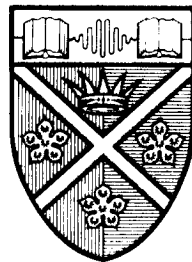


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*TOWARDS A PREDOMINANT
PARTY SYSTEM?*

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David Walker

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**TOWARDS A PREDOMINANT PARTY SYSTEM?
SPAIN SINCE 1977**

By

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**To Ricard, Maryanne and Mireille for all their
friendship and help**

INTRODUCTION.

This paper will attempt to classify the party system which has emerged from the four general elections since Spain returned to democracy after the death of Franco in 1975. A possible model for the post-Franco Spanish party system was outlined by Juan Linz in Rokkan and Lipset's 1967 book, **Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives**. Writing in the 1960s, Linz discarded the conventional wisdom on the continuity of a nation's party system, arguing that the long duration of the Franco dictatorship would result in the disappearance of many of the parties of the pre-Franco era, such as the Republicans and the Anarchists. Instead, Linz predicted that the Spanish party system would be dominated by Socialist and Christian Democratic tendencies, which would, however, be broader based than their predecessors in the Second Republic (1931-36), the pre-Franco period. In Linz's opinion, a strong Communist party would cut into the Socialist vote, while increased immigration to both Catalonia and the Basque country would dilute nationalist feeling in these regions and thus rob the Basque and Catalan nationalist parties of their *raison d'être*. However, an overview of the features of the general elections of 1977, 1979, 1982 and 1986, shows that Linz's predictions were, on the whole, wrong.

FEATURES OF SPANISH GENERAL ELECTIONS 1977-1986

The first of these features is the progress of Partido Socialista Español (PSOE), from that of leading opposition party in 1977 and 1979 to its present position as the party of government. This came about after PSOE won both the 1982 and 1986

general elections with overall majorities. Contrary to Linz's prediction, Partido Comunista Español (PCE) has not cut into PSOE's vote, but instead has seen its own electoral support fall away. Meanwhile the centre-right UCD (Unión de Centro Democrático), which formed a minority government after both the 1977 and 1979 elections, was reduced to a rump of 11 deputies after the 1982 election and it subsequently dissolved. In contrast to UCD, the right wing Alianza Popular (AP) performed poorly in both the 1977 and 1979 general elections, but in 1982 it increased its representation in the Congress of Deputies from 9 to 106. Nevertheless, in the 1986 general election AP was unable to exceed its 'techo' (electoral ceiling) and go on to become the governing party in Spain. Thus an electorally strong Christian Democratic party has failed to develop, while, like Mark Twain, Linz's reports of the death of the Catalan and Basque nationalist parties have been much exaggerated. The last feature is the appearance in 1982 of a new centrist party, Centro Democrático y Social (CDS), under the leadership of former UCD leader Suárez. However CDS has been unable to develop into a major force in Spanish politics, with its best performance coming in the 1986 general election when it won nine percent of the vote and 19 seats.

SPANISH GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS

PARTY	1977		1979		1982		1986	
	%	VOTE SEATS	%	VOTE SEATS	%	VOTE SEATS	%	VOTE SEATS
PSOE	29.3	118	30.5	121	48.4	202	44.1	184
AP(CD,CP)	8.3	16	6.0	9	26.5	107	26.0	105
UCD	34.4	166	35.0	168	6.7	11	-	-
PCE(IU)	9.4	20	10.8	23	4.1	4	4.6	7
CDS	-	-	-	-	2.8	2	9.2	19
CiU	2.8	11	2.7	8	3.7	12	5.0	18
PNV	1.6	8	1.5	7	1.8	8	1.5	6
EE	0.3	1	0.5	1	0.5	1	0.5	2
HB	-	-	0.9	3	0.9	2	1.2	5
Others	13.3	10	12.1	10	4.3	1	7.9	4
Total	100	350	100	350	100	350	100	350

Abstention% 21.4 32.0 20.0 29.0

KEY

PSOE: Partido Socialista Obrero Español

AP:Alianza Popular CD:Coalición Democrática CP:Coalición Popular

UCD:Unión de Centro Democrático

PCE: Partido Comunista Español

IU:Izquierda Unida

CDS:Centro Democrático y Social

CiU: Convergencia i Unió

PNV: Partido Nacionalista Vasco

HB:Herri Batasuna EE: Euskadiko Ezkerra.

There are several explanations as to why PSOE has progressed from being the main opposition party to go on and win two consecutive general elections, both with overall majorities. The main thread of Pollack and Hunter's (1987) argument that PSOE's victories were merely the continuation of the 'tradition' versus 'modernity', which had 'characterised the confrontation of the 1930s'. PSOE's victories meant that it was charged with the task of bringing Spain into the modern world.

This paper will suggest that Pollack and Hunter's argument is not in fact the case and that the explanation for PSOE's electoral success is twofold. The first of these is that PSOE has broadened its electoral support by taking on most of the characteristics of Kirchheimer's 'catch-all' party. These characteristics would include recruiting voters from the population at large instead of from specific social classes or groups, de-emphasising ideology, building on the personal popularity of the leader and strengthening the position of the party leader and the moderates [Kirchheimer, 1966]. In contrast to Kirchheimer, who stressed the importance of increased prosperity in relation to the development of 'catch-all' parties, Wolinetz [1979] argued that a 'catch-all' party would only succeed where a nation's political system had undergone a major institutional upheaval, such as the change in France from the parliamentarianism of the Fourth Republic to the presidentialism of the Fifth. In a sense, a similar transformation has taken place in Spain with the restoration of democracy after the Franco dictatorship.

The other explanation is that PSOE's electoral success is related to the fact that Spain may perhaps be moving towards what Sartori [1976:195] describes as a Predominant Party System, where one party 'manages to win, over time, an absolute majority of seats (not necessarily of votes) in parliament'. According to Sartori a Predominant Party System comes into existence only after one party has won three consecutive general elections each with an absolute majority, the prime example being the Swedish Social Democrats whose tenure in power lasted from 1932-76 and from 1982 to date. PSOE in Spain has not reached that position yet, but what is remarkable about PSOE's success is that for the first time in Spanish political history a single party has won two consecutive general elections, both with an overall majority. According to von Beyme [1985:263], 'the dominant party generally forms the government and can only be displaced by a coalition of all or most of the opposition parties'. The evidence of the 1982 and 1986 general elections shows that no single opposition party has been able to defeat PSOE, and thus PSOE's electoral success is partly due to the weakness of the opposition, particularly the Right, as is also the case in Sweden.

RISE OF PSOE

After the 1977 election, PSOE was the leading party in only about 10 provinces, although in all the rest it was the main challenger to UCD. PSOE did best in the southern and Mediterranean provinces, the urban areas of Madrid, Barcelona and Asturias (in the North). These had been PSOE's strongholds during the Second Republic (1931-36) which supports Rokkan and Lipset's argument, that a nation's party system remains frozen

over a lengthy period of time, with communities and families acting as the social carriers of ideology.

In the 1979 election, despite heavy losses to the nationalist parties in both the Basque country and Western Andalusia, there was a much more homogeneous distribution of the PSOE vote throughout Spain. PSOE in fact made gains in areas like Extremadura, where they were already strong, but they also made inroads into areas where UCD and AP were strong, like Galicia where PSOE made gains of between 0.4 and 5.4 percent. With regard to the social composition of PSOE's vote, Tezanos demonstrates that the middle classes were becoming a more important part of PSOE's electorate. Thus in 1979 21 percent of PSOE's vote came from the middle class, as opposed to 28 percent from the working class [Tezanos,1983:69]. It must be remembered that since the late 1950s there had been a number of economic and social changes in Spain. Thus with regard to the occupational structure, between 1965 and 1976 the percentage of the Spanish population engaged in the service industries increased from 31 per cent to 41 per cent while the percentage working in agriculture fell from 35 to 22 per cent [Tezanos,1986:115].

In the 1982 general election PSOE, such was the increase in PSOE's vote throughout the whole of Spain, that it won for the first time at least one seat in each of the 50 provinces. PSOE was also the leading party in 42 of these provinces, as opposed to only 14 in 1979. PSOE's success was slightly exaggerated because of the workings of the electoral system, notably the overrepresentation of both the rural provinces and the larger

parties.[1] Thus PSOE won 57.7 per cent of the seats with 48.4 per cent of the vote. Amongst PSOE's most striking successes was its victory in the traditionally conservative province of Navarre. Nevertheless, PSOE's biggest advances were in the South and the Levante, where they were already strong. In these areas, PSOE was absorbing votes from the PCE, the extreme Left Wing parties and, in the case of the Canary Islands and Andalusia, the regionalist parties.

In terms of social class, 'PSOE's electorate reflects well the stratification of Spanish society' [Jürgen Puhle, 1986: 302-303]. Thus the percentages of working class (70 per cent) and middle class and lower middle class (25 per cent) among PSOE's voters corresponds to the Spanish average (working class 61 per cent and middle and lower middle class 26 per cent). In terms of electoral groups, over half of PSOE's 1982 vote (5.5 million) came from those who had voted for PSOE in 1979, 1.3 million were new voters, 1.6 million were former UCD voters, 0.7 million came from ex-PCE voters and another 1.3 million from increased participation [Buse,1984:230].In accordance with Kirchheimer's model, PSOE was becoming a 'catch-all' party in terms of both geography and social class, as the French Socialists under Mitterand also were.

These voters were supporting PSOE, because PSOE, like a 'catch-all' party was de-emphasising ideology and searching for themes that appealed to the electorate as a whole, as well as building on the personal popularity of party leader Felipe González. Thus,76per cent of loyal PSOE voters, as well as 76 per cent of

ex-UCD voters and 57 per cent of former PCE voters gave as their first and second reasons for voting for PSOE as 'because change is necessary' [Jürgen Puhle, 1986: 316-317]. Jürgen Puhle is talking in particular about the transformation which took place within PSOE between 1979 and 1982, which strengthened the position of party leader González and the moderates, which is one of Kirchheimer's preconditions for a 'catch-all' party. Perhaps the key event was the Extraordinary Congress of 1979, which moderated PSOE's historic commitment to Marxism, strengthened González's hold on the party and excluded the Left from all positions of power. In part these moves towards moderation were influenced by electoral considerations. In both the 1977 and 1979 elections PSOE had been perceived as being too far to the Left by voters, a point which was exploited by UCD leader Suárez.

PSOE also made full use of the personal popularity of Felipe González, which was based on his personal skills. Not only could González communicate well, as demonstrated by his ability to express arguments simply, but he could also be both a man of the people as well as a serious politician. In this context it must be pointed out that in Southern European societies personalist political leadership has always had a strong appeal.

Thus perhaps it was not surprising that although PSOE fought the 1982 election with a manifesto entitled 'por el cambio' ('for change'), the change being offered was not so much Marxist, or even Socialist change but rather what The Economist [Volume 285, Number 7262] called 'democratic and moral improvement'. The only

really radical measures were the promises to create 800,000 jobs over the next four years and to hold a referendum on NATO membership, while proposed nationalisation measures, except for the electricity grid, were eliminated in order to win over centrist voters. This shows that like a 'catch-all' party, PSOE was trying to recruit votes from the population at large instead of from specific social classes or groups. All parties wanted a reduction in unemployment, differing only about the means by which this reduction could be achieved. Thus PSOE advocated an increase in both private and public funding, while AP placed its faith in free market policies, such as greater flexibility in the labour market. Whilst there were differences among the parties in some areas of social policy, such as abortion (PSOE and PCE favouring the legalisation of abortion and AP and UCD opposing it), this should not disguise the agreement among the parties in other areas, an example being the extension of social security provision. Thus the evidence of both the party manifesto and the ballot box suggests that the voters supported PSOE because it was a party of moderation as opposed to Pollack and Hunter's belief that PSOE was a party of modernisation. Pollack and Hunter also ignore the modernisation which had taken place in Spain prior to PSOE coming to power. Thus, during the Franco era there had been considerable economic development and the UCD government had introduced divorce reform.

THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE

Pollack and Hunter also fail to take account of the fact that PSOE's success was made possible by the simultaneous collapse of the PCE and UCD, which lends support to von Beyme's argument concerning the weakness of the opposition. PCE made poor showings in both the 1977 and 1979 elections, and performed even worse in the 1982 election, when it won only 4.7 per cent of the votes, a massive 40 percentage points behind PSOE. PCE was not mistaken in adopting a Euro-communist stance as opinion polls showed that an overwhelming majority of Spaniards favoured moderate as opposed to revolutionary change [Pollack and Hunter, 1987:367]. However PSOE was able to project a much younger 'Kennedy' style leadership than the Communists whose General Secretary, Carrillo, had been a party leader since the 1930's. PCE's problems were compounded by internal conflicts throughout the period 1977-82. The main divisions concerned PCE's political strategy and related issues like party organisation. The majority within PCE adhered to Carrillo's position of continued innovation in policy, whilst also supporting the leadership's views on party organisation. This concept was challenged by conservatives who wanted the party to move away from its Euro-communist orientation line and to concentrate on mobilizing the proletariat. Yet another perspective was provided by the liberal wing of the PCE. They did not question PCE's Euro-communist stance, but wanted it to be complemented by an organisational overhaul, which would allow more debate within the party.

DECLINE AND FALL OF UCD

UCD was not so much a political party but rather 'an organisation set up by those in power with the purpose of preserving that power' [Amodia, 1983:7]. It was set up on the eve of the 1977 elections and consisted of four broad groups or political families: conservative Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, Liberals and former bureaucrats from the Francoist Movimiento, like party leader (from 1977-81) Suárez. UCD's main strength was in the provinces of the central Meseta, the West and North-west and Galicia. Therefore UCD's support represented 'more that of traditional rather than that of modern Spain' [Buse, 1984:242]. In these parts of Spain traditional local elites were dominant and influences such as industrialisation were minimal. Thus showing that to an extent UCD was like Pollack and Hunter's party of 'tradition', but, as illustrated earlier, UCD's policies in areas like divorce and tax reform were not those of traditional Spain.

After its 1979 election victory UCD was unable to deal with the problems of the economy, (by the autumn of 1980 unemployment had reached 1.5 million), and terrorism (particularly from ETA in the Basque country). In addition Suárez's aloof leadership style did not endear him to the UCD deputies, who showed their displeasure by voting against their party. In addition, the heterogeneous nature of the groups within UCD made disputes on policy more likely. By the autumn of 1981, UCD was unable any longer to paper over its cracks, as was illustrated by the defection of the Social Democrats (to PSOE) and UCD's crushing defeat in the Galician Autonomous Community election. Then, in May 1982 UCD

suffered another electoral reverse when it was defeated by PSOE in the Andalusian Autonomous Community election, the first time that UCD had lost to PSOE in an election in Spain. On the eve of the 1982 general election the UCD broke up. The Christian Democrats formed Partido Popular Democrata (PDP), which made an electoral alliance with Alianza Popular (AP). The Liberals reformed under the banner of Partido Liberal, while Suárez emerged from his self-imposed exile to form Centro Democrático y Social (CDS).

REASONS FOR THE DEATH OF UCD

Suárez realised that if UCD was to establish electoral dominance then it had to shift leftwards on issues like divorce and tax reform in order to compete electorally with PSOE. However, the dominance of the political families and the conservative leanings of much of UCD's supporters made it difficult to achieve this. Factionalism within UCD made for a sense of desgobierno (lack of government). The latter led, in turn to the desertion of supporters like the employers association (CEOE). In *las elecciones del cambio*, Muñoz Alonso et al argue [1984:29] that UCD made itself into a very bureaucratised party at its first Congress, therefore depriving itself of good relations with the sectors of society who supported it. A factor which was aggravated by UCD's lack of a political tradition compared to PSOE and PCE. Bruce Young [1983:140] argues that UCD's problems began in the wake of the 1979 election, 'precisely when it became necessary to move from the tasks of elaborating the constitution to applying it' Thus

it was easier to find agreement on broad constitutional generalities than it was on the details of measures like social reform. In a sense, UCD should be seen not so much as a modern political party, but more as a provisional government after a revolution, whose task has been completed once a new constitution has been drawn up. Thus there are many reasons for the demise of the UCD, reasons which tend to be underplayed by Pollack and Hunter.

PSOE RETURNED TO POWER

In the 1986 election, although PSOE's vote fell by 7 per cent compared to the 1982 election, it was still returned with an overall majority. In a sense this victory was surprising bearing in mind that once in office, PSOE's economic policies were anything but socialist and indeed nearer to the neo-liberal policies of West European centre-right governments. This about turn was in a sense to be expected, because PSOE had become more of a 'catch-all' party and other socialist governments in Sweden and France were also applying similar neo-liberal economic policies. Instead of creating 800,000 jobs by expanding the economy, PSOE's economic policies, such as industrial restructuring, resulted in 734,000 workers losing their jobs between 1982 and 1986. Moreover, workers were also hit by measures such as increased social security contributions and increase in indirect taxes. However, these economic policies did have some success, such as reducing both inflation and the balance of payments deficit.

PSOE in power was also far from radical in social policy, with perhaps their most far reaching measure being the reform of primary and secondary education. Under this reform, state subsidies to private (mainly, Catholic schools) were made conditional upon these schools accepting some element of governmental control such as national curricula determined by the government. This was a far cry from PSOE's policy during the Second Republic of wanting to close all schools run by the Catholic Church. Although social spending between 1982 and 1987 increased from 3.3 billion pesetas to 6.3 billion pesetas, Spain still allocated less of her budget to social spending than the OECD average and also allowed military spending to overtake spending on education [Gillespie, 1989:76].

PSOE was able to pursue these conservative social and economic policies because Spanish voters, unlike British voters, could not hark back to a period when their party had followed a more radical course in social and economic policy. González's tight grip on the party, resulting from his successful leadership record and the centralised structure he had imposed on PSOE, meant that there was no major rebellion within the ranks of PSOE. The only exception was Nicolas Redondo, who had an independent power base as the general secretary of the Socialist trade union federation UGT. The prevailing political climate in both Spain and Western Europe would have made it very difficult for PSOE to implement radical policies. Not only was it apparent by the autumn of 1982 that Mitterrand's 'reflation in one country' had failed, but PSOE's leadership was wary of antagonising powerful sections of Spanish society. However, perhaps the key to PSOE's

victory in 1986 was, as in 1982, the failure to develop a viable alternative to PSOE on the right, left or centre of the political spectrum. The weakness of the left and centre was an additional factor in enabling PSOE to pursue cautious economic and social policies without fear of losing votes.

LACK OF AN ALTERNATIVE

FROM PCE TO IU (IZQUIERDA UNIDA)

Throughout the period 1982 to 1985, PCE was plagued by internal wrangling which resulted in the pro-Soviet faction splitting from PCE in October 1984 to form Partido Comunista de los Pueblos de España (PCPE). In 1985, Carrillo broke with PCE to form Unidad Comunista (UC) because he disagreed with Iglesias' (his successor as PCE leader) strategy of building a Broad Left alternative to PSOE. This grouping would include not only Communists but also environmentalists and feminists. Carrillo argued that such a formation would dilute PCE's programme and weaken its political identity. In the wake of co-operation on the NATO referendum, in March 1986 such a broad left formation Izquierda Unida (IU) came into being. However, IU performed poorly in the 1986 general election, winning only 7 seats, far less than the 20 which PCE won in 1979.

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES: ALIANZA POPULAR AND ITS ALLIES

1977-86

PSOE's re-election in 1986 was also helped by the problems of the main right wing opposition grouping Coalición Popular (CP) was experiencing between 1982 and 1986. CP was a coalition consisting of Alianza Popular (AP), Partido Demócrata Popular (PDP) and Partido Liberal (PL), which in reality did not exist but was created at AP's prompting. Although AP-PDP had emerged as the main opposition party to PSOE after the 1982 general election, Montero emphasises that AP-PDP's success was very much a 'sub-triunfo' (an incomplete triumph) because AP-PDP was a poorer second to PSOE in the 1982 election, in both the percentage of the vote and number of seats, than PSOE had been to UCD in the 1977 and 1979 elections. Not only that, but surveys showed that of the 3 million former UCD votes which AP-PDP received in 1982, about half were really votes for PDP. These voters supported PDP more as a way of rebuffing PSOE, than out of any great enthusiasm for AP [Montero, 1986:360]. None of the electoral contests between 1982 and 1986 suggested that there was going to be a major realignment of the party system. Indeed in the Galician Autonomous Community election of November 1985, CP could not even win an overall majority in what had been fertile territory for AP.

The 1986 general election result highlighted the failure of CP's political strategy centred around the concept of the 'natural majority'. This meant that CP wanted to unite all anti-socialist opinion in one mass party, with the aim of replacing

PSOE as the party of government. However, although CP retained much of the support which AP-PDP had won in 1982, it failed to attract sufficient support from other sections of the electorate, as shown by the fact that only 9 per cent of workers voted for CP in 1986, while PSOE won the support of 53 per cent of workers [Montero,1988:155].

One reason for CP's failure to obtain the 'natural majority' was the leadership of the former Francoist minister Fraga, who was AP's founder. As was neatly summed up 'El País' of 24.6.86, 'The problem is that Fraga has a ceiling but he also has a floor; there are those who will never vote for him but there are many faithful voters'. This illustrates how, in contrast to PSOE, a party's electoral fortunes can be adversely affected by its leader. Policies were another part of the explanation for CP's lack of electoral success. CP's strategy in opposition between 1982 and 1986 was merely to criticise PSOE, but the reforms which CP opposed had the support of a majority of Spaniards. Unlike other European parties of the Right, such as the British Conservatives, CP did not redefine its ideology so that it could appeal to a majority of the electors. Indeed in its 1986 general election manifesto, 'Radical condemnation of the socialist government proved to be a substitute for conservative policy making'[Montero,1988:151]. Whilst economic liberalism was evident in commitments, such as the privatisation of public services, some of CP's pledges were vague, notably to put an end to terrorism within 6 months, and even contradictory. Thus CP promised to promote Spain's full integration into NATO, yet in the referendum, held a few months prior to the election, CP had

campaigned for abstention. With regard to policy. CP's problems were compounded by PSOE pursuing the type of economic policies which the President of the Banco de Vizcaya both approved of, and believed were no different from those of a right wing government. Thus it was much harder for CP to create a separate identity.

In a nutshell, the lack of a distinct identity has been the major problem of the Spanish Right. Francoism has little appeal for the Spanish electorate as shown by the miniscule 0.65 per cent of the vote which the Francoist Alianza del 18 de julio obtained in the 1977 election, while the best result that the Extreme Right, Unión Nacional, obtained was 2.11 per cent in 1979. The monarchy is no longer the major issue that it was during the Second Republic. King Juan Carlos is now accepted by all shades of the political spectrum, and consequently the monarchist parties of the Second Republic have not reappeared. Moreover, the absence of a revolutionary Left and the weakness of the PCE meant that anti-Communism could not be used to rally the electorate.

RELIGION

During the Second Republic, the major political party on the Right was the Catholic confessional party CEDA (Confederación de Derechas Autónomas). CEDA was the Catholic Church's response to the anti-clericalism of the Second Republic. Not only were both PSOE and PCE anticlerical, but Article 26 of the Republic's Constitution called for the closure of convents and religious schools and the ending of subsidies for the clergy. However, religion is no longer is no longer an important determinant of

voting behaviour. In the 1982 election, 20 per cent of 'very good Catholics' voted for PSOE, while the figure for the right wing Alianza Popular was only 3 per cent higher [Linz,1986:220].

Contrary to Linz's predictions, noted earlier, a Christian Democrat party has been unable to achieve any real electoral success in its own right in Spain.(although as noted earlier,Christian Democrats were one of the component groups of UCD). Indeed in the 1977 election the Christian Democrats failed to win a single seat. One of their mistakes was to campaign on a leftist programme, which meant that they lost votes from moderates but were unable to pick up support from Leftist voters. Perhaps most importantly, the post-Francoist Church decided not to sponsor its own political party in the 1977 elections. This was largely because it was far more divided than its Italian counterpart had been during the late 1940s when it was involved in establishing the Christian Democratic Party. A more liberal attitude had developed among the Spanish clergy as a result of Vatican 2. Consequently the organisational network which provided the corner-stone for the Italian Christian Democratic Party was much more radical in the case of Spain. The softening of both PSOE and PCE's anticlerical attitude was another factor in explaining the failure of a Christian Democratic Party to take root in Spain. Since the 1940s PCE had looked for collaboration with Catholics, a process that was accelerated by a shift in the Church's anti-Marxist stance at Vatican 2 and PCE's desire for an active presence by Catholics in the anti-Franco resistance. As late as 1974, PSOE was still adhering to its anticlerical stand.

However González's remodelling of the party led to a number of Left leaning Catholics joining PSOE. This influx of Catholics into PSOE led, in turn, to a moderation of PSOE's anti-clericalism. Thus, unlike their counterparts in Germany and Italy, the Spanish Right has been unable to discard their Fascist associations under the banner of Christian Democracy.

NATIONALIST PARTIES AND REGIONAL PARTY SYSTEMS.

For the Spanish Right the existence of nationalist parties and separate regional party systems in both the Basque country [2] and Catalonia has been an electoral irritant. In order to explain why it is necessary to look at the historical roots of both Catalan and Basque nationalisms. In doing so it must be pointed out that although Spain emerged as a nation state at the end of the fifteenth century, the core, the Kingdom of Castile, made no attempt to create a unitary state until 1640, by which time she was too weak to do so. Consequently, the regions of Spain, like Catalonia and the Basque country, retained not only a separate cultural and linguistic identity, but also considerable political autonomy. It was only after the War of the Spanish Succession, (1700-14), that Catalan political autonomy disappeared, although it was not until after their defeat in the Second Carlist War of 1873-74 that the Basques were subject to the same centralising laws as the rest of Spain.

CATALAN NATIONALISM

One of the main characteristics of Catalan nationalism was, and remains, the use of the Catalan language. The publication of Aribau's *Oda a la Patria* in Catalan in 1833 led to a cultural revival which together with the migration of workers to the towns, helped to unify Catalonia. Moreover, industrialisation in the nineteenth century shifted the economic power base in Spain from Madrid to Catalonia. In 1892 the Lliga Catalonia was formed, as a pressure group come political party and in 1901 it took the name Lliga Regionalista. In the same year the loss of the Cuban textile market led to the first electoral success of the Lliga and also established the pattern of separate Catalan parties which has continued ever since. At this time, Catalan nationalism was essentially middle class and conservative, but desired greater economic modernisation. Meanwhile the majority of the Catalan working class at this time supported the Anarchist as opposed to the nationalist movement.

The Lliga persuaded the government in Madrid to give the Catalans some control over their schools, social services and communications in the Mancomunitat, set up in 1914. Although the Mancomunitat failed to achieve the degree of autonomy which the Lliga wanted. The Lliga's failure strengthened the appeal of the radical nationalism of the Left. The Left nationalist position was filled by a succession of groups breaking away from the Lliga or PSOE, but there was no mass political party of the nationalist Left until the formation of Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) in 1931.

ERC dominated elections to both the Catalan parliament and the Spanish Cortes during the Second Republic (1931-36), a dominance exaggerated by the workings of the PR electoral system. ERC wanted a federal Spain and its core support came from the lower middle class, artisans and industrial working class. The prestige of ERC's leader Marcià, who took a radical stand on Catalan issues, provided an additional electoral spin off for ERC.

CATALAN PARTY SYSTEM SINCE 1977

Catalonia has continued to have a different party system from that of Spain as a whole. ERC is now a minority party, while the Lliga has disappeared. The latter's replacement appears to be Convergencia i Unió (CiU), a coalition formed in 1978 and consisting of Convergència de Democràtica de Catalunya and Unió Democràtica. In terms of ideology, CiU is a Catalan nationalist party, with both liberal and christian democratic wings. Like ERC in the Second Republic, part of CiU's electoral success derives from the charisma of its leader Pujol, 'who does more than lead his 'nation'; he personifies it' [*Le Point*, No.836, 26.9.88, p.72]. Whilst CiU has been the leading party in the last three elections for the Catalan Autonomous Community elections, this success has not been repeated at Spanish general elections, although the 18 seats it won in 1986 was its best general election performance.

Instead, the most successful Catalan party at general elections has been PSC (Partit del Socialistes de Catalunya). PSC was formed in 1978 and forms a coalition with PSOE, similar to

that of the Bavarian Christian Social Union has with the West German Christian Democratic Union. The PSC's vote is concentrated among the immigrant working class in Barcelona province, which contains three quarters of the electorate of Catalonia. PSC's success can be explained by its combination of Catalan nationalism and Socialism. A similar explanation could account for why PSUC(Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya) performed relatively better in Catalonia than PCE did in Spain as a whole in the 1977 and 1979 elections. (in 1979 PSUC won 8 seats while PCE won 15). However, in the 1982 general election, PSUC's decline was more spectacular than PCE's throughout the rest of Spain. Thus PSUC lost 14 per cent of its vote and 7 out of its 8 deputies.

As noted earlier, Catalonia has not been the most successful electoral territory for the parties of the Spanish Right, either at present or during the Second Republic. AP's best performance in Catalonia was 15 per cent of the vote in 1982, well below the 25 per cent it polled throughout Spain as a whole. Conservative voters in Catalonia are continuing their tradition of voting for moderate Catalan nationalist parties (first Lliga and now CiU) as opposed to the parties of the Spanish Right, such as AP, which they believe to be centralist.

BASQUE NATIONALISM

From the founding of Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV), in 1895, the hallmark of Basque nationalism was the use of Euskera (the Basque language), with social and economic issues taking second place. Indeed the Basque industrialists and financiers were much more integrated into the Spanish economic and political system than their Catalan counterparts. Basque nationalism developed as a result of the large influx of immigrants from other parts of Spain to work in the iron mines and steel works of Vizcaya. Many Basques believed that their traditional, Catholic, and Euskera speaking society was under threat from the mainly anticlerical Spanish speaking immigrants. In electoral contests during the Second Republic PNV's main support came from the peasants, fishermen and artisans of the small towns of Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya, the very areas where Euskera speakers were concentrated. In contrast to the situation in Catalonia, PNV was the sole voice of Basque nationalism. However, two main factions existed uneasily within PNV: moderate regionalists discontented with the failings of the government in Madrid and those who emphasised the themes of party leader Arana, namely Carlism,[3], Euskera and Basque racial purity. PNV also lacked the electoral dominance that ERC enjoyed during the Second Republic in Catalonia. Thus, in the industrial areas of Bilbao and San Sebastian the working class tended to support PSOE, while the parties of the Spanish Right polled well in the rural province of Alava.

BASQUE PARTY SYSTEM SINCE 1977

In contrast to the Second Republic, PNV cannot claim that it alone is the voice of Basque nationalism. In 1959 PNV split with the formation of ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna- Basque homeland and freedom). ETA's ideology was a combination of Arana's racial purity of the Basque race with Socialist ideas. In 1968, ETA began a campaign of violence against the Spanish state, and the late 1970s saw the emergence of ETA's political wing, Herri Batasuna (Popular Unity). HB's main objective was a united, independent Basque country including the French Basque country and Navarre and it condoned the use of violence to achieve this end. PNV also faced competition from Euskadiko Ezkerra (Basque Left). Euskadiko Ezkerra (EE) had evolved as a splinter group from ETA, as a Basque nationalist workers' party. While EE wants independence for the Basque country it wants this to be achieved by peaceful means. However, all this competition did not stop PNV emerging as the leading party in the Basque country in both the 1977 and 1979 general elections, winning 8 and 7 seats respectively. PNV's success was based on its traditional strongholds of Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya, while it also had some success in the industrial areas of Bilbao and Western Vizcaya.

However in the 1980s both HB, and in particular EE, increased their vote and representation in the Basque country. HB had done well in the 1979 general election when it won 15 per cent of the vote in the Basque country and three seats. HB was largely capturing the protest vote, which was annoyed not only at the lack of devolved power which the Basque country was to receive, but also by the poor performance by the PNV deputies in the

Congress of Deputies in Madrid. EE and HB's best performances came in the 1986 general election, with the former winning two and the latter five seats. As in 1979, HB's vote was basically a protest vote against the unemployment resulting from industrial restructuring and the activities of the Spanish police forces, notably the anti-terrorist group GAL, in the Basque country.

PNV entered the 1986 campaign internally divided, a division that led to the defection of Garaikoetxea and his formation of Eusko Alkartasuna (EA) in the aftermath of the 1986 election. Essentially the rift was between Garaikoetxea (who had been lendakari- President of Basque Autonomous Community from 1980-84) and Arzallus (General Secretary of PNV). Trouble had surfaced in 1984, when some Navarrese members were expelled for failing to obey the PNV leadership's call to support the conservative UPN's candidate for the government of the Navarre Autonomous Community. Garaikoetxea, a Navarrese himself, supported the expelled members. In December 1984 Garaikoetxea was forced to resign as lendakari. However, conflict between his followers and those of Arzallus continued, with one of the main disagreements being the voting system for PNV's National Assembly, which gives representation solely to local majorities and not to minorities. Nevertheless, despite these difficulties PNV still won 26 per cent of the vote in the Basque country in the 1986 general election. By comparison, at its period of greatest strength in October 1974, the SNP was winning just 30 per cent of the Scottish vote.

The overall result of the decline of PNV has been the emergence of PSOE-PSE as the leading party, at least in terms of representation in the Congress of Deputies, with 8 seats in the Basque country (compared to PNV's 6). However, it must be emphasised that PSOE-PSE does not share the dominant position of its Catalan counterpart. Indeed in the Basque country, as was also the case during the Second Republic, no single political party can claim to be dominant.

Other West European countries like Belgium, UK and Finland have nationalist parties and also, notably the case of Northern Ireland, a distinct regional party system. However, the Basque country and Catalonia are probably unique in Western Europe in that although located on the geographical periphery of their nation, as is the case with most other West European nationalist movements, in economic terms they are situated right at the very core. Flanders in Belgium is also an advanced economic region with a nationalist party, but Flanders economic advance only really dates from 1945, whereas the Basque country and Catalonia have been at the economic core of Spain since the late nineteenth century [4] Nevertheless, a distinct culture and language is as much a part of Catalan and Basque nationalism as it is of Flemish and Welsh nationalism. Indeed the great strength of Catalan and Basque nationalisms is that, contrary to Linz's prediction noted at the start of the paper, they survived the frontal attack made on them during the Franco era (1939-75) and re-emerged with new found vigour. In party political terms, Catalan and Basque nationalisms are unique in that they speak with several and not

one voice. Perhaps most importantly, as illustrated earlier, Alianza Popular and its allies' weakness in Catalonia and the Basque country means that during a general election it is like a boxer fighting with one hand tied behind his back. Thus the mainstream Basque and Catalan nationalist parties have prevented the emergence of a single truly national party of the Spanish Right.

OTHER REGIONAL PARTIES

In other Spanish regions, like Galicia, it is not so much the case of a separate party system developing but rather a regional party challenging the existing Spanish parties and doing best in the 1979 and 1986 elections. In 1979 the increase in the support for regional parties can be seen as a desire for the people of these regions to have a stronger voice for their particular area in the Congress of Deputies, and thus obtain more in the way of regional devolution. One such example was the Partido Socialista de Andalucía (PSA) which won 11 percent of the vote in Andalusia and five deputies.

Regional parties in Aragon, the Canary Islands, Valencia and Galicia gained representation in the Congress of Deputies in the 1986 election. In Aragon and Valencia both the regional parties preferred to fight the election under their own banner, rather than as part of Coalición Popular (CP), as they had done in the 1982 election. Perhaps because they felt that they could better represent their respective regions than CP could, again illustrating how far CP was from obtaining the 'natural majority'. However, it must be stressed that the appeal of these

parties was confined to their particular region and that Roca's attempt to create a new political party by integrating regional forces, Partido Reformista Democrático (PRD), won only a derisory 0.96 per cent of the votes and no seats in the 1986 general election.

CENTRO DEMOCRATICO Y SOCIAL (CDS)

Another barrier for the Spanish Right to surmount has been the not insignificant electoral presence of CDS, which in the 1986 election won 9 per cent of the vote and 19 deputies. Thus again demonstrating that CP's strategy of the 'natural majority' had little appeal outside the right of the political spectrum. However although CDS attracted 600,000 disillusioned PSOE voters as well as absorbing a large part of the former UCD electorate, CDS' vote in 1986 is only the same as the total of the CDS and UCD vote in 1982. As was the case with UCD, Suárez wants CDS to be slightly to the Left of PSOE, with the aim of becoming Spain's next government. However, the difficulty with this strategy is that on a number of issues both parties share similar views. Some examples include abortion, the secularisation of both primary and secondary education and the modernisation of the armed forces. Thus Suárez does not appear to want CDS to be the potential coalition partner for either PSOE or AP in the way that the Free Democrats are for the Christian Democrats or Social Democrats in West Germany. The other question mark concerning CDS is what will happen to the party if and when Suárez goes, as since its formation in 1982, CDS has been very much Suárez's party.

CONCLUSION: WHAT TYPE OF PARTY SYSTEM?

Some political scientists [5] have been reluctant to classify the Spanish Party System, citing as their reason the novelty of Spanish democracy. Pollack and Hunter do however make such a classification but overemphasise the continuity of the tradition versus modernity cleavage in Spanish politics. Indeed, PSOE's Second Republic 'modernisation', including anti-clericalism and anti-monarchism was, as has been shown, much more radical than the moderation which PSOE has both espoused and practised in the 1980s. Moreover, Pollack and Hunter play down the extent to which PSOE's success in 1982 was due to the internal contradictions in the UCD. They also ignore the persistence of the centre-periphery cleavage (as shown by the of the nationalist and regionalist parties). Indeed during the 1930s, the centre-periphery cleavage was as much responsible for the end of the Republic as Pollack and Hunter believe the 'tradition' v 'modernity' cleavage was. One of the reasons for the Civil War was the fear by many on the Francoist side that Spain was about to split up into a series of regional states.

The main theme of this paper has been the progress of PSOE from that of main opposition party to being the victor of consecutive general elections, both with overall majorities. PSOE's electoral success is partly because it has become a 'catch-all' party with a broad base, although the weakness of the opposition parties also has to be taken into consideration. The question to be addressed in this final section, is have PSOE's victories in 1982 and 1986 led to the kind of long lasting realignment of the party system that happened in West Germany as

a result of the 'catch-all' CDU/CSU's victories in the 1950's.

A PERMANENT CATCH-ALL PARTY ?

The very nature of PSOE's transformation to a 'catch-all' party may, however, lead to problems. PSOE has reduced its ideological baggage and shifted from being 'a party that was traditionally Marxist, anti-monarchist, anti-military and Jacobin' [Subirats,1989:143] to what Socialist dissident Ignacio Sotelo has called the 'neo-capitalist model'. But whilst attempting to manage capitalism more efficiently produced high growth rates in Northern Europe throughout the 1950s and 1960s, it is unlikely that this performance can be repeated in the 1980s and 1990s. Even if growth were to be achieved, the introduction of labour saving technology will make it harder to create new jobs. Moreover, the 'catch-all' party's strategy of attracting votes from the population at large may alienate a party's traditional supporters. To an extent this has already happened with PSOE, as was illustrated by the student unrest in early 1987 and the deterioration in relations between PSOE and the Socialist trade union federation UGT. This probably began in May 1985 with UGT general secretary Redondo's denunciation of PSOE's economic policy which he believed was 'bringing to our country nothing other than greater unemployment, greater inequality and greater poverty' [Quoted in Camiller,1986:28] Relations between PSOE and UGT have become even more strained as shown by the December 1988 general strike. At general elections PSOE has not yet alienated its traditional voters, but there is some evidence that voters are deserting PSOE at Autonomous Community elections. Thus in

PSOE's Andalusian heartland she lost votes at the 1986 Autonomous Community election to Izquierda Unida. Perhaps most spectacularly of all, in the referendum on NATO membership in March 1986, in which PSOE reversed its position from 'Yes' to 'No', 40 per cent of those who voted were opposed to NATO membership and there was a majority 'No' vote in both the Basque country and Catalonia.

Kirchheimer stresses the importance of leadership as an election winning asset, and Felipe González has been just that for PSOE. However, this asset can rapidly become a liability, as is being illustrated at present with the personal scandals concerning Papandreou in Greece. In Spain in the wake of the December 1988 general strike, the majority of Spaniards believed that González was acting 'as arrogant as always'. [Tiempo, No.347, p.27]. Moreover excessive reliance on a single omnipotent leader poses a problem as to a successor. The 1987 electoral reverse which the Portuguese Socialists suffered after the departure of Soares to become President of Portugal shows how hard it can be for a successor when there is no crown prince waiting in the wings.

ELECTORAL CHANGE

It must also be borne in mind that Kirchheimer's article was written in the 1960s when the electoral environment in Western Europe was one of stability. Since then electoral volatility, particularly on the part of voters, has been the order of the day. Voters' attachment to political parties (partisanship) is not as strong as it was. This has led to a decline in electoral fortunes of established parties, such as the British Labour

Party, and the appearance of new parties, such as the Greens. In the case of Spain it is hard to test these theories of electoral volatility, because owing to the Franco dictatorship, there were no competitive elections from 1936-77 to provide a basis of comparison. However Mackie and Franklin's theory of Post-Industrial Social Change could be applied to Spain particularly as it concentrates on the period from the 1960s to the present and it looks at the electoral fortunes of the Left [Mackie and Franklin,1989].

Mackie and Franklin argue that in countries where traditional cleavage politics no longer dominate, there is considerable electoral volatility and the fortunes of political parties depend more on factors such as leadership skills. Parties of the Left in Australia, New Zealand and France have gained from this volatility by being able to appeal beyond their traditional voters. In some respects Spain fits Franklin and Mackie's argument. The fact that in the 1982 election nearly 7 million voters (almost one quarter of the electorate) voted differently from the way that they had done in 1979 shows that Spain has experienced considerable electoral volatility. In addition, like their French and Australian counterparts, PSOE has been electorally successful by being able to attract votes from people like practising Catholics, and exploiting the popularity of party leader Felipe González. However, it must be borne in mind that PSOE's electoral success was also partly due to the decline of UCD and the weakness of Alianza Popular and its allies.

However, Spain could also be an example of a variation of Franklin and Mackie's argument, namely that stable patterns of

voting behaviour on the part of the electorate may be quite consistent with electoral change, because of the volatility at the level of the political parties. This volatility would take the form of feuds within parties, as well as the amalgamation and disintegration of parties. Victories by the centre-right UCD and the centre-left PSOE would seem to support the view that the Spanish electorate is both essentially stable and moderate. Barnes et al point out that by 1984 surveys showed that 82 per cent of Spanish citizens were able to place themselves on a left-right self-location, a higher percentage than USA, Austria, Italy and Switzerland [Barnes et al, 1985:702]. However, while Spanish voters can identify strongly with a tendency on both the Left and the Right, PSOE is the only party that has managed to convert successfully a substantial number of its voters into identifiers. Thus in 1984, 34 per cent of the electorate named PSOE as the party to which they felt closest, while AP was named by only 9 per cent [Barnes et al, 1985:703]. This augurs well for PSOE's electoral prospects as partisanship is still the most important single determinant of voting behaviour.

By contrast, the low level of partisanship for Alianza Popular illustrates the weaknesses of the Spanish Right, which has also been an important factor in PSOE's rise to power. As has been pointed out, the Spanish Right, in the shape of Alianza Popular, lacks the tradition of the British Conservatives or the legacy of a national hero that the French Gaullists have. All that Alianza Popular (AP) has is the ex-Francoist minister Fraga, and despite his attempts since the formation of AP to emphasise its

moderation this has not entirely convinced the electorate. Indeed in a 1985 survey 53 per cent of the electorate believed that AP was on the 'Extreme Right' [Montero,1987:39]. AP's changes of name appear to have had little effect on its popularity and indeed have been more of a case of putting old wine into new bottles. Moreover, the fact that AP has never governed Spain means that it lacks the type of successful track record that the West German Christian Democrats, under Adenauer, were able to build up in the early days of the Federal Republic. By contrast, AP's counterpart in Portugal, CDS, joined a coalition government with the Socialists, from 1977-78, in order to gain a measure of legitimacy. Perhaps it was therefore not surprising that in 1985 more than 50 per cent of the electorate believed that AP was not an acceptable electoral alternative [Montero,1988:160].

AP is also weakened by the strength of the mainstream nationalist parties in both Catalonia (CiU) and the Basque country (PNV). Both these parties have taken away what could be potential supporters of AP. Moreover these parties are above all nationalist parties, and such is the strength of their nationalist feeling that they distrust AP and do not regard it as a potential coalition partner. Indeed since 1986, PNV has been in coalition with PSOE-PSE in the Basque country Autonomous Community, a formation which might be repeated in the Congress of Deputies if PSOE loses its overall majority [El Diario Vasco, 1.3.89]. AP is also handicapped by the existence of the centrist CDS. Unless AP can form some sort of coalition incorporating both CDS and the mainstream nationalist parties, its chances of

defeating PSOE appear to be slim. It is such a realisation that may be one of the motives behind the recent pact between Partido Popular (AP by any other name) and CDS to amass their votes wherever they had a chance of ousting PSOE from governing in certain Autonomous Community or municipal governments. The 1989 election to the European Parliament, in which both Partido Popular and CDS lost seats, has shown that both these parties do not appear to have obtained any immediate electoral dividend from their pact.

Thus, it would seem that PSOE's potential to become the predominant party depends on a combination of three independent factors. The first of these is the stable centrist nature of the electorate. There are the weaknesses of the Spanish Right, notably the electoral irritant of the regionalist and nationalist parties and Alianza Popular's lack of a distinct identity. Finally there is the growth in attachment to PSOE, which is important because partisanship is still the single most important determinant of voting behaviour. PSOE's future electoral prospects therefore depend partly on factors within its own control and partly on factors which are not. It was a similar combination which brought PSOE to its present position of electoral dominance in the first place.

FOOTNOTES

NOTE 1: Electoral System: Each of the 50 provinces in Spain is an electoral constituency which elects a minimum number of deputies. In practice all provinces have at least 3 deputies, with the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco electing one deputy each. This system favours the rural areas at the expense of the cities. In each province the voter chooses a party's list of candidates and seats would be allocated subsequently according to the d'Hondt system of proportional representation. This method while preventing extreme fragmentation of the party system, tends to over represent the large parties.

NOTE 2: For the purposes of this paper the Basque country will be defined, as it is in Spanish electoral literature, as the provinces of Alava, Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya. Therefore it does not include Navarre.

NOTE 3: The term comes from Don Carlos, a claimant to the Spanish throne in the nineteenth century. The Basques supported Carlism, not so much from the dynastic aspect, but because of Carlism's emphasis on reverence of tradition, defence of the fueros, hatred of anti-clericalism and distrust of the cities.

NOTE 4: Amongst the many examples of the economic importance of both Catalonia and the Basque country are the fact that in 1987 Catalonia accounted for 19.5 per cent of Spanish GDP (the largest amount by any single region in Spain) [The Economist Survey on Spain 11.3.89, p.5] The Basque provinces rank first in per capita income amongst the Spanish regions. [Robert P Clark, Recent Voting trends in Spain's Basque Provinces, Iberian Studies, Volume 9, No. 2 (Autumn 1980), p.54]

NOTE 5: Some examples include Josep M Vallés, 'A la busca de un sistema: los partidos políticos en España' in Razon y Fe (Madrid No.1060), febrero 1987 and Manuel Ramírez 'el sistema de partidos en España 1977-87' in Revista de Estudios Políticos (Nueva Epoca), Número 59, enero-marzo 1988.

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