe's entry into Spain." Accession to the EC required a liberalization of the terms of trade and finance, and this quickly brought about a huge increase in foreign investments in Spain and led to a much more complete integration of Spain into the European and global economy. Transnational banks and firms forged numerous mergers and partnership agreements with Spain, and a flood of foreign consumer goods entered the country (Salmon 1995:73). On the one hand, because relatively few transnational corporations were based in Spain, the country became increasingly dependent, both technologically and financially, on foreign executives, experts, and investors. On the other hand, Spain's economy grew at an impressive annual rate of 5 percent between 1986 and 1990, and its gross domestic product per capita increased by 27 percent during the same period (Tovias 1995:99).

Overall economic prosperity and a rise in the standard of living for many Spaniards had a powerful impact on social attitudes and orientations. In the late 1980s, for the first time ever, a majority of the Spanish people began to identify themselves in public opinion surveys as "middle-class" in their basic values and aspirations.¹⁰ Most people seemed to accept the general direction of change, and EC flags and bumper stickers proliferated in the cities and countryside. Nevertheless, there were still many problems causing dissatisfaction within different sectors of Spanish society. ETA terrorism continued almost unabated. Many Basques, Cataláns, and others were frustrated by the slow devolution of power from Madrid to the autonomous regions. University students, small business owners, and workers often feared that their jobs and job prospects would be threatened by policies that had been designed to speed industrial reorganization and make Spain more competitive in the global economy, and many in these groups felt that the government was not doing nearly enough to minimize the negative impact of new policies on their lives (see Bruton 1991). As a result, university students sponsored demonstrations to demand greater accessibility to higher education and sweeping curricular reforms designed to increase the availability of technical

and professional training. In December 1988, unions organized a massive general strike to protest an increase in short-term labor contracts, inadequate unemployment support, and a number of government decisions that were disliked by the public at large.

Moreover, lurking just behind the generally optimistic surface of social and political life, there was a diffuse but expanding sense of annoyance, skepticism, and unease concerning the costs and consequences of rapid modernization. To some extent, this unease was fostered by the self-satisfaction and arrogance that some Socialist politicians and technocrats openly displayed with respect to their leadership roles and by the steadily mounting rumors and fragmentary reports of widespread political corruption, favoritism, and graft. More broadly, there was a perception that economic prosperity had not brought with it any resolution of basic social problems of fairness, equality, and solidarity, nor had it helped to reduce tensions among regional, class, and sectoral interest groups.

These doubts and problems were reflected in a decline of support for the PSOE in the general Spanish elections of 1989, thanks to which González's government barely managed to maintain a one-vote majority in the Congress of Deputies. None of this, however, did much to undermine Spaniards' basic and widespread faith in "Europeanization." On the contrary, the six-month tenure of González as president of the EC clearly helped to limit Socialist losses to the PP and the IU in 1989. In addition, the disintegration of state socialism in the east, Spain's active support for German reunification and for the Allies in the Gulf War, and the leading (and, on the whole, successful) role the Spanish government played in defending the interests of Mediterranean and even Latin American countries before the EC all tended to reinforce Spain's commitment to maintaining a united and strong Europe in the emergent and still quite obviously disorderly and precarious "new world order."

During the complex negotiations that resulted in the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which set the terms for European monetary union, the Spanish government argued for increased funding to achieve greater equality between the rich and poor regions of the EC, advocated the idea of general European citizenship and rights, sought to expand the powers of the European Parliament, and urged the development of mechanisms to enable EC members to formulate common positions on international and defense issues. In other words, the Spanish government demonstrated that it was willing to surrender a degree of national sovereignty and conform its foreign and domestic policies to those of the EC as a whole in the expectation of creating a more cohesive political as well as economic union. Moreover, while the signing of the Maastricht Treaty and related agreements on the new "European Union" immediately generated widespread concerns in many countries about the surrender of political, economic, and cultural autonomy to community bureaucrats in Brussels, a similar nationalist reaction did not occur in Spain. Although the Maastricht Treaty was rejected in a

public referendum in Denmark and barely survived a similar test in France, the Congress of Deputies in Spain approved the treaty by an overwhelming majority, with 314 votes cast for ratification, 3 votes cast against, and 8 abstentions (Ortega 1995:182). For all of these reasons, it is clear that 1992 was a year in which enthusiasm for a “Europe without borders” was particularly intense among the Spanish public.

In 1993, however, Spain began to feel the full impact of its economic liberalization policies and the lingering general European recession. Two devaluations of the peseta in quick succession and a sharp rise in unemployment made the public more aware of the broader socioeconomic consequences that would follow from austerity measures necessary for Spain to meet the requirements for monetary union in the late 1990s. In addition to having doubts about the Maastricht agenda and the pace of full integration into Europe, the Spanish public began to become disillusioned with the PSOE. As a result of questions about government policies and concerns about entrenched power, the PSOE failed to win a majority in the elections of 1993 and was forced to negotiate an informal and fragile parliamentary coalition with center-right Catalán and Basque regionalist parties in order to stay in office (see Lancaster 1994).

Even though the economy rebounded in late 1994 and 1995, during this period the PP and the IU were able to further undermine the position of the PSOE by focusing public attention on a seemingly never-ending series of cases of political corruption and especially on the activities of the members of a criminal conspiracy responsible for the clandestine “dirty war” against the ETA terrorists. The activities of the anti-ETA group led to the deaths of innocent people and were carried out with the knowledge and consent of a number of high officials. The possibility that government ministers—including, perhaps, González—were aware of the conspiracy raised grave doubts about the ministers’ commitment to the Constitution and the rule of law and forced the discredited PSOE to accede to demands for an early election.

The national election, which took place in March 1996, brought the uninterrupted fourteen-year reign of the PSOE to a close. But to the surprise of almost everyone, it did not result in a sweeping victory for the PP, headed by José María Aznar. Thanks in large measure to the efforts of the shrewd and still amazingly popular and trusted González, the PSOE managed to win 37 percent of the vote. Not only did this demonstrate the fundamental strength of the center left in Spain, but it also forced the PP to enter a coalition with a Catalán regionalist party to gain the parliamentary majority necessary to form a new government.

The end of the PSOE’s hold on power did not alter Spain’s basic commitment to strengthening the EU. On the contrary, despite the Bosnian debacle and other setbacks, popular support for almost every aspect of Europeanization remained high in Spain in the latter half of the 1990s; and the Aznar government, which won the election again in 2000 thanks to a booming economy and a

remarkably lackluster campaign by the new leadership of the PSOE, quickly showed its willingness to take any remaining steps necessary to achieve full integration into the new European political and economic order. Thus, in little more than two decades, Spain has been transformed from a marginal nation struggling to escape from the confines of a claustrophobic dictatorship into an essentially pluralistic, tolerant, and free society populated by forward-looking and outwardly directed “Euro-optimists.” Or so, perhaps just a tad too superficially, it seems.

But setting problems of appearance and reality aside for the present, it is not difficult to see that the processes of liberalization sketched above are relevant to understanding the nature and significance of Expo '92. For now, it is enough to observe that many of the sharpest twists and turns in the long road to liberalization also mark key turning points in the history of the Expo. For example, King Juan Carlos first publicly proposed a celebration of 1992 at a critical moment in the transition from dictatorship to democracy—namely, in the early summer of 1976, just before he appointed Adolfo Suárez the new head of government. The official decision to hold the Expo was made in 1982, just when control of the government and state was passing from the UCD to the PSOE. The basic design and plans for the event were formulated in 1985 and 1986, in conjunction with Spain's entrance into the EC and recommitment to NATO. The construction of the Expo buildings occurred in conjunction with the economic boom propelled by “Europe's entry into Spain.” The Expo and other events of the miraculous year were held when the “spirit of Maastricht” was at its height but the popularity of the PSOE was in decline. And efforts to transform the site of the Expo into a center for advanced technology and economic development after 1993 were undertaken in the midst of recession and a crisis in employment. Although Spanish officials represented the Expo as the best of all possible islands because it offered a comprehensive and optimistic vision of the past, present, and future of global civilization, there is every reason to suppose that this vision was itself decisively shaped by the specific historical forces that were at work during a short but critical period of rapid sociopolitical, cultural, and economic transformation in Spain and Europe.

But if to understand the Expo it is necessary to consider it as a product of the processes, politics, and culture of liberalization and Europeanization that emerged and became dominant in Spain during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, might not something like the reverse also be true? In other words, could the Expo be viewed not only as a product of encompassing processes of liberalization but also as a kind of high-pressure laboratory or factory in which new transnational forms of liberalized sociopolitical relations, cultural representations, and ideological legitimations were being concocted out of already existing materials and tested in preparation for broader distribution and circulation throughout the new Spain, the new Europe, and the new world order? This possibility had barely occurred to me in the late spring of 1992, when I

was pondering what an ethnographic account of such a peculiar event in the midst of such an extraordinary period might eventually look like. But as time passed, the idea assumed greater and greater importance.

4. Relocating the Subject: Macroethnography and Cosmopolitan Liberalism

As I became increasingly aware of the relationship between the Expo and processes of liberalization, I began to investigate four broad and overlapping topics that would cast different sorts of light on this relationship.

The first topic concerned the origins and development of the Expo as a nonpartisan project of the Spanish state. Although the idea for the Expo had originated with the king and his circle, it had gained at least the nominal support of all sectors of the national “political class” by the early 1980s. Even so, the ultimate success of the project hinged on winning the participation of other countries, transnational corporations, intergovernmental bodies of the European Community, international organizations, and regional governments in Spain—each of which sought to promote its own interests and perspectives. As a result, throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, there was a seemingly endless series of negotiations conducted primarily by Expo officials and Spanish diplomats. The outcomes of these negotiations influenced the basic design and most of the details of the Expo. By charting the course of these courtships, I believed that it would be possible to understand how the position of Spain and of other states and institutions within the shifting international politicoeconomic and cultural order of existing liberalism was represented through the structure, themes, and organization of the exposition.

The second topic to investigate was how the political dominance of the Socialist party in Spain and Andalusia affected events in Seville. Although the Expo was formally a nonpartisan project of the state, primary responsibility for it rested in the hands of the various Socialist governments in Madrid for most of the Expo’s history, and it was obvious that the project had been powerfully conditioned not only by international factors but also by domestic politics and the efforts of a variety of actors and groups to gain the upper political hand by building winning coalitions or by preventing their adversaries from doing so. Therefore, what I wanted to know was how the Socialists’ efforts to turn the Expo to their partisan advantage had shaped the event and how this, in turn, had influenced the Expo’s larger significance.

The third topic to explore was the dynamics of the Expo as an unfolding public and media event. The primary way in which the Expo presented itself to

its visitors and the world was as a prepackaged and relatively static array of thematically organized pavilions, displays, and images. Nevertheless, the meanings and values of the Expo's material forms were subject to constant official and media interpretation, reinterpretation, and commentary over the course of the Expo's six-month duration. Thus, there were many different versions of the Expo presented over time in accordance with who was talking or acting, when, and under what circumstances. From this perspective, one of the key questions posed by the event was how and to what extent the unceasing babble and bustle of Expo ceremonies, speeches, and entertainments altered the highly structured ways of viewing the world conveyed by the Expo's material images and official themes.

The fourth topic to investigate was how the Expo's various audiences and participants actually encountered and talked about the event. Although the Expo was primarily intended to appeal to a mass audience of Spanish and European visitors, it was by no means clear that anything approaching a broad consensus of opinion about the meaning, value, or success of the event existed or would finally emerge. On the contrary, it seemed likely that local tour guides, supervisors of foreign national pavilions, maintenance workers, Sevillanos denied season passes, Spaniards traveling from northern regions of the country and stopping by for a day or two on their way to the beach, and German tourists attending both the Olympics and the Expo—to mention only a few of the possibilities—would respond to the Expo quite differently not only because they would be exposed to different facets of the event but also because they would bring along with them quite different personal and social expectations that would shape their understanding of it. Thus, to say anything at all convincing about the broad impact and efficacy of the Expo with respect to the cultural politics of liberalism, it was imperative to gain some sense of at least the most salient factors and dispositions that conditioned how different sorts of people experienced the event.

Guided by, or perhaps burdened with, these four rather disparate topics for investigation, I began the most intense period of my field research by arranging a series of interviews with present and former Expo and Seville officials and functionaries. I also continued to amass and read more than a decade's worth of official documents and newspaper accounts relevant to understanding the event. I discovered much more about the general history of the Expo and how it had affected life in Seville than I had known before, and I also slowly began to piece together an account of the intricate, shifting, and partly hidden political strategies and tactics that had surrounded and permeated the project from its very beginning. However, I had to postpone much of the research on my first two topics until after the summer and early fall of 1992, because it was urgent to observe the Expo and to talk to as many people as possible about it before it closed in October.

I generally spent three or four days of most weeks in or around the Expo site, visiting pavilions and attending a long string of speeches, ceremonies,

temporary exhibits, and performances. I was usually alone but was sometimes accompanied by my family and friends from Aracena or Seville. I also had hundreds of casual conversations with visitors about the event and related topics. On the whole, these informal “interviews” were remarkably easy and pleasurable to do, especially on crowded days when people were bored with waiting in long lines or in the late afternoons when they sought rest or refuge from the heat. In the evenings, while I waited for something or other to begin, I often passed the time by nursing a five-dollar beer and filling in sketchy notes about what I had seen and heard earlier. Clearly, in the larger anthropological scheme of things, fieldwork at the Expo did not qualify as hardship duty. But why, I guiltily asked myself, endure the travails of a quest for some remote and pristine ethnographic El Dorado when I could visit what the Expo promoters called “the whole world in a day?” Yet not quite everything about my direct encounter with the Expo was sweetness and light in the lap of luxury. Two developments prevented me from becoming enthralled by its comfortable charms.

A good while before arriving in Spain with Sharon, my wife, we had decided that it would be better to live in Aracena than in Seville during the Expo. This was partly for the sake of our budget but primarily for the sake of our four-year-old son. It would be far better for him to be free to play and roam with the children of our friends in a quiet and safe town than to be isolated in a dingy, overpriced apartment in a badly overcrowded city. Initially, then, I thought of the countless trips to Seville and the other liabilities involved in doing commuter ethnography simply as a professional price that had to be paid in exchange for personal benefits. Soon, though, I realized that every day I was encountering what seemed like a critically important but quite mystifying puzzle: Why were all of my most esteemed friends and the majority of townspeople in Aracena so vastly (and for me, at first, annoyingly) indifferent to events that were drawing worldwide attention barely an hour’s easy drive away? It was all well and good to consider what visitors to the Expo thought about it, but what about the hundreds of thousands of nearby Andalusians who often frankly did not give a damn? What did this suggest about the broader politics and culture of liberalism of which the Expo was a part?

While I was wondering if my hitherto esteemed friends were just a bunch of dull provincials, a new development occurred and began to restore my respect for their judgment. Just as the public crisis concerning season passes for Expo was reaching its final frustrating conclusion, my own private and extended efforts to gain access to everything I needed to know about the Expo took an abrupt turn for the worse. To make a long story short: There I was—a scholar well-armed with government approval for my research, with a grant from Spain’s own ministry of culture, and with some good personal contacts—and when I sought pro forma permission from the Expo organizers to conduct research on the Expo site, I ran into a bureaucratic stonewall. This led to a direct and heated confrontation with a high official of the Expo, who offered a

“compromise” solution that I rejected as an affront to and assault on scholarly independence. But having escaped from this encounter with some semblance of professional integrity (barely) intact, I was still faced with the dilemma of whether I should make my difficulties public at a time when tensions between the Expo and Seville would have made them a hot story for the local press. For a number of reasons, I was sufficiently chagrined by my loss of innocence that I chose instead simply to cultivate my various existing gardens more diligently.

The proprietary attitude of Expo officials and the indifference that my Aracena friends showed toward the Expo together exerted a powerful distancing and alienating effect on my view of the events of 1992. I had been disposed initially to see the Expo in the best possible light, but now I became much more skeptical about the whole project. I must confess that the line separating ethnographic realism from skeptical cultural criticism had begun to become somewhat blurry for me at this time.

However, after the conclusion of my research in Andalusia in 1992, I saw the principal task before me as one of constructing a “macroethnography” of the Expo. I first heard this term used by Michael Herzfeld during a lecture in which he urged anthropologists to supplement what they discovered through the use of traditional methods of direct participant observation with other types of information and evidence derived from “secondary” sources, such as archives, historical and literary works, and print and electronic media.¹ The basic idea, as I understood it, was to extend the range of ethnographic interpretation by taking into account large sociopolitical formations and cultural processes, such as nation-states and nationalism, without sacrificing the virtues of contextual holism and interpretive particularism that have long characterized anthropological accounts of much smaller units of analysis, such as rural communities and local customs.

To offer a macroethnographic account of the Expo, I needed a format that would allow me to show how interlinked but partially autonomous sociopolitical and cultural processes of widely varying scope, intensity, focus, and duration had affected one another and shaped the Expo as a complex event. The best format, I concluded, would be an episodic and discontinuous narrative history that would make it relatively easy to shift interpretive attention back and forth, sometimes focusing on the “little worlds” of the Expo, its visitors, Seville, and surrounding areas of Andalusia and other times focusing on the “big worlds” of international power relations, economic globalization, national politics, and the like. This is why my exposition of the Universal Exposition is broken into twenty-four substantive and interpretive essays. The essays are arranged in six overlapping parts that loosely correspond with the chronological stages of the Expo’s development and also signal shifts in primary interpretive and analytic focus.

Part I, “Guidelines: Contemporary Ethnography and the New World Order in Spain,” has described the Expo in the context of contemporary Spain

and contemporary ethnography. Part II, "Origins and Structures: The State, the Party, and the Expo," focuses on the period from 1976 to 1990. It describes how the status of the universal exposition as a project of the state and of the governing Socialist party, as well as the difficulties involved in winning the participation of countries around the world, led to an event in which traditional symbols of national unity and identity were virtually banished from the site and supplanted by celebratory images of cultural and political pluralism. Part III, "Conjunctures and Conflicts: Technobureaucracy and the City," focuses on bureaucratic struggles and rivalries inside the Expo organization in 1989, 1990, 1991, and 1992. It explores how the struggles generated an event that had two sharply contrasting faces—one of which could be characterized as high-brow, humanistic, historical, and educational, and the other of which emphasized science and technology, mass entertainment, the future, and the economic bottom line. In addition, this part examines how the struggles inside the Expo influenced electoral politics in Seville and eventually sparked a revival of an oppositional "antipolitical politics" shaped by tradition-based local egalitarian and populist sentiment. The next two parts concentrate on the period from April 1992 to October 1992. Part IV, "Pavilions and Performances: The Expo as Cultural Olympics," considers the Expo as a media event in which official participants engaged in a sometimes tacit and sometimes overt competition with one another in order to present their countries and institutions in the best possible light. Part V, "Dispositions and Practices: The Sense of Freedom and the Politics of Daily Life," discusses the experiences and opinions of representatives from the Expo's various audiences and explores the gap that existed between what the Expo's organizers hoped to communicate and achieve in 1992 and what the event actually meant to those who built, visited, protested, and renounced it. Part VI, "The Aftermath," deals with the period from late 1992 to 2001, describes what happened on La Isla de la Cartuja after the Expo ended, and discusses how developments on the island have influenced the ways in which the Expo is being remembered and evaluated in Seville. The "macroethnography" concludes by showing the links between the local history and events presented here and the broader political and cultural tendencies and dilemmas in fin de siècle and fin de millennium Spain and Europe. The work as a whole thus represents a history of the political culture of contemporary Spain as viewed through the ethnographic prism of a single event.

But what is to be learned from this ethnographic history? As suggested earlier, the Expo was more than simply a product of the transition to a liberal, democratic order in post-Franco Spain. It was also a forum for advancing visions of the future of Spain, Europe, and the new world order. Seen from this perspective, the Expo can be considered to have fostered and promoted a view of the world in keeping with the tenets of what may be called "cosmopolitan liberalism." My exploration of the tensions between cosmopolitan liberalism and the local egalitarian and populist traditions and impulses in Seville is what

ultimately gives my account of the history of the Expo its overall analytic coherence and interpretive focus.

In using the term “cosmopolitan liberalism,” I mean to refer to a highly contested and still somewhat inchoate configuration of cultural and political representations, values, images, and practices—a configuration that has already exerted a powerful influence on politics and daily life in contemporary Spain, Europe, and elsewhere and may yet crystalize into the dominant ideological formation of the twenty-first century.² Cosmopolitan liberalism involves a reworking of some of the elements of conventional liberalism in ways that are better suited to the recent, rapid, and radical transformations of the global political and economic order. It thereby encompasses a complex set of responses to various actual or looming crises of legitimation and cultural authority that have been generated over the last two or more decades by shifts in global power arrangements, communications technologies, transnational patterns of production, exchange and capital accumulation, and the decline and collapse of state socialism.

While there is no satisfactory way of briefly summarizing the philosophical views of human nature, history, and society on which the principles of cosmopolitan liberalism depend, it is at least important to note the following: Like other forms of liberalism, cosmopolitan liberalism ultimately derives most of its intellectual and cultural authority from its association with (1) a universalizing minimalist ethical humanism of individual rights and freedoms and (2) a maximalist philosophical and scientific rationalism that constitutes human beings, history, societies, and cultures as objects of knowledge, judgment, and governance. Both of these elements reflect an Enlightenment heritage.³ This philosophical tradition is important to bear in mind because it has influenced the most politically highly charged feature of contemporary cosmopolitan liberalism—namely, its preoccupation with and peculiarly naturalized and bipolar vision of the historical and contemporary significance of pluralism and cultural diversity.

On the one hand, cultural diversity is represented as an expression of human freedom and a vital source, impetus, and locus of organic creativity and vitality. *Vive la différence* and, with it, innovation, change, imagination, art, invention, spirituality, happiness, wealth, progress, good ethnic restaurants—in short, most of the promise of civilized life and the proffered pleasures of Expo '92. On the other hand, cultural differences are depicted as the root cause of most conflict, hatred, intolerance, and human suffering. In this respect, cosmopolitan liberalism is defined as the adversary of all forms of fundamentalism, essentialism, and religious, ideological, racial, and ethnic extremism that attempt to impose an excessive and divisive order on life but in so doing almost inevitably degenerate into violent anarchy and chaos. As a result, cosmopolitan liberalism tends to regard cultural differences—all the various categories of thought, action, and relationships that are constituted as otherness—either as

fertile grounds to be cultivated and harvested or as wild kingdoms, full of threatening beasts to be tamed. This is to say that because of these polarized perceptions of the possibilities and dangers of otherness, contemporary cosmopolitan liberalism tends to define its primary political and cultural responsibility as one of domesticating the world and thereby making cultural differences both safe and productive.

Every liberal tradition has a favored repertoire of normative prescriptions and coercive, tutelary, disciplinary, and regulatory strategies for counterbalancing freedom with the requirements of sociopolitical order. However, what distinguishes contemporary cosmopolitan liberalism from its liberal siblings and ancestors is the special priority that it gives to perspectives and projects which promote and create structures that mediate diversity and differences of all kinds at every level of social relations and thereby supposedly reduce conflict. In other words, cosmopolitan liberalism places the highest value on any institution or activity that can be construed as fostering interchanges, which bring divergent traditions, values, practices, and forms of meaning and identity into active interrelationships with one another in ways that generate new forms of interdependency.

In the economic sphere, for instance, the expansion of free trade and the fluid movement of global capital are celebrated not merely because they promise to increase wealth and gradually improve conditions of life everywhere but also because they create pathways that bring peoples and cultures together and generate new forms of communication and interaction. From this perspective, basic processes of commodification function to mediate differences by making divergent values and interests at least partially commensurate with one another. For example, when the government of Papua New Guinea purchases some carved wooden masks from people of its Sepik River region, transports them to its pavilion at the Seville Expo, and places them on sale at a price that may be tempting, say, to a visiting American anthropologist, several things occur: Indigenous people are brought into the global cash nexus and are further incorporated into a state system; a sacred artifact is reobjectified and transvalued into a profane commodity but as folk “art” still manages to retain an aura of the exotic and spiritual; and a skeptical scholar becomes a sated consumer (“Damn, what a beauty this mask is; what a deal; what a wonderful world!”). From the perspective of cosmopolitan liberalism, all this is regarded positively insofar as it can be construed as domesticating without wholly obliterating cultural differences and as reducing the chances of discord and confrontation along several axes of economic, social, political, and cultural relations.

Such exchanges can be seen as contributing to the creation of an emergent world cultural ecumene characterized by the proliferation of what Richard Wilk (1995) aptly terms “structures of common difference” that permit diversity and competition but limit and discourage conflict. Wilk discusses beauty pageants in Belize and the Caribbean, but what he says of them can be applied

equally to the Expo in Seville, the Olympics in Barcelona, and countless other contemporary cultural phenomena ranging from soap operas to popular music genres that bring people from diverse cultural traditions either directly or indirectly together. Indeed, according to the Office of the Commissioner General of the Universal Exposition, one of the key justifications for the Expo was that it would help to forge “solidarity through interchange” in ways that might ultimately lead to the creation of “one single world common to all its inhabitants” (see OCGE 1987:8).

Yet the full cultural force that cosmopolitan liberalism exerts by giving pride of place to strategies for the mediation and domestication of differences can be appreciated best when it is considered from a more directly political perspective. In this sphere what is distinctive about cosmopolitan liberalism is the stress that it places on gradually transforming an international regime based on the sovereign power of nation-states. In the interests of freedom, peace, and progress, critical dimensions of state power should be partially or wholly devolved and redistributed not just “upward” to suprastate and transnational bodies (such as the European Union and the Andean Pact) but also “downward” to subnational regional or ethnic and political communities (such as Catalonia and Scotland) and “outward” to public and private entities (such as national and transnational corporations, autonomously chartered banks and agencies, and nongovernmental organizations). This does not mean, however, that the state itself, much less the forms of coercive and regulatory power associated with it, will wither away (increasingly, a neoliberal as well as a Marxist fantasy). On the contrary, intrinsic to the logic of cosmopolitan liberalism is the notion that even as the state divests itself of some of its monopolies, it must also shoulder many of the new burdens involved in the increasingly indispensable and multi-dimensional functions of policing and coordinating the dense networks of interrelationships that exist among overlapping but quasi-autonomous entities, interests, processes, peoples, and cultures. Indeed, this vision of interactive, intermediary cosmopolitan polities that orchestrate ever-increasing multilayered interdependence and heterogeneity goes well beyond the concepts of mediation as interest balancing or as compensatory equalization by a centralized authority as they have been elaborated in either the *laissez-faire* versions or the welfare state versions of classic liberalism.⁴

Even though the appeal of cosmopolitan liberalism is not limited to any one group, its way of viewing the world is clearly most attractive to and consistent with the training, experience, interests, and functions of a particular class group. This group consists of the higher tiers of professionals, managers, career politicians, bureaucrats, executive officers, and the many sorts of technical, academic, and policy advisers who are supposed to be essential for the smooth day-to-day functioning and long-term development and integration of the new global political economy. This is the group whose members are best positioned to be the primary mediators and domesticators of

cultural differences in the contemporary world and whose members are both qualified and inclined to approach most of the difficulties they face as a series of “problems” that can best be resolved through the systematic development and application of disciplines, policies, and programs which are represented as nonideological, nonpartisan, and pragmatic in their essential aims and spirit.⁵

Yet as the affair of the season passes and much else about the Expo suggests, the relationship between cosmopolitan elites and ordinary citizens is far more troubled and contentious than the Expo’s pavilions, programs, and representations ever indicated. Indeed, although the Expo was touted as a celebration of the achievements and promise of the new democratic Spain within the new order of a cosmopolitan and liberal European Union, the cultural politics of class, national, and regional identity that surrounded the event suggest a condition of present stasis and possibly impending crisis in processes of democratization. As corporate elites and state experts invoked ideals of freedom and tolerance and diversity in ways that furthered the concentration of technocorporate power in their own hands, many citizens of Seville felt compelled to reassert their own sense of cultural and to some extent political autonomy, while other protesters and critics discovered that their populist, egalitarian versions of cosmopolitanism were deemed beyond the bounds of legitimacy. Ultimately, however, the outcome of this contest was from most perspectives a less than inspiring political and cultural stalemate—a tempest in a teakettle. So even if, as seems likely, ordinary people and committed dissenters alike persist in their efforts to advance alternative visions of how to be citizens of their homelands and the world, what happened at the Expo does little to reassure us that such efforts will necessarily lead to a significant democratic transformation of sociopolitical relations anytime soon.

In these circumstances, perhaps the most important contribution that an ethnographic study of the Expo can make is to help us better understand in what ways cosmopolitan liberalism encourages and in what ways it impedes the realization of more democratic, egalitarian, and just societies. From this perspective, my account of the Expo can be seen as a step toward the further development of a set of neo-Toquevillean ethnographic projects and themes within the anthropology of Europe whose general aim ought to be to explore the varieties of actually existing European liberalism (see also Verdery 1997) in order to better understand how notions of freedom, tolerance, equality, democracy, the individual, civil society, and the state vary in expression and practice from place to place, from time to time, and according to people’s social positions, immediate circumstances, and life trajectories.⁶ Without such work, we are unlikely to understand why, as John Borneman and Nick Fowler (1997:510) have observed, processes of Europeanization appear to be locked in an almost “manic-depressive cycle” of “Europhoria” and “Europessimism.” Nor will we be likely to conceive or advance any useful alternatives to this pattern.