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THE PARTY SYSTEMS OF SPAIN: OLD CLEAVAGES AND NEW CHALLENGES

Juan J. Linz and José Ramón Montero

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Juan J. Linz is Sterling Professor of Political and Social Science at Yale University. José Ramón Montero is Professor of Political Science at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and at the Center for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences, Juan March Institute, Madrid.

Introduction*

When Lipset and Rokkan planned *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, one of us wrote a chapter on "The Party System of Spain, Past and Future" (Linz 1967). At that time Spain was an authoritarian regime with a single party, and the emergence of a competitive party system was merely a hope for the future. Ten years later, the first free election was held on June 15 1977, over 40 years after the last democratic consultation under the Republic in 1936. Since 1977, dozens of elections have been held for the two chambers of the Cortes, the 17 parliaments of the autonomous communities, over 8,000 town councils and the European Parliament. In contrast with the elections held under the liberal Restoration monarchy and those of the Second Republic, these recent ballots have proceeded with complete normality, and in some cases have proved typically dull. Nevertheless, they are no less significant for that. At the political level, elections have played a vital role in the consolidation of democracy: they have served to ratify the new Constitution, reaffirm the legitimacy of the new regime after the failed coup attempt in 1981, change the party in government on two occasions, replace the administrations of all the local councils, construct the complex *Estado de las Autonomías*, as well as to allow Spain to participate in European politics through its own elected representatives in the European Parliament. In other words, electoral processes and interparty competition have sealed the definitive break with a past of discontinuity, fraud, and polarisation, and guaranteed Spain's admission into the select club of countries with stable and efficient democratic systems.

Spanish elections are also significant at the theoretical level. The establishment of a new democracy places Spain alongside Italy and Germany, as well as the former Eastern bloc, among the countries with a history of discontinuous democratic party politics. Although there are some continuities with the past, they were always particularly weak, not surprisingly so given that Franco came to power in 1939 and died in 1975, thereby surviving much longer than Mussolini and Hitler. This also meant that the return to party politics took place in a different historical context to that existing in Western Europe after World War II, with the result that the Spanish

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parties and their patterns of interactions may be considered to be distinctively new (Linz 1980a). Hence, Spanish elections provide a unique opportunity to identify some of the peculiarities of electoral behaviour and party competition in comparison with similar processes in some Western European democracies in the 1940s, or in the new Central and Eastern European countries in the 1990s.

In this paper we examine the relations between these new parties and the electorate, the current articulation of old cleavages, and the factors that structure interparty competition. We will analyze Spanish party *systems*, rather than *a* party system, a feature that makes Spain quite unique in Western Europe. This situation reflects both the relevance of peripheral nationalisms and the series of major electoral changes that have marked the transition to and consolidation of democracy. Spain is a multinational, multicultural, multilingual, and a type of *asymmetric* federal state (indeed, the largest one in Western Europe), in which the nationwide[1] party system coexists with a number of regional party systems.[2] In each of these, a particular nationalist or regionalist party or parties play a decisive role, the regional cleavage has a different impact on electoral behaviour, and distinct patterns of competition operate in both the Cortes and regional parliaments. Moreover, over the last twenty years, major changes have taken place in both the format and the mechanics of party competition at the national level which allow us to distinguish three periods each characterized by distinct party systems, or at least different party formats. A fundamental change occurred in 1982, with the disappearance of a major party, the UCD (*Unión de Centro Democrático*), which had won a plurality in 1977 and 1979 and played a crucial role in the successful return to democracy. The resulting electoral realignment produced a change from a moderate multiparty system to one that seemed likely to develop into a predominant party system led by the PSOE (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*). After a decade of PSOE dominance, in the 1990s there has been a return to the moderate multiparty system at the

[1] In this chapter and in the next one we will talk about nation-, state-, or Spain-wide parties to distinguish them from the nationalist or regionalist parties, since although most Spaniards consider Spain to be a nation state, others see it as a state comprised of several nations. We use the terms nationalist or regionalist to refer to the respective type of parties, rather than merging them under the broader label of ethnoregionalist parties.

[2] The multilevel coexistence of nation and some relevant regions distinguishes Spain from Belgium. The disintegration of the Belgian party system since 1978 has given birth to two distinct party systems (the French-speaking and the Flemish-speaking one), to the point that there are no longer Belgian parties, but only Flemish and Francophone wings of traditional Socialist and Christian parties, in addition to other minor regionalist parties, all of which appeal to their respective regional electorates; see De Winter (1998, 240).

nationwide level. The disappearance of the UCD, the changes in the identity of the leading parties and the series of distinct party formats are probably unique in the context of democratic politics in any European country. The existence of these peculiarly sharp turning points also justifies our use of the rare plural in referring to "party *systems*" rather than the more usual, "*a* party system", which appeared in the title of Linz's chapter in the volume edited by Lipset and Rokkan.

This paper will also differ from that 1967 text in two other key respects. We can now take advantage of a huge amount of survey data on public opinion as it has evolved since 1976, the profiles of the voters of the different parties, and the contours of the most important cleavages for electoral competition.[3] We can also benefit from the huge literature that now exists on Spanish electoral behaviour, political parties and political attitudes, both in different regions and at the nationwide level.[4] Unlike the situation thirty years ago, the existence of these sources means that the Spanish case can serve as a type of political laboratory in which to examine relations between voters and their parties, patterns of interparty competition, and the social or ideological bases of electoral decisions.

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[3] Most of the survey data come from the *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (CIS), a government-run research centre which has carried out hundreds of surveys, many of them on elections, over the last twenty years. The series of surveys sponsored by the *Fundación Foessa* (*Fomento de Estudios Sociales y de Sociología Aplicada*) have also been decisive for the publication of a number of essential studies. See, for instance, *Fundación Foessa* (1976 and 1983), Linz et al. (1981) and Juárez (1994). Different researchers have produced numerous electoral studies in collaboration with the firm DATA. These include Linz et al. (1981), Gunther, Sani and Shabad (1986), Linz and Montero (1986) and Montero (1994). Equally, for a number of years the CIRES (Centro de Estudios para la Realidad Social) has produced systematic surveys of different political, social and cultural questions; see its reports (and in particular its most recent surveys, CIRES 1997). Spain has participated also in the 1980 and 1991 European Values Study; see Orizo (1991). There are also many electoral analyses based on surveys designed and carried out for the particular research purposes of their authors.

[4] There are now too many studies on those topics to be cited here. For some specific bibliographies see Montero and Pallarès (1992), Gómez Yáñez (1989), Díaz Martínez (1992), and Ruiz (1997). Given the character of this paper, we can only refer the reader to general works on electoral behavior such as Linz et al. (1981), Caciagli (1986), Gunther, Sani and Shabad (1986), Linz and Montero (1986), and Del Castillo (1994). On the party system, see Linz (1980a), Ramírez (1991) and Bar (1985). On political attitudes, see Montero and Torcal (1990), Torcal (1995), Maravall and Santamaría (1986), Morán and Benedicto (1995), and Montero, Gunther, and Torcal (1998). Additional references on democratic transition can be found in the analyses by Linz and Stepan (1996), Maravall (1984 and 1997), Gunther (1992) and Morlino (1998).

The Future That Was Not, or Was It?

A re-reading of the pages in the Lipset and Rokkan volume devoted to the future development of the Spanish political system is a strange experience (Linz 1967, 264-275). Although the discontinuities in party politics meant that some words of caution were included there, the changes that took place between the 1930s and 1960s were much greater than those anticipated by most political observers. Those pages presented not only a wide range of scenarios and open possibilities, but also a number of predictions, many of which were fulfilled while others, actually or apparently, were disproved. In 1967, it was impossible to know if a monarchy, and particularly a constitutional monarchy, would be consolidated, or whether the alternative monarchy versus republic would become a major issue. Nor to imagine that the mechanisms of consensus that characterized the transition from the authoritarian regime would allow the legitimisation of the monarchy in a democratic referendum, or that the role played by the King would confirm and seal the absence of debate on the monarchy-republic question. Spain thus became the only country of the third wave of democratization in which the transition process opened with the establishment, or the restoration, of a monarchy (Powell 1991; Podolny 1993). Other points made in that chapter were more debatable. The prediction that none of the many bourgeois Republican parties that played such an important role between 1931 and 1936 would reappear was validated. It did not seem unreasonable to expect that an extreme right-wing party defending continuity with the Franco regime would hold on to some voters. However, this would not happen, initially because, before the first free election, Adolfo Suárez, the prime minister, dissolved the official party and transferred its assets to the state.[5] Furthermore, the existing neo-fascist parties were definitively weakened by the characteristics of the transition to democracy. The mechanisms of the *reforma pactada-ruptura pactada* (negotiated reform-negotiated break) in general, and particularly the formation of the UCD and the presence of AP (*Alianza Popular*), a conservative party committed to the democratic constitution without fully rejecting the past, deprived those parties nostalgic for the authoritarian regime of their electoral space (Linz et al. 1981, 587ff). In addition, the neo-fascist groups that

[5] This is, incidentally, a major difference with respect to many of the post-communist democracies, where a successor to the communist party was allowed to participate in the elections and often retained control of the resources it had accumulated as a state party. In some cases (including those of the BSP in Bulgaria and the National Salvation Front in Rumania), this enabled them to win the first elections.

did exist were both isolated and divided (Rodríguez Jiménez 1997, 444; Jabardo 1996): after receiving a minuscule 1 percent of the popular vote in 1977, only in 1979 did a coalition of small extreme right-wing groups win a single seat (only to lose it definitively in the next elections). In this way, neo-fascism and the antidemocratic Right were weaker than in Italy and even in Germany. As for the Left, the analysis did not make systematic predictions about the relative strength of the communists and socialists. Nonetheless, the general impression existing at the time regarding the significance of the PCI (*Partito Communista Italiano*) and the prominence of the communists in the opposition to Franco in the workplace, universities and even among the liberal professions, meant that communist electoral support was overestimated. Similarly, it was predicted that the PCE (*Partido Comunista de España*) would also have to compete with some small parties on the far Left, and that the anarchist labour organization, the CNT (*Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*), as well as its political wing, the FAI (*Federación Anarquista Ibérica*), would be another victim of discontinuity and change.

The analysis was fundamentally the result of applying the patterns of political behaviour of Italians on the basis of the estimates of Mattei Dogan (1967) to the Spanish social structure of 1964: in other words, from analyzing what the outcome in terms of the popular vote would be if the Spanish electorate were to vote like the Italians (bearing in mind the differences in the social structures of the two countries). As was noted at the time, this type of "intellectual experiment" (Linz 1967, 268) had many obvious limitations, and could not take into account the changes in the social structure in subsequent years or in the global political climate in the mid-1970s. In the 1960s, comparison with Italy gave rise to the prediction that the major political force on the center and center-right would be a christian democratic party. This was not to be the case, despite the prominent role played in the opposition to the Franco regime by leaders identified with Christian democracy (Tusell 1977). A combination of factors (the Second Vatican Council, the secularization of the Spanish population which strengthened the freedom of Catholics to make their own political choices, Cardinal Tarancón's opposition to the idea that the Church would be identified with a party even through the use of the word *Christian* in the name, and the disastrous election campaigns fought by some political leaders), thwarted the consolidation of Christian democratic political groupings (Huneeus 1985). However, the electorate that should, according to the prediction, have supported Christian democracy in fact gave its support to the UCD in 1977 and 1979. Indeed, the proportion of vote predicted almost exactly matched the

combined vote of the UCD and the two nationalist parties that were ideologically closest to a Christian democratic party position (one of them, the PNV [*Partido Nacionalista Vasco*] was a member of the Christian democratic international). It could be argued, therefore, that the prediction was only half-wrong: there would be no christian democratic party, but the UCD had a very similar electorate. In practice, the UCD served as a "functional alternative" (Linz 1993a, 35) to Christian democracy. Yet both the UCD and the other conservative parties refrained from establishing institutionalized relations with either religious organizations or the Church itself.

The analysis was correct in stressing the importance that the peripheral nationalisms would acquire in the Spanish party system. It did anticipate the increasingly key role that the nationalist Center-right parties would play over time, the institutionalization of the *Estado de las Autonomías*, and that some of these parties would become significant sources of support for minority governments of the statewide parties in the 1990s. The analysis also correctly predicted the larger share of the vote for the Left in Spain than in Italy. But the predicted strength of the communists did not materialize, perhaps not surprisingly considering, among other factors, the crisis of communism after the Prague Spring. Instead, the PSOE received the largest share of the vote in the competition within the Left. The potential division between left-wing socialists and social democrats was avoided partly thanks to the support the Socialist International gave the PSOE led by Felipe González. The Maoist communists and other far-left groups did enjoy greater support than their counterparts in Italy, but ultimately this proved ephemeral (Laiz 1995). The absence of an anarcho-syndicalist labour movement and a potential syndicalist party was more complete than predicted, and represented a fundamental break with the political alignments that had existed since the turn of the century and particularly under the Second Republic.

The weakness of these extreme left-wing organizations contributed significantly to the strength of the socialist Left, the Left's commitment to democracy and, more generally, to the pragmatic and moderate character of Spanish politics after 1975, three features which contrasted sharply with the Second Republic. The PCE's espousal of Eurocommunism and the absence of an extreme right-wing force reduced but did not eliminate the possibility of a polarized multi-party system. The ideological distance between the PCE (whose leaders had taken part in the Civil War and whose members were later very active in the opposition to the authoritarian regime) and the rightist AP (whose leaders had served as ministers under Franco and were

opposed to a radical break with Francoism) meant that it was impossible to rule out, *a priori*, polarizing tendencies in the multiparty system established in 1977. Despite this, the new democratic party system was radically different to that of the 1930s, unanimously considered to be a perfect example of Sartori's (1976, 155 ff.) category of an extreme, polarized pluralist system.[6] In sharp contrast with these features, which played such a decisive role in the breakdown of democracy in the 1930s (Linz 1978), a series of developments in the 1960s gave rise to a much less fractional, ideological and polarized multiparty system. And with it, a stable democracy has been consolidated for the first time in Spanish history.

Party Development in a New Democracy: Some Basic Factors

Numerous factors help to explain why the pattern of party development in the 1970s was different to that in the 1930s. Some are due to the long-term consequences of the Civil War and the exceptional length of the authoritarian regime. Others relate to the fundamental changes in Spain's economic and social structure, the virtual disappearance of a rural proletariat, the expansion of the middle classes, higher levels of education, the presence of the mass media, especially television, and the different ideological climate in the Europe of the 1970s. And still others include the way in which the transition took place through politics of consensus and *reforma pactada-ruptura pactada*, the responsible behaviour of, and the strategic choices made by, social and political elites and, from an institutional point of view, the impact of a new electoral system. We could briefly examine each of these factors. The list itself indicates that Spain in and after 1977 would not reproduce the patterns of party formation of the Second Republic, when most of the then new parties emerged from the ashes of the old Restoration party system after the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923-1930). Nor would Spain conform to

[6] With the decisive help of a multimember, majoritarian electoral system, elections in the Second Republic produced very high levels of volatility, fragmentation, and polarization. The results swung like a pendulum from one contest to the next: in each of the three republican Cortes more than twenty parties were represented (none of them ever holding more than 23 percent of the seats). The subsequent parliamentary fragmentation contributed to one of the most intense situations of governmental instability seen in any European country. And the ideological gap between the political elites and voters was constantly widened by the presence of anti-system parties on both extremes of the political spectrum, the increasingly centrifugal dynamics of inter-party competition, the generalization of semi-loyal and disloyal positions among the principal actors, and the demagogic politics of outbidding; see Montero (1988).

the type of party system that developed in other countries such as Italy, Germany and Austria, where democracy had been interrupted by non-democratic rule for no longer than one or two decades. In fact, the party system change experienced by Spain is likely to have been, together with Italy, the broadest and deepest among European democratizing countries in the 1940s and 1970s.[7]

It is perhaps worth emphasizing the importance that some of these factors had for the type of parties that would make up the new party system, as well as for the patterns of electoral competition that would develop in the new democracy. The first factor was the historical discontinuity caused by the profound crisis of the Civil War and the 40 years that separated the last free elections in 1936 and the first in 1977. Only some 10 percent of the population in 1977 had been eligible to vote in 1936; for no less than nine out of ten Spaniards, this was their first opportunity to vote in free elections. There were some political continuities between the two periods, many of which would be seen in the concordance in the intergenerational vote of parents and children, as well as in the link between memories of the Civil War and the new political alignments (Linz 1980a, 105; Maravall 1984, 40-41). There was also a striking continuity in the geographical distribution of electoral support for Right and Left: the ecological correlations between the electorates of the main parties in the 1936 and 1977 elections were relatively high.[8] And should a Left-Right scale be available for the 1930s, we would probably find some continuity in the proportions identifying with the Left and the Right, although it is also likely that far more Spaniards now place themselves on the Center-left and Center-right than in the years leading up to the Civil War: the characteristic *U*-curve of polarized and centrifugal politics has been replaced by the typically moderate unimodal distribution which is depicted in the form of an inverted *U*.

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[7] For Bennet (1998, 198), who has examined party system change before and after the breakdown of democratic regimes in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway and Spain through a number of variables, Spain is ranked in the first place in the relative amount of overall change, whilst Denmark occupies the last position.

[8] According to the calculations made by Linz (1980a, 103), the correlation at the provincial level between the vote for the CEDA (*Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas*, the most important right-wing party in the Second Republic) and the UCD in 1977 was .46, while that of the PSOE in both these years was .60; the correlation of the vote for the parties on the Left in 1936 and for the PCE in 1977 was .68, and .54 in the case of the PSOE. Maravall (1984, 39) gives similar coefficients.

However, in 1977 the signs of discontinuity were much more numerous. All the ideological spaces experienced considerable changes. Anarchism disappeared, as did the bourgeois republican Left (in contrast to the situation in France between the III and the IV Republics), liberal conservatism (unlike the German liberal parties), the Catholic right (again in contrast to the German Christian Democrats or the Italian Catholic parties), and the extreme right linked to the Bourbon monarchy or the Carlists. After nearly 40 years of an authoritarian regime, most of the parties of the Republic had disappeared. With the exceptions of the PCE and the PSOE at the national level, and the PNV and the ERC (*Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*) in their respective regions, none of the 33 parties that had won seats in the 1936 Cortes were represented in the Congress in 1977. And these exceptions must also be considered *cum grano salis*, since in nearly all cases organizational continuity was accompanied by drastic changes in party leadership, programs and images. In fact, few parties would claim continuity in their name, and they were even less inclined to identify with the legacy of the past. This was the case of the PSOE, seeking to become a typical catch-all party instead of the mass Workers' Party it had been before the war, and of the PCE, some of whose leaders, older than those of most other parties, would embrace Eurocommunism, thereby distancing themselves from the party's Stalinist past. Only the PNV sought to stress its continuity with the past, but the conflictive Basque society would prevent it from becoming the hegemonic expression of Basque nationalism. At the elite level, very few party leaders had survived from the republican years. In contrast to the high levels of continuity among the German, Italian, and Austrian elites after the totalitarian hiatus, the Spanish politicians holding important government positions during the transition or seats in the 1977 Cortes were notable for their youth, and did not have direct links with the republican period. This difference was exemplified by the contrast between the careers of Konrad Adenauer in Germany and Alcide de Gasperi in Italy and those of Adolfo Suárez, the main architect of the Spanish transition (born in 1932 and therefore 45 years old in 1977), and José María Gil Robles, the youngest leader in the Second Republic who, at the age of 79, failed to win a seat in 1977 (Linz 1980a, 102).

Another factor is the historical context of the 1970s in Europe, which contrasted with the situation when the German and Italian party systems took shape in the 1940s, a context determined by the changes in the Catholic Church following the Second Vatican Council and the deepening crisis of communism after the Prague Spring. A major supporter of the Franco

regime through what was known as *nacionalcatolicismo* (Botti 1992), the Church could not identify itself with the opposition, or at least with the rejection of Nazi totalitarianism as it had in Germany, nor with the christian democratic tradition of the Italian Populari suppressed by Mussolini. In moving away in the late 1960s from close involvement in the Civil War and collaboration with the authoritarian regime, the Church had to emphasize its non-partisan position and accept political pluralism within the Catholic community (Pérez Díaz 1993, 140ff.). On the other hand, and again in contrast to Italy and France, the Communists could not capitalize on the reality and the myth of the resistance. Although the clandestine PCE and its members had become the most important political and social movement in the opposition to the Franco regime, that was not enough. Even though the PCE embraced Eurocommunism and sought to moderate its image, the weakness of its roots before the Civil War, the distrust the Left felt for the party as a result of its role at the end of the Civil War, and the crisis of the Eastern European communist regimes would never allow it to play the role it had in France and Italy (Mujal-León 1983). Regional nationalisms also underwent major changes as a result of the new historical climate. After the 1968 crisis in France, the Spanish peripheral nationalisms, which in other countries were identified with the Right, became associated with the Left and different sectors of the anti-Francoist opposition. While in many European countries the events of 1968 represented a resurgence of cultural, linguistic, or nationalist protest, in Spain the political mobilization of many nationalist groups and clandestine parties was encouraged by Franco's repression of regional identities, as well as by the pre-1936 traditions of nationalism in Catalonia and the Basque Country.

The interaction between those changes at the European level with developments within Spanish society itself from the 1960s onwards would be a third consideration. According to most of the major indicators, in the space of just twenty years Spain underwent transformations which in the United States had taken place over the six decades beginning in 1880, and in Canada during the five decades beginning in 1901 (Linz 1980b, 9). This development brought changes in the levels of industrialization and urbanization, the distribution of the active population and the growth of the service sector, a dramatic fall in illiteracy and generally higher levels of education, the transformation of the social structure, and changes in basic cultural patterns, rising per capita incomes, and a widespread improvement in the standard of living reflected in the appearance of the first manifestations of the consumer society (Linz 1984). These changes

also altered the contours of the class and religious cleavages. In the 1970s, the class cleavage already conformed to the model to be expected in a modern society: the traditional class structure had been replaced by a pattern of social stratification more typical of a post-industrial society, and sharp class differences had given way to a more equal society thanks to accelerated processes of social mobility and a generalized improvement in educational levels (Linz 1995). The modernization of cultural patterns also implied an equally intense process of secularization: the framework of *nacionalcatolicismo* was replaced by a more complex situation in which growing numbers of Spaniards became estranged from the Church as an institution, found their religious convictions weakening, and felt that their political choices should be independent of their religious beliefs (Montero 1997).

The partisan articulation of the social groups affected by the new cleavage structure has also been mediated by the Spanish path towards democracy. The politics of consensus assigned an extraordinarily important role to the new political elites, who directed from above a gradual and negotiated process of political change (Gunther 1992; Linz 1993b). These new elites would simultaneously have to meet the challenge of a dual task of institution building. On the one hand, there was the need to agree on the basic institutions and rules of the new regime. Along with the institutional design later defined in the 1978 Constitution, negotiations would also include a new electoral system that was explicitly intended to avoid the negative effects of the system of the Second Republic. This process of institutional learning (Aguilar 1996, 240) brought positive results: the electoral system adopted in Spring 1977, just before the first elections, has helped to stabilize party competition by breaking with the historical precedents of excessive parliamentary fragmentation, intense ideological polarization, and chronic governmental instability. At the same time, the political elites would have to devote time and energy to the task of institutionalizing their own parties. This entailed the development of the organizational machinery for mobilizing their electorates, the achievement of a reasonably unified party, the control of new activists and candidates recruited *ex novo,* the articulation of their membership, the establishment of relationships with the potential voters, the settlement of favourable features for electoral competition (Morlino 1998, 205-206; Gunther 1987). The outcomes of this second group of tasks were also affected by the transition: different parties followed different strategies of democratization. On the Left, the PCE and the PSOE called with different degrees of intensity for a *ruptura pactada*, which conditioned their electoral appeal as

well as their electoral results. On the Right, the development of new parties was a direct consequence of their proposals regarding the transition process. AP, formed by an elite closely identified with Francoism, initially favoured some kind of a controlled *apertura* (or "opening") of the institutions of the authoritarian regime; and the UCD, dominated by younger leaders from different ideological backgrounds, but in every case less identified with the previous regime, advocated a *reforma* which would lead to a fully European democratic system (Hopkin 1999a).

From an organizational perspective, the new leaders faced additional problems. In Spring 1977, the very limited time available between the legalization of the parties and the first democratic elections prevented many of the new leaders from engaging in any kind of organizational activities other than drawing up lists of candidates and planning the election campaign. The impossibility of developing organizational links with specific sectors of the electorate encouraged the main parties to adopt catch-all strategies, and nearly all of them to take further steps towards moderation. It also led them to embrace inclusive electoral strategies, rather than defend the interests of a specific *classe gardée*, in a bid to maximize their vote and hence the number of seats in the new parliament (Van Biezen 1998, 42). Subsequently, the main parties would have to devote an extraordinary amount of time and human resources to the politics of the transition, whether in government, in parliament, or in negotiations with the other social actors involved in the process. The phase of the transition summed up in the expression "politics first", that is, the necessary priority given to politics rather than the economy during the process of regime change (Maravall 1993, 111), essentially implied politics at the *institutional level*. The PCE and the PSOE, two parties that for historical and political reasons liked to define themselves as mass parties, simply did not benefit from the conditions which their European colleagues had enjoyed for decades to establish a solid territorial structure, recruit activists, organize a mass membership, or establish close relationships with social groups affected by the cleavage structure. And the UCD, the main party on the Center-right, contented itself with ensuring the continuity of the initial elite coalition and building its presence at the provincial and local level.

In this way, the conditions in which the parties were founded or reappeared affected their subsequent development in three distinct domains. First, the speed with which they had been forced to organize, compete in founding elections, and collaborate in the very complex

democratic transition helps explain the almost immediate appearance of different types of crisis. Some parties suffered from crises of adaptation, institutionalization or expansion. For others, crisis was the result of personal conflicts or factional struggles among the elites, or it involved clashes between mutually exclusive visions of the type of party that they were trying to build. One striking feature of these *intra*-party conflicts is that they took place at the same time as the *inter*-party negotiations, which played such a decisive role in the success of the political transition (Gunther 1992); another similarly striking feature consisted in the partial institutionalization achieved by the main actors –positively for the PSOE within the Left, negatively for the UCD and AP within the Right. Secondly, the parties' formation in an institutional context of public funding for elections campaigns (and soon afterwards even for the parties' running costs [Del Castillo 1985]) has lowered the incentives for them to consistently engage in mass recruitment. The combination of political traditions of demobilization, a dictatorship which fostered depolitization and a state which had already developed some welfare policies further weakened the pull that some social groups might have felt to affiliate to mass parties which, as had been the case at the beginning of the 20th century and after the two world wars, offered different benefits. In fact, the Spanish parties are amongst the weakest in Europe in terms of membership (Montero 1981; Gangas 1995; Van Biezen 1998). A third factor is the emergence of parties in a society already structured by patterns of consumption, where television is the dominant media, which has weakened still further the parties' social roots, accentuated the personalization of politics through the role assigned to their leaders, and blurred their programmatic differences.[9] In this context, the style of electoral campaigning would be very different to that developed in the politics of democratic reconstruction in the later 1940s and early 1950s. Mass organizations, local activities, and rallies paid for by the large numbers of members of a party are simply no longer necessary.

These factors raise some questions about the characteristics of the parties that emerge in latecomer democracies, and which have often been seen as failures in terms of the pattern of party development in the early successful democracies. Yet it could be argued that the new

[9] Television played a particularly important role in this critical period of party formation, since in the electoral campaign for the 1977 founding elections all the political parties, whether new or old, significant or insignificant, were given equal time on television.

democracies may share significant characteristics of *newness* and that, in time, some of the old democracies may increasingly come to resemble them (Linz 1992, 182). It can therefore be suggested that one of the distinctive features of Spanish democracy is not so much its tardy incorporation into the ranks of the European democracies, but rather its very modernity. In one sense, the Spanish party system is not just new, but in many ways the first modern party system in Western Europe. The apparent weakness of the Spanish parties is not so much a failure of the democratization process, or the result of deliberate choices by party leaders, but rather reflects the historical, social, and cultural context that distinguishes Spain from the older democracies of Europe and the new democracies of the immediate post-World War II period. The creation of a party system in a modern, very different type of society to that found in post-World War II Europe, and in which television is the dominant channel of intermediation, has meant that Spanish democracy has skipped many of the stages of development that older party systems have passed through. This type of *leap-frogging*, as it has been called (Gunther 1990), makes it possible to identify more easily in the Spanish case some of the characteristics of electoral behaviour and party competition which may appear in other modern societies with similar socio-economic structures (Linz 1986a, 658-659; Montero 1992, 295-296).[10]

Types of Elections: Founding, Critical, and Realigning.

On 15 June 1977, the Spaniards went to the polls for the first time since 1936. Most of them knew relatively little about parties legalized only a few months before. But survey data show that people had relatively clear ideas about the main ideological alternatives in the political market of Western Europe, could identify with them, and place themselves on the Left/Right dimension. They also soon learnt which parties they would never vote for, a fact that narrowed down their choices considerably (Linz et al. 1981; CIS 1977; Alvira et al. 1978). The nationalists in Catalonia and the Basque country had developed their own distinctive identity some time before, and there was little question that they would not vote for statewide parties.

[10] Servata distantia, this is also the case of many Central and Eastern European party systems; see Hofferbert

Two decades later, seven elections have been held for the Congress. The results define three different electoral periods in terms of the format of the party system and the character of interparty competition. But the existence of such profound political changes in a relatively short time raises the question of the extent to which Spain has achieved a minimal level of electoral stabilization, that is, the establishment of stable relations between the parties and citizens, and among the parties themselves (Morlino 1998, 85). This process is of crucial importance for the institutionalization of the party system and the development of predictable patterns of electoral competition. Many observers considered that party stabilization was unlikely to occur in a democratic system emerging from almost forty years of authoritarian rule. They saw major obstacles in the lack of continuity between the new democratic parties and leaders and their predecessors from the Republican period, the apparent weakness of new parties, and the uncertain relations between the parties and cleavages that had been transformed during the long authoritarian interval. Accordingly, the conclusion is that Spain, in common with the other new Southern European democracies, is characterised by very open electoral markets, enhanced electoral availability, and intense interparty competition, all of which, as has been said, "inevitably hamper the stabilisation of an enduring democratic order" (Mair 1997, 174).

But party institutionalization is not a prerequisite for democratic consolidation (Morlino 1998, 212), and Spain has been a consolidated democracy at least since the early 1980s (Linz and Stepan 1996). In fact, consolidation came to coincide with the critical elections of 1982, which produced both what is perhaps the highest level of electoral volatility in European history and an electoral realignment of lasting consequences. We will try to demonstrate that, despite appearances to the contrary, Spanish voters have increasingly become stabilized, and that electoral competition has therefore followed predictable patterns. It is true that, in terms of the parties, instability appears to be the norm. The main parties did experience a more or less traumatic period of mergers, coalitions, and splits. They all suffered crises which ended in the resignations of leaders, the redefinition of party images, and the development of re-equilibrating mechanisms with different outcomes. In 1982, UCD, the governing party which had triumphed in the two previous elections and successfully overseen the transition, collapsed, and the many different attempts to create centre parties did not meet with any success. AP, which had replaced the UCD in the conservative space, experimented with various ineffectual coalition and

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(1998).

leadership arrangements before re-launching itself as the Partido Popular (PP) in 1989 in a bid to break out of electoral stagnation. On the Left, the serious crises suffered by the PSOE at the end of the 1970s were followed in the 1980s by the upheavals within the PCE, in which a series of splits and expulsions led to the formation of the coalition *Izquierda Unida* (IU), but to relatively little avail. Nor have the many nationalist or regionalist parties with parliamentary representation escaped this instability.

This party instability contrasts with continuity at the institutional level. None of the elements of the electoral system have been changed, and its effects have always operated in the same direction regardless of the processes of party change or party system change. Similarly, the rules on party funding, the formation of governments and parliamentary relations have not been modified since the constitution was enacted in 1978. Most importantly, the Spaniards' voting behaviour has been closer to a model of stabilization than to one of recurring availability in an open electoral market subject to unpredictable variations. The evolution of the party system has therefore been marked by the continuity of the ideological preferences and the inability of political elites to sustain effective party organizations. In this sense, one could even suggest that Spain constitutes a case of "volatile parties" and "stable voters" (Linz 1986a, 657ff.; Barnes, McDonough and López Pina 1986; Hopkin 1999a, 230). This apparently paradoxical situation is not so much due to brusque changes in the cleavage structure or to sharp modifications in voters' preferences, but rather to major changes in the electoral supply, that is, a prior transformation of the images or evaluations of the parties in function of strategic decisions taken by their leaders, factional processes headed by party *barons*, or the outcomes of their governmental policies.

TABLE 1. *First Electoral Period: Votes and Seats in the 1977 and 1979 General Elections*

	1977			1979		
Party	%Votes	Seats	% seats[g]	% Votes	Seats	% seats[g]
Left						
PCE[a]	9.3	20	6	10.8	23	7
PSOE[b]	29.4	118	34	30.5	121	35
PSP/US	4.5	6	2	-	-	-
Centre-right						
UCD	34.6	166	47	35.0	168	48
Right						
AP[c]	8.8	16	5	6.1	9	3
UN	0.4	-	-	2.1	1	0.3
Regional						
Basque Country						
HB	-	-	-	1.0	3	1
EE	0.3	1	0.3	0.5	1	0.3
PNV	1.7	8	2	1.5	7	2
Catalonia						
ERC[d]	0.8	1	0.3	0.7	1	0.3
CiU[e]	2.8	11	3	2.7	8	2
UCDCC	0.9	2	0.6	-	-	-
Andalusia						
PSA	-	-	-	1.8	5	1
Aragon						
PAR	-	-	-	0.2	1	0.3
Canary Islands						
UPC	-	-	-	0.3	1	0.3
CAIC	0.2	1	0.3	-		-
Navarre						
UPN	-	-	-	0.2	1	0.3
Others[f]	6.3	-	100	6.6	-	-
TOTAL	100	350		100	350	100
Eligible voters		23,543,414			26,836,500	
Voters		18,625,000			18,284,948	
		(79.1%)			(68.1%)	
Blank + void votes		317,030			326,544	
		(1.7%)			(1.8%)	

[a] Including its Catalan branch, PSUC.
[b] Including in 1977 its Catalan branch, PSC.
[c] In 1979 as the coalition CD.
[d] In 1977 as EC.
[e] In 1977 as PDC.
[f] Without parliamentary representation (the most important of these being a number of extreme left-wing parties such as the PTE and ORT both in 1977 [1.2%] and in 1979 [1.8%]).
[g] Percentages are rounded off.

Source: Linz (1980a, 112, and 120-121).

The First Period: Founding Elections and the Making of a Party System

The relative stability of the vote was already remarkable in the first electoral period (Table 1). Despite upheavals in the internal lives of all the major parties, there were hardly any significant changes in voters' choices between 1977 and 1979. In fact, an analysis of voting shifts suggests that the political spaces of Left and Right were already crystallised, and that there was greater relative movement between the parties *within* each of these two spaces (Santamaría 1981, 413). This pattern, which has remained substantially unchanged ever since, contrasts with the high volatility generally seen in the second elections in new democratic regimes (Cotta 1996, 71). In contrast also with most founding elections, parliamentary fragmentation was already relatively limited in 1977: the combined effects of electoral preferences and the electoral system drastically reduced the typical *alphabet soup* of first election campaigns. Most voters opted for the UCD or the PSOE, which between them won 64 percent of the votes and 81 percent of the seats. Both were flanked by minority competitors on the extremes: AP on the right and the PCE and the PSP (*Partido Socialista Popular*, which would later merge with PSOE) on the left. And they all, in turn, faced competition from a variety of nationalist and regionalist parties, most importantly the PNV and PDC (*Pacte Democràtic per Catalunya*, a Catalan coalition which in 1979 would stabilize as CiU, formed by *Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya* [CDC] and *Unió Democràtica de Catalunya* [UCD]). The extreme right-wing parties won less than 1 percent of the vote, and despite receiving almost three times as many votes, the parties on the far Left failed to obtain parliamentary representation. This was also the fate of the christian democrats: their potential electorate was attracted by the reformist democratic stance of Suárez and his success in managing the transition (Linz 1980a).[11] Almost two years later, the main novelty was a spectacular increase in abstention (Justel 1995). Although in most cases with only one deputy, the extreme Right (in the shape of *Unión Nacional* [UN], a coalition of typically Francoist parties) and the radical Basque independence movement (through *Herri Batasuna* [HB], a coalition of different groups associated with the terrorist organization ETA) both won seats for the first time, as did a number of small regionalist parties. Nonetheless, neither the format of the party system nor the pattern of competition changed significantly (Gunther, Sani

[11] In 1977 the only two christian democratic deputies did not belong to any of the statewide christian democratic parties, but to a separate Catalan electoral coalition, UCDCC. In 1979, the regional christian democratic party was UDC, which formed a stable alliance with CDC in the electoral coalition CiU.

and Shabad 1986). The results shaped a moderate multiparty system characterised by intense competition between the two main parties, high levels of rejection of the two minor parties on the respective extremes, and the almost equal split between the Left (an average of 42.2 percent of the vote) and Right (43.4 percent) (Table 2).[12] But far from reproducing the polarized confrontations of the 1930s, the UCD and PSOE shared a certain ideological proximity, neither the PCE nor AP defended regimes other than democracy, and all the parties were conscious of the fact that the Spaniards' striking ideological moderation only permitted a centripetal type of interparty competition.

In this period, both the UCD and PSOE suffered different problems of party institutionalization. The UCD had greater difficulty achieving this, not least because in 1977 it was not even a party. Rather, it was an electoral coalition made up of a younger generation of politicians who had begun their careers within the previous authoritarian regime and collaborated with Adolfo Suárez in the transition, as well as some opposition leaders identifying as Christian Democrats, Social Democrats or Liberals. And although initially the UCD did not have a common organizational framework, programmatic principles articulated in a coherent ideological corpus, nor members, it was the party of government, meaning that it could count on many more resources than its rivals. The first steps towards institutionalization included converting the coalition into a party, choosing Suárez as its president, adopting a catch-all model which fused the different ideological tendencies, and constructing an efficient organizational infrastructure, with an extensive albeit passive membership, in the majority of the provinces (Caciagli 1986, 256 ff.).[13] The UCD elites, reluctant to embark on organizational integration in a single party, were characterized by profound differences with respect to the type of party that they wished to build, its ideological priorities, ands its strategies for electoral competition. These divisions intensified over the action of the government, especially when the politics of consensus gave way to politics as usual. The hostility between the different wings deepened when the party

[12] In Table 2 we have preferred to classify the regionalist parties separately. Although their votes could easily be added to a specific ideological area, the greater importance of the regionalist or nationalist profile of these parties in their identity and political action suggests that they are best treated separately.

[13] In February 1981, UCD claimed a membership of 152,104, its highest since the foundation. The ratio between its members and voters (in 1979) was 2.4, and the ratio between its members and the Spanish electorate was 0.6; see Montero (1981, 44), Caciagli (1986, 255-256), Hopkin (1999b, 103) and infra, Table 5, for similar data for other parties.

rejected offers to establish a stable parliamentary agreement with the rightist and still scarcely legitimated AP, and the government was forced to take decisions on divisive aspects of educational, regional and fiscal policies in the context of an extremely serious economic crisis and a major upsurge in ETA terrorist activity (Gunther 1986a). Equally, the clashes between the different elites within the party began to undermine the position of Suárez, whose innovative leadership (Linz 1993b) had precisely constituted its principal political capital. These clashes eventually ended in a serious process of factional infighting marked by public confrontations and desertions on all sides (Hopkin 1999b).

TABLE 2. *Votes and Ideological Placements in General Elections, 1977-1996*[a]

	First period		Second period			Third period	
Placements	1977	1979	1982	1986	1989	1993	1996
Left[b]	43.2	41.3	52.4	49.1	49.0	48.4	48.1
Right[c]	43.4	43.2	35.9	35.5	33.8	34.8	38.8
Nationalists/Regionalists							
Left[d]	1.1	4.3	2.2	1.6	3.3	2.3	2.8
Right[e]	5.6	4.6	5.6	8.1	7.6	8.1	7.2
Total	93.3	93.4	96.1	94.3	93.7	93.6	96.9

[a] Figures refer to the percentages of votes cast for parties with parliamentary representation.
[b] IU (including PCE and IC) and PSOE (and in 1977, PSP/US).
[c] UCD, CDS, PP (including AP, CD and CP) and UN.
[d] HB, EE and EA in the Basque Country; ERC (and EC) in Catalonia; PA (and PSA) in Andalusia; BNG in Galicia; and UPC in the Canary Islands.
[e] PNV in the Basque Country; UCDCC and CiU in Catalonia; CG in Galicia; UPN in Navarre; Par (and PAR) in Aragon; CAIC, AIC and CC in the Canary Islands; and UV in the Valencian Community.

Sources: See Tables 1, 3 and 4.

The PSOE's problems were rather different. Its images combined the moderation and responsibility shown by the main leaders during the constituent process with the ideological radicalism and revolutionary rhetoric of other leaders and party activists. The former tried to increase the party's appeal among moderate electors by toning down its program and

emphasizing its sense of responsibility. But these messages were undermined, particularly in the 1979 election campaign, by the maximalist rhetoric of many of the party's official statements, the unstable assemblyism of internal decision-making, and the clashes among different sectors over numerous issues. This duality was resolved in November 1979 during the Bad Godesberg of Spanish Socialism (Maravall 1991, 11), when an Extraordinary Congress reinforced the leadership of Felipe González and Alfonso Guerra, eliminated the definition of the party as Marxist, adopted a social democratic reformist program, replaced the implicit threat of mass mobilization by the conventional mechanisms of catch-all parties, and re-established party discipline (Puhle 1986, 332-339). After a successful process of moderation, the PSOE was able to concentrate on its opposition to the UCD governments and, with the decomposition of the center party, present itself as a credible alternative.

The Second Period: Critical Elections and the Remaking of the Party System

The break-up of the UCD and the PSOE's success came in October 1982 (Linz and Montero 1986). Although in 1979 political analysts had predicted the definitive crystallisation of the party system, the 1982 election reshaped the political scene with such force that it was described as an "electoral earthquake" and even an "historical milestone" (Caciagli 1986, 149; Santamaría 1984, 8). None of this was exaggeration: the characteristics of the1982 ballot appear to fit those of critical elections, that is, elections which produce a substantial and lasting change in the existing electoral alignments. Over 40 percent of the voters changed their choice from the preceding elections of 1979. The parties underwent substantial changes, and the party system itself was radically transformed (Table 3). Spaniards massively supported an alternation in government, giving the PSOE a broad parliamentary majority, and erasing the UCD from the scene despite the party's two preceding victories. The prevailing balance between Left and Right was broken in favour of the former. Due to internal crises, the PCE was left with a minimal share of the vote, whereas AP, which was on the verge of disappearing in 1979, emerged as the main party of the opposition. Many regionalist parties that entered Congress in 1979 disappeared, although the PNV and CiU maintained their positions. And the failure of the extreme Right was total: *Fuerza Nueva* (the most important of the neo-fascist parties) disbanded

after winning little more than one hundred thousand votes (some 0.5 percent), and *Solidaridad Española*, led by Antonio Tejero, one of the protagonists of the 1981 coup attempt, obtained fewer than thirty thousand votes (0.1 percent).

The PSOE's victory was extraordinary. The party doubled both its vote (topping ten million) and its parliamentary group (from 121 to no fewer than 202 deputies). It was the most-voted party in 42 of Spain's 52 districts and in all of the autonomous communities except for the Basque Country and Galicia (Puhle 1986). The PSOE was able to govern alone for the first time since its foundation over a hundred years before; it was also the first time in Spanish history that a party had won an absolute majority of seats, and the first time that a Left party had held power after the authoritarian regime. The PSOE's victory also meant that after only five years of party competition, Spain experienced an alternation in power, doing so, moreover, in circumstances of growing legitimacy which would have very positive repercussions for the consolidation of the democratic system (Maravall and Santamaría 1986). The UCD was annihilated by an electorate that rejected the party's continual infighting and ineffective governments. No other European party had ever suffered a defeat of such magnitude:[14] the party's more than six million voters in 1979 shrank to about one and a half million in 1982. Three out of four UCD voters opted for the AP or to a lesser extent the PSOE, and those who remained loyal to the party belonged to marginal socio-demographic groups (Gunther 1986a). The number of UCD deputies dropped from 168 in 1979 to just 12 in 1982; and these did not even include Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, the prime minister and the party's number two candidate for Madrid.

[14] The only other vaguely similar case is that of Ismet Inönü, whose Popular Republican Party suffered a comparable defeat towards the end of the 1940s in Turkey (Maravall 1984 , 91).

TABLE 3. *Second Electoral Period: Votes and Seats in the 1982, 1986 and 1989 General Elections*

	1982			1986			1989		
Party	% Votes	Seats	% seats[e]	%Votes	Seats	% seats[e]	% Votes	Seats	% seats[e]
Left									
IU[a]	4.0	4	1	4.5	7	2	9.1	17	5
PSOE	48.4	202	58	44.6	184	53	39.9	175	50
Centre-right									
CDS	2.9	2	0.6	9.2	19	5	7.9	14	4
UCD	6.5	12	3	-	-	19	-	-	-
Right									
PP[b]	26.5	106	30	26.3	105	30	25.9	107	31
Regional									
Basque Country									
HB	1.0	2	0.6	1.1	5	1	1.1	4	1
EE	0.5	1	0.3	0.5	2	0.6	0.5	2	0.6
EA	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.7	2	0.6
PNV	1.9	8	2	1.6	6	2	1.2	5	1
Catalonia									
ERC	0.7	1	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
CiU	3.7	12	3	5.1	18	5	5.1	18	5
Galicia									
CG	-	-	-	0.4	1	0.3	-	-	-
Andalusia									
PA	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.0	2	0.6
Aragon									
Par[c]	-	-	-	0.4	1	0.3	0.3	1	0.3
Canary Islands									
AIC	-	-	-	0.3	1	0.3	0.3	1	0.3
Valencian Community	-	-	-	0.3	1	0.3	0.7	2	0.6
UV									
Others[d]	3.9	-	-	5.7	-	-	6.3	-	-
TOTAL	100	350	100	100	350	100	100	350	100
Eligible voters		26,739,685			29,117,613			29,460,120	
Voters		21,440,552			20,487,812			20,599,629	
		(80.2%)			(70.4%)			(69,9%)	
Blank + void		504,536			443,125			280,150	
voters		(2.3%)			(2.2%)			(1.3%)	

[a] In 1982 as PCE; including its Catalan branch, PSUC in 1982 and IC in 1986 and 1989.
[b] AP in coalition with PDP in 1982; in 1986 as CP. In Navarre, in coalition with UPN.
[c] PAR in 1986.
[d] Without parliamentary representation (the most important of these being in 1982 the neo-fascist FN [0.5%] and the far-left PST [0.5%]; in 1986, MUC [1.1%, a split from the PCE], and the centrist PRD [0.9%]; and in 1989 the populist ARM [1.1%] and the greens LV-LV and LVE [0.7%]).
[e] Percentages are rounded off.

Sources: Spanish Ministry of the Interior.

The PCE and AP also experienced contradictory fates. The protracted crisis in the PCE contributed to the loss of over one million voters, almost all of whom shifted to the PSOE. Its strategy of growth *a la italiana* was abandoned: the party proved incapable of carrying out the *sorpasso*. The PCE's attempts to attract sectors of the extreme Left and the Left of the socialist electorate failed: the ratio between the PSOE and the PCE reached 12 to 1 in terms of votes (compared to 3 to 1 in 1979) and 50 to 1 in terms of seats. Reduced to a smaller electoral base and parliamentary representation than the Scandinavian communist parties, the PCE ended up splitting into three different parties (Gunther 1986b). AP embodied the other face of electoral fortune. The party's continued efforts to substitute a *natural* (i.e. conservative) majority for the *artificial* (i.e. centrist) majority of the UCD in order to compete directly with the PSOE in the framework of a two-party system appeared to bear fruit. This strategy seemed to have the support of some of the so-called *poderes fácticos*, especially business groups and the most conservative sectors of the UCD, in consequence of the hostility that they developed towards Suárez and the progressive wing of the UCD (Martínez 1993). The AP coalition with the *Partido Democrático Popular* (PDP, a small conservative party born from a Christian Democrat offshoot of the UCD) obtained five and a half million votes, a five-fold increase in the number of votes compared to 1979 and a twelve-fold increase in the number of seats. Like the scale of the UCD's failure, the AP's growth was equally remarkable in the European context.[15] Even so, only some former UCD voters now gave their support to the conservative coalition. With almost one million votes less than the UCD in 1979, AP was still a long way behind the PSOE: contrary to the expectations of the conservative leaders, the *natural* majority lay for the moment at least with the PSOE (Montero 1986).

Many European countries have witnessed significant electoral changes over the last few decades. However, with the exception of Italy in 1994, probably none of them have seen such intense changes as Spain. Moreover, most of the countries that have experienced these changes have done so over the course of two or three successive elections, rather than in a single consultation, as was the case of Spain in 1982 (Mair 1997, 68). The extraordinary volatility of this election raised serious concerns about the underlying instability of the Spanish electoral behaviour, the availability of voters in a practically open electoral market, and the prospect of a

[15] The only comparable case appears to be the growth of the *Rassemblement du Peuple Français* in the early

non-institutionalized party system. Thus, most political analysts and many party leaders assumed that the results of the 1982 election would be only provisional. They expected the exceptionally high Socialist vote to drop to *normal* levels in the next elections, once the PSOE returned to the Left and the Center the more than three million votes it had been given *on loan* from the PCE and the UCD. According to similar interpretations, the relatively modest conservative vote would necessarily increase after recovering the old centrist vote thanks to the definitive disappearance of the UCD, which would enable AP to become the first party and occupy the government.

These calculations proved wrong. The 1986 and 1989 general elections showed more elements of continuity than change. The average vote for the parties on the Left was greater (50.2 percent) than that of the conservative parties (35.1 percent). These elections gave rise to PSOE absolute parliamentary majorities, a smaller, but still considerable, gap between the PSOE and AP, the fragmentation of the opposition, and the stability of the nationalist parties. Although the PSOE saw its electoral support eroded over the course of the decade, the so-called *TINA* (*There is No Alternative*) syndrome typical of predominant-party systems continued to give the party a key role. And although opposition parties were unable to benefit from those losses, the processes of erosion had been set in motion, particularly in the late 1980s, regarding the party unity, the increasing alienation of the UGT (*Unión General de Trabajadores*, the allied trade union), the decline of its mobilization potential and the transformation of its electorate, which became older and less urban, more economically inactive and less educated (Puhle, forthcoming). In the left, the competition between the PSOE and the PCE continued to be extremely unbalanced even after the PCE created in 1986 *Izquierda Unida* (IU), a coalition with other small and disparate groups which would attempt to channel the representation of a problematic new left. The battle for the center was temporarily won by the CDS, while AP enjoyed little success in its attempt to appear as a centrist rather than a rightist party (Montero 1989).

The outcomes of the critical election of 1982 and its lasting consequences over the decade present some interesting puzzles about party competition in the Center and Center-Right of the party system. We will refer to three interrelated aspects: the crisis of the UCD, the poor results

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1950s.

obtained by AP even after the dissolution of the UCD, and the failure of some minor centrist parties to take advantage of the political vacuum left by the disappearance of the UCD. It is not possible to discuss here the crisis of the UCD (a process that began in 1980 and was dramatically confirmed by the party's electoral defeat in 1982), nor the different explanations given for it. Many observers have mentioned the cost of governing during a difficult period, the economic crisis (with the accompanying effects of large-scale unemployment and high levels of inflation) and the rise of terrorism. More particularly, they have pointed to the decisive importance of the way decisions linked with the economic and social policies derived from the Moncloa Pacts, issues such as divorce, policies such as education or tax reforms and, above all, the negotiation of regional Statutes for the Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia and Andalusia that undermined Suárez's leadership and the unity of the party once transition to democracy had been assumed (Hopkin 1999b). But although those problems would account for a loss of votes, the scale of its defeat and the ultimate dissolution of the party cannot be explained only by responses to its policies. The crisis was essentially an internal affair, reflected in the factional conflicts, the resignation of Suárez as prime minister in 1981 and the slow but continuous disintegration of the parliamentary group, a process to which the electors had the opportunity to react first in some regional elections and later in the October 1982 general election.[16] Other observers, including the UCD prime minister Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo (1990), attribute the crises to the mistake of fusing into a single party the components of the heterogeneous coalition that won the 1977 election. Once the transition had been completed, the differences between the various ideological tendencies of christian democrats, social democrats, liberals, and those

[16] In this respect, one factor that may be significant in federal states is that a governing party at the center is faced by opportunities to be punished whenever there are regional parliamentary elections, creating a momentum for the opposition. This was particularly important in the case of Spain, where the 1980 Basque and Catalan elections (the first regional elections in the new democracy) gave the nationalist parties an excellent opportunity to make gains at the expenses of the UCD, and where the Galician elections of 1981 and those in Andalucia in May 1982 gave the opposition parties of the right and left, respectively, the chance to mobilize support in two areas in which they were strong. Subsequently, the local and regional elections, like those for the European Parliament have been perceived as a kind of primaries prior to forthcoming general elections. And although during this second electoral period these primaries did not substantially modify the results of the parties in the legislative elections, they did become important again at the end of the 1980s (Pallarès 1994). In fact, the electoral advance of the PP that culminated in its 1996 victory was anticipated by the European elections in 1994 and the regional and local elections of 1995: on both occasions, it was the first time that the PP defeated the PSOE.

labelled the *blues*[17] would come to the fore. However, there is evidence that leaders and deputies identified with, and coming from, the various different political groupings split among themselves, some staying in the party until the bitter end (Gunther 1986a). A related factor was the ambivalence of many of the faction leaders, the so-called *barons*, toward Suárez, who, on account of his social background, education, and career, did not fit their image of a leader, despite the fact that for the electorate he had been an undisputed and almost charismatic leader (Linz 1993b). His election as the president of the already unified party, controlling much of the organization against the opposition of strong factions and particularly his resignation as prime minister in rather obscure circumstances (probably under pressure from the military) made the crisis explicit. His successor as premier, Calvo Sotelo, was unable to hold the party together, despite his achievements in successfully bringing the military rebels to trial and his generally unpopular decision to take Spain into NATO (which would not be reversed by the Socialists when they came to power). With the support of the *poderes fácticos*, a number of parliamentarians and leaders felt that closer collaboration, if not a merger, with AP, in what was known at the time as the *gran derecha*, abandoning some of the populist dimensions associated with Suárez, would assure electoral victory in a two-party confrontation with the PSOE. But this strategy was based on the mistaken assumption that the votes of UCD and AP could be combined without provoking losses among the center and on the center-left of the electorate (Montero 1986).

Thus, there can be no doubt that although many voters would have turned their backs on the UCD because of the worsening economic situation and their opposition to particular policies, the unprecedented scale of its debacle cannot be explained without focusing on the elite fighting and the factional politics within the party. In the summer of 1982, the chronic internal tensions in the UCD gave rise to the desertion of some deputies to AP and above all to a series of splits that spawned three parties: the *Partido de Acción Democrática* (PAD) with a social democratic orientation and which would later be absorbed by the PSOE on the Left; the *Centro Democrático y Social* (CDS), led by Suárez himself in the Center, and on the Right the PDP, with a christian democratic orientation. This made it impossible for most of the voters who might have identified with the UCD as a party, and even been members and office holders at the

[17] This term was used to describe the UCD politicians drawn from the younger cadres of Franco regime who

local level, to vote for it again in 1982. The voters had changed as much as the situation that encouraged them to modify their electoral choice. The weak UCD governments of 1982, which did not receive sufficient support from a party that was wracked by internal divisions and had suffered major splits, bore no comparison to those of 1979 and proved largely ineffective (Maravall and Santamaría 1986).

AP's strategy to secure domination of the political spectrum to the right of the PSOE would only bear fruit ten years later. In the early 1980s, the hopes of the *natural majority* were disappointed: the argument that a party on the right could combine the votes of UCD and AP ignored some basic facts. It overlooked the general leftward leanings of the electorate shown in the average position on the left/right scale, and the fact that the UCD, due to the unique circumstances of the transition and personal leadership of Suárez, had been able to make some inroads on the Center-left of the spectrum. Given the conservative and rather authoritarian image of AP and of its most prominent leader at the time, Manuel Fraga, it was unlikely that the UCD-voters would shift to AP, particularly when confronted with a renewed and moderate PSOE and its popular leader, Felipe González. The proponents of the *gran derecha*, after their disappointing performance in successive elections, began to blame the leadership of Fraga rather than analyzing some of the structural factors that explained the repeated failure of AP and the various electoral coalitions formed under his leadership (Montero 1989).

One of those factors is that both in Catalonia and the Basque Country the middle class and the bourgeoisie were not ready to abandon the center-right nationalist parties to support a party that appeared to represent Spanish nationalism and centralism. Whereas the PSOE and the Communists could win the votes of both the immigrant working class and some lower white collar voters, a significant number of Catalan and, to a lesser extent, Basque workers, the statewide Right could compete for only a small segment of the Catalan bourgeoisie and the Basque upper class. It is unlikely that the PP will ever overcome that obstacle.[18] In the context of the 1980s, and confronted with a Eurocommunist and essentially weak Communist party, the

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actively supported the transition and closely identified with Suárez.

[18] In fact, the UCD and AP enjoyed in 1979 a level of electoral sucess in Catalonia (with a combined share of 23.1 percent of valid votes) which would never be repeated by any statewide party of the Center or on the right: in its electoral victory in 1996, the PP received only 17.9 percent of the vote in the region.

Right could not capitalize on anti-communism in the way that the Italian Christian Democrats had been able to do. The religious cleavage could not be mobilized in the more secularized society that developed after Vatican II and with a Left that avoided confrontation with the Church. A pro-NATO stance was not attractive to Spanish voters, and in the 1980s the PSOE would perform a volte-face, coming out in favour of Spain's continued membership of the alliance in the 1986 referendum. Europe was not an issue in Spain as it was in Portugal because all the parties were in favour of joining the common market (Linz 1986a). The dream of a two-party system at the statewide level was just that, and only an *imperfect* two-party system, to use the expression of Giorgio Galli (1966), would emerge in the 1990s.

AP's failure to grasp these factors partly explains its internal instability. During this second phase, the party experienced considerable organizational development, which crystallised in the renovation of its middle-ranking leaders, membership growth, an effective functioning of its central governing bodies and a strong territorial presence (López Nieto 1997). AP also engaged in constant soul-searching: the disappointment caused by its electoral stagnation in the 1980s provoked an intense process of conflicts, clashes and desertions which lasted until 1990, when Aznar became the leader of a party ideologically redefined as something akin to christian democracy or liberal neoconservatism. AP has had three different presidents (Fraga, Antonio Hernández Mancha and, following another brief spell of Fraga, Aznar), has stood for election both alone and in coalition, has also changed its name (from AP, after the *refoundation* in 1989, to the *Partido Popular* [PP]), and adopted very different and even contradictory political strategies. Its leaders failed to take the opportunity provided by their period in opposition to renew their ideological proposals, so distant to the majority of Spaniards, or to soften the negative elements of their party images. And they adopted a radical form of opposition, attempting to delegitimize the Socialist governments' reformist policies and always predicting a sort of catastrophic future for the country (Montero 1989; Capo 1994). This was exemplified in their strategy of active abstention on the occasion of the 1986 NATO referendum (ESE 1986; Alt and Boix 1991; Santamaría and Alcover 1987).

The disappointment of the hopes raised by AP highlighted the importance of the statewide Center parties. In the 1980s, the vote of those to the right of the PSOE would remain divided between different parties. In 1982 the UCD retained 6.5 percent of the vote and 12 seats, but it

soon disappeared under the weight of the economic burden of the huge loans taken out to fight the election campaign. The CDS, a splinter of the UCD founded by Suárez, attempted to hold on to the progressive elements within the UCD and become a party in the center of the spectrum. However , it would win a disappointing 2.9 percent of the vote in 1982, only to make a brief comeback in 1986 with 9.2 percent and 19 seats, and 7.9 percent and 14 seats in 1989. Some christian democrats supporting the PDP (a minor party in coalition with AP) revived their hopes of capturing that 16 percent of electors who surveys early in the transition suggested were sympathetic to a christian democratic ideology (Montero 1994, 86-87). But their hopes would be dashed in the European and local elections in 1987, in which they stood under their own flag for the first time; the PDP received about 1 percent of the vote, and subsequently disappeared.

It seemed, therefore, as if the CDS might become a small party playing a role comparable to the FDP (*Freie Demokratische Partei*) in Germany. Indeed, it was admitted into the international of liberal parties, but, for a variety of reasons, and in spite of some local successes, it did not take off. This fiasco should be measured in relation to the hopes placed in the party, as well as in terms of its privileged position in the party system. The CDS was both a typical center party, with an ideological mean of around 5 or 6 on a ten-point left-right scale, and a middle party, located in between the two main poles of the party system (Hazan 1997, 17). But its strategy of also establishing itself as a pivotal party, able to participate in coalition governments led by the PSOE or AP as the major parties, proved to be impossible during the 1980s: with parliamentary majorities in three consecutive elections, the PSOE government simply did not need it. After the 1986 elections the CDS emerged as the third political force, even if at a considerable distance behind the PSOE and AP. In 1987, and as a result of the local and regional elections, this success gave the CDS extraordinary room for manoeuvre to form majorities in a large number of local councils and regional parliaments. The CDS, however, failed to seize either opportunity (Wert 1994, 643-644). The voters did not like its erratic policy of alliances, which sometimes meant working with the PSOE and sometimes with AP. Nor were its populist ideological positions understandable to all but a small, quite sophisticated, segment of the electorate. Adolfo Suárez did not trust many of his fellow party leaders and did not take on active leadership himself. The CDS's decline began as early as the 1989 general elections, became evident after the local and regional elections in 1991, and definitively culminated in the 1993 elections.

In 1986 yet another party, the PRD (*Partido Reformista Democrático*) tried to compete in the crowded space between the PSOE and AP. Its leader, Miquel Roca, a distinguished CiU parliamentarian and one of the drafters of the constitution, appealed to a small and select electorate. But voters were not ready to support a Catalan leader who not only was unwilling to give up his position within CiU and his identification with Catalan politics, but also stood in a highly confused partisan format. In the 1986 elections, the PRD won less than 1 percent of the vote. A coalition or *entente* between CDS and PRD might perhaps have been able to articulate a center alternative, but, apart from personality differences, the two parties had rather different electorates. According to survey data, voters placed the CDS at 5.5 on the left/right scale and the PRD at 6.2, while their own voters gave them 5.1 and 5.9 respectively. Right-wing voters placed the CDS at 5.2 and the PRD at 5.9, and those of the PSOE at 5.6 and 6.3 respectively. CDS voters saw the PRD as a party to their right at 6.2 (Linz 1986a, 655-656). During the 1980s the CDS would also suffer the effects of an electoral law that discriminates against smaller parties, particularly considering that much of its relatively limited strength was concentrated in very small districts. The party obtained just 1.8 percent of the vote and no representation in the 1993 legislature. There was no chance for the emergence of a hinge party, that is, a center party able to make coalitions with either the PSOE or AP: the Socialists' absolute majority made it unnecessary. And when it could have played a crucial role, in 1993 following the formation of a PSOE minority government, the CDS no longer existed. It would be the crisis of these attempts to create parties at the center of the spectrum - CDS, PRD and PDP- that would finally allow, as a result of the crisis in the PSOE in the 1990s, a victory of the PP in 1996. However, the structural limitations of the appeal of the Right would deny this party an absolute majority.

The Third Period: Realigning Elections and New Patterns of Competition

After more than a decade of Socialist ascendancy, a new period opened in the 1990s with evident signs of electoral realignment brought about by a number of factors: the incorporation of more than four million new voters into the electoral register, the impact of economic modernization and new educational levels, the social changes resulting from the welfare policies

of the PSOE governments, and the political resources generated by the consolidation of the *Estado de las Autonomías*. The political implications of these developments affected the main statewide parties, which experienced significant changes in the social profiles of their electorates; the party system was also altered as a consequence of the new conditions of competitiveness and interaction between the two major parties. The electoral implications of those changes were felt in the next two elections in 1993 and 1996. In 1993, the PSOE lost its parliamentary majority and the PP saw a sharp rise in electoral support (Table 4). Voters for the parties on the left (48.3 percent) still outnumbered those for the right (34.8 percent), and the nationalists, above all CiU and the PNV, maintained their position in terms of both votes and seats. Nonetheless, the tighter competition between the PSOE and PP, on the one hand, and between the PSOE and the Communist -dominated IU, on the other, spelt the return to a moderate multi-party system.

TABLE 4. *Third Electoral Period: Votes and Seats in the 1993 and 1996 General Elections*

	1993			1996		
Party	%Votes	Seats	% seats [c]	% Votes	Seats	% seats[c]
Left						
IU	9.6	18	5	10.6	21	6
PSOE	38.8	159	45	37.5	141	40
Centre-right						
CDS	1.8	-	-	-	-	-
Right						
PP	34.8	141	40	38.8	156	45
Regional						
Basque Country						
HB	0.9	2	0.6	0.7	2	0.6
EA[a]	0.6	1	0.3	0.5	1	0.3
PNV	1.2	5	1	1.3	5	1
Catalonia						
ERC	0.8	1	0.3	0.7	1	0.3
CiU	4.9	17	5	4.6	16	5
Galicia						
BNG	-	-	-	0.9	2	0.6
Aragon						
Par	0.6	1	0.3	-	-	-
Canary Islands						
CC	0.9	4	1	0.9	4	1
Valencian Community UV	0.5	1	0.3	0.4	1	0.3
Others[b]	4.6	-	-	3.1	-	-
TOTAL	100	350	100	100	350	100
Eligible voters		30,748,763			32,531,833	
Voters		23,718,083 (77.1%)			25,172,058 (77.4%)	
Blank + void votes		316,649 (1.3%)			369,127 (1.5%)	

[a] In 1993, in coalition with EUE.
[b] Without parliamentary representation (the most important of these being in 1993 the centrist CDS [1.8%] and the greens LV [0.6%], and in 1996 the regionalist PA [0.5%]).
[c] Percentages are rounded off.

Source: Spanish Ministry of the Interior.

For the PSOE, its fourth consecutive victory combined the loss of 16 seats with a significant increase in its vote. But the fatigue its electorate felt and the appearance of cracks in the party's internal cohesion already pointed to the end of its long period in power. For the PP this new defeat was offset by its 34 new seats, the piercing of its electoral *ceiling* of the 1980s, and the narrowing of the gap that separated it from the PSOE. Thus, the party's greater institutionalization following its refoundation began to bring results through renovation in its leadership, increased membership and the modification of negative images. The change of government finally came in the March 1996 elections. The campaign was dominated by the certainty that the PSOE would lose (hounded by a severe economic crisis, corruption scandals, and allegations of state-sponsored death squads in the GAL case) and that the PP would win (following the aggressive parliamentary and media campaign against the Socialist government, as well as its success in the regional elections the year before). But the PSOE's defeat was less conclusive, and the PP's victory more modest, than expected: the Socialists lost to the PP by a difference of only 340,000 out of a poll of over 25 million votes. Although the PP emerged as the party with the largest plurality, it took only 45 percent of the seats in the Congress, while the PSOE retained 40 percent. The PP's *bitter victory* and PSOE's *sweet defeat* did not, therefore, signal the end of the predominance of the Left (with 48.1 percent of the vote) over the Right (with 38.8 percent) – leaving aside the vote for nationalist and regionalist parties (Wert 1997). However, this third period has seen a major change in the way governments have been formed. Both the PSOE in 1993 and the PP in 1996 opted for single-party minority governments, maintained in power by the more or less formal parliamentary support provided by nationalist parties. Following the collapse of the CDS and given the IU's rejection of any type of alliance with the PSOE, the nationalist parties became the only source of support for minority, and especially conservative, governments. The nationalist (and hence particularistic) logic of these parties' parliamentary alliances makes this an unusual situation in the European context, and raises interesting questions about the future development of regional conflicts and inter-party competition between political forces operating at different territorial levels and within distinct party systems.

In the 1990s, the organizational features of each of the main statewide parties followed distinct paths. In the case of the PSOE, party life was characterized by its massive presence in the institutional spheres following its arrival in power in 1982. For over a decade, thousands of

party members held public office in the Cortes, regional parliaments, local councils, and different levels of the public administration.[19] The scale of the PSOE's institutional responsibilities gave the party a key role in a critical phase of Spanish politics, facilitated the stabilization of the party system, and sharply increased its own organizational resources. But these responsibilities also brought some negative consequences: an excessive dependence on the government, a personalised form of decision making, the deficient institutionalization of its internal bodies and rules (Puhle 1986, 339-340; Gangas 1995,159-160). Party and government were one and the same thing, and both were in the hands of Felipe González, who gave the party unity and discipline. This facilitated the party's support for government decisions and also made a major contribution to the electoral successes of the 1980s, but restricted participation in the party by members, limited internal debate, and generated oligarchic processes at all levels (Maravall 1991,16-17).

A further consequence was the party's organizational weakness. The PSOE has had a small membership, much smaller than the large institutional and political resources it enjoyed during the 1980s (Table 5). During the transition, growth of membership (both numerically and territorially) and internal cohesion were combined relatively effectively; but the long period in government reinforced the lack of organizational strategies and, more particularly, the lack of interest in membership policies (Méndez-Lago 1998). These internal problems were aggravated by the tensions generated by the factional infighting between the so-called *renovadores* (supporters of social democratic policies identified with González), and those known as *guerristas* (supporters of Alfonso Guerra, deputy general-secretary of the party, who appeared to defend a radical socialist identity) (Maravall 1991, 17). After a protracted and notorious public struggle, the *guerristas* were excluded for the new government in 1993, and marginalized at the 1997 party congress. In the meantime, and paralleling the institutionalization of the *Estado de la Autonomías*, most of which were dominated by the electoral and governmental presence of the Socialists, the leaders of the most important regional federations emerged as a new source of power and resources within the party. Their strategic manoeuvring has consolidated those regional *barons* as an autonomous structure, with increasingly significant decision-making

[19] This can clearly be seen from the high proportion of delegates to the party Congress who held public positions: 57 percent in the 1981 Congress, 61 percent in 1984, and 67 percent in 1990 (Maravall 1991,15).

authority between the traditional centralized leadership and the new basic units of regional federations (Puhle, forthcoming).

TABLE 5. *Party Membership and Partisan Mobilization in Spain, 1977-1996*

(*a*) Party Membership (in thousands)

Year	PCE/IU	PSOE	AP/PP	CDC	PNV
1977	201,7	51,5	-	2,6	-
1979	168,1[a]	101,1	50,1	6,7[a]	-
1982	181,9[b]	107,2	85,4	8,8[b]	-
1986	70,0[c]	160,0	223,1	10,0[c]	34,0[c]
1989	49,7[d]	213,0[d]	284,3	15,0	-
1993	57,3[e]	325,4[e]	375,2	20,0[e]	-
1996	66,4	365,1	490,2[f]	26,0	30,5

(*b*) Partisan Mobilization (in percentages)

	PCE/IU		PSOE		AP/PP		CDC		PNV	
Year	m/v[g]	m/e[h]	m/v[g]	m/e[h]	m/v[g]	m/e[h]	m/v[g]	m/e[h]	m/v[g]	m/e[h]
1977	11.7	0.9	1.0	0.2	-	-	0.5	0.06	-	-
1979	9.7[a]	0.7[a]	1.9	0.4	1.8[a]	0.1[a]	1.4[a]	0.1[a]	-	-
1982	9.4[b]	0.7[b]	1.1	0.4	1.5	0.3	1.1[b]	0.2[b]	-	-
1986	8.2[c]	0.3[c]	1.8	0.6	4.2	0.8	1.0[c]	0.2[c]	11.0[c]	2.1[c]
1989	5.3[d]	0.2[d]	2.4[d]	0.7[d]	4.7	0.9	1.4	0.3	-	-
1993	3.1[e]	0.2[e]	4.0[e]	1.1[e]	4.6	1.2	1.7[e]	0.4[e]	-	-
1996	2.5	0.2	3.9	1.1	6.0[f]	1.6[f]	2.3	0.5	9.6	1.7

[a] In 1978.
[b] In 1981.
[c] In 1985.
[d] In 1988; for IU, figures refer only to the membership of the PCE.
[e] In 1992.
[f] In 1995.
[g] *m/v* indicates the ratio between members and voters of a party.
[h] *m/e* indicates the ratio between members of a party and the Spanish (for PCE/IU, PSOE and AP/PP) and regional (for CDC and PNV) electorates.

Sources: In Montero (1981), Tezanos (1983 and 1993), Wert (1994), Gangas (1995), Méndez-Lago (1998), van Biezen (1998), Bosco (1997), Morales (1998), Marcet and Argelaguet (1998), Acha and Pérez-Nievas (1998) and our own calculations.

Following its defeat in 1996, the PSOE considered *volis nolis* launching a process of restructuring its leadership, democratizing its internal mechanisms, and updating its ideological appeals. To date, the PSOE has taken two main initiatives: González's substitution by Joaquín Almunia as secretary general of the party at the XXXIV party conference (June 1997), and the celebration of primaries to choose candidates for the presidency of the central and regional governments, as well as for the mayors of the major cities, for the forthcoming legislative, regional and local elections. The primaries were held in Spring 1998, firstly to elect, through a ballot of the entire membership, the party's candidate for the presidency of the government. Almunia competed with José Borrell, who emerged victorious. It was a close-run fight: Borrell won 55 percent of the ballot, as against 45 percent for Almunia (with a 54 percent turnout among the party's 383,462 members). Borrell won in 16 of the 21 party regional federations. This primary was followed by others to choose the head of the lists of the party slates in the regional and local elections, to be decided by ballots of the corresponding provincial and local memberships. It is difficult to ascertain the consequences that this new procedure might have for different dimensions of party life. However, it is clear that the procedure was welcomed by voters and most of the media, who saw it as a move towards democratizing party life (Boix 1998).[20] Moreover, the primaries resulted in a renovation of the party elite precisely when the party organization was already undergoing important changes of personnel and was also in a state of flux (Hopkin 1999c): besides the candidate to the presidency of central government, the PSOE changed 80 percent of its candidates for mayor in the largest cities and for president in regional governments.[21] It is true that the *bicephalia* between Almunia as secretary general and Borrell as candidate brought in some conflicts because of the intedeterminacy of their respective functions in the daily life of the party, both internally and externally.[22] It is also likely that in the medium-run those new rules can contribute to curtail the oligarchical practices of the past, to

[20] In a poll carried out shortly before the vote, 69 percent of respondents (and 83 percent of those who had voted for the Socialists in 1996) approved the introduction of primaries to elect the party's presidential candidate, and 81 percent (including 90 percent of IU voters, 78 percent of the PSOE's, and 78 percent of the PP's) considered that the other parties should adopt a similar procedure; see El País, 27 March 1998.

[21] In El País, 25 April 1998 and 29 June 1998.

[22] This bicephalia was apparently brought to an end when the Federal Committee reached an agreement in November 1998 by which the party decided to give preeminence to Borrell as leader of the opposition and candidate for prime minister, while Almunia's role as secretary general was reinforced; see El País, 22 Novembre 1998, and Boix (1998).

enhance grass-roots participation in party affairs, and consequently to increase the credibility of the party renewal processes among the public at large (Puhle, forthcoming).

The PP faced a different series of challenges. Firstly, the party leadership passed through a process of generational replacement, with the arrival of large numbers of middle-ranking officials who had already worked with Fraga. Their experience and relative youth helped them transmit a message of continuity with the past, but also one of essential change. This was consolidated by implementing a recruitment policy that combined the appearance of new (and younger) faces with the incorporation of former leaders of the UCD, the PDP and the CDS (López Nieto 1997, 114-115). Secondly, the presence of this new elite favoured a new phase of the by now familiar strategy of *conquering the center*. The disappearance of the CDS gave the PP the chance to monopolize the center- and right-wing voters in those regions without nationalist parties, and to make an exclusive claim to be *the* Center party. The PP was able to shake off memories that linked it with the Francoist past, and attempted to emphasize its similarity to the great European conservative parties by joining the European Popular Party (EPP). A process of internal change, more positional than ideological, combining elements of Christian democratic parties with other typically neo-liberal positions, was also implemented (Wert 1994). Thirdly, the PP became the largest party in terms of membership: it has grown steadily since 1982, but above all since 1991, when the PP's electoral prospects began to look more solid (Table 5). Accordingly, after the double victory in the regional and local elections in 1995, and the general elections in 1996, the PP emerged as the main party in both electoral and institutional terms: it was the most-voted party in 44 provincial capitals (with an absolute majority in 31), and obtained a majority in 10 regional parliaments. From 1996 onwards, its position in the central government and many regional and local governments has been one of the principal forces behind party institutionalization.[23]

Finally, IU has accumulated in this third electoral period a series of problems that dated from more than ten years before, when the leaders of the PCE tried to overcome the negative

[23] In its XIII National Congress, held in January 1998, the PP depicted itself as a "center and reformist" party, claimed to be the largest party with 578,000 members, once again confirmed its positional rather than ideological changes, and stressed the image of party unity and discipline under the undisputed leadership of Aznar; see El País, 30 January 1999, and La Vanguardia, 29 January 1999.

consequences of the 1982 elections. After playing a constructive role during the transition (Linz 1981), the party suffered a series of internal crises that led to changes in leadership, organizational instability, and splits (Gunther 1986b). In 1986, Communist leaders tried to take advantage of the almost seven million "no" votes in the referendum on Spanish membership of NATO by setting up the coalition Izquierda Unida (IU). This was based on an alliance among the PCE, small left-wing parties and some individuals who had stood out in the campaign against NATO. Although IU's results still did not match the PCE's vote in 1977, the new coalition gave voters dissatisfied with the PSOE an option that also represented the apparent modernization of the PCE. However, the dominant presence of the PCE gave rise to internal tensions as a result of the difficulties involved in harmonizing the limited electoral appeal of a communist party after the collapse of the Soviet Union with the crucial importance of the PCE in the coalition's daily activities (Bosco, forthcoming). Despite the search for mechanisms of internal readjustment, IU remains essentially a coalition which in all important respects is controlled by the PCE, and which intermittently presents itself as a channel for feminists, pacifists and ecologists. And despite presenting itself as a *new* political movement, IU is in fact an asymmetrical coalition between the PCE as the hegemonic force and a heterogeneous collection of virtually non-existent *parties* and different social organizations lacking any real strength (Ramiro 1998).

IU has enjoyed only limited success in the numerous ballots held in the 1990s, and always less than the over-optimistic expectations of Julio Anguita, its leader since 1988. Subsequent frustrations have produced waves of radicalization (usually addressed against the PSOE), and reinforced dissent among at least two critical tendencies that have emerged within it: *Nueva Izquierda*, on the occasion of the debate over the coalition's European policy in the 1993 election campaign, and the *Partido Democrático de la Nueva Izquierda* (PDNI) following the disagreement over IU's anti-Socialist strategy and the elaboration of the slates for the 1996 election. The internal polarization between the traditional Communist militants (whose ideological profiles are old-fashioned radical left) and those who come from university or trade union circles (who tend to defend typically post-materialist issues) is also likely to increase (Montero and Torcal 1994).

Party Change and Party System Change: Dimensions and Features

The Spanish case exhibits a peculiar combination of indicators of party change and patterns of stabilization of electoral behaviour. This stabilization should have favoured the institutionalization of the party system. And both elements should be expressed in the dimensions that reflect fundamental characteristics of the distribution of the vote. We will examine five significant dimensions: the volume of vote transfers between successive elections; the number of relevant competing parties; the intensity of electoral competitiveness; the structure of the competition for government; and the ideological distance between the parties and among their voters. If Spain constituted a case of an inchoate party system, or an open electoral market in which the parties lacked a predictable pattern of competitive relations, and voters were available, these dimensions should reveal high and relatively constant volatility, changing party fragmentation, erratic electoral competitiveness, a variety of combinations of parties in government, and a perceptible modification of the ideological positions of voters according to their equally changeable preferences. But this does not appear to have been the case: the increasing stabilization of the electorate is reflected in the continuity shown by these indicators, which in relative terms have remained so throughout the different electoral phases. This characteristic makes the Spanish case highly unusual, as it has proved compatible with simultaneous processes of party system changes, that is, with the transformation from one class or type of party system into another (Mair 1997, 51-52).

Reduced Electoral Volatility

It might appear that Spain has seen considerable electoral volatility: indeed, the existence of three distinct electoral periods itself would testify to the many changes that have taken place in the parties' electoral support. Moreover, the collapse of the UCD and the CDS, the oscillations in the PSOE's and PCE/IU's share of the vote, and the great leaps forward in AP/PP's electoral support would suggest that these changes have also been considerable. This impression appears confirmed when the averages of the aggregate volatility index for Spain[24] is compared to similar indexes in other European countries since the mid-1970s: the Spanish figures are the highest, followed closely by those of the other new Southern European

[24] Expressed as a percentage, the volatility index measures the net difference between the results obtained by the main parties in two successive elections; see Bartolini and Mair (1990, 20 ff).

democracies (Gunther and Montero, forthcoming). But Table 6 reveals a rather different picture. Two points should be highlighted. The first concerns the evolution of the index. We have referred to the scant volatility between the first and second elections, which was much lower than in other countries also emerging from authoritarian rule. In the Spanish case, these readjustments were postponed until the third, 1982 elections, when they occurred for different reasons and with an unusual intensity: if indexes higher than around 15 percent have been interpreted as the consequence of earthquake elections (Ersson and Lane 1998, 31), the 42.8 percent volatility in 1982 was truly extraordinary. Figures of over 40 percent are rare in Europe, with only two similar cases since the 1970s – Italy, with a volatility index of 41.9 percent in 1992-1994 (due to the breakdown of the Italian party system), and France, with a 37.4 percent in 1981-86 (coinciding with the aftermath of the Socialist alternance in the presidency of the French Republic). In fact, the elections in Spain in 1982 (and in Italy in 1994) are by far the most extreme cases of total aggregate volatility seen in Europe this century: of the more than 300 elections held since 1885, only the Weimar elections of 1920 and the French ballot of 1906 (with 32.1 percent and 31.1 percent volatility respectively) come close. During this period, the average volatility was 8.6 percent, while no fewer than eight out of ten elections showed indexes of below 15 percent. Moreover, the Spanish index of 1982 was five times higher than the European average for the period since the 1940s (Mair 1997, 67-68; Bartolini and Mair 1990, 70).

The second point is the decline in volatility after 1982, since when it has remained below the European average (Mair 1997, 182; Lane and Ersson 1998, 196). It might be hypothesised that following the exceptional earthquake in 1982, electoral behaviour stabilized with the mere passage of time. However, we do not believe this is the case: even in the highly volatile elections of 1982, inter-party voting shifts followed a certain logic. If we compare the Spanish case with two others that have also experienced very volatile elections, Greece (with 26.7 percent in 1981-1977) and Portugal (with 23.2 percent in 1987-1985), the difference is that a very large part of the total volatility in the Greek and Portuguese party systems has consisted of inter-bloc volatility. That is, not only was there a redistribution of vote among the parties, but also significant movement across the left-right ideological divide. In contrast, the Spanish elections of 1982 (like those in Italy in 1994) combined very high total volatility with surprisingly low inter-bloc volatility (6.3 percent and 5.8 percent respectively). This massive electoral change

was compatible with the fact that the Spaniards (and Italians) gave their support to a different party than in the previous election, but one within the same ideological space. Spain and Italy, therefore, show higher than average levels of intra-bloc volatility (that which occurs within each of the blocs of parties grouped in function of class or left-right cleavages). This pattern highlights the importance that the barrier between the main parties on the left and right has for the stabilisation of the electoral and the anchoring of inter-party competition: a barrier which very few voters cross, and hence limits transfers of votes between the two blocs of parties (Gunther and Montero, forthcoming, and Morlino 1998, 88).[25]

TABLE 6. Electoral Volatility in Spain, 1977-1996*****

	Volatility		
Elections	Total	Inter-bloc	Intra-bloc
1979-77	9.9	1.9	8.0
1982-79	42.8	6.3	36.5
1986-82	12.1	1.7	10.4
1989-86	9.4	0.9	8.5
1993-89	9.9	2.1	7.8
1996-93	4.4	0.8	3.6
Mean	14.7	2.3	12.4
Deviation	13.9	2.0	11.9

*Parties included in Left and Right blocs are those mentioned in Table 2.

Low Party Fragmentation

The stabilisation of Spanish electoral behaviour is also reflected in the apparently scant variation in the number of relevant parties – although with some changes in the parties considered to be relevant and in the party system format. To date, electoral preferences have

[25] Data for aggregate volatility in Spain are also similar to those for individual volatility, which are based on estimates made from post-electoral surveys measuring individual voting shifts in two successive elections; see Montero (1992, 289-295).

systematically converged on just a few parties (Table 7).[26] The level of party fragmentation is amongst the lowest in Europe; it puts Spain even below Austria or France, only a little above the United Kingdom or Greece, and close to Germany or Portugal (Montero 1994, 67; Lane and Ersson 1998, 185). Despite the constant expansion of the electoral supply, it seems clear that the electoral market is relatively closed to new actors; and that the electoral system operates against openness, as the differences between electoral and parliamentary indices confirm. And despite the low party fragmentation, changes in the party system format are evident from one period to another. In the 1980s, the predominant party system clearly persisted in three legislatures at the parliamentary level in spite of the increasing number of parties at the electoral level. In the 1990s, the heightened competitiveness between the two major parties brought about a new party format. Much of the low party fragmentation is due to the fact that the most voted party has managed to win at least 35 percent of the vote and 45 percent of the seats, and significantly higher figures during the Socialist period (Table 8). The concentration of the vote on the two major parties has also been high, oscillating between two-thirds and three-quarters of the vote, and between 80 and 88 percent of the seats. Therefore, the combination of electoral preferences and the effects of the electoral system has facilitated throughout the three periods the formation of single-party governments, as well as the exceptional run of three consecutive majorities in Congress during the 1980s. The moderate fragmentation has also meant that the governments of the new democracy have been able to count on working majorities, assemble the parliamentary support required to push through their main policies, and enjoy an unprecedented degree of institutional stability in Spanish parliamentary history.

[26] The indices in Table 7 show how many parties compete in elections, and how many get seats in parliament, in both cases taking into account their respective relative sizes. We decided to include two indices since each highlights different features of the party system. The Taagapera and Shugart (1989, 79ff.) index is very sensitive to small parties, but excessively so to the largest ones, to the point of "overcounting" them; and the Molinar (1991) index takes much better into account the size of the largest party and the distance between the two largest parties, but is less sensitive to small parties.

TABLE 7. *Indices of Number of Parties in Spain, 1977-1996*

	Molinar index			Taagapera and Shugart index		
Elections	Electoral	Parliamentary	Difference	Electoral	Parliamentary	Difference
1977	3.09	2.01	1.08	4.45	2.89	1.56
1979	3.04	1.99	1.05	4.29	2.81	1.49
1982	1.81	1.52	0.29	3.20	2.33	0.87
1986	2.06	1.69	0.37	3.59	2.68	0.90
1989	2,43	1.82	0.61	4.09	2.85	1.24
1993	2.63	2.20	0.43	3.47	2.67	0.79
1996	2.63	2.25	0.38	3.21	2.72	0.48
Mean	2.53	1.92	0.60	3.76	2.70	1.04
Deviation	0.42	0.26	0.33	0.51	0.18	0.39

However, this distribution is also compatible with the presence in the Congress of Deputies of a relatively large number of parties and coalitions: 14 in the 1979 legislature, 13 in 1989, and 11 since 1996. In fact, in the mid-1990s, no Western European parliament had such a large number of political forces, except perhaps in Italy and Belgium; and leaving out the peculiar case of Belgium, because of the duplication of its parties, the Italian index of the effective number of parliamentary parties almost triples the Spanish one (Le Duc, Niemi and Norris 1996, 20ff.). Another notable feature of the Spanish case is the growing weight of the nationalist and regionalist parties within the large group of minor parties included in Table 8. The minor statewide parties have shrunk over the course of the different electoral periods, both in terms of their number and their share of the vote; around 8 regional parties seem to have stabilized their combined share of about 10 percent of the vote and 9 percent of the seats. These figures are modest, but they mask a factor of extraordinary importance for both the features of the party system and the formation of governments. They reflect to begin with the importance of the regional cleavage as a second dimension of competition that structures both the existence of regional party systems in some autonomous communities and their complex interaction with the party system at the statewide level. Basque and Catalan nationalist voters have always had specific parliamentary representation, and by more than one party, while voters in the Canary Islands, Aragon, Andalusia, Navarre, Valencia and Galicia have been more sporadically repre-

TABLE 8. *Votes and Seats for Different Parties in Spain, 1977-1996* (in percentages)

Votes and seats	Party with largest plurality	Two major parties	Minor statewide parties[a]	Nationalist and regionalist parties[a]	Total
Votes[b]					
1977	34.6	64.0	22.6 (3)	6.7 (6)	93.3
1979	35.0	65.5	19.0 (3)	8.9 (9)	93.4
1982	48.4	74.9	13.4 (3)	7.8 (5)	96.1
1986	44.6	70.9	13.7 (2)	9.7 (8)	94.3
1989	39.9	65.8	17.0 (2)	10.9 (9)	93.7
1993	38.8	73.6	9.6 (1)	10.4 (8)	93.6
1996	38.8	76.3	10.6 (1)	10.0 (8)	96.9
Average	40.1	70.1	15.1	9.2	94.4
Deviation	4.6	4.6	4.3	1.4	1.3
Seats[c]					
1977	47	81	12 (3)	7 (6)	100
1979	48	83	9 (3)	8 (9)	100
1982	58	88	5 (3)	7 (5)	100
1986	53	83	7 (2)	10 (8)	100
1989	50	81	9 (2)	10 (9)	100
1993	45	86	5 (1)	9 (8)	100
1996	45	85	6 (1)	9 (8)	100
Average	49	84	7	9	100
Deviation	4.4	2.6	2.4	1.2	

[a] In parenthesis, number of parliamentary parties.
[b] In valid votes.
[c] Percentages are rounded off.

represented by regionalist parties.[27] This also highlights the distinctiveness of the Spanish party format among the countries in which a small number of large parties compete with different types of small parties.

A simple typology of party size and continuity over the seven legislatures makes it possible to distinguish from within the group of minor parties the *small*, *micro*- and *ephemeral* parties, in accordance with a number of elementary criteria (Table 9).[28] All the ephemeral parties appeared only in the first two legislatures, and most were regionalist. In turn, micro-parties also belong to the category of nationalist or regionalist parties, and have survived with different degrees of success throughout the period. But the most striking pattern is that the small parties are all, with the exception of PCE/IU, nationalist, and most of them have obtained parliamentary representation in every legislature. This pattern reinforces their significance within the Spanish party *systems*. The reasons are twofold: first, because of their coalition potential with any large party at the statewide level; second, because of their governmental and/or leading roles in most of cases within their own party systems at regional levels. Ignoring the marginal small statewide parties like PCE/IU, and/or radical nationalist parties like HB or BNG, the lack of a statewide center party which could operate as a *hinge* with either the PSOE or the PP, has allowed CiU, PNV and more recently *Coalición Canaria* (CC), to monopolize the coalition potential of the Spanish party system.[29] This has been the case in the third electoral period, when CDS disappeared and IU experienced a new wave of radicalization against the PSOE. In 1993, CiU usually voted in favour of bills presented by the Socialist minority government in return for substantial concessions on regional policies in general, and for Catalonia in particular; in 1996, CiU, PNV, and CC reached an agreement with the PP minority government. An unprecedented

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[27] The electoral strength of the various nationalist and regionalist party varies greatly within their respective autonomous community. For illustrative purposes alone, it is suffice to note here that, according to the criteria used by De Winter (1998, 213-214), in the 1996 parliamentary election CiU (with 29.6 percent of the votes, but 40.9 percent in the 1995 regional election), PNV (25 percent, but 27.5 percent in the 1998 regional election) and CC (25.2 percent) are large parties, and that small parties would include BNG (13.1 percent, but 24.8 percent in the 1997 regional election), HB (12.3 percent), EA (8.2 percent), ERC (4.2 percent) and UV (3.5 percent).

[28] These criteria have been adapted from those discussed by Mair (1991, 44).

[29] This contrasts with the typological distinction Smith (1991, 36-38) has drawn between marginal, hinge and detached small parties, the latter usually being regional-ethnic based parties since they decide to stay out of

situation in the history of Spanish democracy, these developments are also unusual in European democracies because of the nationalist condition of the government's partners and the peculiar relations of parliamentary support that have developed since then.

Changing Electoral Competitiveness

With the help of the electoral system and in spite of the systemic relevance acquired by the small nationalist parties, the concentration of the vote in two major parties has also had significant consequences for the level of electoral competitiveness.[30] This element of any party system also shows a peculiar combination of continuity in its structural profile and changes in some of its specific aspects (Table 10). During the first electoral period, there was a high level of competitiveness in electoral terms, and a rather lower level in parliamentary terms as a result of the strong effects of the electoral system. During the second period, the PSOE's exceptional position was revealed in the almost twenty point gap separating it from the second-placed party. This gap grew progressively smaller, but this was primarily a result of the decline in the Socialist vote rather than an increase in support for the PP, which was unable to break through the ceiling of its 1982 results (Montero 1989). This was a characteristic situation of a predominant-party system, in which governmental alternation proved almost impossible; the uncertainty surrounding electoral results was also limited. But elections in the third electoral period have radically altered this picture. Despite the continued protagonism of the same parties, their indicators have been ever lower than during the first phase in both electoral and parliamentary terms. The growing bipolarization between PP and PSOE has brought substantial changes in the levels of competitiveness, and also a significant change to the party system (Sartori 1976, 293). And since the figures included in Table 10 average the results at the nationwide level, it is important to note that high levels of competitiveness have now spread to most of the 52

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the main dimension of competition with other parties, a strategy that generally deprives them of all possible coalition potential.

[30] Sartori (1976, 218-219) has conceptualized competitiviness as one of the properties or attributes of competition: if the latter is a structure or rule of the democratic game, the former is a particular state of the game. As a result, it is usually measured by the proximity in electoral or parliamentary results of the two main parties, and it is associated with the uncertainty surrounding these results and the likelihood of a change in government; see also Strom (1989).

districts. While in the elections in the 1980s the first party beat the second by 25 percentage points or more in an average of 22 percent of electoral districts, in the 1990s this difference has occurred in only 3 percent of districts (Anduiza and Méndez 1997, 280).

TABLE 9. *A Summary of Size and Continuity: Types of Parties in the Congress of Deputies, 1977-1996*

	Parties		Legislatures						
Types	Statewide	Nationalist or regionalist	1977	1979	1982	1986	1989	1993	1996
Large[a]	PSOE		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	AP/PP				x	x	x	x	x
	UCD		x	x					
Small[b]	PCE/IU		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	AP		x	x					
	CDS				x	x	x		
	UCD				x				
		CiU	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
		PNV	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
		HB		x	x	x	x	x	x
		PSA/PA		x			x		
		CC							x
		BNG[c]							x
Micro[d]		ERC	x	x	x			x	x
		EE	x	x	x	x	x		
		UV		x		x	x	x	x
		PAR/Par				x	x	x	
		EA					x	x	x
		AIC				x	x		
Ephemeral[e]	PSP/VS		x						
	UN			x					
		UCDCC	x						
		CAIC	x						
		UPC		x					
		UPN		x					
		CG				x			
Total of parties			11	14	10	12	13	11	11

[a] *Large* parties are those receiving 15% or more of the votes in at least two legislatures.
[b] *Small* parties are those receiving between 1% and 15% of the vote in at least two legislatures (with the exception of the UCD, which disappeared after the 1982 election).
[c] Obtained 2 seats for the first time in the 1996 legislature.
[d] *Micro* parties are those receiving 1% of the vote *or* obtaining 2 or more seats in at least two legislatures.
[e] *Ephemeral* parties are those obtaining seats in only one legislature (with the exception of the BNG).

TABLE 10. *Electoral and Parliamentary Competitiveness in Spain, 1977-1996**

Elections	Competitiveness		Parties
	Electoral	Parliamentary	
1977	5.2	13.9	UCD-PSOE
1979	4.5	13.4	UCD-PSOE
1982	21.9	27.1	PSOE-AP
1986	18.3	22.6	PSOE-AP
1989	14.0	19.4	PSOE-PP
1993	4.0	5.1	PSOE-PP
1996	1.3	4.3	PP-PSOE
Mean	9.8	15.1	-
Deviation	8.1	8.6	-

**Electoral* competitiveness is expressed by the differences in the percentages of valid votes between the two main parties in each election; *parliamentary* competitiveness, by the differences in the percentages of seats between the two main parties. Consequently, the smaller the differences, the higher the levels of competitiviness.

Closed Competition for the Government

These changes in the levels of competitiveness contrast with the stability shown by the patterns of competition for government. As Mair has recalled (1997, 222-223), the mechanisms of competition for government constrain the decisions of voters by converting their choices of a party into a simultaneous expression of their preferences for a potential government. A crucial dimension of the party system itself, in the Spanish case these patterns have crystallized into a *closed* structure of partisan competition. According to the criteria defined by Mair (1997, 206-214), this implies that the two changes of government (PSOE in 1982, and PP in 1996) have been complete (on both occasions one single-party government was replaced by another), the governmental formulae have been regular (on both occasions the alternation has simply applied the mechanisms which assign the government to the party that wins the elections), and the number of parties with a chance of forming a government has been limited. The structural patterns of competition for government have therefore made a major contribution to both the institutionalization of the party system (despite changes in its format during the different

electoral periods) and the stabilization of Spaniards' electoral behaviour (despite changes in the levels of electoral support for the parties in each of these periods).

In contrast with the patterns of competition for government in the Spanish Second Republic,[31] all the elections held since 1977 have produced a clear winning party, even if the distance separating it from the second party amounted to just the 340,000 votes between PP and PSOE in 1996;[32] all the legislatures have had single party absolute majorities or pluralities of variable proportions, in every case large enough to ensure daily parliamentary decision-making; and all governments have been homogenous and single-party (Table 11). The PSOE governments enjoyed an exceptional run of three parliamentary majorities during the 1980s, while the almost -majority UCD governments in the 1970s rested on 48 percent of the seats. In 1993 and 1996 the minority PSOE and PP governments were able to secure the support necessary to achieve parliamentary majorities through a generic agreement for the legislature with CiU (as the PSOE did in 1993), or through a formal legislature pact signed with the nationalist groups of CiU and PNV, as well as with the regionalist CC (as the PP did in 1996). The closed competition for the government has been accentuated even further by the bipolar competition between the PP and the PSOE, and, at another level, has been reinforced by the inclusion in the constitution of a series of provisions to give minority governments greater political stability. The combined result of these factors has been remarkable. Compared to the 19 governments and eight prime ministers in the five years of the Second Republic, Spain has had four prime ministers during the last two decades. In fact, almost all the governments formed since 1977 have lasted as long as the parliaments that originally invested them, and the legislatures have usually run their full course. Even the UCD governments, which were shorter as a result of the Constituent Cortes of 1977 and Suárez's resignation in 1981, lasted an average

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[31] The Second Republic is among the most significant examples of an open structure of competition since coalition governments were the rule in extremely fragmented parliaments. This meant that changes in the government came about through a wide range of variations between legislatures and even within each of them, that the constitutent parties of the different governmental coalitions were constantly changing in search of stability that was never to be achieved, and consequently that the number of parties involved in the governing coalitions was often very high. During the second legislature (November 1933 - February 1936), for example, there were ten different governments, each of which consisted of at least four parties, and almost all of these governments went through different situations of entry and exit by significant parties (Linz 1978).

[32] This narrow gap was exceptional: in the first electoral phase and in the 1993 elections it was around one million votes, and in the second electoral phase it fluctuated between four and a half million votes in 1982 and almost three million in 1989.

of 22 months. The PSOE governments, which enjoyed parliamentary majorities for more than ten years under González, lasted an average of 40 months. And the current PP government, led by Aznar, has been in office since it was invested in 1996. Certainly, the governments of Suárez and Calvo Sotelo, as well as those of González, did undergo major changes that amounted to more than just reshuffles and which affected a large number of ministries. But the continuity of the prime ministers and of the public policies they defended gave these governments an unprecedented degree of stability in Spanish parliamentary history.

TABLE 11. *Governments by Electoral Periods in Spain, 1977-1996*

Government	Dates	Duration (in months)	Party	Parliamentary support (in %)	External support	Type*
Suárez I	Jul 77-Apr 79	22	UCD	47	No	s-m
Suárez II	Apr 79-Jan 81	22	UCD	48	No	s-m
Calvo-Sotelo	Feb 81-Oct 82	21	UCD	48	No	s-m
González I	Dec 82-Jun 86	43	PSOE	58	No	S-M
González II	Jul 86-Oct 89	40	PSOE	53	No	S-M
González III	Dec 89-Jun 93	43	PSOE	50	No	S-M
González IV	Jul 93-Mar 96	33	PSOE	45	Yes (Ciu)	s-m
Aznar I	May 96 - Na	Na	PP	45	Yes (CiU, PNV, CC)	s-m

* *s-m* indicates single-party minority government; *S-M*, single-party majority government.

In the legislatures without majority governments, the politics of coalition was not easy (Table 12). In 1979, for example, the UCD almost-majority governments experienced increasing difficulties following the end of the politics of consensus. A simple calculation would have advised the UCD to form a minimal winning coalition with AP. But this choice was not feasible on account of its costs at both the electoral level (because of the authoritarian, or at best scarcely democratic, image of AP) and at the governmental level (because of the major political differences separating the two parties, and the deep personal incompatibility between Suárez and Fraga). The possibility of incorporating regional conservative parties such as CiU and the PNV

into this hypothetical UCD-AP coalition was even more unlikely. The UCD therefore continued as a single-party, almost-majority government, negotiating occasional support to its left and right on different issues. This strategy of *shifting majorities* (Strom 1990, 97) allowed the UCD governments maximum flexibility for building *ad hoc* coalitions with changing small parties. But its costs became soon evident: those occasional agreements made for a complex and difficult to understand process which confused an inexperienced electorate which was not used to an ever-changing scenario of parliamentary alliances and oppositions. It also exacerbated bilateral competition, since the PSOE reinforced its confrontational strategy after its failure in the 1979 election, while AP launched its strategy of the *gran derecha* to force the UCD into a stable alliance on a conservative position. All this heightened the tensions between the *families* of the governing party (Gunther 1986a; Hopkin 1999b). When the 1982 election led to the final crisis of the UCD and gave the new PSOE government an absolute parliamentary majority of no less than 58 percent, this broad mandate was interpreted both as the end of the parliamentary confusion of the preceding legislature and the starting point for the efficient approval of policies (Maravall 1984, 84ff., and 1997, 84-86). And in the third period, after the parenthesis of the exceptional PSOE parliamentary majorities, minority governments have again become the rule. In the 1993 legislature the PSOE as the *winning* party formed a single party minority government with 45 percent of parliamentary support. Given the increasing incompatibility with IU (which had 5 percent of the seats), the PSOE reached a loose but effective agreement with CiU (which also had 5 percent of seats) for the legislature. In 1996, the possibilities for the formation of the government were slightly different. The PP (with 45 percent of the seats) and the conservative nationalist parties could have formed a majority coalition government (Table 12), but these parties refused to enter into a *Spanish* coalition government. Nonetheless, the PP was able to sign a written agreement for the legislature with CiU, PNV and CC, which provided a parliamentary majority to the single-party, minority government.[33]

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[33] In 1996, another possibility was an almost-majority coalition government between the PSOE and IU, or made up of the PSOE, IU and BNG, a leftist nationalist party. But once again the radicalization of IU against

TABLE 12. *Patterns of Competition for the Government: Possible Single-party and Coalition Governments in Spain, 1979 and 1996**

		1979 Possibilities						
Party	Seats	Left + Centre-left	Left+Centre-left+ Regional-left	Centre-Left+ Regional-left	***Centre-right***	Centre-right + Regional-right	Centre-right + Right	Centre-right + Right + Regional-right
PCE	23	23	23					
PSOE	121	121	121	121				
UCD	168				***168***	168	168	168
AP	9						9	9
Others	1							
PSA	5		5	5		7		7
PNV	7					8		8
CiU	8							
Others	8							
Total	350	144	149	126	***168***	183	177	192
(%)	(100)	(41)	(43)	(36)	***(48)***	(52)	(51)	(55)
Type of government								
Single-party majority								
Minimal winning coalition						X	X	
Surplus majority government								X
Single-party minority					***x***			
Minority coalition		x	x	x				

		1996 Possibilities						
Party	Seats	Left + Centre-left	Left+Centre-left+ Regional-left	Centre-Left+ Regional-left	Centre-right	Centre-right+ Regional-right	***Centre-right + Right***	Centre-right + Right + Regional-right
IU	21	21	21					
PSOE	141	141	141	141				
PP	156						***156***	156
BNG	2		2	2				
PNV	5							5
CiU	16							16
CC	4							4
Others	5							
Total	350	162	164	143			***156***	181
(%)	(100)	(46)	(47)	(41)			***(45)***	(52)
Type of government								
Single-party majority								
Minimal winning coalition								X
Surplus majority government								
Single-party minority							***x***	
Minority coalition		x	x	x				

* The required majority is 176. The left-wing regional parties were the PSA in 1979 and the BNG in 1996; the conservative regional ones, the PNV and CiU in both years, and the CC too in 1996. There were other parties, but these have not been taken into account because of their anti-system character (HB) or of their *micro* size (EE, ERC, PAR, UPC and UPN, which had only one seat each in 1979; and EA, ERC, and UV in 1996, also with a seat each in 1996). A capital *X* denotes majority governments; a small *x*, minority governments. Actual governments are in italics and bold.

Thus, the winning parties in the third period, and especially the PP in the 1996 legislature, have chosen different strategies to build parliamentary majorities than those implemented by the UCD in the first period. Instead of resorting to shifting majorities with statewide, nationalist or regionalist parties ideologically located either to the left or right, there is now a formal minority government, that is, one which has the external support of three parties, formalized through a written and explicit pact for the legislature: a result which is rare among the many existing minority governments (Strom 1990, 94-97). As we shall see, the Spanish case is even more exceptional due to the fact that the external support comes exclusively from nationalist and regionalist parties. They enjoy Regierungsfähigkeit, and particularly so given the lack of a statewide centre or middle party. Once CiU, PNV and CC decided not to join a PP government, and once the PP decided to form a minority government with formal parliamentary support, they became its only possible support. For the PP, these parties represent a kind of pivotal middle parties between the PSOE and the governing PP (Hazan 1997, 27) despite their very different positions on the center-periphery cleavage. For CiU, PNV and CC, their strategy of external support without further commitments enables them to maximise their benefits at both levels - in the statewide parliament and in the regional governments they already occupy. We will also discuss below some consequences of these arrangements, which are distinct to those surrounding a number of regionalist parties fulfilling similar functions in some Western European countries.

Ideological Moderation

The Spanish electorate has not only tended to vote for just a few parties, but also for moderate ones. Since the 1970s, most initially chose centre-right parties (such as the UCD), before switching to the centre-left (such as the PSOE), and more recently to a party like the PP, which hovers between the right and centre-right. Democratic parties have covered almost the entire parliamentary spectrum, whilst the extremist parties have obtained minimal support; only two anti-system parties have held seats in the Congress, one on the right (*Unión Nacional* [UN] in 1979), and another on the radical, nationalist Basque left (*Herri Batasuna* [HB] since 1979).

This electoral moderation does fit with the pattern of ideological moderation. Many indicators show that it encompasses different social classes, age cohorts, and occupational groups, and has enjoyed an unusual degree of continuity since the 1970s (Maravall 1984, 32).[34] The Spaniards' distributions on a ten-point left-right scale are shown in Figure 1 from various post-electoral surveys.[35] The first observation is their relative stability. In spite of electoral volatility between parties, the disappearance of the UCD, the long PSOE's period of hegemony and the recent victory of a refounded PP, there have been no major changes. The second finding points to both the weakness of the extremes and the strength of the centre. Since 1978, Spaniards have placed themselves slightly to the left of most European electorates, with a mean which oscillates between 4.4 and 4.8; only in 1976, before the first free election, was the mean 5.6 (Linz et al. 1981, 264 ff.). The continuity of the centre-left positions suggests that the Spaniards form one of the least conservative electorates in the European Union, and agrees with their tendency to adopt reformist attitudes on political, social and economic questions (Montero and Torcal 1990). Except for 1976, the most left-wing alternatives (points 1 and 2) have always been almost three times as populated as those on the extreme right (9 and 10). For almost the entire period, the center-left positions (3 and 4) have been chosen by twice as many voters as their equivalents on the center-right (7 and 8).

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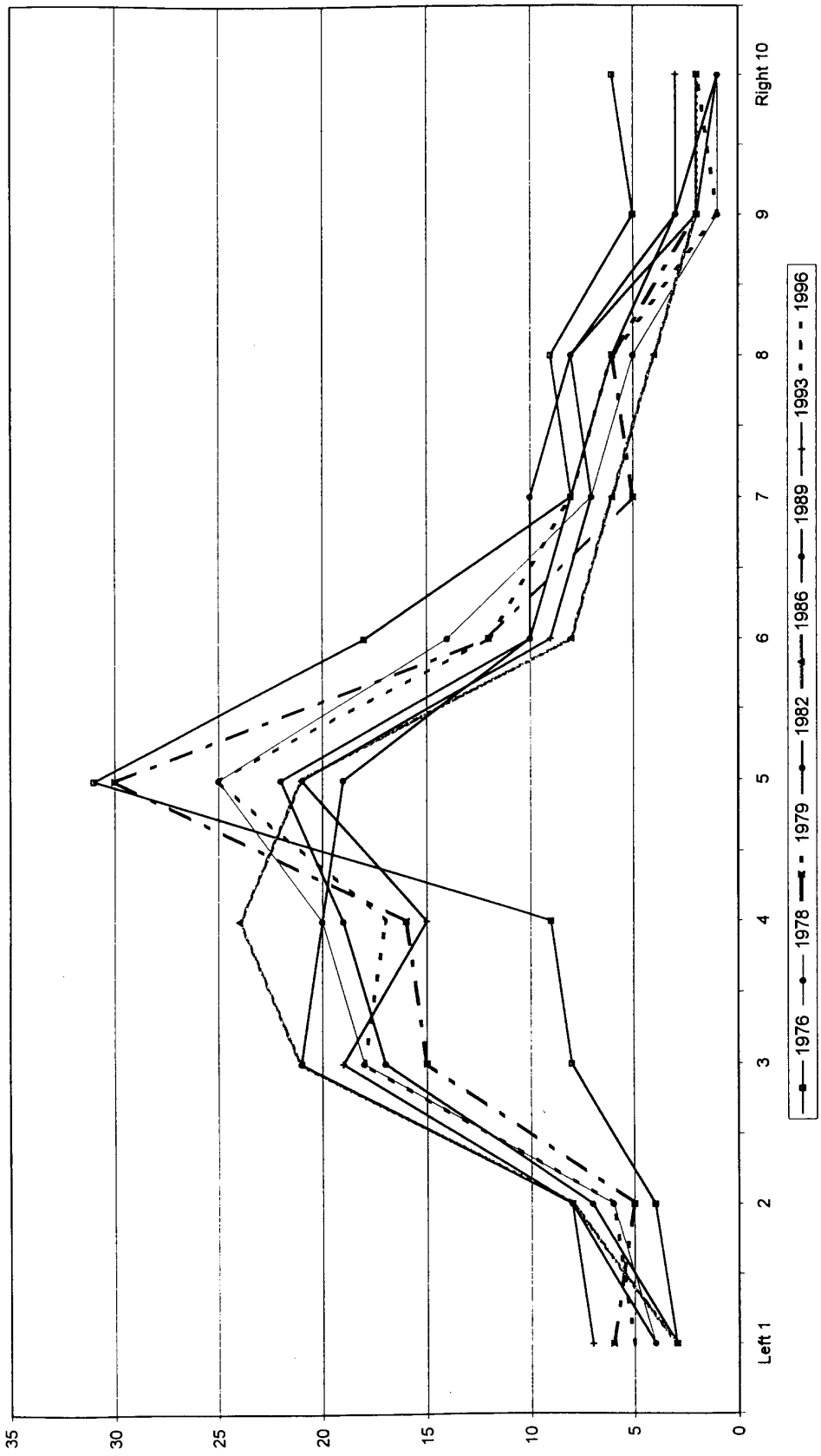
[34] Among these indicators, survey questions about the respondents' self-placement on a left-right scale are the most relevant, and have been most widely used. As in many other European countries, since the mid-1970s voters have placed themselves on the left/right scale in a consistent and stable way (if we ignore some of the sampling variations and maybe some temporary shifts). The left/right scale is probably the most useful indicator in the study of Spanish politics in spite of the usual problem posed by exactly what respondents mean when they say that they are on the left or on the right, or when they draw distinctions between the different points on the scale. We only know that these positionings correlate highly with both voting patterns and a wide range of attitudes on different issues (Linz et al. 1981, 355ff.; Sani and Sartori 1983; Sani and Montero 1986). Moreover, self-placement is significant not only when dealing with the mass electorate or the voters of particular parties, but also with the attitudes of elites. Other indicators that are also relevant to the issue of ideological moderation, but of a different nature, point to the generalized attitudinal support for democracy, democratic rules of the game, and systemic political objectives both among Spaniards (Maravall 1995, 215 ff.; Linz and Stepan 1996, 107 ff.; Montero, Gunther and Torcal 1997) and elites (Gunther 1992; Morlino 1998, 148 ff.).

[35] The 1979 survey was carried out by DATA in April-May from a representative nation-wide sample of 5,439 Spaniards aged 18 or over (see Gunther, Sani and Shabad 1986); the 1982 poll was undertaken by DATA in October-November from a sample of 5,463 adult Spaniards (Linz and Montero, 1986); and the two waves of the 1993 panel survey was carried out by DATA in May and June that year using a sample of 1,448 citizens (Montero 1994). The polls in the Data Archive of the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS) were carried out in June-July 1986, October-November 1989, and March 1996, with representative, nationwide samples of 8,236; 3,084; and 5,350 adult Spaniards, respectively.

FIGURE 1
Self-placement on Left-Right Scales, 1976-1997



Sources: Linz et al. (1981, 373), Montero (1994, 84), and Data Archive, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS).

The positions voters assign to the parties have remained relatively stable, although with some variations over time that might well reflect the shifting positions of the parties (Table 13*a*). The PCE and its successor, IU (between 1.8 in 1982 and 2.5 in 1996, but generally with a score of just over 2), is one of the least extreme communist parties at the European level (Montero 1994, 100). The PSOE's positions (from 3.8 in 1978, 3.5 in 1982, 4.5 in 1996) reflect the moderate policies of the Socialist governments. Whereas the UCD was assigned to the center-right (6.0 and 6.5), AP has been seen on the extreme right (8.5) and remained in this range even in the 1980s, in spite of inheriting much of the electorate of the UCD and the efforts of its leadership to present it as a center party. Even though in the 1990s its successor, the PP, was seen as moving slightly toward the center-right, it is still perceived to be one of the most conservative parties in Europe. The short-lived CDS was perceived in the center (between 5.5 and 6.0); its disappearance meant that there is no party of any significance between the PSOE and the PP, no party comparable to the Italian DC in a polarized multiparty system and no party playing the governmental role of the FDP in Germany. But despite the ideological distance between the PSOE and PP, it is possible to describe the Spanish party system as a bipolar, but not a polarized system (with the exception of the Basque case).[36]

With the partial exception of the anti-system parties in the Basque Country, the voters' ideological moderation is also reflected in the subcultures of the different parties. Data in Table 13 (b) and in Figure 2 reveal both the distinct position of the main partisan groups and their stability despite the changes in the parties themselves. As in many other European countries, these patterns reflect the centripetal tendencies in the electorate. Voters of both PCE/IU and AP/PP have tended to place themselves closer to the center than the electorate as a whole sees them, particularly in the case of AP/PP, whose voters placed themselves between 7.7 (in 1978) and 6.5 (in 1996), while the electorate as a whole placed the party at 8.5 and 7.9, respectively. Only in the last years have PSOE voters held a more leftist image of their party than that held by the electorate as a whole, reflecting the pragmatic and moderate policies held by their governments.

[36] The positions assigned by voters to the parties are, moreover, similar to those given by experts at different points of time; see Huber and Inglehart (1995) and Knutsen (1998).

TABLE 13. *Parties and Voters on the Left-Right Scale, 1978-1996******

(*a*) Placement of Parties by the Electorate

Party	1978	1979	1982	1986	1989	1993	1996
PCE/IU	2.5	2.2	1.8	2.0	2.2	2.4	2.5
PSOE	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.7	4.2	4.2	4.5
CDS	-	-	5.7	5.5	6.0	5.5	-
UCD	6.0	6.5	6.2	-	-	-	-
AP/PP	8.5	8.0	8.5	8.5	8.2	8.2	7.9
Electorate	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.4	4.6	4.7	4.7
(N)	(5,898)	(5,439)	(5,463)	(6,573)	(3,084)	(1,448)	(3,647)

(*b*) Self-placement of Party Voters*

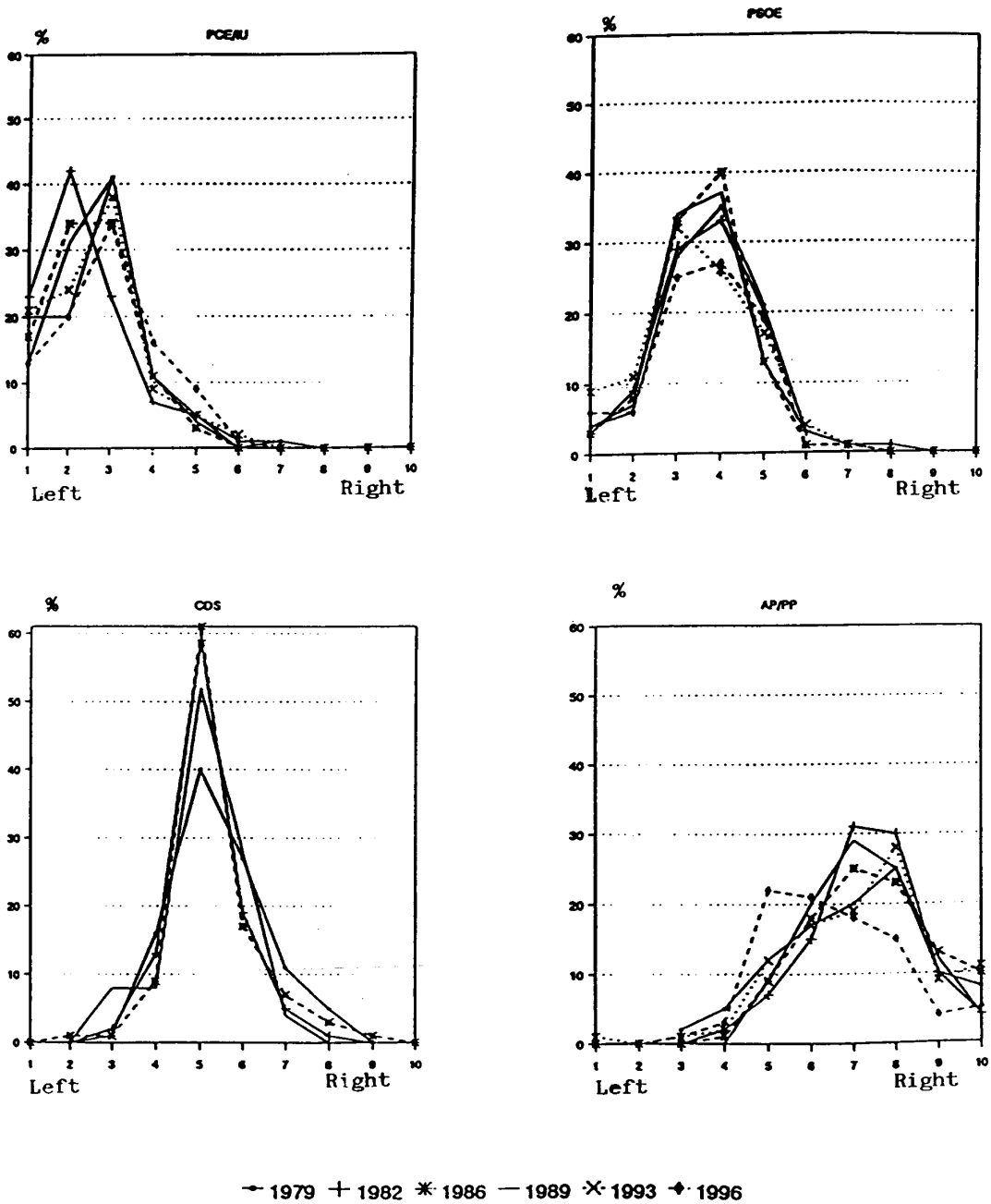
Party	1978	1979	1982	1986	1989	1993	1996
PCE/IU	2.6	2.7	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.9
PSOE	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.4	3.7
CDS	-	-	5.4	5.2	5.3	5.1	-
UCD	5.6	5.9	5.6	-	-	-	-
AP/PP	7.7	7.0	7.2	7.4	7.2	7.2	6.5
Electorate	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.4	4.6	4.7	4.7
(N)	(5,989)	(5,439)	(5,463)	(6,573)	(3,084)	(1,448)	(4,360)

* Figures are means on left-right scales of ten positions.

Sources: See Figure 1.

FIGURE 2

Self-placement of Party Voters on Left-Right Scales, 1979-1996



Sources: See Figure 1.

These patterns are similar to ones found in other Southern European countries with significant communist parties, no strong center parties, and relevant conservative parties. This configuration broadens the party space, widening the distance between its component parts, and therefore increasing the potential polarization of the party system. Spain stands out in terms of the ideological distance between the extreme parties (i.e. IU and PP) and shares with France the greatest ideological polarization between competing parties (i.e. the PSOE and PP) (Montero 1994, 101-103). But these comparatively high levels of polarisation are not a cause for concern *per se*. Not least, because party elites have carefully avoided embarking on the type of polarizing strategies so common, for instance, among Greek parties since the 1980s (Kalyvas 1997). Moreover, and reflecting the absence of a strong center party and the predominant distribution of ideological preferences, since 1982 the bipolar configuration of the party system has encouraged centripetal competition, whereby the parties try to attract the voters in the center of the continuum. The format of the party system means that this centripetal logic is compatible with the evenly-balanced competition between IU and the PSOE on the left, the undisputed pre-eminence of the PSOE on the center-left, and the PP's solid monopoly on the center-right and right. However, the patterns of inter-party competition are more complex in some autonomous communities, where the regional cleavage has spawned nationalist parties across the ideological spectrum which compete amongst themselves and with other state-wide parties on various dimensions.

It is possible to trace the extent to which these patterns of party competition have crystallized in the different electorates through an analysis of the weight of the voters of the main parties in each of the ideological spaces (Table 14). In 1982, the electoral earthquake was due to the PSOE's success in winning the votes of those who placed themselves on the left and had previously voted for the PCE; votes that the PSOE would largely lose in 1996, although the party would continue to maintain a stronger position in this segment than in 1979. This is also the case of the center-left electorate. But the most important change in 1982, and the one that gave the PSOE its absolute majority, was its success in the center. While in 1979 the PSOE won 20 percent of the vote of this large segment of the electorate (42 percent) and the UCD obtained 75 percent, in 1982 the PSOE gained 52 percent, while the CDS and UCD combined took only 37 percent; and AP, which had put its hopes in the disintegration of the UCD, only managed to pick up 21 percent: though this was a considerable improvement on the 3 percent AP had won in

1979, it was still way below the party's expectations. As the majority party in the center, the PSOE was able to retain the support of a large proportion of this electorate in 1993, and do better in 1996 (29 percent) than in 1979 (20 percent). In spite of its electoral victory and move towards the center, in 1996 the PP could only claim the support of 56 percent of this sector of the electorate, compared to the 75 percent that the UCD had obtained in the 1970s.

The victory of the UCD in the first elections was due to its strength on the center-right (it won the vote of 72 percent of those placing themselves on 6 and 7 of the left-right scale in 1979). In 1982, the PP managed to take 84 percent of that electorate and in 1996 this figure rose to 95 percent; but these inroads were made in a segment accounting for only 11 percent of the electorate, and 15 percent in 1996. The votes of the small proportion of the electorate that placed itself on the extreme right in 1979 went largely to the UCD (63 percent), with a strong showing for AP (21 percent). Thereafter, AP/PP has been able to win over 80 percent of that minority. As Table 14 shows, success or failure in elections hinges on the vote of those placing themselves ideologically on the center-left or the center. It was the PSOE's maximization of the vote in these segments and its continued success in the 1980s that allowed the party to govern. The PP's ability to make inroads into the center electorate in 1993 fuelled its hopes of winning a majority in 1996; but it failed because of the resistance put up by the PSOE.

There are two other indicators of the diminishing polarization in the Spanish party system. One of them consists of the perceptions of what might be termed as the *negative vote*, that is to say, the extent to which citizens express negative opinions of parties to the point of excluding them from their possible voting choices. These negative preferences, which are typically higher in the case of extreme parties, have been falling over the period (Table 15). This confirms our definition of the Spanish party system as bipolar but not polarized; a conclusion compatible with the existence of periods of particularly fierce confrontation between party leaders of the type that took place in the 1996 elections. And while the continued strong rejection of the PP has weakened, it is notable that, in comparative terms, this party has attracted the highest levels of rejection in all the different electoral periods (Montero 1994, 106-108).

TABLE 14. *Self-Placement on the Left-Right Scale and Vote in Spanish General Elections, 1979-1996****** (in percentages)

	Self-placement					
Party voted	Left	Center-left	Center	Center-right	Right	
1979						
PCE	55	19	2	2	-	
PSOE	40	73	20	7	6	
UCD	5	6	75	72	63	
AP	-	1	3	17	21	
(N)	(242)	(886)	(1,244)	(367)	(119)	
Electorate	11	31	42	11	4	(5,439)
1982						
PCE	29	4	1	-	-	
PSOE	71	93	52	8	4	
CDS	-	1	6	2	-	
UCD	-	1	31	5	2	
AP	-	1	21	84	82	
(N)	(342)	(1,298)	(880)	(627)	(142)	
Electorate	20	36	32	18	3	(5,463)
1993						
IU	33	15	4	-	1	
PSOE	65	81	46	2	-	
CDS	-	1	9	1	-	
PP	2	2	41	80	85	
(N)	(151)	(339)	(222)	(188)	(78)	
Electorate	15	34	30	15	6	(1,448)
1996						
IU	44	21	4	1	-	
PSOE	52	71	29	4	1	
PP	2	5	56	95	88	
(N)	(331)	(1,041)	(1,005)	(462)	(130)	
Electorate	11	34	37	15	4	(4,360)

* Non-answers have been excluded from the base of percentages. Only nationwide parties have been taken into account. Columns may not add up to one hundred because minor nationwide parties have not been included in the table. However, figures for the electorate corresponds to the whole survey, for which non-answers have been excluded from the base of the percentages. *Left* includes positions 1 and 2 of the scale; *Center-left*, 3 and 4; *Center*, 5 and 6; *Center-right*, 7 and 8; and *Right*, 9 and 10.

Sources: For 1996, Banco de Datos, CIS; for other years, DATA surveys.

TABLE 15. *Negative Party Preference in Spain, 1979-1996******

Party	1979	1982	1986	1989	1993	1996
PCE/IU	33	46	55	52	19	12
PSOE	12	9	15	24	17	7
CDS	-	18	16	21	11	-
UCD	19	23	-	-	-	-
AP/PP	39	35	52	42	39	25
(N)	(5,439)	(5,463)	(2,498)	(3,371)	(1,374)	(3,753)

* Percentages of people who say they will never vote for a given party.

Sources: For 1996, Banco de Datos, CIS; for other years, DATA surveys.

A second set of indicators refers to the evolution of the images of the parties. We have numerous series of indicators at different points in time (Linz et al. 1981, 232ff.; Gunther, Sani and Shabad 1986, 113ff.), although unfortunately some alternatives were dropped in successive surveys as no longer relevant (Table 16). The characterization of a party as *republican* became irrelevant after the left gave its support to the monarchical constitution of 1978. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, it made sense to ask if any of the major parties were or were not *democratic*, in the sense of abiding by the rules of the game. There was still some doubt about the democratic commitment of the PCE; we do not know if such scepticism exists with regard to IU, but it seems unlikely in terms of the evolution of the negative vote. Many voters had also doubts about the democratic commitment of AP; although we do not know either whether some still feel that way about the PP, the fact that in 1993 26 percent considered the PP to be extremist suggest that only a minority is sceptical.

TABLE 16. *Images of Spanish Parties, 1978-1993**

	PCE/IU			PSOE			UCD	AP/PP		
Image	1978	1982	1993	1978	1982	1993	1978	1978	1982	1993
Democratic	49	54	-	67	80	-	61	33	53	-
Extremist	-	38	33	-	8	16	-	-	29	26
Marxist	62	59	44	49	19	18	-	-	-	-
Republican	59	-	-	56	-	-	7	5	-	-
Avoid confrontations**	36	25	29	51	62	51	47	24	36	40
Defend workers	65	62	69	71	78	58	36	15	25	28
Defend business	12	12	24	20	30	60	65	74	76	85
Defend middle class	-	-	47	-	-	61	-	-	-	46
(N)	(5,898)	(5,463)	(1,448)							

* Percentages of people who agree with each image, for the different parties.
** In 1993, *able to govern.*

Sources: 1978, 1982 and 1993 DATA surveys.

The major change in the image of the parties on the left has been the weakening of their *marxist* label. Voters clearly responded to the PSOE when it dropped its Marxist commitment in its extraordinary congress of October 1979: while in 1978 49 percent perceived it as marxist, by 1982 this figure has fallen to just 19 percent. The Communists, perceived as marxist in 1978 by 62 percent, also successfully changed their image: only 44 percent of the electorate see IU as marxist. Both the PCE and IU have retained their image as *defenders of the workers*, while the PSOE has to a large extent lost that image. Reflecting the neo-liberal policies adopted by Socialist governments, a large number of voters see it as a party that *defends business* and the *middle class.* In fact, the PSOE is seen by two out of three Spaniards as defending simultaneously the interests of workers, business, and the middle class: there could not be a better image of a catch-all party compared to its initial image as a workers' party. In the late 1970s, the UCD was perceived as a party defending business, but 36 percent still saw it as defending the workers; the result was a typical center-right catch-all party. Finally, AP was originally identified as a party that was most favourable to business. And although it is still perceived in that way (85 percent in 1993), it also has become a party of the middle class (46

percent) with a smaller catch-all dimension amongst those who think that it defends workers (28 percent). These data clearly show that voters hold images that portray the major parties as catch-all parties, above all in the case of the PSOE, and with profiles still defined as conservative and pro-business in the case of the PP. All parties have also strengthened the image that they are *able to avoid confrontations* in society and/or *able to govern*: another indication of the absence of polarization.

Changes in Party Systems: Formats and Layers

Over the last twenty years, the instability shown by the parties has been accompanied by modifications in the patterns of interparty competition in each of the three electoral periods: the frequent party changes have thus interacted with a rather unusual series of party system changes. The distinct electoral fortunes of the parties have given rise to party systems with different formats (as was the case between 1979 and 1982) and different mechanics (as between 1982 and 1996). These changes complicate the task of political analysts attempting to place the Spanish party system within one of the existing typologies. In some cases their analyses have proved mistaken (as, for example, when many predictions have not been fulfilled), but more often they have been rather arbitrary (when basic variables have been disregarded) when not simply reckless (when grounded on notorious ideological biases). The great variety of classifications offered (and collated by Heywood [1995, 174]) is certainly striking. Yet in practice, the main distinguishing feature of the Spanish party system since the transition consists of the fact that it is more accurate to talk of party *systems*, rather than *a* party system. Moreover, this peculiar feature has given rise to two complementary phenomena. On the one hand, from a temporal perspective, the successive processes of electoral realignment have crystallized in significant changes in the components and patterns of competition between the statewide party systems, even though they have occurred in a short period of time. On the other, in spatial terms, the development of the regional cleavage has resulted in the coexistence of the statewide party system with distinct regional party systems in a number of autonomous communities.

The principal features of the party systems in each of the three electoral periods covering the last twenty years are outlined in Table 17. After the 1979 elections (which essentially confirmed the tendencies already seen in the 1977 founding elections), the party system seemed to belong to the category of moderate pluralism (Santamaría 1982, 412-413). The number of parliamentary parties was very large, but the level of party fragmentation was much lower due to the major differences in their parliamentary sizes. There was also a significant number of relevant parties, reflecting the overlap between the ideological and regional dimensions, rather than the dispersion of the parties across the ideological spectrum; accordingly, the parties with coalition potential included statewide, nationalist and regionalist parties. The distance between the two principal competing parties (UCD and PSOE) was very small, while the gap between the extreme parties (PCE and AP, since UN was soon isolated as an extreme-right wing anti-democratic group) was significant. The dynamic of interparty competition was centripetal, due both to the unimodal distribution and hence ideological moderation of the voters, and the catch-all strategies and moderate platforms adopted by party elites. In electoral terms, interparty competition was also characterized by the fact that both the PSOE and the UCD, as the two main parties, faced bilateral competition, respectively, from the PCE and AP, two minor parties situated in both cases on the extremes. Moreover, for some time both these two parties had been moderating their strategies in order to complete their legitimisation as democratic actors. The competitiveness between the UCD and the PSOE was accentuated by the low level of partisan identification, the division of the spaces of left and right for the statewide parties, and the increasing consolidation of the regional cleavage for the statewide and nationalist parties in certain key communities that would be crucial for the newly created *Estado de las Autonomías*, notably the Basque Country and Catalonia (Maravall and Santamaría 1989, 224). At the governmental level, in turn, the small electoral gap between the two main competing parties suggested that the center-left opposition stood a good chance of winning power in the future (Di Palma 1980, 137). The bipolar configuration of the party system was accentuated by the existence of an almost-winning centre-right government that relied on the support of shifting majorities. These were occasionally achieved through the support of statewide parties such as AP, but above all through that of the nationalist (as CiU) or regionalist (as PSA) parties. Their strategic position among the relevant parties meant that they were extraordinarily well-placed to offer their external support for UCD governments in return for policy concessions for their

respective autonomous communities, which at that time were just embarking on their institutional development (Capo 1989.) Although scarcely visible, there were already unequivocal signs of the overlapping of the ideological and regional cleavages through the qualified presence of many nationalist and regionalist parties. There were also signs of the complex interrelations between the statewide party system and the distinct regional party systems, two features that would re-emerge with even greater force in the 1990s.

After the second general elections in 1979, therefore, the prospects for the institutionalization of the party system appeared good.[37] However, the party system was radically transformed in the third general elections in 1982. These critical elections practically wiped out the UCD, gave the PSOE a parliamentary majority of almost 60 percent, turned AP from an almost insignificant force into the largest opposition party, and appeared to threaten the PCE with disappearance; in the Basque Country and Catalonia, however, those elections brought more continuity than change in their respective party systems (Shabad 1986). In this way, the Spanish case exemplifies perfectly the concept of party system change (at the statewide level), through what was, moreover, a radical change in the course of just one election (Mair 1997, 52-53; Pennings and Lane 1998, 5-6). On the other hand, the change in the party system did not undermine the process of democratic consolidation. In fact, in contrast to what many had feared at the time, these critical elections of 1982 played a decisive role in the successful consolidation of democracy (Linz and Stepan 1996, 108; Morlino 1998, 212).

[37] Other analyses were more cautious, describing the party system as polarized and even segmented pluralism, although not ruling out the possibility that it would evolve positively after the first two elections; see for instance Linz (1980a, 110ff.), and Maravall (1984, 38).

TABLE 17. *Features of Spanish Party Systems in Three Electoral Periods, 1977-1996*

	Periods		
Features	First (1979)	Second (1982)	Third (1996)
Volatility[a]			
Interbloc	1.9	6.3	0.8
Intrabloc	8.0	36.5	3.6
Total	9.9	42.8	4.4
Fragmentation			
Parties in parliament			
Statewide parties	5	5	3
Nationalist and regionalist parties	9	5	8
Total	14	10	11
Party with largest plurality			
Votes (%)	35	48.4	38.8
Seats (%)	48	58	45
Two major parties			
Votes (%)	65.5	74.9	76.3
Seats (%)	83	88	85
Number of parties (Molinar index[b])			
Electoral	3.04	1.81	2.63
Parliamentary	1.99	1.52	2.25
Competitiveness[c]			
Electoral	4.5	21.9	1.3
Parliamentary	13.4	27.1	4.3
Competition for Government			
Party in government	UCD	PSOE	PP
Parliamentary support (%)	48	58	45
Number of governments[d]	3	3	1
Average duration (in months)	22	42	-
Type of government	Single-minority/ Almost majority	Majority	Single-minority with external support
Main opposition party	PSOE	AP/PP	PSOE
Polarization			
Votes for parties (%)			
Left	41.3	52.4	48.1
Right	43.2	35.9	38.8
Nationalist and regionalist	8.9	7.8	10.0
Index of ideological distance[e]			
Between most extreme parties			
PCE/IU-AP/PP	0.47	0.54	0.40
Between competing parties for government			
PSOE-UCD	0.22	0.20	-
PSOE-PP	0.34	0.37	0.31
Type of party system	Moderate pluralism	Predominant	Moderate pluralism

[a] Refered to the immediately preceding election of 1977, 1979, and 1993, respectively; see text ccompanying Table 6.
[b] See text accompanying Table 7.
[c] See Table 10.
[d] The fourth PSOE government (July 1993-March 1996), which was part of the third period, has not been included.
[e] This index (which goes from 0 to 1) is measured by the absolute difference between the mean self-placements of their respective voters on the left-right scale divided by 9 (which is the theoretical maximum distance of the scale); see Sani and Sartori (1983, 321).

The new party system had a different format in terms of both the number and above all the parliamentary size of statewide parties. Although the continued strength of the two main parties led many observers to define the new system as a more or less "imperfect" two-party system,[38] the distance between them displayed the typical mechanics of a predominant-party system, in which, obviously, the PSOE was the dominant party. During the 1980s, the new party system conformed to the general characteristics defined by Sartori (1976, 195-199):[39] the PSOE won three clear successive electoral victories, in which it obtained absolute parliamentary majorities, and managed to maintain a lead in terms of seats of a maximum of 27 percent in 1982 and a minimum of 19 percent in 1989, over AP-PP, the second party. The ideological distance between the two main parties increased considerably following the disappearance of the UCD. However, the continuity of the distribution of preferences among the voters ensured also the persistence of the centripetal competition between the PSOE and AP/PP. At the parliamentary level, the existence of PSOE majority governments made the coalition potential of the other relevant parties redundant during the 1980s. This was as true of the statewide CDS (which expanded in the mid-1980s, when at its peak it took nearly 10 percent of the vote and 5 percent of the seats) as of the Catalan nationalist CiU (with an average of 5 percent of the vote and of the seats). Nonetheless, the PSOE responded to its electoral loss of support in the elections of 1986 and above all in 1989 with a remarkable shift in its legislative strategies in parliament by increasingly seeking support from the center parties, the CDS and CiU in particular. As a result, interparty relations in the Congress of Deputies did not display the dynamics of government versus opposition. Leaving a confrontational style of opposition mainly to the PP and to a lesser extent to IU, much of the time the PSOE fostered a subtle relationship between the majority and the different minorities through processes of parliamentary negotiations and agreements (Capo 1994).

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[38] Linz (1986a, 653-654) offered a different characterization in the mid-1980s, when he used the Italian bipartismo imperfetto coined by Galli (1966) to draw an analogy with the Spanish case. This was based on the hypothetical absence of an alternative to the PSOE governments, due to AP's weak legitimacy to present itself as the axis of a center-right coalition, and the impossibility of it alone winning a parliamentary majority.

[39] In spite of its definitional and operational problems, we still prefer Sartori's approach to others that seek to apply longer time-frames (i.e. Pempel 1990) or which attempt to distinguish between other similar concepts (i.e. Morlino 1998, 264 ff.).

In the 1990s, the predominant party system of the 1980s developed into a new variant of moderate pluralism. As is well known, Sartori (1976, 199-200) has argued that the former is a *type* rather than a class of party systems: it can easily develop a variant of multipartyism. Equally, party system change may easily occur through relatively slight modifications in the strength of the principal components of the system (Mair 1997, 53). This is precisely what happened in the 1993 and 1996 elections.[40] Nonetheless, the changes were far from insignificant. The levels of competitiveness between the PSOE and PP increased enough to take the PP to power after more than a decade of Socialist governments, and to be reflected in the extremely small differences in both parliamentary and electoral terms. Rather than permitting the entry of green or some type of new right parties, as in many other European parliaments (Kitschelt 1997; Donovan and Broughton 1999), the format of the party system continued to reduce the number of statewide parties and to increase that of nationalist and regionalist parties. The disappearance of the CDS left IU and the PSOE as the only statewide parties on the left, and the PP as their sole competitor on the right. Meanwhile, the established nationalist parties have survived, and others have won parliamentary representation, thereby reducing slightly the concentration of the vote among the two major parties. Accordingly, the level of electoral and parliamentary fragmentation is significantly higher than in the previous format, but still relatively low in comparative perspective.

In electoral terms, the limited volatility would appear to indicate that electoral behaviour has tended to stabilize despite the relatively high degree of party instability and the party system change. Although the system is still marked by the bipolar configuration around the PP and the PSOE, the ideological gap between them has shrunk as a result of the PP's absorption of former CDS voters and the continued centripetal dynamics of interparty competition. The absence of a major center party, the prompt ideological moderation of the PSOE, and to a lesser extent of IU, and the PP's strategy of *conquering* the center have allayed the fears that existed in the 1970s regarding the threat of polarization in the party system. And although there is still some potential for, and more occasional signs of, ideological polarization, the dominant pattern of interaction is shaped by the fact that voters reject polarization, and party leaders, competing for the center vote, do their best to avoid it, in spite of their mutual antagonism. At the parliamentary level, the

[40] For Figure 3 and Table 17, we have used the data on the 1996 elections, as it was these that produced

PSOE majorities of the 1980s gave way in 1993 to a PSOE minority government with the external support from CiU, and then in 1996 to a PP minority government also with external support from CiU, the PNV, and CC, this time formalized in a written agreement. In these circumstances, the roles of the nationalist and regionalist parties would obviously be strengthened. Minority governments are generally associated with moderate pluralist party systems (Strom 1990, 241). However, cases of formal external support are unusual, and cases in which support comes exclusively from non-statewide parties rarer still. In fact, Spain in the 1990s is unique due to the dual circumstances that the only parties with coalition potential were the nationalists and regionalists, *and* that practically all the relevant parties with coalition potential actually had governmental relevance (Sartori 1976, 300-301).

These peculiarities have been accentuated by the coexistence of the statewide party system with distinct regional party systems in some autonomous communities (Linz 1986a; Montero 1994). In federal states, the dominant pattern is that of a federation-wide party system, in which there may be occasional regional variations in the electoral strength of one of the statewide parties and perhaps occasional third, minor parties. However, some complex multinational states (closer to being state-nations rather than nation states) have different party systems at the state and sub-state level (Linz 1997, 34). This has been the case of Belgium over the last twenty years, where a disintegrating system has been replaced by the Flemish and the Walloon party systems, each operating independently from the other in terms of the type of parties and of their electoral strength, and only overlapping to some extent in the competition for voters of the Brussels constituency (De Winter and Dumont 1999, 205-206). This is also the case in Spain, but with the significant difference in the complex interaction existing between (i) the statewide party system, (ii) some regional party systems, and (iii) a number of specific statewide party sub-systems. The parties, therefore, follow patterns of cooperation and competition at different electoral, parliamentary, and institutional levels. Table 18 illustrates the multilayered character of the Spanish party systems, which is evident from the parliamentary sizes and the ideological positions of the most important parties at those different levels in 1996.[41] In the Basque Country, Catalonia and perhaps

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the change in government with the PP's coming to power.

[41] In Table 18 we only show data on the parties with representation in the Congress of Deputies for the Spanish statewide parties. For the autonomous communities we give all the parties winning at least 3 percent of

Navarre, both the number of parties and their patterns of interaction clearly diverge from the general pattern of the statewide party system (in which, moreover, they nearly all have parliamentary representation). As we shall see, in these communities the relevance of the regional cleavage is reflected in the relative weakness of the statewide parties and particularly in the presence of electorally strong nationalist parties. In the Basque Country and Catalonia above all, the importance of their regionally distinct party systems is confirmed by the separate celebration of regional elections and the existence of a large number of regional institutions with significant resources, including governments controlled by the nationalist parties since the early 1980s.[42] In contrast, the other communities included in Table 18 are characteristic examples of statewide party *sub*-systems: they tend to reproduce the general pattern of the party system, albeit with some minor modifications. This is the case, for example, in Galicia, where the greater electoral strength of the conservative parties has occasionally been accompanied by the presence of a regionalist or (as in 1996) nationalist party; or in Andalusia, where this pattern is reversed due to the greater strength of the Left, and above all the PSOE. Similarly, various regionalist parties have usually enjoyed considerable support in the Canary Islands, while in Madrid, the PP and IU have tended to improve on their statewide shares of the vote.

In the 1990s, the interaction between the different party systems and the new roles played by the nationalist parties supporting the PP government has endowed party competition at the statewide level with a number of distinctive characteristics. The fact that these parties control governmental resources in their communities gives electors an additional incentive to vote for them in general elections. Moreover, their parliamentary representatives perform wider roles than normal: they could see themselves as representatives of their voters, of their party leaders (who control the government in their communities) and of their regions as a whole. In a sense, they are likely to become *ambassadors* of the regional government at the center (Linz 1997, 36). And their parties might best be seen as *pressure parties*, in the

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the vote in at least one district; in these cases, the parties' electoral strength refers to their respective communities. The ideological positions refer to the self-placement of their respective voters (either at the statewide or the regional levels) in left-right scales.

[42] This is incidentally a major difference with regionalist and even nationalist parties in unitary states such as the United Kingdom or Finland, since those parties can only gain control of local governments and

TABLE 18. *Party Systems and Party Subsystems in Spain, 1996**

	Statewide			Nationalist			Regionalist		
	Party	Votes	Ideology	Party	Votes	Ideology	Party	Votes	Ideology
Party systems									
Spain	IU	10.6	2.9						
	PSOE	37.5	3.7						
	PP	38.8	6.5						
Basque Country	IU	9.2	2.7	HB	12.3	2.5			
	PSOE	23.6	4.0	EA	8.2	4.5			
	PP	18.3	6.2	PNV	25.0	5.1			
Catalonia	PSOE	39.3	3.8	ERC	4.2	2.9			
	PP	18.0	6.5	IC-EV	7.7	3.1			
				CiU	29.6	5.2			
Navarre	IU	12.5	3.2	HB	8.2	2.3	CDN	5.3	5.9
	PSOE	30.2	3.5	EA	3.8	4.7			
	PP-UPN	36.8	7.4						
Party subsystems									
Galicia	IU	3.7	2.5	BNG	10.1	2.9			
	PSOE	33.0	3.7						
	PP	48.5	6.6						
Andalusia	IU	13.5	2.7				Pa	3.1	4.5
	PSOE	46.5	3.6						
	PP	35.5	6.2						
Canary Islands	IU	5.5	2.5				CC	25.2	5.0
	PSOE	29.8	3.9						
	PP	37.7	7.1						
Madrid	IU	16.5	2.9						
	PSOE	31.3	3.7						
	PP	49.3	6.8						

**Votes* mean the percentage of valid votes in the general election of 1996; *ideology* includes the means for voters of each party in left-right scales of ten positions. For *Spain* only the statewide parties have been included despite the representation enjoyed by both nationalist (i.e. HB, BNG, ERC, EA, PNV and CiU) and regionalist (i.e. CC and UV) parties. For these percentage of votes and their voters' ideological means have been calculated at their respective autonomous communities.

parliamentary seats, but not of regional governments with economic and symbolic political resources; see Linz (1997, 35).

sense that their principal function in the state parliament is to put pressure on the government in order to obtain as many particularistic policy concessions as possible for their regions (Molas 1977, 189; Marcet and Argelaguet 1998, 72). These roles have become particularly significant thanks to the opportunities the nationalist parties have to exercise governmental relevance as partners or external supporters of the 1996 PP minority government. If they decide to join the government, the nationalist parties would have a different role to that played, for example, in a two-and-a-half party system by the German FDP, which was able to change sides between CDU and SPD. While the FDP competes in the whole *Bund* and is accountable to its voters for its role in whichever coalition it participates or breaks up, nationalist parties will be rewarded or punished only by their voters in their respective region, only in their role as representative of their communities in relations with the center, and only to the extent to which they are able to secure benefits for them, obtain further transfers of powers or oppose actions of the government at the center (Linz 1997, 37).

However, the nationalist parties decided not to join the PP government. Instead, in May 1996 CiU, PNV and CC, on the one hand, and the PP, on the other, signed a so-called "Pact of Investiture and Governability" through which the former committed themselves to giving external support to the PP government during the legislature in return for a large number of policy concessions;[43] these concessions were more numerous and significant than those made by the PSOE minority government to CiU during the previous legislature. Furthermore, in accordance with the *ambassadorial* nature of the nationalist parties, the agreements reached in both 1993 and 1996 were not made by the parliamentary leaders of the respective statewide and the nationalist parties, but rather between the prime ministers (Felipe González and José María Aznar, respectively) and the presidents of regional governments. In any case, the refusal of both CiU and PNV to participate in the *Spanish*, central government allows them to avoid the dilemmas nationalist parties have to resolve when faced by the choice between office-holding, policies and electoral success (De Winter 1998, 238-239). Their decision to provide external support without commitment enables them to appear at one at the same time to be promoting the adoption of moderate policies at statewide level *and*

[43] This "pact" fulfilled the criteria for external support agreements set out by Strom (1990, 97), who argues that they must be explicit, comprehensive in policy terms, and more than short-term in duration; for the actual content of the agreement, see Morata (1997, 137-140).

maintaining their principled challenge to the unity of the state, when not the ultimate utopia of independence. Their refusal to participate in the central government also frees them from the risk of sharing responsibility for policies on substantive issues that could divide electorates basically united by questions of nationalist identity, or of obtaining what might be considered insufficient benefits for their regions. More particularly, the nationalist parties can easily avoid charges of irresponsible behavior by refusing to participate in a coalition government which could give them portfolios and high-level offices, and hence votes. They already occupy the regional government in their respective communities, and it is there that they develop their basic activities as office- and vote-seeking parties. By only providing external support they are able to retain their independence and pursue in their communities policies which they might otherwise have to abandon or postpone if they were to share direct responsibilities in the central government. CiU, PNV, and to a lesser extent CC are able to gain the maximum benefits from their strategy by obtaining policy concessions for their communities in exchange for their support for the PP minority government.[44] This position also means that these parties can reject or even veto policies that they consider unacceptable. Moreover, these exchanges in the policy arena are usually followed by *logrolling* agreements, by which the government *buys*, or rather the nationalist parties *sell*, legislative support on one issue for concessions in a totally different area (Strom 1990, 98). The granting of benefits to the nationalist parties was further guaranteed by ideological and institutional factors. In ideological terms, the PP's criticisms of the nationalist parties for providing support to the PSOE government in the previous legislature enabled these parties to *charge* a high price for their formal support. After aggressively denouncing while in opposition the nationalist parties for supporting the PSOE government, in 1996 the PP needed to make more policy concessions in return for fewer payoffs, while the nationalist parties needed to show unprecedented policy benefits in order to justify the pact to their electorates. More importantly, CiU and the PNV have also been able to take advantage of three complementary institutional factors (Strom 1990, 108 ff.). First, the government's scant bargaining power, given that the format of the party system makes it very difficult for it to turn to other parties as alternative sources of support. Second, the government's limited control of the agenda,

[44] This logic considerably extends the otherwise limited assumptions discussed by Budge and Keman (1990, 49-50) when trying to explain why some parties decide not to join a government but yet support it externally.

which forces it to rely on its nationalist *partners* for the process of investiture and in every phase of the legislative process. And third, the characteristics of the policy concessions themselves, which comprise both general as well as particularistic, regional policies, which the nationalist parties increasingly demand for their communities and which are highly appreciated for their demonstration effects towards their constituencies.

As a result of all these factors, if minority governments are usually a more attractive choice for vote-seeking and policy-seeking parties (unlike majority coalitions, which are usually preferred by office-seeker parties [Strom 1990, 130]), this is even more strongly the case in Spain, where external support for minority governments in the central parliament comes from nationalist parties which are *also* governing in their respective regions. Nationalist parties are able to avoid risky trade-offs between accepting offices at the center and facing electoral competition in their constituencies. They can combine the *best* of their *two worlds:* they do govern in their communities as the major parties within their respectively distinct regional party systems, and yet constantly push the central minority government for regional policy concessions, since they constitute the only possible source of support within the statewide party system. This means that the interconnection among those multiple levels gives rise to at least two spaces of competition. And that the positions of both the nationalist parties in the statewide party system and the statewide parties in any of the regional party systems become particularly complex. In contrast to what Sartori (1976, 334 ff) argues with respect to the disadvantaged situation of identity-based parties which remain outside the principal space of competition, the simultaneous interplay between the ideological *and* the regional dimensions of Spanish party systems provides competitive advantages to those nationalist parties able to combine their domain of identification in both dimensions of competition.

Consequently, CiU and the PNV play at the same time two contradictory roles (Colomer 1999, 49). While on the left-right dimension both parties (but especially CiU) play a moderate, pragmatic, pluralist, and committed role, on the regional dimension both parties (but particularly the PNV) have tended to provoke an escalation of demands based on unilateral, conflictive and untrustworthy, when not actually semi-loyal, strategies. The contribution of nationalist parties to the centripetal dynamic of party competition at the

statewide level is complemented by their promotion of centrifugal tendencies on major decentralization issues at the regional level. Thanks to their governmental relevance, the nationalist parties have facilitated the so-called *governability* in most socio-economic policy arenas. At the same time, however, they have also contributed to the widening gap that separates them from statewide parties on the regional policy, as well as to a confrontational style of policy-making in this terrain. This contradiction points to a more general paradox in the format of the statewide party system and in the features of party competition across regionally distinct party systems. On the one hand, the support provided by nationalists parties both to the PSOE government in the 1993 legislature and to the PP government from 1996 onwards has led to a clear improvement in the relations between the statewide and nationalist parties. This support has also reinforced the mechanisms of interparty cooperation at the central level in spite of their differences on regional policies. Yet, on the other hand, the bargaining processes and willingness to reach agreement seen in the Congress of Deputies have not been reciprocated at the regional parliaments: either the regional governments have not needed the statewide parties, or they have denied the legitimacy of these *Spanish* parties to develop truly nationalist policies. In this way, the cooperation seen at the central level is replaced by harsh, principled and sometimes semi-loyal competition at the regional level. The different institutional venues for party relationships give rise to totally distinct patterns of party interaction. Many of the policies for which the nationalist parties have given their support to central government have been pragmatic and favoured moderation in the policy-making process. But the need to compete for votes at the regional level has encouraged the nationalist parties governing their communities to develop both policies based on cultural and/or linguistic identities, as well as strategies of directly challenging the existing federal-type arrangements and/or the unity of the state.

These centrifugal drives have facilitated nationalist polarization (at times, with discriminatory and primordialist contents [Linz 1985b]) of the political institutions at the regional level, while intensifying the conflictive intergovernmental relations at the statewide level (Moreno 1997, 73-75). These drives have also inspired the strategies of supraregional and extra-parliamentary agreements that the nationalist parties (particularly, CiU and PNV) have implemented since 1998, demanding the replacement of the *Estado de las Autonomías* by some still imprecise confederal formulae, questioning those articles of the 1978

constitution that define the most important elements of the state-regions relationship, and proclaiming the goal of independence in the medium to long term. It is true that there are significant differences in the political styles, short- and medium-term objectives, and features of the nationalist parties that have signed these agreements. Nonetheless, it seems that the centrifugal dynamics which inspires them all will prove scarcely compatible with the so-called *Bundestreue*, or the basic loyalty to the federal constitution and to the state, which works as a kind of the *soul* of an intergovernmental relationship and without which multinational federalism might not be a stable solution (Linz 1997, 52). In this respect too the structural conditions of the Spanish party systems can be seen to be relatively exceptional in European terms. For instance, it has been argued that minority governments generally seek support from nationalist parties because they are undemanding partners, and hence because their support can prove less expensive to the government in terms of policy concessions (De Winter 1998, 237). However, in the Spanish case it is clear that the complexity of the multilayered dimensions of interparty competition has fostered the increasing rejection of the existing federal–type arrangements, precisely at a time when the nationalist parties enjoy extraordinary governmental relevance both at the state and regional level. And it is moreover likely that these critical, centrifugal processes do not appear to be particularly positive for the necessarily consensual and incremental reform of the hard-won *Estado de las Autonomías*, nor for the complex articulation of the various party systems which permit the Spaniards' political integration.

Structuring Voting Choices: Parties, Cleavages and the Electoral System

The stabilization of Spaniards' electoral behavior and the institutionalization of the party system are related to a number of factors that have played a decisive role in *anchoring* electoral choices among the different parties, thereby contributing to stabilize voters' preferences over time. In this final section of the paper we will briefly examine four factors: party identification and the organizational roots of the vote; the cleavage structure; trends in vote anchoring; and the effects of the electoral system in constraining party competition.

Party identification and social partisanship

Scholars using different empirical criteria to measure party identification in Spain have all agreed that it is particularly weak (McDonough et al. 1998, 133 ff.; Schmitt and Holmberg 1995). According to the Eurobarometer surveys, since 1985 Spain has systematically shown the lowest levels of partisanship of all the European Union (EU) countries. In the late 1980s, only one out of ten Spaniards declared that they felt "very close" or "fairly close" to a party, whilst five out of ten stated that they did not feel close to any party. There has been a slight increase in party identification in the mid-1990s, but it appears to have stabilized at lower levels than in France and Belgium (the two countries usually considered to have the weakest party identification in Europe); in fact, only Ireland outmatches Spain in terms of the proportion of voters denying any sense of identification with parties. Among the statewide Spanish parties, the PSOE has usually enjoyed the highest levels of party attachment (just below 20 percent in the late 1990s), followed by the PP (around 10 percent) and IU (around 3 percent). This is just one component of a broader cultural syndrome of political disaffection (Montero, Gunther and Torcal 1997): the Spaniards' anti-party sentiments, which combine widespread recognition of the need for parties in democratic politics with extremely negative opinions of their actual performance, reflect the parties' scant power of articulation in this respect (Montero, Torcal, and Gunther, forthcoming).

However, this is not all. If party identification cannot explain the stabilization of Spaniards' electoral behavior, to what extent might this be due to the existence of organizations (such as the parties themselves, trade unions or lay religious groups) which mediate between their members or sympathizers and the candidates? In this respect too, Spain constitutes a rather peculiar case. As we have already seen in Table 5, party affiliation is extremely low in Spain, and the parties' organizational presence in society is very limited. Seen in comparative perspective, since the mid-1970s Spain has had lower levels of party membership than Portugal or Greece, let alone most other European countries (Morlino 1998, 169ff.; Katz and Mair 1992). The union affiliation rate among salaried workers is also low. The net density rate rose to 24.7 percent in the late 1970s, only to drop to 13.2 percent in the early 1980s, before rising again to 22.7 percent in 1994, thereby putting Spain along with France towards the bottom of the European league table in this respect (Jordana 1996;

Ebbinghaus and Visser 1997). Moreover, organizational ties between the unions and the (respective) parties have become increasingly tenuous, and cooperation ever looser. This has been further undermined in the case of the PSOE, whose relations with the *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT) deteriorated during the late 1980s, leading to a situation of chronic conflict and the breakdown of party-union relations (Astudillo 1998). The panorama of the religious associations has been even worse. Claiming over one million members throughout Spain in the 1960s, Catholic Action organizations dropped to 100,000 members by 1972 (Hermet 1985, 224 ff.) and continued to lose members and influence after the return to democracy; in the early 1990s, only 3 percent of Spaniards stated that they belonged to a religious organization.[45] The low levels of party-, trade union- and religious organization-affiliation rates are components of a long-standing syndrome of a poorly developed civil society. Despite an upsurge in associational life during the transition, since the early 1980s the proportion of Spaniards declaring that they do *not* belong to any voluntary association has remained relatively stable at around 70 percent. Data from the 1981 and 1990 European Values Surveys show that the levels of associationism in most European countries are two, if not three, times higher than in Spain (Torcal and Montero 1998; Orizo 1991). The 1993 CNEP post-electoral survey mentioned above found that 76 percent of Spaniards were not members of any organization; only 18 percent declared that they belonged to one, 5 percent to two, 2 percent to three, and just 1 percent to more than three. Parties, therefore, find it particularly difficult to anchor voters through the organizational dimension of politics: weak party identification is reinforced by equally weak social partisanship, and both factors make it much more difficult for the parties to operate as channels of intermediation with citizens, mobilization of electors, and articulation with their voters (Gunther and Montero, forthcoming).

[45] These figures are taken from the 1993 CNEP survey.

The structure of cleavages: class, religion, and region

As in other European, and above all Catholic countries, the basic cleavages with roots in the nineteenth century and the responses to the French Revolution were social conflicts derived from class differences and religious conflicts between clericals and secularizers. The more limited economic development and relatively slow industrialization in Southern Europe meant that class conflict spread to rural society, nourished by the existence in much of Spain of *latifundia*, absentee landowners, and a large and growing landless rural proletariat. In the center and north of the country, smallholders with conservative values and traditional religious allegiances supported the center and even the extreme right. Moreover, both the urban and the rural proletariat were largely secularized and, in contrast to the situation in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany, social reform tendencies in the Church came too late to attract a significant part of the working class to christian trade unions and parties. In many parts of Spain, class and religious cleavages were cumulative rather than crosscutting. Besides, leaders of the working class organizations rejected reformism, and anarcho-syndicalism acquired an influence without parallel in other European countries. Bourgeois anti-clericalism further fuelled polarization on the religious axis, particularly after the 1931 constitution. Thus, the Second Republic was confronted by an extremely divisive cleavage structure of social and religious conflicts, as well as by a marked regional cleavage and the fierce confrontation between republicans and monarchists. As we have already noted, the interaction between the cumulative character of these cleavages and the extreme, polarized party system decisively contributed to the democratic breakdown of 1936 and Civil War (Linz 1978).

However, this cleavage structure had changed dramatically by the 1970s. The traditional polarization along class and religious lines was engraved in the minds of the elites as a sort of *contramodello* when it came to reestablishing democracy. The Left, and particularly the Communists, adopted the position of the "outstretched hand" toward Catholics, perhaps impressed by the younger progressive clergy who were seeking an understanding with the Left and the working class. The fact that many working class leaders had first become involved in politics through Catholic organizations contributed to this distension of religious conflict; and many Church leaders, who felt guilty about the identification of the Church with the rhetoric of the Francoist *Crusade* and with the role it had played in legitimating the authoritarian regime,

also wanted to establish a *modus vivendi* with the Left. Moreover, from the late 1960s onwards the Spaniards underwent an increasingly intense secularization process. As a result of this fundamental shift, the 1978 constitution included a compromise on religious issues and, with the exception of some clashes and disagreements on education, divorce and abortion, religion did not constitute a divisive cleavage at the mass level. Politicians, who were well aware of voters' attitudes, including those of practicing Catholics on some of these issues, were not prepared to exacerbate conflicts on the religious-secular divide. This does not mean that religion, or more specifically, religious practice and identification are not associated with party preferences. The cleavage is there, but it does not have the saliency it had had since the nineteenth century and particularly during the Second Republic.

Class conflict evolved in a similar way. Revolutionary options disappeared, and maximalist positions were abandoned over the course of the transition. The development of an incipient welfare state under Franco contributed to this development. But the most important factors were the extraordinary decline in the number of landless peasants and, more generally, the decreasing importance of rural society: in 1930, agriculture accounted for 46.5 percent of the Spanish active population, yet by 1981 this figure had dropped to just 15 percent (Linz 1995, 156). Industrialization, migration to the cities or to other European countries, upward social mobility and the fall in the birth rate had reduced the ranks of the radicalized, rural proletarians who had contributed so much to the intensity of social conflict during the Second Republic. A new industrial working class with few links to the organizations and the ideologies of the past had emerged in the cities and, in the latter years of the Franco regime, began to share in the fruits of economic development. In the late 1970s, the electorate did align along class lines, but without the intensity and bitterness of the 1930s. The fact that the conflict was between industrial workers and employers rather than between farm laborers and landowners contributed to this different social climate. So too did the fact that the industrial working class accounted for a smaller proportion of the labor force as a result of the growth of the tertiary sector. Whilst in the late 1970s industrial workers constituted 38.7 percent of the active population, the tertiary sector accounted for 44.7 percent (Linz 1995, 148): this comprised an entirely new middle class of white collar workers, civil servants, lower-ranking professionals and the liberal professions. Laborist appeals by an exclusively working class movement and party made no sense in light of these changes in the social structure. Moreover, some of the status conflicts associated with a

more traditional society, in which people were unsure about their economic position but extremely concerned about the social recognition of their status as officers, professionals and owners, had lost much of their salience. Paradoxically, the Civil War had contributed to the crisis of these status distinctions. Fascist ideology, with its critique of bourgeois life styles, and the massive social mobility and expansion of education and professional opportunities weakened the status consciousness of the middle and upper classes. The consumer society, in turn, had unexpected equalizing consequences in terms of lifestyles. The timing of the return to democracy also contributed to reduce the impact of the social cleavage: the fact that parties (re-)emerged in a relatively modern, well-educated society, in which the television was the principal mass media, meant that the social cleavage was very different to that which had existed when most European parties were founded. The old cleavage lines, therefore, had not completely disappeared, but their significance in the new democracy was very different.[46]

How have Spanish parties articulated these cleavages? To what extent has the cleavage structure been reflected in patterns of voting behavior during the three electoral periods? Table 19 offers an initial answer with respect to the social cleavage: it shows selected data on the social profiles of the voters for the statewide parties in three characteristic elections. The most significant aspects of the data consist, first, in the explicit refusal of the parties to search for more or less homogeneous *reservés* or for a *clase gardée* as a consequence of the extraordinary changes in the social structure. Second, in the relatively successful way in which, from the very beginning of the transition, the main parties have developed catch-all strategies, albeit with systematic differences between them. And third, in the significant changes in the social bases of the parties in each of the three electoral periods. In the elections in the 1970s, UCD and PSOE voters comprised relatively heterogeneous coalitions in terms of social class and occupation,[47] educational levels and age cohorts, gender and size of place of residence. Political preferences

[46] Similarly, these developments also account for the 1977 Moncloa Pacts, which the major parties signed in a bid to stabilize the economy, and the later corporatist-type agreements between trade unions and employer organizations – with or without the intervention of state representatives – on labour relations at the national level. This type of social concertation was not only completely successful, but also differed radically from the confrontational patterns of class relations seen during the Second Republic. In the late 1970s, workers were ready to participate in the democratic political process and vote, whilst in the 1930s many were committed to principled abstention from participation in bourgeois politics; see Fishman (1990).

did, therefore, reflect some dimensions of the class cleavage, but the relation between the two was far from complete due to the parties' deliberately catch-all strategies and the plural voting-choices of the different social groups (Gunther, Sani and Shabad 1986, 181ff.). The PSOE's electorate comprised a higher proportion of working-class, young, less-educated, and urban voters than the UCD, but in no way did the profiles of UCD voters constitute the other side of the coin; whilst the PSOE took 46 percent of the working-class vote (data not shown), and 79 percent of its voters defined themselves as workers, the UCD still managed to attract 36 percent of the working-class vote, and no less than 60 percent of its electorate identified themselves as workers. Hence, the PSOE's appeal among the working class and least privileged social groups was combined with significant support from the middle classes and peasants, at the same time as the UCD's electorate brought together the traditional voters of a conservative party with significant levels of voters from different sectors of the working class (Maravall 1984, 212-213). Of course, these catch-all profiles were much more blurred, and in logically opposite senses, in the case of the PCE on the left and of AP on the right. Despite having a more heterogeneous electorate than many other communist parties, the PCE had a relatively stronger presence among workers and the unemployed, but also among young and male voters, university graduates and those living in urban areas (Linz 1981). In contrast, the defining features of AP voters constituted an identikit picture of the upper classes and higher occupational groups; the party received, for example, only1 percent of the vote of industrial and agricultural workers.

The social bases of party competition were radically transformed by the major realignment that took place in the critical elections of 1982. The growth of the PSOE, the decline of the PCE, the virtual disappearance of the UCD, and the rise of AP implied a substantial change in the electoral rendering of the class cleavage: although this had a more polarized dimension due to the direct competition between the PSOE and AP following the disappearance of the UCD, the PSOE's ascendancy further reinforced the catch-all profile of its electorate. In fact, this profile was remarkably similar to that of the Spanish electorate as a whole. This reinforced the party's

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[47] The category class and occupation in Table 19 has been constructed on the basis of combining the class scheme developed by Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992) and the traditional components of the inactive population; see also González (1996 and 1998).

TABLE 19. *Social Profiles of Party Voters in Spain, 1979-1996* (In percentages)

	PCE/IU			PSOE			UCD	AP/PP		
Profile	1979	1982	1996	1979	1982	1996	1979	1979	1982	1996
Gender										
Male	62	67	55	55	50	48	42	49	48	48
Female	38	33	45	45	50	52	58	52	52	52
Age										
18-24	25	18	23	15	17	12	7	10	12	15
25-34	26	32	30	21	23	18	11	9	14	19
35-44	17	18	23	21	18	18	21	20	18	15
45-54	14	13	12	18	17	14	21	28	23	17
55-64	12	10	8	11	11	15	17	21	16	17
65 and more	6	10	4	15	13	23	23	12	16	18
Class and occupation										
Service	7	10	14	6	5	6	7	21	12	11
Intermediate	20	16	14	23	18	13	24	31	29	18
Working	28	27	15	21	20	14	8	3	7	11
Unemployed	11	15	19	5	8	12	2	1	2	9
Retired	6	11	9	11	10	27	13	7	11	20
Housewife	18	12	14	30	33	21	43	29	31	21
Student	11	9	15	5	6	6	3	8	9	10
*Subjective class**										
Upper and upper-middle	8	3	14	7	5	8	16	42	31	25
Middle and lower-middle	13	11	24	19	24	31	24	30	30	36
Working	79	83	62	73	67	61	60	29	34	39
Education										
Primary (and less)	54	44	23	60	61	53	65	30	45	41
Secondary	31	46	57	31	27	38	19	40	33	41
University	15	10	19	9	12	8	16	30	23	17
*Size of community***										
Less than 10,000	24	26	17	31	30	28	46	24	31	29
20,000-50,000	10	13	19	15	16	24	18	17	12	19
50,000-100,000	5	3	11	4	7	8	3	10	4	8
100,000-200,000	4	4	37	4	4	30	5	4	9	29
More than 200,000	57	54	16	45	43	11	29	45	44	14
(N)	(360)	(152)	(422)	(1,142)	(2,060)	(1,379)	(1,569)	(155)	(882)	(1,272)

* Data for subjective class come from the 1993 post-electoral CNEP survey; number of cases are 112 for IU, 484 for PSOE, and 327 for PP.
**In the 1996 survey, the two most populated strata are from 100,000 to 400,000, and more than 400,000.

Sources: 1979, 1982 and 1993 DATA surveys, and Banco de Datos, CIS, for 1996..

competitive advantages in the new electoral period. However, it also raised well-founded doubts as to the party's capacity to maintain the cohesion of such a heterogeneous coalition (Puhle 1986). At first sight, there appeared to be no challenge to the PSOE's dominance from the left: the PCE's electoral decline was reflected in a drop in its support among workers (down from 16 percent in 1979 to 6 percent in 1982), the unemployed (from 30 percent to 8 percent), and students (from 26 percent to 4 percent) (Gunther 1986b). Nor did the PSOE's privileged position appear to be threatened by AP: despite growing significantly, the party was still characterized by the disproportionate support of higher class social groups and occupations (taking 35 percent of the vote of big businessmen and senior executives, but just 9 percent of workers), a factor which seriously limited its potential growth in the short term (Montero 1986 and 1989).

During the successive elections in the 1980s, and despite some erosion of the Socialist vote, the support for the PSOE was sufficient to maintain its dominant position, the PCE gained little from adopting the new format of *Izquierda Unida* (IU), and AP retained the same (low) level of electoral support despite a succession of organizational and leadership changes. However, this relative continuity in the vote of the main statewide parties masked, above all in the late 1980s, a number of extraordinarily important changes in their social bases, changes which would crystallize in the elections in the third period, and above all in 1996. As seen in Table 18, there are remarkable differences in the social profiles of the respective parties between 1982 and 1996, as well as among the three parties in 1996. In the case of the PP, its presence has increased among workers, the inactive population, and the young and consequently declined among the higher social and occupational categories. The growth of the PP, therefore, has come about though its incorporation into the ranks of the conservative catch-all parties: in 1996, the PP took the vote of 27 percent of workers (compared to 9 percent in 1982), and increased its support among the liberal professions and white-collar workers (29 percent in 1996 compared to 7 percent in 1982). This has enabled the PP to replace the PSOE as the party which most closely fits the social profiles of the electorate as a whole (Wert 1997). Moreover, this process has also contributed to further blur the class cleavage through the articulation of parties that, whilst obviously drawing votes from specific social and occupational profiles, have developed typically catch-all strategies and receive typically catch-all electoral support. The same is also true, albeit not entirely, of IU, even though it is an electoral coalition dominated by the PCE. Despite winning a similar proportion of the vote in 1996 to 1979, its social bases have changed

significantly: the weight of workers, male and older voters, has decreased, whilst that of higher social and occupational categories, women, and the more educated has increased (Bosco, forthcoming). Finally, the PSOE has combined continued high levels of electoral support with an equally substantial change in the profile of its voters, now distinguished by the greater weight of older voters, the inactive, the least educated and those living in rural areas (González 1996).

In a sense, the changes in the social profiles of the statewide parties reveal simultaneous processes of dealignment (in the case of the PSOE) and of realignment (in the case of IU and the PP) through which the parties articulate the political preferences of their new social bases. Given its predominant position during the 1980s, the PSOE has been the fundamental axis of these changes in the 1990s. The most common explanations for these changes refer to the public policies implemented by the party during its many years in power. The difficult balance that the Socialist governments sought between economic efficiency and egalitarian social policies placed the most dynamic sectors of the Socialist electorate in a kind of structural *disenchantment* (Puhle, forthcoming; Boix 1996, 220ff.). Despite the success of many of its egalitarian and welfare policies, the erosion of the PSOE's social bases was accompanied by growing tension with the unions, protests against the heightened fiscal pressure, and serious disputes over the tough policies of economic adjustment and labor market reform. The combined effect of these policies was to give rise to a certain *dualization* of the Socialist voters, divided between those who benefited most from the redistributive policies (essentially the inactive population and most dependent social groups) and those who suffered most from the economic and fiscal policies (above all, the middle-ranking occupational groups and industrial workers). However, Maravall (1997, 192 and 198) has argued that the most serious damage came not from policies but from politics: the Socialist governments gradually fell foul of "their growing isolation from key social groups, the hostility of important media, the dwindling appeal of their party organizations, corruption scandals, and bitter internal disputes (...) The party found itself increasingly isolated, connected only with a silent electorate, [and] amidst accusations of sectarianism (...)". The processes of realignment experienced by IU and the PP reflected their adoption of different strategies to win over Socialist voters disenchanted with governmental policies and party politics (Torcal and Chhibber 1995). Despite its confused organizational format, IU substantially altered the social base of its electorate by attracting the youngest voters, for

whom their left-wing identity and defense of post-materialist values was more important than their links with specific social or occupational groups (Torcal and Montero 1994). And, after its refoundation and the arrival of new leaders in 1989, the PP substantially expanded its electoral base through radicalized tactics designed to delegitimate and even stigmatize the PSOE. These were combined with policy proposals designed to appeal to voters whose interests had been harmed by the policies implemented by the Socialist governments (González Álvarez 1998). These processes of dealignment and realignment, however, have proved compatible with a certain underlying continuity in voters' ideological identities. In other words, these changes have not, for example, responded to the logic of economic voting, since the political reactions to the economy have been mediated by political loyalties and by ideological identifications (Maravall and Przeworski 1998). And nor do these changes appear to have intensified the class cleavage: despite the connections existing between electoral preferences and occupational or class status, the logic of catch-all competition strategies means that the main statewide parties have relatively socially heterogeneous, and hence increasingly overlapping, social profiles.

Secondly, the religious cleavage too has changed significantly during the last two decades. In the mid-1970s, the Spaniards' progressive estrangement from the Church and the Church's own reappraisal of its relations with the authoritarian regime failed to calm the fear of a strong resurgence of the religious cleavage. In the constituent process, party elites had to make a number of difficult decisions with regard to issues as relevant as Church-state relations, education, divorce, or abortion. It soon became clear that Spanish voters were divided over religious issues, with some polarization in attitudes towards the Church, and a strong correlation between religious identification and party choice (Linz et al. 1981, 292 ff.). However, the disruptive potential of the religious cleavage was not realized. Political elites resorted to consensual procedures in drafting the constitution, adopted a pragmatic attitude in negotiations over their differences with the Church, and refrained from mobilizing voters around religious issues (Gunther, Sani and Shabad 1986, 221ss.). For their part, Church elites clearly supported the democratization process, showed similar restraint in their handling of their differences with the new political elites, and explicitly refused to support the parties which presented themselves under the christian democratic label in 1977. Moreover, the leaders of the PCE and PSOE, two parties that in the 1930s had been distinguished by their

fierce anticlericalism, now showed an unprecedented capacity for moderation and pragmatism. As Linz has put it (1993a, 44), all agreed on a policy of *never again*: since then, the few discordant voices with this consensus have been unable to disrupt Church-state relations or polarize religious divisions.

These positions are particularly important when taking into account the differences that still exist between party elites and their electorates and/or some of their constituencies. However, these differences have also moved in a depolarizing direction. At the mass level, Spain could be described as a society which combines a Catholic cultural identity with significant estrangement from the Catholic Church, and in which expressions of religiosity are kept usually out of the realm of politics. According to data on citizens' perceptions of their own religiosity, in 1970 two out of three Spaniards identified themselves as "very good" or "practicing" Catholics; twenty years later, these categories account for only a third of the total, whilst half the population see themselves as non-practicing Catholics *lato sensu*, and the remaining fifth as indifferent, or to a lesser extent, atheist (Figure 3). The secularization process which lies behind this tendency explains why, like other European societies, Spain has now become divided into three main groups: that of the very religious, who may also practice their religion; that of the Catholics who practice only irregularly, and/or show a certain reluctance to accept the basic precepts of the Church; and that formed by those who consider themselves indifferent, either not feeling identified with the Church or who reject the religious experience. These trends are fully confirmed by data on church attendance. To put this in dichotomous terms, in 1973 three out of four Spaniards declared that they went to church at least once a month, every or nearly every Sunday, or more than once a week; yet just a few years later this proportion had dropped to a third. Equally, the proportion of people who never go to church, or do so only a few times a year has risen from 23 percent in 1973 to 55 percent in 1994. And the fact that around half of the youngest generations never go to church would certainly suggest that, as the older generations pass away, levels of church attendance will continue to fall (Montero 1997).

In some ways, the Spanish case illustrates Kalyvas' (1996, 116) arguments on the distinct political consequences to be expected of a religious cleavage *with* or *without* a confessional party. In Spain, the correlation between religiosity and party has been declining ever since the transition. Naturally, voters with different religious identities have shown a preference for specific parties and leaders, and the electorates of the different parties have had distinct profiles in terms of religiosity. But these preferences have not been homogeneous, nor have they remained static over time; and nor have those differences been projected uniformly over *all* groups of voters: religiosity has been a fundamental factor of discrimination for some parties, but not for others (Linz 1986b). As can be seen in Table 20, in the first electoral period religiosity had considerable discriminatory power between conservative and left-wing parties. Some 70 percent of those who defined themselves as practicing Catholics in 1979 voted for the UCD (data not shown), a figure which dropped to 20 percent in the case of the PSOE and to 3 percent in that of the PCE. The critical elections of 1982 also produced a major realignment within the religious cleavage. Although the parties continued to have religious profiles, the disappearance of the UCD and the changes in the electoral weight of the other parties radically modified the impact of religiosity. Whilst AP managed to win 38 percent of the vote of the most religious groups (compared to just 7 percent in 1979), the PSOE won no less than 32 percent; and if the PSOE took 66 percent of the vote of those who considered themselves to be indifferent or agnostics, AP obtained only 2 percent. These asymmetric patterns were apparently consolidated in the third electoral period. The progressive weakening of the religious cleavage is reflected in the fact that most religious voters divide their electoral preferences between the PSOE and PP, whilst the least religious and the small minority of atheists are divided between the PSOE and IU. This makes the religious distribution of PSOE voters in the 1990s strikingly similar to that of the Spanish population as a whole; its internal composition is more balanced than that of the PP (half of whose voters comprise very good or practicing Catholics), or that of IU (two thirds of whose voters identify themselves as atheists or indifferent). The indices of religiosity included in Table 19 trace the depolarization of the religious profiles of the statewide parties' electorates: the distances between the extreme parties (PCE/IU and AP/PP) have shrunk, and the initially very clearly-defined religious profiles of all the parties have become more diffuse (above all

in the case of the PSOE and, albeit to a lesser extent, in that of AP/PP).[48] Hence, whilst the ratio between the extreme positions of Communists and conservatives stood at 2.5 in 1979, this depolarization meant that by 1993 it had dropped to 1.6.[49]

Thus, changes in the religious composition of the parties' electorates and the continuing moderation and pragmatism of the elites have been mutually reinforcing. Their joint contribution to the declining significance of the religious cleavage has also been reinforced by the generational differences affecting both the vote and religiosity. An analysis of the relations between these two variables in a few selected generations serves to confirm the extraordinary importance of cohort effects. Here, data from 1994 for the two oldest cohorts (those born before 1937) has been compared with those for the two youngest ones (those born after 1963). The results are given in Table 21 in the form of the Percentage Difference Index (PDI), that is, the differences in percentage points between the proportions of the two groups of selected cohorts.[50] It can be seen that the PDIs are systematically significant: among the electorates of the three main parties in 1993, the two oldest generations surpassed the youngest in terms of both religiosity and church-attendance, whilst the opposite is true of those who consider themselves to be non-practicing Catholics or declare that they never go to church. Hence, the generational factor appears to be of decisive importance for religious identities. For example, 52 percent of the members of the oldest generations who vote IU define themselves as practicing Catholics, compared to only 13 percent of the youngest generations; thus, the PDI is 39. Albeit with differing intensity, this relation is reproduced in all the other electorates. Naturally, the most intense relation is found among PP voters. Some 73 percent of the oldest generations of the party's electorate define themselves as practicing Catholics, compared to only 29 percent of the youngest cohorts; the PDI is 44. The generational factor is also relevant in the other categories, even if in this case the youngest generations predominate (and hence the PDIs are negative). For instance, only 8 percent of

[48] The values of the electorate as a whole were 2.94 in 1979, 2.98 in 1982, and 2.82 in 1993.

[49] A multivariate analysis of the 1982 and 1993 DATA surveys, carried out for explaining the vote for those three parties and using various indicators of religiosity, reached similar conclusions on the increasingly weak explanatory power of the religious cleavage with respect to the vote for left- rather than right-wing parties, and in particular, its declining significance for the PSOE and PP, but not for IU; see Calvo (1998).

the oldest generations who vote PP define themselves as non-practicing Catholics, compared to 33 percent of the youngest generations, giving a PDI of -25. We find similar patterns when the indicator of church attendance is used, as can also be seen in Table 21: in all the parties, voters belonging to the oldest cohorts score higher than the youngest in terms of at least weekly church-going, and the youngest cohorts exceed the oldest in so far as the complete lack of church attendance is concerned. It seems probable, therefore, that the religious cleavage will continue to decline as the oldest voters abandon the electoral register and are replaced by generations who have experienced much more secular processes of religious socialization.

The cleavage structure is complicated by the existence of the regional cleavage. Spain is a multicultural, multinational, and multi-linguistic society that in some respects is even more complex than other linguistically or nationally heterogeneous countries such as Belgium, Switzerland or Finland. This complexity, which dates back to the nineteenth century if not before, contributed to the breakdown of the Second Republic in the 1930s and resurfaced during the transition (Linz 1985a). The extraordinary process of the construction of the *Estado de las Autonomías*, which in just a few years replaced a highly centralized territorial distribution of power with 17 autonomous communities with a wide range of resources, powers, and institutions, gave a decisive impetus to the regional cleavage in the new democracy. The electoral rendering of the regional cleavage has crystallized in two complementary outcomes: on the one hand, the existence of major variations in the vote distribution across most communities; on the other, the presence of strong nationalist parties in a few communities and a wide variety of regionalist parties in nearly all the rest (Pallarès, Montero and Llera 1997). The resulting mosaic has been labeled the *electoral Spains* (Vallès 1991), in reference to the great diversity of patterns of party competition in the different communities. Table 22 shows aggregate data for

[50] We have used a CIS survey from June 1994 (N=2,490); the number of cases in the oldest cohorts was 848, and in the youngest 399.

TABLE 20. *Religious Composition of Party Voters in Spain, 1979-1993* (In percentages)

	1979				1982				1993		
Religiosity	PCE	PSOE	UCD	AP	PCE	PSOE	CDS	AP	IU	PSOE	PP
Very good and practising Catholic	13	25	63	63	8	24	47	62	10	32	51
Not-very-practising Catholic	16	26	24	23	13	30	33	26	20	28	25
Non-practising Catholic	16	27	9	10	16	27	18	11	35	27	18
Indifferent and Atheist	61	21	3	3	61	19	2	1	35	13	5
(N)	(357)	(1,135)	(1,563)	(155)	(152)	(2,004)	(79)	(875)	(110)	(479)	(321)
Index of religiosity*	1.7	2.6	3.4	4.2	1.7	2.6	3.3	3.6	2.1	2.9	3.3

* The index of religiosity has been calculated by assigning the value of 5 to the "very good Catholics", 4 to "practising Catholics", 3 to "not very practising Catholics", 2 to "non-practising Catholics", and 1 to those who identify themselves as "indifferent" or "atheists".
Sources: DATA surveys 1979, 1982 and 1993.

TABLE 21. *Vote, Religiosity and Generational Differences in Spain, 1994*[a]

Party vote[c]	Self-definition of religiosity		
	Practising Catholics[b]	Not-practising Catholics	Indifferents and Atheists
IU	39	-11	-21
PSOE	31	-24	-10
PP	44	-25	-4
	Frequency of church attendance		
	Every Sunday and more	Once a month	Never
IU	23	9	-30
PSOE	27	7	-24
PP	43	-5	-16

[a] The figures are the Percentage Difference Indices (PDIs) between the two oldest and the two youngest cohorts within each party electorate.
[b] Including both "very good Catholics" and "practising Catholics".
[c] Vote cast in the 1993 general elections.

Source: Banco de Datos, CIS.

both outcomes in each autonomous community. So-called *regional voting* measures the electoral distinctiveness of each community, that is, the extent to which its voters support nationalist or regionalist parties *and/or* the extent to which they give proportionate support within the region for parties operating at the statewide level.[51] Nearly all the communities have high indices. moreover, these indices have remained remarkably stable, albeit with a slight downward tendency: whilst in 1977 the mean of regional voting was 21.7, in 1996 it was 17.1. In comparative terms, the Spanish levels of regional voting with respect to the national results are among the highest in Europe: nearly all the Spanish autonomous communities score higher than

[51] The index is calculated by adding the absolute difference between the percentage vote received by each party inside each community and the average vote received by it across the 17 communities, divided by two; see Hearl and Budge (1996, 169).

the overall mean of 13.6 of the 118 regions of eleven European countries between 1979 and 1993 (Hearl and Budge 1996, 172-173). Naturally, regional voting is especially high in those communities with nationalist or regionalist parties, whose electoral strength in the three periods is also shown in Table 21: no European region (apart from the quite exceptional case of Northern Ireland) surpasses the percentages of the Basque Country or Catalonia, and no European country has as many regions in which the non-statewide parties are as significant as Spain. The vote of the nationalist and regionalist parties has increased with the stabilization of electoral behavior (the mean for all the communities was 9.7 in the 1977 elections, 12.7 in 1993, and 10.9 in 1996) and, as could be expected, has always been higher in the elections for the regional parliaments of the communities (Pallarès, Montero and Llera 1997). The regional cleavage is particularly intense in the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Navarre, where a number of nationalist parties ranging from the extreme left to the center-right compete among themselves and with the statewide parties within the format of distinct regional party systems. In these communities, the regional cleavage derives from historical, cultural and political features that have generated conflictive perceptions of national identities, and is structured by regional governments equipped with extraordinarily wide-ranging institutions, policies and resources. In other communities, regionalist parties have benefited from the political opportunity structure offered by the decentralization process and the institutional consolidation of the *Estado de las Autonomías*. Both developments gave regional entrepreneurs the possibility to compete profitably with the statewide parties, to use the political resources generated by the new regional bureaucracies, and to foster regional identities, not least through their ability to make more or less demagogic resort to claims of relative deprivation with respect to other communities or against central government. In all these cases, the electoral strength of nationalist parties in the Basque Country and Catalonia and the relevance of regionalist parties in many other communities sketch an exceptional map in Western European terms.

TABLE 22. *The Electoral Spains: Regional Voting and Votes for Nationalist and Regionalist Parties by Autonomous Communities and Electoral Periods, 1977-1996* (In percentages)

	Regional voting				Votes for nationalist and regionalist parties			
	Electoral periods**				Electoral periods**			
Community*	First	Second	Third	Average	First	Second	Third	Average
Basque Country	46.7	51.9	45.7	48.7	49.3	56.4	48.9	52.2
Catalonia	36.8	33.5	35.1	34.9	26.1	37.4	43.8	36.0
Navarre	34.9	18.6	15.6	22.4	34.7	19.8	16.9	23.2
Canary Islands	29.8	22.7	25.5	25.5	9.4	14.1	26.9	16.4
Galicia	26.3	22.1	19.2	22.4	7.9	9.1	15.1	10.5
Valencian	16.7	11.9	12.7	13.5	4.3	5.2	11.3	6.7
Andalucia	18.7	21.9	19.1	20.2	6.7	3.9	3.5	4.6
Aragon	14.4	11.4	16.2	13.6	9.4	7.8	13.3	3.8
Balearic Islands	17.1	16.2	14.6	16.0	4.0	2.6	5.2	3.8
Cantabria	12.5	11.7	12.5	12.2	1.2	0.2	7.1	2.4
Rioja	16.4	13.3	12.4	13.9	4.2	0	3.9	2.4
Extremadura	15.4	16.2	13.9	15.4	0.3	2.9	1.3	1.7
Asturias	18.0	13.1	11.8	14.1	1.5	0.5	1.8	1.2
Castile-León	17.0	14.6	12.9	14.8	1.9	0.4	1.5	1.1
Murcia	12.7	11.6	11.5	12.5	1.7	0.1	0.1	0.6
Madrid	16.2	13.7	15.1	14.8	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.3
Castile-La Mancha	13.3	11.5	12.5	12.3	0.7	0	0.3	0.3

*Communities are ranked by their average of votes for nationalist and regionalist parties.
**Figures for each period are averaged. The first period includes the elections of 1977 and 1979; the second, those of 1982, 1986 and 1989; and the third, those of 1993 and 1996.

Source: Oñate and Ocaña (1999).

Trends in vote anchoring

To what extent have the parties been able to *encapsulate* political conflicts (as Bartolini and Mair [1990, 1-2] put it) as a crucial means of structuring the vote and, consequently, stabilizing their electorates? What factors have served to *anchor* the vote, thereby contributing to the institutionalization of the patterns of party competition? Table 23 offers a tentative answer to these questions: it shows the results of a multivariate analysis that attempts to explain voters' electoral choices through basic indicators of class, religiosity and ideology.[52] The table gives the pseudo R^2, which measure the impact that a variable or group of variables has on the prediction of the vote for a party, and which has also been weighted for the statewide party system in accordance with the main parties' share of the vote.[53] A number of trends can be highlighted. In the first place, the indicators relating to social class appear to have a limited capacity to explain voting choices: the Spanish case, therefore, fits the general tendency towards the decline of class voting in Western countries (Nieuwbeerta 1995). In 1979, the successful catch-all strategies implemented by UCD and PSOE produced a relatively low level of class crystallization in the indicators of both objective class (which includes occupational status, employee/self-employed status, and income) and subjective class. The increase in 1982 (when this variable accounted for 17 percent of the variance) was due to the collapse of the UCD, whose inter-class appeal was not inherited by an AP which had a much more clearly defined social identity. Nonetheless, the class bases of the electoral decision have declined since then, as the PP has finally been able to attract voters from more diverse social groups. In 1993, for example, objective indicators of class explained 16 percent of the PSOE's vote (compared to 19 percent in 1982, data not shown), 12 percent of the PP's (compared to 23 percent in 1982), and 12.7 percent of support for the

[52] This section rests on arguments which are developed more extensively in Gunther and Montero (1994, and forthcoming), which also discuss the characteristics of the multivariate analysis and its main findings. This is a Probit-type multivariate analysis, in which the dependent variable is the declared vote for a party, and the independent variables are several indicators of objective and subjective class position, union membership, religiosity, membership in religious associations, proximity to the parties on the left-right ideological continuum and evaluations of party leaders. The regional cleavage has not been analyzed given the small number of cases for the nationalist parties. Only the DATA post-electoral surveys of 1979, 1982 and 1993 had been used.

[53] In fact, the pseudo-R^2 resulting from each Probit equation is a measure of the percentage of variance explained by each independent variable or group of variables included in each equation, and thus indicates the extent to which those variables contribute to an overall explanation of the vote for each party. In order to take the strength of the cleavage anchoring explicitly into account, and to create a meaningful figure for the entire statewide party system, weighted average R^2 figures were calculated for each selected election; see Gunther and Montero (1994, and forthcoming).

statewide parties as a whole. In the second place, the relevance of religiosity has declined even more strongly. Although religiosity had a significant impact in 1979 and especially in 1982 (with 14.5 percent and 20.6 percent of the explained variance, respectively), secularization and the political elites' strategy of avoiding politicizing religious issues has considerably weakened its impact. In 1993, religion played a minimal role in anchoring the Socialist vote (2 percent), and relatively little in distinguishing between PP voters (8 percent) and those of the left-wing parties; the only exception was the much higher figure for the IU voters (21 percent). As a result, the social and religious components of the barrier separating the two blocs of parties have become much more permeable; whilst in 1982 the sum of the variance explained by these variables totaled 41 percent, by 1993 it had fallen to 21 percent. In the third place, the impact of union membership on anchoring the vote has followed a similar downward tendency. In 1979, membership of *Comisiones Obreras* (CC OO) explained 17 percent of the variance of the PCE's vote, compared to just 8 percent for the UGT in relation to the PSOE. In 1993, the weakening of the influence of the unions, the continuity in their affiliation rates, the clash between CC OO and IU and the breakdown of the previously close ties between the UGT and the PSOE significantly reduced both unions' contribution to the electoral support for the left-wing parties: it explained just 2.3 percent of the variance.

TABLE 23. *Factors of Electoral Behavior in Spain, 1979-1993: A Multivariate Analysis of the nfluence of Class, Religiosity and Ideology*

	Elections		
Variables	1979	1982	1993
Objective social class	.064	.170	.127
Subjective social class	.054	.044	.024
Union membership	.113	.056	.023
Religiosity	.145	.206	.058
Ideology	.206	.226	.405
Total*	.548	.808	.781

*The figures refer to the weighted average R^2, and represent the cumulative impact of the preceding variables.

Source: Gunther and Montero (1994, 516-530).

Finally, the ideological factor (that is, the extent to which voters see themselves and parties in terms of left versus right) seems to have greater importance than the social-structural

anchoring of the vote, which has been declining, or party identification, which is very low, or social partisanship through secondary organizations, which is minimal. Assuming that ideological perceptions tend to be widespread, salient and stable in terms of party choice, then voters' identification with the left or right might serve as a substitute and/or complementary mechanism when socio-structural or psychological factors are weak, or are losing force over time. According to the data in Table 23, the ideological factor has the highest weighted average R^2 in every election; moreover, it has been increasing to the point that this variable alone explains 40.5 percent of the variance in the vote. It is true that, in contrast to the other factors, this ideological anchor does not tie voters to a specific party, but rather to the generic spaces of left, center and right, in each of which there might be various competing parties. Hence, it does not rule out electoral changes between parties competing within a given ideological space. However, it does stop voters from leaping over the barrier separating the two opposing ideological camps – that is, it hinders inter-bloc volatility. It seems likely that in the late 1970s ideological identities were maintained by extensive minorities and with relatively high levels of intensity. And that whilst the importance of social-structural anchoring increased after the critical 1982 elections, due to the disappearance of a typically catch-all party like the UCD and the rise of the much more conservative AP, during the 1980s ideological identities became increasingly blurred as the social bases of the PSOE vote faded and those of IU and the PP became more heterogeneous, the religious cleavage weakened, and six million new, young voters were incorporated onto the electoral register. The bipolar competition between the PSOE and PP crystallized in the third period amidst new levels of increasing competitiveness, accentuating still further the significance of ideological identifications: for most electors, the PP had established itself as the only party in the center and on the right, whilst, despite competition from IU, the PSOE was still the principal party on the left. In this way, the cleavage which currently divides the party system for many voters does not accurately reflect class positions and much less so religious orientations, but essentially expresses a vision of politics associated with the spatial terms of left-right through the voter's identities, loyalties and/or sympathies. Evidently, these terms have vague, debatable, and shifting contents, and those identities might have more or less loose connections with actual party images, platforms or policies. It is also

clear that both these terms and identities have again revealed their flexibility and adaptability in the 1990s, incorporating the competition between the PSOE and PP.[54]

Constraining Competition through the Electoral System

The Spanish electoral system belongs to the category of *strong* systems due to its capacity to constrain voters' behavior and exercise a reducing impact on the party system (Sartori 1994, 37). Consequently, it has made a major contribution to electoral stabilization and party institutionalization. The 1976 Law for Political Reform that made free elections possible incorporated a modified PR system. The electoral law of March 1977 (which has remained essentially unchanged) established (i) the principle of proportional representation and the D'Hondt formula; (ii) a small, 350-seat chamber, with 52 electoral districts; (iii) the allocation of at least two seats per district and the distribution of additional seats in accordance with the size of the provincial population; (iv) a minimum 3 percent legal threshold for representation, applied at the district-level; and (v) the existence of blocked and closed party lists. Given the varied magnitude of the districts, the mechanisms used to allocate seats have generated serious distortions in representation. The small size of the Congress and the large number of districts mean that two-thirds have fewer than five deputies, whilst Madrid and Barcelona have over 30 seats each; the average district magnitude is extraordinarily small, and below that which is usually seen as the minimum for a truly proportional system.[55] The D'Hondt electoral formula has had therefore a significant majoritarian bias in the smaller districts, since the two parties with the highest number of votes accumulate the remnants of all the other parties. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that whilst in most districts it has never been necessary to apply the 3

[54] Leadership, of course, also figures prominently among the factors influencing the vote: in the Spanish case, evaluations of political leaders do not appear to be related so much to the decision to vote for one or other party belonging to different ideological blocs, but in the decision to do so for a particular party within one or other of the blocs; see Gunther and Montero (1994, and forthcoming).

[55] En 1996, for example, the ratio electors/seats ranged from 26,143 to one in Soria to 125,975 to one in Barcelona and 123,523 to one in Madrid. The average district magnitude is only 6.73 seats; of the 21 electoral systems which have used D'Hondt electoral formulae and single-level, multi-seat districts between 1945 and 1990, only the ephemeral French system of 1986 had a smaller average district size (5.79); and of the 11 systems which have employed some other kind of proportional system, only Ireland has smaller districts than Spain (Lijphart 1994, 22).

percent legal threshold, the effective threshold has often been much higher; in fact, it is the highest of all comparable European systems (Lijphart 1994, 22).

The Spanish electoral system has had a distinct impact on some basic features of the party system. Firstly, its principal mechanical effect has taken the form of the gap between the number of electoral and parliamentary parties (a gap that has usually only been wider in the United Kingdom). Nevertheless, this mechanical effect has not damaged the nationalist or regionalist parties' chances of reaching the Congress of Deputies. By establishing a threshold only at the district level, the electoral system allows the representation of those parties on the periphery that would have been eliminated with a statewide, or in some cases regional, threshold of 3 percent. In addition, it also assures representation of the non-nationalist minority vote in those autonomous communities in which nationalist parties have generally held majorities.[56] Secondly, the other side of the coin consists in the high levels of disproportionality of the system (Table 24). The two largest parties (the UCD and PSOE in the first period, and the PSOE and AP/PP ever since) have always won a significantly larger proportion of seats than of the vote. This disproportionality has been especially beneficial for the most-voted party (the UCD in 1977 and 1979; the PP in 1996; and the PSOE on all the other occasions), and even more so when that party is conservative (like the UCD and PP). Minor parties whose support is spread thinly throughout the country have systematically been discriminated against (AP in the first period, the CDS in the second, and PCE/IU in all three periods). In contrast, parties whose voters are concentrated in one, or just a few districts (that is, normally nationalist or regionalist parties), have obtained fair representation.[57] The *advantage ratios* included in the last column in Table 23 summarize these outcomes.[58] In 1977 and 1979, the UCD obtained an average advantage ratio

[56] In contrast to many observers, who consider that the electoral system ought to be reformed in order to reduce the political importance of nationalist parties because of their support for the central minority governments or to make this unnecessary by transforming a plurality into an absolute majority, we believe that, given the multinational character of Spain, no electoral system would eliminate their presence; more importantly, we also believe that the potential manipulation of the system would be highly undesirable.

[57] Although in Table 24 only the difference for CiU and PNV, the most relevant nationalist parties, have been selected, this holds true for many other small or micro- regionalist parties.

[58] This ratio is calculated by simply dividing the proportion of seats by the proportion of votes for each party (Taagepera and Shugart 1989, 68); a perfect proportional share is therefore 1, whilst a ratio between 0 and 1 denotes that a party obtains less than its proportional share, and the contrary when the ratio is above 1. For an analysis of the Spanish case, see Penadés (forthcoming).

of 1.36, the highest ever recorded, and AP 0.50. From 1982 onwards, the average ratio for the AP/PP has been 1.15, similar to the PSOE's 1.17. Although gradually falling, the disproportionality indices have nonetheless remained considerable. The key variable is, of course, district magnitude: the index increases systematically as the size of the district decreases, to the point that the Spanish electoral system is one of the most disproportional of all the proportional representation formulae currently in use (Penadés, forthcoming). The combination of the electoral gap between the PSOE and AP/PP during the 1980s and the different dimensions of the system (particularly the ratio electors/seats, district magnitude and the D'Hondt formula) have generated majoritarian biases comparable to those in countries using different types of majoritarian systems. This same combination of factors also facilitated the series of manufactured majorities produced by the three general elections during the 1980s, when the PSOE obtained absolute parliamentary majorities from shares of the vote ranging between 48.4 percent and 39.9 percent .

TABLE 24. *Differences in the Share of Votes and Seats, Advantage Ratios and Index of Disproportionality in Spanish General Elections, 1977-1996*[a]

Party	1977	1979	1982	1986	1989	1993	1996	Advantage ratios[b]
PCE/IU	-3.6	-4.2	-2.4	-2.7	-4.3	-4.5	-4.6	0.51
PSOE	+4.4	+4.1	+10.4	+8.5	+10.4	+6	+2.8	1.16
CDS	-	-	-2.2	-3.8	-3.9	-	-	0.45
UCD	+12.9	+12.9	-3.1	-	-	-	-	1.06
AP/PP	-3.8	-3.5	+4.7	+3.9	+4.8	+5.5	+5.7	0.96
CiU	-0.6	-0.5	-0.2	+0.1	+0.1	0	0	0.98
PNV	+0.6	+0.4	+0.5	+0.2	+0.2	+0.2	+0.1	1.18
Index of disproportionality[c]	10.6	10.5	8.1	7.3	8.9	6.8	5.3	

[a]The positive sign indicates overrepresentation; the negative sign, underrepresentation.
[b] Advantage ratios are averaged for the seven elections.
[c]This is the least-squares index included in Lijphart (1994, 61-62)

Source: Our own calculations for the differences, Penadés (forthcoming) for the advantage ratios, and Oñate and Ocaña (1999) for the index.

Thirdly, the biases generated by the electoral system have also had significant effects on the format of the party system. The two largest parties have never won less than 80 percent of the 350 seats in the Congress of Deputies. In contrast, the smaller parties with geographically disperse electoral support have been progressively pushed out of the chamber; they obtained 41 seats in 1977 (shared among the PCE, AP and the PSP), 31 in 1989 (distributed among IU and the CDS), and just 21 in 1996 (all held by IU). The electoral system, therefore, has encouraged many small statewide parties to merge or ally with other larger forces, and dissuaded minority leaders from breaking away from established parties: to do so would mean parliamentary suicide. The party system has been simplified still further by the tendency towards tactical voting to the detriment of small parties with little or no chance of winning a seat (Gunther 1989; Montero and Gunther 1994, 18-19). This psychological dimension of the electoral system has reinforced its mechanical effects by anticipating and accentuating their impact. Finally, it should be noted that the overall effects of the system vary at territorial levels irrespective of district magnitude. Although the biases of the system work against parties with disperse electoral support, they do not necessarily discriminate against small parties (such as the nationalist or regionalist ones) whose voters are concentrated in just one autonomous community, or even a single district. Thus, the electoral system operates in two, contradictory directions: whilst it contains incentives against fragmentation of statewide parties, it allows the fragmentation produced by the increase in electoral support for regional or provincial parties. These biases are at the heart of the debate between those in favor of classifying the Spanish system as majoritarian (even if attenuated) and those who consider it to be proportional (even if corrected) (Montero 1998). In reality, the electoral system contains three sub-systems. The first one includes 30 small and over-represented (in terms of electors/seats) districts: they have a majoritarian character, and are therefore highly disproportional, favor the concentration of the vote in only two parties, and have benefited the UCD and AP/PP over the PSOE. A second subsystem consists of the six large and infra-represented districts: they are almost proportional (partly corrected by the 3 percent threshold), and are characterized by greater party fragmentation and proportionality in the ratio between seats and votes. The third sub-system is made up of an intermediary group of 16 districts that could be characterized as a “corrected” proportional sub-system (Penadés, forthcoming).

Conclusions

Over forty years after the last free elections, a three-year civil war, and almost forty years of authoritarian rule, in 1977 the Spaniards embarked on a new democratic era with new parties and political elites. Within the new institutions derived from the *reforma pactada-ruptura pactada* and the consensual 1978 constitution, we have seen how elites and voters have competed freely for power in elections that have avoided polarization and supported stable governments. The attempted coup on 23 February 1981, in which there were no casualties and whose conspirators were brought to trial, was opposed by all the relevant political and social organizations, and totally failed to undermine the consensus support for the democratic institutions and parties. Since then, this consensus has become consistently stronger. The new features of the cleavage structure, the electoral outcomes, and the party systems have contributed to Spain's well-established membership of the select category of democratic, stable and efficient polities. Despite the extraordinary volatility caused by the critical elections of 1982, the Spaniards' electoral behavior has become increasingly stable. The changes in the party system during these electoral periods have been matched by the persistence of a number of factors: the limited electoral, and above all parliamentary fragmentation, voters' ideological moderation, the centripetal competition among parties, the existence of stable single-party governments with at least sufficient parliamentary support. And just as the party system currently appears to be relatively stabilized at the state-wide level, the cleavage structure shows similar signs of consolidation in terms of the definitive weakening of the religious factor and the continued decline in class voting. In contrast, the regional cleavage has intensified under the protective shadow of the constraints of the democratic transition and particularly the construction of the *Estado de las Autonomías*, a development that has led to the emergence of 17 regional political systems with new representative institutions, distinct electoral processes, and significant resources for the emerging regional elites. In many communities, the new political opportunity structure has given rise to regionalist parties of some impact at the regional level and occasional presence in the Congress of Deputies. In others, however, the crystallization of distinct regional party systems, with nationalist parties ranging from extreme left to the right and competing with the statewide parties along class and religion cleavages as well as over divisive conflicts related to linguistic policies and sometimes incompatible perceptions of national identities, constitutes a serious challenge to the inclusive capabilities of political integration of the new Spanish democracy.

After Franco's death, Spain did not only have to complete a transition to democracy, but also a transition from a unitary, centralized state to a federal-type of state, from what most Spaniards considered to be a nation-state to a multinational state-nation founded on the constitution. This radical change in the organization of the state was supported by all the parties, including the main Catalan party, and overwhelmingly approved in a popular referendum by the Spanish electorate, including Catalonia. Only the Basque nationalists departed from this consensus. However, the PNV as the main Basque party subsequently supported the autonomy statute derived directly from the constitution, and since then, with the exception of HB, Basque nationalists have participated in Spanish and Basque politics. HB has challenged these institutions, although it has freely participated in elections and held office in local government in the Basque Country; its links and sympathy with the ETA terrorist group allow us to define it as a disloyal opposition. The ambivalence of other Basque voters and leaders of the PNV towards Spain's democratic institutions and in its relations with HB could lead us to see considerable semi-loyalty. We would therefore argue that Spanish democracy is fully consolidated, but that the existence of nationalism in the periphery that questions the state as well as the democratic institutions and processes in that state could be an element of instability.

Glossary of Spanish Parties and Coalitions

AIC	Agrupaciones Independientes de Canarias.
AP	Alianza Popular.
ARM	Agrupación Ruiz Mateos.
BNG	Bloque Nacionalista Galego.
CAIC	Candidatura Aragonesa Independiente de Centro.
CC	Coalición Canaria.
CD	Coalición Democrática.
CDC	Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya
CDS	Centro Democrático y Social.
CiU	Convergència i Unió.
CG	Coalición Galega.
CP	Coalición Popular.
EA	Eusko Alkartasuna.
EC	Esquerra de Catalunya.
EE	Euskadiko Ezquerra.
ERC	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya.
EUE	Euskal Esquerra.
FN	Fuerza Nueva.
HB	Herri Batasuna.
IC	Iniciativa per Catalunya.
IU	Izquierda Unida.
LV	Los Verdes.
LV-LV	Los Verdes-Lista Verde.
LVE	Los Verdes Ecologistas.
MUC	Mesa para la Unidad de los Comunistas.
ORT	Organización Revolucionaria de Trabajadores.
PA	Partido Andalucista.
PAR	Partido Aragonés Regionalista.
Par	Partido Aragonés.
PCE	Partido Comunista de España.
PDC	Pacte Democràtic per Catalunya.
PDP	Partido Demócrata Popular.
PNV	Partido Nacionalista Vasco.
PP	Partido Popular.
PRD	Partido Reformista Democrático.
PSA	Partido Socialista de Andalucía.
PSC	Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya.
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español.
PSP/US	Partido Socialista Popular/Unidad Socialista.
PST	Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores.
PSUC	Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya.
PTE	Partido del Trabajo de España.
UCD	Unión de Centro Democrático.
UCDCC	Unió del Centre i la Democràcia Cristiana de Catalunya.
UDC	Unió Democràtica de Catalunya.

UN	Unión Nacional.
UPC	Unidad del Pueblo Canario.
UPN	Unión del Pueblo Navarro.
UV	Unió Valenciana.

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