

Social identities based on class, religion, and region underpin political cleavages in Spain. This article examines the salience of divisions based on these identities and estimates changes in the conflict-potential of the cleavages over time. The political consequences as well as the origins of the dimensions of conflict are analyzed. While some of the social identities remain fairly strong—religion, for example, more evidently than class—the direct effects of the cleavages on both within- and extra-system politics at the mass level appear to have weakened. Data are drawn from the third in a series of national surveys conducted in 1978, 1980, and 1984.

SOCIAL IDENTITY AND MASS POLITICS IN SPAIN

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Region, religion, and class are the master cleavages of Spanish politics. To these can be added age, or rather the battles over historical changes that generational differences reflect. These demarcators of social partisanship capture loyalties that may conflict with or weigh more heavily than allegiances to political parties, to the political system, and to the nation itself.

Social partisanship is not unique to Spain. Class and other social bonds have counted for more than conventional political partisanship in other settings as well (Shively, 1972). Yet the phenomenon may be

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accentuated in Spain. Democracy there is in its early stages. Ties to institutions, such as parties, that are normally associated with a civic culture are weak and inchoate (Barnes et al., 1985). Social cleavages in Spain have historically reinforced antagonisms that have escaped institutionalized channels of conflict resolution, creating an air of intractability and maximalism.

The structural transformations—urbanization, the spread of education, the absorption of Spain into the capitalist international—that picked up speed during the last decades of Franco's rule may have weakened the potential for political confrontation (Tezanos, 1984). But it is unlikely that this attenuation has proceeded uniformly. Such changes raise a pair of questions. What is the comparative salience or volatility of the major cleavages in Spain? And what are their political consequences?

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Two distinct literatures can be brought to bear on the politics of social identities. One examines the psychology of social attachments—the cognitive and affective factors that link individuals to collectivities and, by way of such linkages, to political attitudes and behavior (Conover, 1986). A second perspective derives from studies of social movements. Here the focus is on the socioeconomic and organizational preconditions, more than on the psychology, of collective action (Jenkins, 1983).

While our interpretative approach draws on both schools, our analysis concentrates on the former, social-psychological strategy. The potential for political mobilization that is culturally—that is, religiously, or ethnically, or linguistically—motivated continues to be substantial in Spain, even as long-term structural changes and the democratic opening have reshaped the organizational conditions of political action. We are primarily concerned with the effects of structural transformation on the perceived intensity of cleavages, and secondarily with the political repercussions of these cleavages as mediated through associations like political parties.

Our point of departure is the deceptively simple notion that social identities are relational. Class, for example, is not just an objective position but also a perceived distance between positions. To identify oneself as “working class” implies a sense of separation, which may be

more or less intense, from the "upper class." The same goes for region and religion. A Basque is not only a Basque. He or she is so in relation to other regions and to Spain as a whole. In this way, identities anchor cleavages.¹

The construct of social identities as relational has further implications. Thus, to continue the illustration, we asked Spaniards not only to what class they considered themselves to belong but also how close or far away from classes, their own as well as others, they felt.² Such distances vary, obviously enough, across individuals. They also vary systematically, as we will see, from one dimension—for example, class—to others, namely, religion and region. This differential variation will take on importance in estimating the comparative polarization of cleavages in Spain. In general, the greater the imputed differences among class, religious, and regional positions, the greater the latent polarization.

In addition, perceived distances need not be symmetrical. The point, common to all cleavages, may be exemplified by thinking in terms of a progressive-conservative ideological continuum. Spaniards on the political right may view those on the left as farther away from themselves than Spaniards on the left view those on the right. This differential distancing indicates that polarization might not be evenly shared among presumed antagonists. The sense of opposition and hostility may be more acute for those at one end of the divide than at the other.

As a result of such variable salience—a kind of unrequited hostility—the degree of polarization surrounding one or another line of conflict may be more ambiguous than that implied by the supposition of perfectly reciprocal opposition. On the other hand, more or less evenly matched distances reflect the emergence of equivalent dogmatisms—for example, of the left versus the right, the modern versus the traditional, and so on.³

It may be argued, further, that certain types of social identities and the distances they entail tend to be more conflict-laden than others. Such tendencies are not wholly intrinsic to the cleavages themselves, and it is risky to classify one line of opposition as deeper or inherently more divisive than another in a priori fashion, as if they were independent of political contingencies. Nevertheless, in Spain it is possible to discern a rough hierarchy of conflict potential along which class, regional, and religious cleavages can be sorted.⁴

In present-day Spain, class antagonisms or, more properly, issues

involving the distribution of economic costs and benefits tend toward the bottom of the conflict scale. While they are far from conflict-free, and while they may in fact influence support for and opposition to specific governments more than presumably touchier factors, such as religion, the modernization of Spanish society—in particular, the passage toward a more complex occupational system of stratification—has reduced the regime-threatening undercurrent of economic controversies. They are usually framed as questions of more-or-less instead of as either-or, militantly revolutionary versus arch-reactionary alternatives. For the most part, the movements, campaigns, and groups aligned on opposing sides of such issues have an instrumental rather than an expressive tenor (McDonough et al., 1986a). In this respect, the softening of ideology has come to Spain. Higher up the conflict scale are issues that are susceptible to being posed in either-or or, more precisely, in-versus-out terms. In such cases, conflict centers on the right of political actors to enter into, or to withdraw from, the larger political system (Tilly, 1973). The classic instance of this type of conflict in Spain is “the regional question,” involving the devolutionary and in some quarters separatist demands of the Basque, Catalan, and other regions (compare Nielsen, 1985).

At least two factors mitigate the explosiveness of center-periphery resentments. One is geographic mobility. Growing proportions of Spaniards resident in the Basque country, for example, trace their origins from elsewhere in Spain, and their regional identities, such as they are, tend not to be rooted in hostility to the country as a whole. In addition, the decentralizing reforms of the post-Franquist regime—in particular, the creation of an *estado de las autonomías* (a federative regime)—have mollified many regional demands (Linz, 1985).

There is another kind of issue that may exceed instrumental, socioeconomic issues and rival specifically political, ingroup-versus-outgroup controversies in the escalation of conflict. These antagonisms tap into the rules of the game; they bear on the cultural norms that separate legitimate from illegitimate action in the public sphere (Cohen, 1985; Touraine, 1985).

While there are no issues in Spain that unequivocally challenge the democratic system nowadays, remnants of just such a core controversy can be found in the split between religiosity and secularism. Until fairly recently, counterreformation Catholicism and militant Liberalism, not to mention Marxism, constituted rival, almost Manichean standards of good and evil (Lannon, 1987). Some of the factors behind the erosion of

this cleavage resemble those that have contributed to the depolarization of regional enmities: broadly, "modernization" and, in particular, education.

Still, the religion-irreligion split retains a capacity to galvanize public opinion. One reason for this is that the Catholic Church continues to be an institutional presence in Spain, most conspicuously through its system of private schools. Moreover, some of the specific issues under the generic rubric of religious-versus-secular, such as divorce and abortion, cut to the core of Spanish social customs and daily relations of power and authority, evoking passions more directly than may be the case, as with certain economic issues, when other kinds of material self-interest are involved. Yet another reason can be traced to the longstanding association—indeed, the near-equation—between secularism and religious devotion on the one hand and, on the other, left-versus right-wing ideologies. For all the apparent secularization of past decades, "religion" versus "irreligion" carries connotations of ideological polarities, between the left and the right generally, in a way that class and regionalism usually do not.

It would be simplistic, however, to claim a transparent correspondence between the conflict-potential of issues and the escalation of these tensions into progressively more violent behavior. Several factors that tend to short-circuit a direct translation of this sort need to be taken into account. One, already mentioned, is the set of historical shifts under the label of "modernization" that have worked to defuse the polarizing potential of all the major cleavages, more or less across the board. Aside from the empirical difficulties attendant on establishing long-term trends in the absence of extensive longitudinal data, the proposition can hardly be thought of as implausible. The chief implication of the hypothesis is that the overall level of polarization surrounding the democratic regime should be less than that associated with the prior, Franquist system, whatever the relative differences among religious, regional, and class conflicts at the present time.

Second, cleavages that are intense in the cultural arena, such as that between religion and secularism, do not always or even typically find adequate associational expression in the party system or melange of interest groups. Regional movements in Spain try to make up in organizational militancy what they may lack in ideological coherence. Conversely, the potentially acute division between popular piety and a secular cosmopolitanism has, at least since Vatican II, almost no "organizational correlative." Hence it is almost certainly futile to

compare the volatility of cleavages—specifically, religion and regionalism—on the basis of one kind of data (for example, attitudinal) to the exclusion of another.

Third, even within the realm of perceived antinomies, caution must be exercised in reaching conclusions about the variable polarization of “big picture” cleavages. In part because of the waning of these classic lines of conflict with the modernization of Spanish society, issues that once were viewed as all of a piece—for example, the division between the ideological left and the right—have to be unpacked into more concrete components, into subdimensions, in order to gain a realistic sense of their conflict potential.

Because our measurement techniques and theoretical formulations are somewhat unorthodox, a preview of the analysis may be in order. The following section is devoted to a mapping of the three main cleavages for the purpose of making preliminary estimates of their volatility. We then turn to an examination of the impact of time on the possible attenuation of the cleavages, that is, of the generational and historical changes underlying their partial weakening. With these trends in place, we take up a consideration of selected political implications of differential polarization, with special attention to partisan affiliation and system support.

CONTOURS OF THE DATA

Contemporary Spain is predominantly urban, industrial, and literate; these conditions were absent at the onset of the Civil War in the thirties. Such changes are reflected not only in declining church attendance but also in a drop in the number of younger Spaniards who identify themselves as members of the working class (McDonough and López Pina, 1984). Geographical as well as social mobility has increased. There are now proportionately fewer “natives” in previously isolated regions of Spain.⁵ Finally, the migration of labor to the advanced industrial democracies of Europe, and back again, during the sixties and seventies, and increasing exposure to the transnational consumer and political norms of television, have contributed to the decay of parochialism in Spain.

Thus the structural bases of major cleavages have eroded. Yet they retain, in varying degrees, a certain resonance. Tables 1 and 2 introduce

TABLE 1
Feelings Toward . . . by Class and Religiosity^a

Feelings toward . . .			
Class I. D.	Working	Middle	Upper
Working	9.2	6.5	3.0
Middle	8.6	7.5	4.1
Upper-Middle	7.9	7.8	5.3
Mean	8.8	7.0	3.6
Eta ²	.08	.05	.07

Feelings toward . . .			
Religiosity	Practicing	Nominal	Non-religious
No religion	3.9	5.1	6.3
Non-practicing	5.4	6.8	5.2
Rarely	6.9	7.2	5.1
Sometimes	8.4	7.7	4.9
Often	9.1	8.1	4.8
Mean	6.8	7.0	5.2
Eta ²	.33	.14	.03

a. 1 = distance . . . 10 = close.

the basic patterns.⁶ The first shows the average sense of distance/closeness, ranging from 1 to 10, with regard to class and religious groups, according to Spaniards' own class and religious identifications. The second does the same for orientations regarding Spain, community of residence, and "people from other locales."⁷

TABLE 2
 Feelings Toward . . . by Residence, Controlling for Native-Migrant Status

Residence	Feelings toward Spain, Own Locale, Other Locales					
	Natives			Migrants		
	Spain	Locale	Others	Spain	Locale	Other
Asturias	9.2	9.2	6.8	8.7	8.7	8.1
Castille/Cantabria	8.9	7.0	5.5	8.4	5.8	5.7
Castille/La Mancha	8.7	7.2	6.1	8.6	5.7	5.7
Levante/Murcia	8.6	6.9	5.1	8.8	6.5	6.1
Extremadura	8.5	7.8	6.2	8.6	6.7	6.6
Andalucia	8.4	8.1	5.4	8.6	7.3	5.6
Galicia	8.4	6.8	5.1	8.4	5.6	5.6
Madrid	8.0	6.4	5.5	8.6	6.1	6.1
Aragon/Rioja	7.7	7.1	5.6	7.9	7.0	6.1
Catalonia	7.3	8.2	6.2	8.4	7.6	6.3
Basque country	6.1	8.3	5.4	7.1	7.0	5.8
Mean	8.2	7.5	5.6	8.4	6.8	6.1
Eta ²	.11	.07	.03	.04	.06	.02

A striking feature of the tabulations is the strength of the religious cleavage compared to the muted divisions by class and region.⁸ While the split between classes is significant, as are the regional differences, these do not approach the distance separating devout Catholics from those without religious affiliation. The growth of a middle class has encouraged the cooling-off of Spanish politics. By contrast, the defense of institutional religion has often been equated with defense of *la patria*, and secular hostility to the Church has tended to be equally implacable (Díaz Salazar, 1981).⁹ Although some of the bases of this polarization faded in the mid- sixties, with the Second Vatican Council, the split

lingers on in the *mentalités* of many Spaniards.

A crucial asymmetry, however, must be noted. On the one hand, religiosity appears to have greater polarizing potential than class or region. On the other hand, the polarizing object is "practicing Catholics," more so than "nominal Catholics" and much more so than those without religious affiliation. Evidently, "Catholicism" generates stronger feelings, pro and con, than does "secularism."¹⁰

One reason for this difference is that while practicing Catholics are closely associated with the institutional church, an organization that remains a tangible presence in Spanish public life, nominal or nonpracticing Catholics are a comparatively heterogeneous and diffuse collectivity. It is also likely that, in recent years (unlike during the days of the Second Republic, with the expulsion of religious orders, the confiscation of church properties, and the like), secularization has come to be associated in Spain more with pluralistic tolerance than with ideological aggression and revolutionary maximalism (Paramio, 1982).

Part of the reason for the less-than-explosive nature of center-periphery tensions appears when the sample is divided between natives and migrants. "Movers" are oriented more positively to Spain than are "stayers"; on the average, the migrants are less parochial. And feelings of proximity to Spain, as compared to the autonomous communities, tend to run strong across the board, regardless of native or migrant status. Catalonia and the Basque country, where allegiance to locale overrides attachment to Spain, are the unsurprising exceptions.

Declared proximity to the working class is great not only among working-class identifiers but also among members of other strata. Middle- and upper-class types claim to have warmer feelings about the working class than they admit to having about themselves. There is doubtless much sentimentality and patronizing, not to say hypocrisy, here. Nevertheless, the skepticism that such views engender should not obscure the sway of populist rhetoric and expectations after nearly 40 years of enforced deference. Invocations of a "natural," "organic," and otherwise traditional system of stratification are no longer legitimate. Furthermore, the societywide level of importance accorded to the working class in public opinion probably helps dull working-class militancy by reducing class resentment.¹¹

In summary, social identities are relational. Spaniards do not simply identify with or feel close to the working class, or to church-going Catholics, or to their own community. They do so relative to possible attachments to other collectivities—to the middle class, to non-

Catholics, to Spain itself, and so on. Tables 3 and 4 document the relational aspect of social identities by expressing distances as both algebraic and absolute differences between, for example, closeness to the working class and closeness to the upper class.

The comparative tameness of the class cleavage reflects strongly positive feelings toward the working class, and a distancing from the upper class, that are shared, albeit not uniformly, across social status. There seems to be less common ground among Spaniards with regard to the religious factor. The difficulty appears to lie more with devout Catholics, who perceive a wider gap between themselves and nonpracticing, not to mention professedly irreligious, Spaniards than do the religiously indifferent perceive between themselves and practicing Catholics. Religious Spaniards seem to care more deeply about this division than do their secularized peers.

However, in contrast to the results for the class cleavage, the relative and absolute values for the religious-secular differences diverge. To be sure, the basic tendencies are similar. The less religious are still likely to put a smaller distance between religious Spaniards and themselves than vice-versa. But the overall distances are more uniform in absolute terms.¹² This suggests that secularized Spaniards may be less "ecumenical" and less indifferent toward the religious-secular divide than might at first appear. This puzzle will be explored in the following section.

The Spain-local differences also set up a paradox. In Table 4, the ordering of the differences from top to bottom corresponds to what observers of Spanish politics would expect. By and large, Catalans and Basques feel alienated from Spain, whereas Spaniards at the traditional center of the country—Castille, Madrid—and in generally conservative areas—for example, Galicia to the north—feel literally at home in Spain. At the same time, the intercommunity differences are weaker than those produced by religious contrasts and virtually as weak as those generated by class. They do not appear to be as sharp as might be supposed from inferences drawn about the turmoil tied to regional grievances (Shabad and Gunther, 1982).

In part the problem stems from the limitations of the data considered up until now.¹³ It is time to view the class, religious, and regional differences from a more genuinely multivariate perspective.¹⁴ In particular, we need to come to grips not only with the variable polarization of social identities but also with how this polarization might have shifted over time.

TABLE 3
Differences Between Feelings Toward Working
and Upper Class, by Class Identification

Class I.D.	Working - Upper	
	Algebraic	Absolute
Working	6.2	6.2
Middle	4.5	4.5
Upper-Middle	2.6	2.9
Mean	5.2	5.3
Eta ²	.14	.13

Differences between Feelings toward Practicing Catholics and Spaniards
without Religious Affiliation, by Religiosity

Religiosity	Practicing - No religion	
	Algebraic	Absolute
None	-2.4	2.9
Non-practicing	0.3	2.2
Rarely	1.8	2.4
Sometimes	3.5	3.7
Often	4.2	4.4
Mean	1.6	3.0
Eta ²	.28	.05

THE IMPACT OF TIME

Spanish generations—from “the generation of 1898” to the current, fortyish “generation of the king”—are not merely journalistic labels.

TABLE 4
Differences (Spain-Own Community) by Residence,
Controlling for Native/Migrant Status

Residence	Native	Migrant
Castille-Cantabria	2.0	2.6
Levante-Murcia	1.7	2.2
Castille-La Mancha	1.6	2.9
Galicia	1.5	2.8
Madrid	1.5	2.4
Extremadura	0.7	1.8
Aragon-Rioja	0.5	0.8
Andalucia	0.3	1.2
Asturias	0.0	0.0
Catalonia	-0.9	0.8
Basque country	-2.2	0.1
Mean	0.6	1.5
Eta ²	.14	.07

They demarcate political boundaries (Rivière, 1984). Social change has been extensive and rapid, especially since the early sixties. Spaniards in their twenties, thirties, and early forties have come to adulthood in an environment that differs from the more restrictive and less prosperous setting familiar to older Spaniards. Change has not been uniform, however. The task is to estimate the differential rates of change in the salience of the major cleavages.

Table 5 furnishes an approximation of the variable pace of change. It portrays shifts in the relational identities of Spaniards, defined once again as differences between orientations toward Spain and toward the

TABLE 5
**Relational Identities (Spain-Local, Working-Upper Class,
 Catholic-Secular) by Age Cohort**

Age	Spain - local	Working - upper class	Catholic - secular	
			Alg.	Abs.
16 - 19	0.28	4.59	0.53	2.51
20 - 29	0.46	5.05	-0.26	2.60
30 - 39	1.07	5.28	1.02	2.62
40 - 49	1.18	5.38	2.05	2.70
50 - 59	1.08	5.44	2.41	3.02
60 +	1.13	5.17	3.20	3.95
Mean	0.90	5.18	1.55	2.98
Eta ²	.01	.01	.10	.03

community of residence, between orientations toward working- as compared to upper-class Spaniards, and so on, across age-cohorts. The absolute figures for the religious-secular difference are supplied because they are the only ones that differ significantly from the algebraic distances.

All of the differences move in the expected direction: They get smaller among younger Spaniards. Older cohorts are somewhat more likely to give precedence to Spain over the localities, just as they are slightly more inclined to see a greater distance between the working class and the upper class. On the whole, they are a bit more conservative than younger Spaniards. But the most vivid pattern emerges in the evident decline, not just of professed religiosity, but of perceptions of vast differences between practicing Catholics and nonbelievers.

The younger, post-Vatican II cohorts have become more secular and religiously indifferent and, it would seem, less concerned about the gulf between religion and unbelief. However, the latter trend is uncertain. There is no tidy correspondence among youth, secularization, and toleration (Hadden, 1987). Secularization—the decline of conventional religion (Coleman, 1978)—may have exceeded, even if it has encouraged, the spread of ideological tolerance and political pluralism. As the

absolute differences between practicing Catholics and Spaniards without religious affiliation indicate, the line between religiosity and secularism is not quite equivalent to the difference between dogmatism and tolerance. Irreligious Spaniards are less distant from their religious peers than vice-versa, that is, than are the devout from the secular—but not by as much as the relative differences indicate. The greater similarity between the absolute than the relative distances implies that pious and secular Spaniards may share comparable, though not quite equivalent, levels of hostility. We follow up on this possibility in our analysis, below, of polarization surrounding moral issues.

Such mixed results indicate that the intergenerational transformation of attitudes is complex. For the sake of comparison, Table 6 includes a breakdown of the variation in class proximity by class, controlling for age, as well as the corresponding breakdown for religion. Let us consider the simpler trend first.

A foreshortening in perceptions of class distance has taken place among Spaniards. This decline, however, is concentrated almost exclusively within the upper middle class, many of whom have benefited from the economic mobility that began to accelerate over a decade prior to the political transition. Working- and middle-class Spaniards take a less sanguine view of the social hierarchy (Mercado, 1985).

As for religious identification, the gap between the devout and the irreligious seems scarcely to have narrowed at all. As rates of church attendance and other devotional practices have gone down, the proportion of secularly oriented Spaniards has gone up, particularly among the young (Beltrán Villalba et al., 1984). The center of gravity of the struggle between the religious and the secular in Spain has moved toward the secular side. The relative distance between the two camps has actually increased a bit, with an absolute demographic shift showing an increase in the number of secularized Spaniards. If in the present context secularization can be approximated by the incidence of non- or infrequently practicing Catholics, then it has become the statistical mode and, in this sense, hegemonic.

Again, however, from another perspective, intergenerational religious differences can seem rather stable, although also quite pronounced. Table 7 is the same as the bottom panels of Table 6, with the figures tabulated in absolute instead of algebraic form. Now it appears that secularized Spaniards, virtually regardless of age, are only somewhat, but not much, more tolerant—in the sense of distance from their opposite numbers—than those who claim to be deeply religious. While

TABLE 6
 Algebraic Differences (Working-Upper Class)
 by Class I.D., Controlling for Age

Class I. D.	16 - 29	30 - 49	50 +
Working	6.2	6.4	6.1
Middle	4.5	4.8	4.2
Upper - Middle	2.0	3.0	3.2
Mean	4.9	5.3	5.3
Eta ²	.21	.13	.10

Algebraic Differences (Practicing Catholic - secular) by Religiosity,
 Controlling for Age

Religiosity	16 - 29	30 - 49	50 +
None	-3.0	-2.1	-1.3
Non-practicing	-0.3	0.4	1.1
Rarely	1.2	1.7	2.4
Sometimes	2.6	3.0	4.2
Frequent	3.1	3.0	4.8
Mean	0.1	1.5	2.9
Eta ²	.30	.21	.20

the drop-off in conventional religiosity seems to be substantiated, this cannot be equated in a one-to-one manner with increasing tolerance. The gap between religious and irreligious Spaniards does not appear to have narrowed much.¹⁵

These cross-currents create multiple puzzles. The religious-secular cleavage has shifted to the secular side, but it is unclear whether the

TABLE 7
 Absolute Differences (Practicing Catholic-Secular)
 by Religiosity, Controlling for Age

Religiosity	16 - 29	30 - 49	50 +
None	3.2	2.5	2.9
Non-practicing	2.1	2.1	2.4
Rarely	2.0	2.3	2.8
Sometimes	3.0	3.2	4.4
Frequent	3.1	3.7	4.8
Mean	2.6	2.7	3.6
Eta ²	.04	.03	.07

distance between the positions has grown, or diminished, or stayed the same. The distance appears to be sizable, in any case, among younger as well as older Spaniards. The class cleavage has also been displaced, toward the middle- and upper-class end of the continuum. Yet the relative difference between class positions has shrunk, at least in the view of upper middle-class Spaniards. What the evidence does *not* confirm is clear. Mass identities in Spain have not become gradually and steadily depolarized after the fashion of a straight, linear decline.

The key to unlocking this puzzle lies in the changing content, the shifting meaning, of "left" and "right" across generations in Spain. The new left differs from the old left. It is divided from older cohorts much more markedly on moral and life-style issues than on matters of economic and social policy. Figures 1 and 2 lay out the basic contrast.

Figure 1 traces the age-specific changes in attitudes toward the role of women.¹⁶ Figure 2 does the same for progressive as compared to conservative economic orientations.¹⁷ The progressivism of the young, and the traditionalism of the old, are striking in the first graph and far less certain in the second. As the different magnitudes of the eta-squared show, the intergenerational chasm is much wider when it comes

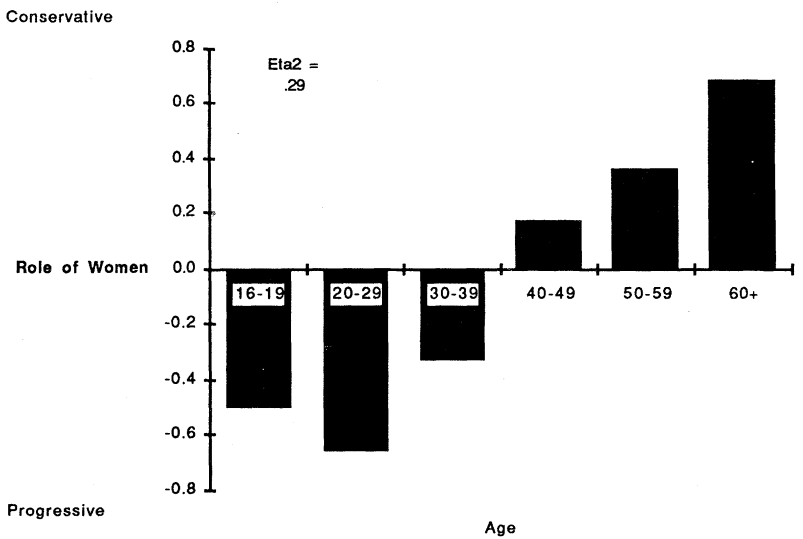


Figure 1: Women's Role (Standard Scores) by Age

to moral issues than with respect to matters of social and economic policy.

The generational split in Spain is selective. The polarization implicit in the religiosity-secularism tension remains intense, although the balance of power, in terms of sheer numbers, has shifted toward the secular camp, as most standard treatments of secularization would lead us to expect (Wilson, 1982). Yet the animosity is not all-englobing. The fire that can be ignited by issues such as the legalization of abortion or the reduction of government support for private, largely Catholic, schools does not spread equally to differences over fiscal or monetary policy. Thus an overarching radicalism is not pitted against a hidebound revanchism, and a certain pragmatism and penchant for bargaining are built into the system of cleavages.

These results enable us to partition the components of the left-right dimension as perceived by Spaniards themselves. *Tendance* divides generations, but in a limited way. The generation gap separates the young from the old more over questions of morals and lifestyle than over matters of economic policy, much less "class warfare" (Inglehart, 1981). As we shall see in greater detail in the following section, this is

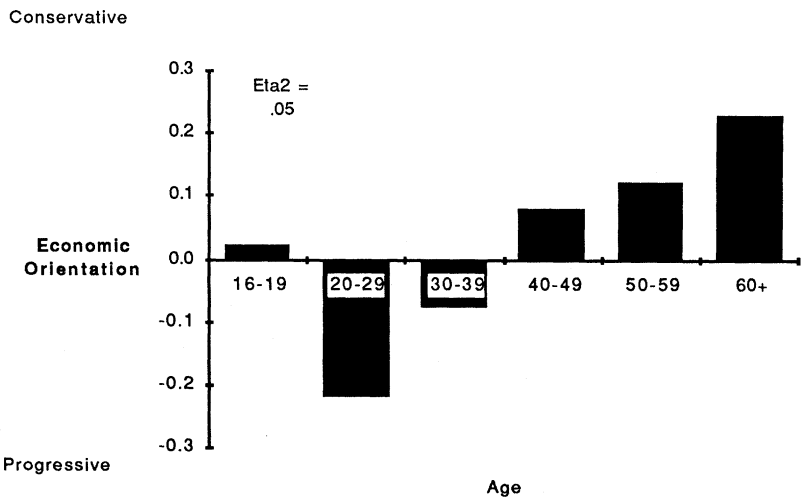


Figure 2: Economic Conservatism (Standard Scores) by Age

because the religious-secular cleavage is more closely associated than class differences with the core meaning of left-versus-right in Spain.¹⁸

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL IDENTITY

PARTISAN AFFILIATION

The message of the analysis presented so far is that social identity in Spain is not all of a piece. The strongest pull seems to be between religion and secularism, followed by national-regional and, far behind, class divisions. It is also evident that some erosion has occurred in the previously dominant categories of the cleavages. The working class has shrunk, relative to the middle class; so has the number of practicing Catholics. Geographic mobility has increased, cutting into the linguistic homogeneity of peripheral areas.

Still, it is unclear what the political expression of these shifting identities might be. It is difficult to tell to what degree the polarization implicit in the religious cleavage, for example, takes on political form.

One way to answer the question is to examine how social identities

link up with or diverge from political partisanship. While a sense of attachment to one or another social collectivity may be strong, its manifestation may be politically oblique and inconsequential unless it combines with some institutional vehicle of mobilization. Table 8 plots the connections of partisan identification with the three indicators of social identity (nation-community, lower class-upper class, and practicing Catholic-irreligious), as well as with left-right self-placement.

None of the cleavages discussed so far connects very closely with partisan identification. The social partisanship-political partisanship link is weak, a partial exception being the national-community contrast.¹⁹

The political salience of the center-periphery cleavage stems in large measure from an institutional fact: Spanish elites succeeded in organizing regionally defined parties for which more or less single-issue supporters could vote. As the left column in Table 8 shows, most of the significant interparty variation in Spain-local distance lies between the regional parties and all the others.

However, the religious cleavage does not find direct expression within the party system. Notwithstanding predictions about the rise of a Christian Democratic force after the Italian example (Linz, 1978), there have been no major religious or confessional parties in post-Franco Spain. The ecumenical climate of the years following Vatican II did not encourage the formation of a Catholic party in Spain.

Variations in class identity fail to come across strongly in the party system for different reasons. The socialists have successfully cultivated an interclass appeal (Caciagli, 1984; Sotelo, 1985). But—in contrast to the Italian experience (Barnes, 1977)—Eurocommunism has never been a convincing platform for the Spanish communists, with their history of fealty to Moscow during the Civil War and their long record of clandestine militancy (Mujal-Léon, 1983). Behind the success of the socialists and the failure of the communists is the transformation of the class structure itself. Despite an income distribution profile that is among the least equitable in Europe, Spain is no longer the rigidly stratified society in which class war erupted during the thirties.

The cleavage around which the party system is most directly organized is neither region nor religion nor class, but instead “ideology” or, more accurately, left-right *tendance*. This framework is traditional to Spanish politics, and it has proved sufficiently sturdy to have survived the long interruption of party politics during the reign of Franco and the modernization of the Spanish social structure.

Left-right *tendance* is not a completely disembodied spirit. It is tied,

TABLE 8
Relational Identities and Left-Right Placement
by Partisan Identification

Partisan I. D.	Spain - local	Working - upper	Catholic - none	Left / right*
Local parties	-2.34	4.88	0.58	4.49
PCE (communists)	-0.22	6.42	-1.92	2.50
Others	0.08	4.80	-0.25	3.76
PSOE (socialists)	0.97	5.67	1.40	3.52
None	1.08	5.13	1.87	4.90
CDS (center-right)	2.06	4.71	2.60	5.58
Alianza Popular (right)	2.25	3.49	3.22	7.57
Mean	0.90	5.18	1.56	4.50
Eta ²	.09	.04	.06	.34

*1 = left . . . 10 = right.

loosely and unevenly, to the big three of Spanish politics: region, religion, and class. The disjuncture between partisan identification and the major cleavages derives first of all from the slippage, documented earlier, in the social bases of the cleavages themselves. Left-right orientation is a set of symbolic cues that are acquiring a new meaning with the crumbling of their original structural underpinnings.

In addition, by and large the cleavages do not overlap or converge very closely, even on the ideational or symbolic level. Religiosity is not a close reflection of class identification, and neither of these is intimately related to region. Partisan identification is, in turn, a two-dimensional composite, derived from region on the one hand and, on the other, class and religiosity by way of left-right *tendance*. A convenient way to gauge the differential links between the cleavages and the party system is through the associations between indicators of social identity and left-right orientation. The correlations are: with Catholic-secular, .33; with working class-upper class, -.27, and with Spain-local, .19.

While all the coefficients are statistically significant, it is the gradient on which they are aligned that counts. In Spain, as in many other Latin polities, religion and class have long been the principal referents of

left-versus-right. The nation-region split is not so neatly matched with progressive and conservative options, even though the nationalistic or centrist balance tilts in a conservative direction. But it was not so long ago, as recently as the sixties and early seventies, that the Spanish left was synonymous with the advocacy of central planning, and in the nineteenth century Spanish reactionaries—for example, the Carlists—flirted with ultramontane causes that had a decidedly anti-Madrid bent (Carr, 1980; Coverdale, 1984). Nowadays there is a direct, though modest, connection between sympathy for devolutionary and separatist causes and a generally leftist tendance. But the links between regional versus national loyalties to policies that are unequivocally of the left or right are muddled, or at least weaker than they might otherwise be, for historical reasons. Thus the regional cleavage is less charged with ideological tension than the division between religion and secularism.

Hence, the Spanish multiparty system is not reducible to a single continuum, even though the split between left and right is the most prominent political division. This is so not only because of the persistence of the regional cleavage, which is for the most part distinct from the antagonism between left and right, but also because many of the social bases of left-right polarization, associated with the harsh days of Spain's transition to capitalism, have eroded. Finally, while the left-right cleavage is more than just a symbolic remnant, its identity-defining power has been diluted by organizational weakness and ideological revisionism on the left, as well as by demographic and economic change.

SYSTEM SUPPORT

Political partisanship—its stability and the degree to which the distribution of partisanship reflects rival social alignments—is a staple of democratic theory. In Spain, the match between social cleavages and political partisanship is oblique. The tentative inference drawn from this slippage is that it is probably a good thing for the stability of Spanish democracy. The assumption is that the imperfect congruence between social tensions and party institutions serves to avert violent confrontation.

The obvious challenge to this line of reasoning is that some segments on one side or the other of religious, regional, or class antagonisms may view the party and electoral systems as irrelevant to meeting their

demands, precisely because the allocation of power and benefits within these institutions reflects only indirectly the distribution of claims “on the outside.” The established vehicles of conflict-resolution may be considered useless or downright harmful to the interests of contending groups, perhaps all the more so if such groups are defined in symbolic as well as instrumental terms. The broader question then becomes: What might be the links between loyalties that are defined by social identities and allegiance to the political system itself, rather than to specific parties or partisan tendencies? The question matters because of the challenge posed at the outset of the analysis—namely, the possibility that in Spain primordial or parochial loyalties might outweigh and indeed subvert commitment to “the public square.” The importance of the question is magnified by the fact that, unlike citizens of “settled” industrial democracies, the Spanish public has experience, in living memory, with alternative political systems. The question treats live political, not just logical, possibilities.

Table 9 provides data to help sort out these possibilities. The three indicators in the rows are the familiar religious, class, and national-local “social identities.” The two indicators that form the columns are factor scores that measure orientations toward the Franquist and the democratic systems that followed it, as a whole.²⁰

All of the correlations between the indicators of social identity and of orientations toward the Franco regime are sizable. The corresponding coefficients estimating the links of the social identity indicators with the new regime are paltry by comparison. The regime that Franco established elicited, and continues to elicit, stronger negative as well as positive feelings than does the present regime. The structural and symbolic constituencies that surrounded the Franco regime are fairly clear-cut. Those supporting and opposing the democratic regime are more amorphous and difficult to pin down. Although the empirical contrast is straightforward, the political and theoretical repercussions of these differences are ambiguous. There seems to be little danger of the new regime’s being crushed between irreconcilable ideologies. There remains a good deal of rhetorical posturing in Spanish politics and, in fact, some potential for symbol-driven movements, as indicated by the mobilization of devout Spaniards against the reduction of government support for private schools (Hernandez, 1984). But it is very doubtful whether such movements, sprung from deep social identities, any longer threaten the political system as such.

One reason for this short circuit between social antagonism and

TABLE 9
Correlations Between Indicators of Social Identity and Measures of Orientations Toward the Franco and Democratic Regimes

Social Identity Indicators	Franco Regime Factor Scores	Democratic Regime Factor Scores
Practicing Catholic - Secular	.38	.03
Working class - Upper class	-.25	-.09
Spain - Local	.21	.03

political mobilization stems from the fact that while religion-versus-secularism may be the most acute of symbolic cleavages in Spain, religiosity itself is, for the most part, an inertial force. Table 10 conveys the gist of the argument. The indicators of religious, regional, and class identities have been correlated with measures of conventional political participation, such as contributing to campaigns, following news accounts of public affairs, and so on; “unconventional” participation—essentially, approval of a variety of protest activities, some of them violent; and of the difference between conventional and protest politics.²¹

The greater the identification with religion, relative to a secular orientation, the less the participation in conventional politics. In broad terms, this pattern confirms the opiate-of-the-masses hypothesis about the diversionary effects of religion on political activism. But even greater still is the rejection of political protest at stronger levels of religious attachment. The net result is that religiosity functions to buttress conventional over protest and potentially system-threatening politics. While religiosity tends to drive down both conventional participation and unconventional mobilization, its depressing effect is greater on the latter than on the former, and the outcome is to reinforce, however slightly, “straight” political behavior.²²

Spaniards who identify strongly with the working class tend, mildly, in the opposite direction, favoring protest over conventional action. The overriding pattern, however—and the one that is common to both religiosity and “working class-ism”—is the modesty of the tie-in between social identities and any distinctive variety of political behavior that might gravely challenge the regime. Religion is powerfully felt, and

TABLE 10
Correlations Between Indicators of Social Identity and
Measures of Conventional and Protest Politics

Social Identity Indicators	(a) Conventional	(b) Protest	(a) - (b)
Practicing Catholic - Secular	-.28	-.35	.10
Working class - Upper class	.01	.11	-.09
Spain - Community	-.09	-.20	.11

deeply religious Spaniards exhibit somewhat less tolerance toward their secular opposition than secular Spaniards feel toward the devout. But religion is handicapped as a political force by its privatizing, demobilizing heritage of withdrawal. "Secularism," on the other hand, is more participatory but, in counterbalance, somewhat less doctrinaire, or less us-versus-them oriented. For these and other reasons, the social demiurges of mass politics in Spain are tamer, even if not fully domesticated, than they once were.

CONCLUSION

For more than a decade Spain has been undergoing multiple transitions. The most obvious has been the political: the dismantling of the Francoist superstructure and the erection of democratic institutions. It was not until the elections of 1982, signaling the peaceful transfer of power from a center-right to a center-left government, that it became possible to speak of the routinization of the new political system.

Another transition has been economic and social and it, too, can be thought of in stages. It began about two decades before the political changeover, with the commitment to industrialization made by technocrats who assumed ministerial posts in the late fifties and early sixties. The governments of the post-Franco era have modified the policies of economic rationalization without, however, pressing a radical transition toward egalitarian socialism.

A third transition spanning the first two, the political and the socioeconomic, has also been underway. It has entailed an attenuation

of the ties between social identities—to religion, region, and class—and allegiance to a public order that stands apart from and possibly transcends traditional parochialisms. The loosening of these links, brought on by structural differentiation, an increase in the sheer numbers of participant citizens—the electorate is more than twice the size it was just prior to the Civil War—and by a process of political learning on the part of elites (Gunther et al., 1985), is reflected in the complexity and comparative depolarization of Spanish politics. At the core of depolarization has been an unraveling of the customarily tight opposition between a narrow provincialism and Castillian triumphalism, for example, between an implacable Catholicism and a ferocious Liberalism, and so on. If a label is needed, this facet of the transition can be called cultural. Although rooted in massive structural transformations, the transition can properly be termed “cultural” insofar as it lacks a firm organizational base. The party system expresses this ideological and cultural revolution only tangentially, and in any case party affiliation, like membership in secondary associations generally, remains low in Spain. Social antagonisms have not erupted into as much political violence as they might, in part because the cleavages on which they are based have lost some of their salience, in part because elites have not cared to open old wounds, and in part because the organizational infrastructure of mobilization and countermobilization is thin.²³

The focus on social identities and their political expression, or lack of it, clarifies the nature of this cultural transition. At the simplest level, we have confirmed the expected distinction between the malleability of instrumental cleavages and the volatility of symbolic ones.

Beyond this, we have probed another venerable but somewhat more tangled puzzle: the question of the equivalence, or difference, between dogmatism and intolerance in opposing camps. One hypothesis would have it that, with “modernization,” the absolutizing temptation has largely gone out of Spanish politics. This is the secularization thesis writ large, for regional and class sentiment as well as for religion. The contrary interpretation is that “secularization,” “differentiation,” and their assorted concomitants (“rationalization”) obscure traces of intolerance and intransigence within otherwise enlightened opinion, and in fact represent a new orthodoxy. If our analysis is correct, the opinion-intensity nexus lies somewhere between these opposing views.

Lastly, one of the ways by which we have arrived at this conclusion furnishes a tip-off to a substantive finding that could lead in turn to a reassessment of the slippage between social identities and their political

manifestation in Spain. In the case of left-right *tendance* it is important to partition the macrocleavage into subcomponents, that is, into specific issues or packages of issues. All of these controversies are related to and have meaning in terms of the universe of discourse defined in terms of left-versus-right. But the tie-ins with identifiably progressive and conservative labels vary, from the forcefulness of many moral issues to the distance of most economic controversies. "Cleavages," "identities," and the like may be only preliminary guides to a more finely differentiated and perhaps fragmented subworld of microcontroversies around which virtually single-issue groups mobilize in a makeshift manner, with only intermittent links to the major political parties and the other standard vehicles of political representation. In these patterns, too, Spain more and more resembles other advanced industrial democracies.²⁴

NOTES

1. The distinction between social identity as position and as a perceived distance between positions is quite similar to the familiar *an sich/für sich* distinction of Marxist lineage.

2. The measurement technique is adapted from Jackman and Jackman (1983).

3. Two dimensions of distance, relative and absolute, come into play here. A relative or algebraic difference takes into account the direction of social (or political, or religious, or regional) distance. For example, the algebraic difference between proximity to secular Spaniards and proximity to Spaniards who are practicing Catholics, calculated as an average for secular Spaniards, would tend to be positive; for practicing Catholics it would tend to be negative. In some circumstances, the algebraic difference can be misleading insofar as positive and negative differences cancel each other out, leading to an underestimation of absolute distance. In general, as will be seen, the absolute difference tends to restore, although not completely, symmetry between poles of a continuum (e.g., the "fanaticism" of the left balanced by the "intolerance" of the right). Both types of differences are used in cases in which they produce discrepant results.

4. For reasons which should become clear during the course of the analysis, we do not treat age or generation as a cleavage by itself.

5. Geographic mobility varies greatly across regions as well as over time. A total of 29% of the respondents in our 1984 sample claim to have been born outside the province in which they currently reside. The three regions with the highest proportions of migrants are Catalonia (49%), Madrid (48%), and the Basque country (33%). The relatively cosmopolitan nature of Madrid is not surprising. Rather, it is the large proportions of immigrants in Catalonia and the Basque country that, *inter alia*, belie stereotypes of regionalism in these areas. It is the poorer provinces—for example, Estremadura and Galicia—that are demographically the most nativist; there, few Spaniards move in.

6. The data are drawn from a national survey (N = 2994) conducted in October-November, 1984. This is the third in a series of surveys; the first was carried out in June, 1978 (3004), and the second in December, 1979-January, 1980 (3014). The first two surveys were based on quota sampling at the individual level, with selection by categories of age and sex. Provinces, and then counties, were selected by probability-proportional-to-size criteria, as were *secciones* (roughly, polling-booth areas); then quotas by age and sex were drawn. In 1984, although the actual provinces and counties that fell in the sample differed from those in the first two surveys, the same procedure for choosing sampling points was followed. However, respondents for the third survey were chosen by means of random selection of households and of individuals within households.

7. The questions are of the form "Now we are going to talk about your feelings regarding people from different social classes. In general, how close do you feel toward the working class? And the middle class . . . ?" (*Ahora vamos a hablar sobre sus sentimientos hacia la gente de las diferentes clases sociales. En general, como se siente de proximo a la gente de la clase obrera? Y a la gente de las clase media . . . ?*). The items tapping regionalism require special attention. While in English we generally refer to "community" or "locale," the Spanish questionnaire uses *comunidad autonoma*—literally, "autonomous community." The *comunidad autonoma* can be either a former province or a regional agglomeration of provinces, as with the Basque country. The English is thus a shorthand translation for the more cumbersome official terminology.

8. Because of occasional missing data, the total N in these and following tables is around 2,900. In order to avoid cluttering already busy tabulations, we omit both grand and cell-by-cell Ns. This information is available from the authors on request.

9. The degree of class consciousness and confrontation in earlier decades was probably exaggerated to begin with (Aviv and Aviv, 1981).

10. The indicator of polarization is the eta-squared statistic, which measures the variation between categories of religiosity, region, and class.

11. Later in the analysis evidence will be adduced to support the argument that the attitudinal inflation favoring "proximity" to the working class does reflect a mixture of conservatism as well as progressivism, particularly as it rejects a harsh, or realistic, reading of the stratification system in Spain.

12. This change is indicated by the reduction in the eta-squared from .28 for the algebraic to .05 for the absolute religious-secular distance. It can also be seen in the differences between the two distributions. The means generated by the algebraic distances vary quite linearly across categories of religiosity, from -2.4 to 4.2. The corresponding distribution of absolute distances is flatter and also somewhat curvilinear. It is the flatness, or rectangularity, of the distribution that accounts for the comparatively small eta-squared (.05). At the same time, the average absolute distance is large (3.0), indicating the overall level of antagonism across religious-secular categories.

13. Here a methodological difficulty should be mentioned. Because of the large number of autonomous communities in Spain, we could not elicit respondents' feelings about each of them separately. In practice, the probability that most Spaniards do not, in the first place, have *sentimientos* regarding the communities taken seriatim reduces this problem greatly; hence the omnibus item directed at feelings toward "people from other communities." All the same, the omission raises doubts about the strict comparability of the regional items with both the class and the religious indicators. The latter incorporate exhaustively symmetrical comparisons; the former do not. In order to get some hold on this difficulty, we added two questions, one for all respondents except those resident in

Catalonia and the second for all except those resident in the Basque country. They are, respectively, "How close do you feel toward the Catalans?" and "How close do you feel toward the Basques?" The results (not shown here) indicate that the Catalans and, even more, the Basques tend to be held in lower esteem by their fellow Spaniards than the generic "people from other communities." The average closeness score for the Catalans is 4.3 and for the Basques 4.2.; the corresponding score for "people from other provinces," depending on whether respondents are natives or migrants, is 5.6 and 6.1 (see Table 2). This pattern warrants the inference, first, that the distance felt by Basques and Catalans toward "Spain" may be reciprocated by Spaniards when the object of concern becomes "Basques" and "Catalans," and, second, that the center-periphery split may be more severe than reliance on the three "Spain-own community-others" indicators suggests.

14. It is evident even from the rudimentary statistical control employed in Table 4, using native/migrant status as an intervening variable, that the application of multivariate techniques is likely to reveal more about the major cleavages. When migrants are separated from natives in the Basque country and Catalonia, the negative balance with regard to the Spain-local loyalties turns out to characterize only the natives. The balance becomes positive, in Spain's favor, among the migrants.

15. Although a generational-historical reading of the data is quite plausible, especially when contextual information about the changes in Catholicism since Vatican II is joined with information about structural changes in Spanish society, we cannot rule out some traces of life-cycle effects. For a cross-national discussion of this problem in the study of supposed secularization, see Sasaki and Suzuki (1987).

16. Using a five-point agree-disagree response format, the question reads: "The best thing that a woman can do is to keep herself busy at home" (*Lo mejor que puede hacer una mujer es ocuparse de su casa*). The item was used in the 1978, 1980, and 1984 surveys.

17. The indicator of economic liberalism-conservatism was developed from a factor analysis of a dozen items tapping attitudes toward economic and social policy (McDonough et al., 1986a: 457-460). The items themselves were adapted from questions designed for the 1984 National Election Study in the United States.

18. This pattern, while very strong in Spain, is not unique to it (Barnes, 1977; Lijphart, 1979; Rose, 1974).

19. Absolute figures are not given because, except where noted, they do not differ markedly from the algebraic differences.

20. For a full discussion of the development of these measures, see McDonough, Barnes, and López Pina (1986b, 742-746). In outline: respondents were asked to evaluate, on 10-point scales, the PSOE (socialist) government (1982-), the UCD (center-right) government (1977-1982), and "the last ten years of the Franco government." They did so according to three criteria: maintenance of law and order, improvement in living standards, and fairness in distributing social benefits. Data-reduction of the nine indicators (three governments times three items) revealed two factors, one clearly associated with the Franco regime and the other with the democratic (UCD and PSOE) regime. The factor scores used here are composite variables reflecting these dimensions.

21. The indices of conventional and unconventional politics are derived from Barnes, Kaase, et al. (1979); the index of unconventional behavior is of *approval* of protest activities. The measures were originally used in national surveys conducted in eight industrial democracies, including the United States. Unlike the "Franco" and "democracy" measures just analyzed, the conventional and unconventional, or protest, indicators are fabricated from Guttman scales.

22. This inference needs to be treated with caution. In a comparison of Spain with other industrial democracies, we found a positive cross-national association between the intensity of left-right polarization, as measured by the correlation of tendance with religiosity, and the propensity to favor protest over conventional political action (McDonough et al., 1984). In the second place the direct impact of religiosity, or of religiosity-secularism, is reduced—though it remains significant—by the introduction of standard control variables, such as education and age. Education in particular drives up levels of both conventional and unconventional political activism, more so than does traditional Catholicism hold down these behaviors.

23. Or so it seems. Data from our surveys, and from other surveys that are available, indicate that participation in non-primary groups of all kinds continues to be low. All the same, most of these surveys had many other objectives besides the estimation of associational life. More extensive measurement could well turn up evidence of a denser proliferation of groups in civil society. This line of research would be particularly important for understanding the relative organizational success of regional, separatist, micronationalist, and other “parochial” movements.

24. Aside from the salience of regional conflict, if there is a feature in which Spanish mass politics diverges from “the West”—specifically, the United States—it is in the quiescence of the religious factor. In a series of important studies, Wuthnow (forthcoming) and others have documented the surge in political activism on the part of hitherto withdrawn and demobilized “believers” in America.

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