

Clandestine Partisanship:
An Investigation into the Fragmented Political Party System of the Spanish Second
Republic 1931-1936 and its Impacts on Spanish Politics Today with an Emphasis on
the Parties Comprising the Political Left

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Abstract

The Spanish Second Republic lasted from 1931-1936 respectively. Within this short time span Spain underwent tremendous social and political upheaval as it raced to achieve significant strides in democratization after centuries of absolutist rule. The incredibly numerous and diverse political parties and ideologies that emerged during this period were the manifestations of the centuries of repressed societal, economical, technological, religious, and political movements that were prevented from entering Spain due to its monarchy and other feudalistic governing structures. The ensuing, and drastically more dramatic, Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and the decades-long Franco dictatorship sought to destroy and erase from history many of those socio-political aspirations and ideologies, but after the return to Democracy in 1977 many of the same parties and platforms that were created in the 1930's resurfaced and continue to lead and polarize the country of Spain today. Exactly how deep the impact of the Second Republic was and how enduring its affects, have been paid little attention, understandingly due to the proceeding civil war, world war, and authoritarian dictatorship that attract more of an audience. This work seeks to further the understanding of the Spanish Second Republic, its institutions, and its impact on Spanish politics today.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Spain's political history can be viewed as messy, problematic, and unstable. Though true, what it represents to me is how authentic the Spanish people and their politics are. The influence of Spain's history and culture on their social structures and sequential political institutions have become intimately real and tangible to me due to my study abroad there in the Fall of 2019.

The Iberian Peninsula and its people have been extremely relevant to the course of global events and its subsequent governmental structures are manifestations of their incredibly vibrant political past. While I was in Spain, I was caught up in the general elections of 2019, where all 350 seats of the Congress of Deputies (the lower chamber) were up for election as well as 208 of the 265 seats in the Senate. Just as elections and politics in the US were- and are still- incredibly polarized, the political scene in Spain was significantly more fractured. The news was full of protests, riots, and politicians publicly demeaning one another as morally and objectively evil.

However, political polarization is nothing new and the political problems facing Americans at home is generally similar to the issues other countries encounter abroad, so this observation alone did not necessarily inspire me to further delve into Spain's circumstances.¹ What really caught my attention was much more tangible and physical. The political graffiti and various types of media on display throughout Madrid and other cities stood out drastically to me and my American viewpoint. The ideograms and overall demonstrations of political ideologies I witnessed during the Fall of 2019 have stuck with

¹ Throughout this work the term "American" and "America" will refer to the United States and its citizens unless otherwise specified. This clarification is made in light of the context of other cultures that utilize the nomenclature such as in Latin America.

me since. One such example is the communist hammer and sickle I would see on pamphlets and billboards, spray painted on buildings, and on TV during political commercials. These symbols were not put up in protest or to provoke shock in its viewers, but instead were genuine appeals to voters to elect the members of one of several Spanish communist parties. I couldn't fathom how anyone could view these communist symbols and rhetoric and be filled with any feeling other than disgust. I spent time inquiring of my professors and other Spanish peers how the people in Spain viewed the ideology of communism, as well as in my mind its apparent negative history. It became obvious that my American perspective of communism being innately "evil" was not the same view held by at least half of the population in Spain. Through my discussions, I realized how events such as the Cold War really had a deep sustained cultural impact on America and the cultural views of its citizens. While in the U.S., communism (or more realistically the USSR) was viewed as the greatest threat to national security, Spain was fighting military coups and a Civil War in which Fascism was the greatest threat to many.

For almost the entirety of the Cold War, Spain was subject to a repressive fascist regime. The use of the hammer and sickle as symbols today do not necessarily imply agreement with how communism has been implemented historically (in forms such as Stalinism, Leninism, or Maoism) or even most of its ideology, but its usage and presence are often a reaction to the decades of Spain's fascist history. People yearn to express their antifascist sentiments, and the most antifascist symbolism in most people's minds in Spain is the hammer and sickle, which stood in direct opposition to Franco and his fascist regime during the Spanish Civil War. Spain has such a radically different history to our

own. The current political polarization and government gridlock in Spain is greater than our own. Seeing their societal and political views be so opposite my previously held assumptions has inspired me to analyze the historical causes and subsequent repercussions that has led the Spanish government to arrive at its current 21st century juncture.

My reason for choosing the Spanish Second Republic in the years 1931-1936 is due to the fact that the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)- a major historical event that had long lasting effects on the people and government of Spain- is a heavily researched topic, and the war's occurrence was a result of factors that developed before its outbreak. The Second Republic and its progression is a far less dissected period that in my opinion is a perfect representation of the cultures, economies, and political ideologies that existed at the time in Spain. The Second Republic was Spain's longest and most sustained attempt at democracy until its recent return to democracy in the 1970s. If one is to do a google search for "Spain's first democratic election" or "When did Spain transition to democracy?" they are given results about 1977 and 1978 when the Franco regime fell, and nothing is said of the Second Republic. Typing into a search engine "the Spanish constitution of..." one finds that the first results that appear are the constitutions of 1978 and 1812, nothing about the Spanish Constitution of 1931 or the Second Republic that drafted it.

The institutions created and perpetuated during that historic period were not simply destroyed, buried, and forgotten during the four decades of the Franco regime, but instead survived clandestinely under the surface. Reasons for the lack of information regarding the republic can be tied to the more domineering aspect of the decades-long

fascist dictatorship that came immediately after. From my research I found no definitive connections made between the current state of affairs of the Spanish government and the events and people that existed during the Second Republic. When democratic government was again brought to Spain in 1978, the parties, political culture, and ideology currently in operation today stem from the Second Republic, 1931-1936. There are histories written about the Second Republic, though not nearly as much as the civil war, but none have been written with the current political context in mind and none have been written about how the period of the Second Republic paved the way for the current government and its present afflictions. My observations and analyses as an outsider provide another layer of uniqueness to my research and its potential for creating a better understanding of Spain and its political institutions and their processes as they relate to our own.

One glance at politics in Spain will reveal an astounding amount of diversity in ideology and party alignment. They have had four general elections in the last four years, with no clear party majority being represented in Spain's parliament- the *Cortes Generales*. The lack of political stability has led to gridlock in the legislature and a loss of the confidence by their citizens in the government's ability to craft and pass relevant legislation that would address the needs of its citizens. Additionally, EU nations question Spain's ability to conduct foreign affairs.

Spanish society is heavily divided politically. I am, however, hesitant to use the word "polarization" in reference to the current political lack of cohesion, as polarized denotes that there are two forces drawing people and ideology away from the middle and toward two extremes. It would appear more apt to describe Spain's political situation as displaying multiple poles and centers of ideological attraction, more centrifugal than

centripetal. The political atmosphere is better represented as fractured rather than split, with fluctuating ideological cracks and chasms spiderwebbing through the parties and their constituencies, rather than simply two opposing forces acting on a singular whole. This may be purely semantical, but I believe that connotation and the current popular usage of a word play a significant role in our understanding of the concepts we are using the word to describe.

The cause of the inability to form a majority government is due to the numerous dynamic political parties represented in the *Cortes* and their unwillingness to cooperate with one another. Only through coalition building can parties without a direct majority hope to vote in their parties' leaders as ministers. A coalition is the agreement between parties to mutually support each other, usually in regard to prime ministerial elections, with certain guarantees promised to the weaker party such as ministerial positions.

Surprisingly enough, the apparent political disconnect between the current Spanish government and the rest of Spanish society is nothing new, and contrary to popular belief, politics in Spain used to be even more fragmented and antithetical than they are now. The Second Republic is the most polarized and fragmented Spain has ever been, evidenced by the succeeding civil war. The beginning of the modern political cracks and chasms that became inflamed during the Second Republic, and that are reignited today, really began in the early 19th century. Ever since the abdication of Ferdinand VII during the Peninsular War with Napoleon and the creation of the Constitution of Cadiz in 1812, factionalism has come to unrelentingly dominate any attempt at Spanish unity and government. From Napoleon until the loss of Spain's last

overseas colonies to the United States, the entire 19th century was filled with civil wars, revolutions, and ideological insurrections.

Spain was divided long before modern governments and constitutions existed, as it has always been a peninsula parceled out amongst different cultural groups contemporarily referred to as Autonomous Regions or Autonomous Communities. Even today many places in Spain still consider their regions/communities as their nations and refer to Spain as a whole as “Castilian-Spain,” in reference to the Kingdom of Castille that dominated central Spain following the 780-year Reconquest (further referred to as the *Reconquista*) of the peninsula from the Moors (711-1492CE). The various Autonomous Communities- with a stunning variety of geography, ethnicity, culture, religion, political ideology, economy/industry, class, and education - are all woven into a constitutional unitary state which operates under a parliamentary system of democracy with a high degree of centralization.

Spain is also not a single culturally identifiable nation, in that the vast majority of its people do not share a substantial degree of common ancestral, cultural, or historical descent, especially when in comparison to other Western nations. Ethnically and culturally, the Iberian Peninsula has been inhabited by numerous ethnic groups. A short-listed example being: the various Celtic tribes- the most prevalent being the Galicians, then there were the Lusitanians, Turdetani, Basque, Iberians, Greeks, Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Vandals, Visigoths, Muslim Moors, Umayyad Muslims, later medieval-Christian kingdoms, and Sephardic Jews. Many of these ethnic groups never overlapped geographically as Spain is starkly divided by numerous mountain ranges and non-navigable rivers. Most cultural groups inhabited different sections of Spain (with the

exceptions being the larger empires like the Moors and Romans), they were not simply successor nomads coming in waves continually blending into a unified culture, as would be the case in England as a contemporary example.

The extensive disunity prevalent in Spanish politics and society today is a direct result of the attempt to incorporate culturally and historically autonomous regions into a unitary government framework without allowing the regions ample constitutional self-determination.² The inherent foundational diversity manifests itself in its political structures exemplified in its attempts to operate a centralized state with a parliamentary style legislature. There are over 19 currently represented parties in the lower assembly. Why does Spain have such a diverse political party landscape in comparison to the rest of the Western countries and how has Spain's legislature come to include such a diverse and wide array of public opinion and political ideology as exemplified by its assorted representation? And what does the apparent superstructure of their multiparty system reveal about the underlying cultural, economic, societal, and political divides? Questions of this scope are far too daunting for a paper such as this. This thesis will focus on the study of the political parties comprising the Spanish Second Republic (from 1931 up to the Spanish Civil War in April of 1936), their ideology, and their interaction in order to understand and contextualize the political and social polarization in Spain today.

² For more information on the status of the Autonomous Communities of Spain see Requejo. "Is Spain a Federal Country?" 2017.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The few years leading up to the Spanish Civil War in July of 1936 are some of the most politically and socially turbulent in modern Spanish history. The centuries long crusades, inquisition, feudalistic governing structures, and the dominance of the Catholic Church all contributed to inhibiting or outright rejecting much of the Scientific Revolution, Enlightenment, and Industrial Revolution, which as a consequence, kept the social and political movements associated with those periods outside Spain's borders as well. The flood of liberalism that accompanied the initial monarchical abdication by Ferdinand VII in the early to mid-19th century, carried with it the last four centuries of social, ideological, and political change. The destabilizing impact of this sudden influx of new ideas and change was rapidly escalated by the tension filled events and movements in the early 20th century- such as the Russian Revolution, WWI and II and the Great Depression- that then manifested themselves in the institutions of the 2nd Republic from 1931 to the subsequent civil war.

Many historians write extensively about the Spanish Civil War from multiple angles due to the direct conflict between fascism and socialism/communism, how it foreshadowed the coming world war, and the Fascist victory which would come to govern Spanish society for half a century. The preeminence of the Spanish Civil War and fascism in Spain take the oxygen out of the room in terms of what is written and researched regarding 20th century Spanish history. What is greatly overlooked is the short-lived Spanish Second Republic (1931-1939), which was Spain's first try at a constitutional democracy/republic in over a century, the first being the even shorter-lived

Constitution of Cadiz (1812-1814).³ The circumstances, events, and people that piled the tinder for the civil war are well-worth investigating. The political structures and mechanisms formulated in the early 20th century were not completely disintegrated after the rise of Franco but were instead surviving underneath the fascist surface of the nation, waiting to resurface once again in the 1980s. The values, principals, and platforms created leading up to and during the Second Republic are clearly evident in the current political atmosphere of Spain today.

Much of my research at the beginning surrounded general Spanish political history up to the civil war and then to the foundations of the various political parties and their leaders that constituted the *Cortes Generales*. The political alignments and characteristics of political parties, of course, parallel the prevailing culture and dominant attitudes of the time. Anytime one is researching cultural history it implies an ample amount of context that also has to be researched, as culture and its incipient institutions are developed over generations and is affected by a plethora of forces. I attempted to keep that contextualization to a necessitated minimum and primarily focus on the years 1931-1936.

To begin my research, I deemed it necessary to start more broadly and then narrow down the topics of my research as I became more familiar with individual people, structures, and events that comprised the Spanish Second Republic. The first books I read were the aptly named *The History of Modern Politics in Spain*, by Frank E. Manuel published in 1938, "History, Politics, and Culture, 1875-1936," by José Alvarez Junco,

³ The governing body of the Republic is effectively without authority after the start of the civil war in 1936 but lasts until 1939 under various faction/party leaderships.

and Payne's *Spain's First Democracy: The Second Republic, 1931-1936*.⁴ Because *History of Modern Politics in Spain* was written during the Spanish Civil War and right after the time period I am researching, Manuel is able to offer a contemporary inspection into how Spanish politics and society arrived at its 1938 juncture. Especially when doing historical research, finding an account written as that event occurred is extremely valuable as it adds an unabated glimpse into the frameworks, zeitgeist, and prevailing attitudes towards the events and people being discussed. Manuel gives in-depth context to the state of affairs in Spain, mentioning how the societal upheaval in the 19th and 20th centuries was a direct result of the economic and religious traditions over the last 300 years. The vast amounts of gold and silver from the Americas left Spain faster than they arrived. The Habsburgs bankrupted the empire with their countless wars in the 16th and 17th centuries and paid exuberant sums to Italian and Northern European artists and early industrialists. This influx of investment, into Northern Europe especially, would spur much of the Renaissance, Scientific Revolution, Enlightenment, and be the foundations for the Industrial Revolution in those Protestant nations, but Spain would reap few of the future benefits of this monetary investment. He also speaks to the power of the Catholic Church in Spain and its role in impeding material, scientific, cultural, and technological advancement.

⁴ Frank E. Manuel. *The Politics of Modern Spain*. Ied. (New York: McGraw-Hill book company, inc., 1938).

Kenneth Allen Hornak. 2003. *Diccionario De Ciencias Politicas Y Relaciones Internacionales : Castellano-Ingles, Ingles-Castellano = Dictionary of Political Science and International Relations: English-Spanish, Spanish-English*. Horsham, Pa: Editorial Castilla La Vieja.

José Álvarez Junco. "History, Politics, and Culture, 1875-1936." Chapter. In *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture*, edited by David T. Gies, 67–85. Cambridge Companions to Culture. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Stanley G. Payne. *Spain's First Democracy: The Second Republic, 1931-1936*. (Univ of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 58.

“History, Politics, and Culture, 1875-1936” and *Spain’s First Democracy: The Second Republic, 1931-1936* describe in great detail the events and the people that significantly impacted the Second Republic and spend less time on the context of the previous centuries. Junco and Payne both describe the political intricacies of the Second Republic and the relationships amongst the parties. Both works specifically address key issues that arose out of the conflict between the Church and state in Spain. So many of the political factions would develop out of the disagreements amongst the Spanish elected officials on how to view religion in the new republic. Manuel and Payne provide detailed accurate statistics such as the trade deficits and economic outputs before and after WWI, during which was Spain’s primary industrialization period, and how the various economic circumstances and industries of the time gave rise to the certain trade unions and political parties that would later become the primary forces in the 2nd Republic and civil war. Manuel and Payne analyze the various political parties, their leaders, the different ministers, the electoral mechanizations, and the overall structure of their parliamentary government.

The Constitution of the Republic of Spain of 1931 and the current Constitution of The Kingdom of Spain (1978) are heavily relied upon as through their dissection, the articles and sections are seen to represent an astounding, often-times contradictory, variety of ideologies that set the stage for the political unrest and institutionalized disfunction inherent in the government of the Second Republic as well as the current government.⁵

⁵ Const. of the Rep. of Spain., pt. 1-3, art. 1-50, Drafted: 1931.
Const. of The Kingdom of Spain. Ratified: 1978.

Though Spain emulates a federal style government structure, with its Autonomous Communities subordinate to the central government, Ferran Requejo in “Is Spain a Federal Country?” outlines the exact definitions of Spain’s current and historical governing structure.⁶ Requejo would refer to Spain as in fact not federal but unitary, while in the book *Courts in Federal Countries Federalists or Unitarists?* Kincaid and Aroney, and Jack Jedwab in *Identities, Trust, and Cohesion in Federal Systems: Public Perspectives*, argue for Spain to be considered “quasi-federalist” for historical and cultural reasons that will be discussed at length later on.⁷ Centralized power is invested in Madrid with a parliamentary style legislature whose representatives are based on popular vote and representation is based on population. Inherent in a parliamentary system of government, the need for coalitions arises. Political movements also find their societal momentum through coalitions as people from varying ideological spectrums join together to vote through a certain agreed upon agenda, as was a key aspect of the Second Republic. Election statistics were found in many secondary sources as well as directly from Spanish government archives.⁸

Matthew Kerry in “A Fragile Radicalism: The Popular Front Spring of 1936” and Payne’s “Political Violence during the Spanish Second Republic”, both describe the extreme division and intolerance, the various revolts, uprising, and protests that emerged from the platforms and cultures of many leftist parties like the left republicans, socialists,

⁶ Ferran Requejo. “Is Spain a Federal Country?” 50 Shades of Federalism (2017).

⁷ Jack Jedwab, and John Kincaid. *Identities, Trust, and Cohesion in Federal Systems : Public Perspectives*. Queen’s Policy Studies Series. (Kingston, ON: Queen’s School of Policy Studies, 2018). Kincaid, John, and Nicholas Aroney. *Courts in Federal Countries Federalists or Unitarists?* (University of Toronto Press, n.d).

⁸ Anuario Estadístico de España. “Número de concejales proclamados por el artículo 29 de la Ley [1931]” *Gaceta de Madrid*, 482-483. (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 1931). Ministerio del Interior, “Consulta de Resultados Electorales” (2021). “Report on Self-Governance”. *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas*.

communists, and anarchists, and how their grass roots organizations and trade unions operated on a daily basis. Practices such as boycotts, lynchings, and the militarization of community policing were common practice in the 1930s in response to anyone who dared to only promulgate rightist sentiment, as well as for anyone who did not support socialist/communist/anarchist ideals.⁹

The manners in which information was disseminated was key in growing a party's base, and despite the rampant illiteracy in Spain, as iterated by Antonio Viñao Frago in "The History of Literacy in Spain: Evolution, Traits, and Questions," at the time, people were regularly kept aware of national events through vast information networks orchestrated by the hundreds of syndicate organizations.¹⁰ Each party had its own organ for dissemination of their material. Written material was very prevalent and available in urban settings, while in rural areas, public readings primarily by anarchist groups, evidence of persistent feudal customs, incorporated the decentralized environments into the national fabric of activism.

Newspapers and other means of information dissemination were extremely prevalent at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. A majority of the authors' works I read as well as my own research utilized the extensive Spanish newspaper archives for a lot of the election statistics as well as general attitudes and opinions of people and politicians at the time. Nationally published papers like *El Sol*, *El Debate*, *ABC*, and *El Heraldo* covered the totality of the years of the monarchy and the

⁹ Matthew Kerry. "A Fragile Radicalism: The Popular Front Spring of 1936." In *Unite, Proletarian Brothers!: Radicalism and Revolution in the Spanish Second Republic*. (LONDON: University of London Press, 2020), 181-208.

Stanley G. Payne. "Political Violence during the Spanish Second Republic." *Journal of Contemporary History* 25, no. 2/3 (1990), 269-88.

¹⁰ Antonio Viñao Frago. "The History of Literacy in Spain: Evolution, Traits, and Questions." *History of Education Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (1990), 573-99.

Second Republic from different points of view. Some papers were openly conservative and others were openly liberal/leftist, but when brought together a more complete understanding of the opinions of the nation can be collected.¹¹ Juan Carlos Mateos Fernández published an essay titled, “Bajo el control obrero: La Prensa diaria en Madrid durante la guerra civil, 1936-1939” detailing the media during the Spanish Civil War and how its actions significantly impacted the events that would shape the country.¹²

The relatively low rates of literacy in the country encouraged other means of communication utilizing pictures, symbols, and ideograms in order to advertise or persuade the audience. Propaganda saturated Spain leading up to and during the civil war from the political left and right. There are plenty of records that document the coordination of Spanish far right politicians, like Jose Primo de Rivera and Gil Robles, with Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. Just as Spain was to be the proving ground for the war strategies and technologies used by the fascist and communist powers later in WWII, it was also the testing site for Nazi Germany’s and the USSR’s propaganda campaigns. Former Greenville University Student Giana Padden published her thesis on the use of propaganda in Spain during the civil war, *La contradicción de las guerreras en la propaganda de la guerra civil Española*, and Jason Stanley’s *How Propaganda Works* both explain the important role that propaganda held among the political parties and their institutions.¹³

¹¹ *El Sol* (Madrid), *El Debate* (Madrid), *ABC* (Madrid and Sevilla), and *El Heraldo* (Madrid).

¹² Juan Carlos Mateos Fernández. “Bajo el control obrero: La Prensa diaria en Madrid durante la guerra civil, 1936-1939.” Edited by: Mirta Núñez Diaz-Balart. (Facultad de Ciencias de la Información Universidad Complutense, Madrid, 1996).

¹³ Giana Padden. *La contradicción de las guerreras en la propaganda de la guerra civil española*. (Greenville College, 2017).

Jason Stanley. *How Propaganda Works*. (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015).

Spain was not isolated from world events. It did not exist in a vacuum. It was greatly influenced by every major European social upheaval. Whether it was socialism from Central Europe, radical communism/Leninism from the Russian Revolution, Jacobin liberalism and syndicalism from France, or apolitical violent (oftentimes terroristic) Italian anarchism, Spain was constantly berated with ideology and social confluence. Marxism had a particularly significant impact on Spain. In order to properly interpret the actions and platforms of the multiple Marxist parties that formed in Spain, the study of Marx's own writings was essential. Karl Marx's, *On Revolution*, provides context for how many of the parties could be more or less revolutionary in nature compared to others.¹⁴

Much of European history likes to place Spain in an exotic bubble- a country of helpless romanticism, thoughtful existential contemplativeness, the land across the Pyrenees that was half European Christian and half African Muslim with little material and tangible significance to the rest of Europe. Alan Sennett in *Revolutionary Marxism in Spain, 1930-1937*, expounds upon the contextualization that many European thinkers began to apply to Spanish politics, especially in regard to its socialistic revolutions.¹⁵ Sennett describes one of the most significant post Marx Marxist theorists Leon Trotsky's views on the Spanish situation, "his first-hand experiences helped him place Spain within an international historical context rather than, as was common at the time, seeing it as an exotic anachronism closed off from the rest of Europe."¹⁶ The great

¹⁴ Karl Marx. *On Revolution*, Edited by Saul K. Padover. The Karl Marx Library, vol. 1. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971).

¹⁵ Alan Sennett. *Revolutionary Marxism in Spain, 1930-1937*. Historical Materialism Book Series. (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

¹⁶ibid, 64.

revolutionaries from across the continent, such as Marx, Lenin, and Bakunin, became involved in the upheavals of early 20th century Spain. The concurrent development of its political parties, as those witnessed in the Second Republic, would directly result from those foreign influences. Their further research is thus necessitated to better understand this paper's foundational questions.

The most significant quasi-political groups in Spain were the anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists. *Revolution, Defeat and Theoretical Underdevelopment: Russia, Turkey, Spain, Bolivia*, by Loren Goldner critiques the purposeful ignorance and lack of focus by a majority of historians on Spain and its connection to anarchism.¹⁷ Graham Kelsey's work *Anarchosyndicalism, Libertarian Communism, and the State: the CNT in Zaragoza and Aragon, 1930-1937* contributes to the idea that workers organizations like the CNT (*Confederación Nacional de Trabajo*), steeped in anarchism, played a much more vital role in Spain than any other nation.¹⁸ In no other country in the world has there been a complete social revolution based around the ideology of anarchism as theorized by thinkers such as Bakunin. Ex anarchist militant B. Cano Ruiz is quoted in Goldners work stating:

“It is obvious that in no other country in the world did anarchism have the rootedness and influence that it had in Spain ... In Spain anarchism was a mass movement integrated in diverse manifestations, from a workers' movement embodied in the CNT (*Confederación Nacional de Trabajo*), which reached a membership of two million ... the rationalist schools (of Francisco Ferrer) ... the libertarian *ateneos*, the Libertarian Youth, *Mujeres Libres* (Free Women) ... the FAI (*Federación Anarchista Iberica*), closely linked to the CNT...” (119).

¹⁷ Loren Goldner. *Revolution, Defeat and Theoretical Underdevelopment: Russia, Turkey, Spain, Bolivia*. Historical Materialism Book Series. (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

¹⁸ Graham Kelsey. *Anarchosyndicalism, Libertarian Communism, and the State: the CNT in Zaragoza and Aragon, 1930-1937*. (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991).

If anarchism and syndicalism played such a heavy role in the buildup to the Spanish Civil War and were key in the de-stability nationally experienced, then it would be irresponsible not to expound upon their influence on the history of the Spanish Second Republic.

The key purpose of the research is not solely the history of the political parties and the political system during the Second Republic, but also the role and the extent sectarianism and overall division plagued the new republic. Daily highlights many of the regionalist political parties and how the vast diversity of the Iberian Peninsula itself manifested much of the conflict existent in their political process.¹⁹ The formation and history of the *Unión General de Trabajadores*, *Confederación Nacionalista de Trabajadores*, and the *Federación Anarquista Ibérica* is intimately linked with the rural and urban social and economic discrepancies, and the authors of this British textbook explicitly detail the significance of these unions and the political parties to which they are attached.

As I researched political parties, patterns began to become visible as far as where the parties had their base following and where their geographic and demographic influence resided. Previous articles and books mention the lack of industrialization in relation to Western European countries, public readings being primary forms of communicating information. The persistent reoccurring theme of peasant unrest, and the correlation between education, prosperity, and overall satisfaction with a central government are all very closely linked with how urbanized a society is. The search for information regarding patterns of political party membership and support meant needing

¹⁹ Dailey, Andy, and Sarah Lyth-Lawley. *Causes, Practices and Effects of Wars*. 3rd. (London: Hodder Education, 2012).

demographic statistics on every region and autonomous community in Spain. The *Facultad de ciencias económicas y empresariales de La Universidad de Zaragoza* details the rate of urbanization in Spain, and in conjunction with the United Nations population growth report, as well as multiple Spanish government sponsored censuses, I was able to compile accurate demographic data to better connect why certain political parties succeeded in some areas and not in others.²⁰

The relevance of this data is how it gives insight into the demographics of the parts of Spain as well as other European nations where Marxism, socialism, anarchism, communism, republicanism, conservatism, and/or fascism were popular. I can then compare/contrast, formulate connections, and identify patterns between the places where certain ideologies are dominant and not others. A pattern that emerged through the demographic research was why Marxism and socialism came to dominate certain regions and not others. For example, Marxism and socialism appeared to primarily be relevant in societies where the majority of laborers did not own the means of production and are not afforded the direct value of their labor. Industrialized societies such as Germany, France, and the U.K. had readily apparent distinctions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie/middle class which made it easier for socialist political parties and intellectuals to spread their ideology as people could easily identify and experience the problematic circumstances being enumerated by certain intellectuals and political leaders.

²⁰ Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations. "Estimated agglomerated population, 1920-1960" and "POPULATION OF BIG CITIES AND MULTIMILION CITIES, 1920-1960," in *Growth of the Worlds Urban and Rural Population, 1920-2000*, Populations Studies, No. 44. (New York: United Nations, 1969).

Junta Nacional de Hermandades, "Encuesta Agropecuaria de la población campesina: 1956," *Revista Sindical de Estadística*. First Trimester, 1959, pp. 4-5.

Throughout my research on the numerous Spanish socialist parties, I began to question how they could be such a powerful force when Spain was not nearly as industrialized. There were heavy socialist numbers in the industrialized centers such as Bilbao, Barcelona, and Madrid, but the largest location for socialist membership was in the latifundio south in Andalusia, Murcia, and Extremadura as described by Pascual Carrión in *Los Latifundios en España* (Maps in Appendix A).²¹ “Labor Force and Employment, 1800-1960” in *Output, Employment, and Productivity in the United States after 1800* by Stanley Lebergott offers industrial and agricultural employment information amongst many different demographics enabling for the comparison between a more industrialized Western nation like the U.S. and a less industrialized one like Spain.²² This apparent discrepancy inherently unique amongst European nations to Spain definitely prompted much of the study to follow.

Materials that tied together the demographics, economic system, and party alignment question together were *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain*, by Edward Malefakis, and Gabriel García-Badell’s “La Distribución de la propiedad agrícola de España en las diferentes categorías de fincas.”²³ In a brilliantly compiled work of past to present cause and effect contextualization on the Spanish society, Malefakis presents the historical reasonings for the latifundio system existing in southern Spain and how the differing traditions and practices of land ownership determined why

²¹ Pascual Carrión. *Los Latifundios en España*. (Madrid, 1932).

²² Stanley Lebergott. “Labor Force and Employment, 1800-1960”. *Output, Employment, and Productivity in the United States after 1800*. (NBER, 1966).

²³ Edward E. Malefakis. *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain: Origins of the Civil War* (Yale University Press, 1970).

Gabriel García-Badell. “La Distribución de la propiedad agrícola de España en las diferentes categorías de fincas,” *Revista de Estudios Agro-Sociales*, no. 30. Jan.-March 1960.

the various regions developed in so many seemingly different ways. The tangible environment that a culture and society develop within play a vital role in shaping its growth. Malefakis presents how the physical geography of the land influenced the political structures that arose in the various Autonomous Communities of Spain, especially in regard to the political parties and structures existent at the time of the Second Republic. How people interacted with and related to their physical environment was important as the manner in which land was developed and distributed amongst communities and individuals would significantly influence the political views of those societies.

Books that delve into the Spanish culture include, *Iberia: Spanish Travels and Reflections*, *Who Prospers? How Cultural Values Shape Economic and Political Success*, and *Spain: The Root and the Flower*.²⁴ Culture directly influences the development of political ideology as representative democracies are meant to conform to the desires and opinions of their constituencies which follow the prevailing culture and cultural assumptions of the time. Michener in *Iberia: Spanish Travels and Reflections*, provides many perspectives from a multitude of other writers on the topic of Spanish culture. Political parties and platforms develop organically as a result of how groups of individuals collectively identify. How Spaniards self-identified and who they viewed themselves to be historically played a pivotal role in the functioning of the Spanish state in the 1930s and today, as regional parties strongly influence legislation and often sow

²⁴ James A. Michener. *Iberia: Spanish Travels and Reflections* (New York: Random House, 1968).

Lawrence E. Harrison. *Who Prospers?: How Cultural Values Shape Economic and Political Success* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1995).

John Armstrong Crow. *Spain: the Root and the Flower* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

discontent nationally in favor of their own region. Inman Fox in “Spain as Castile: Nationalism and national identity” explores the intersectionalities of Spanish identities and its role in political processes and institutions.²⁵

Crow’s Spain: The Root and the Flower, includes ample writings by Claude G. Bowers, a journalist and the American ambassador to Spain during the Second Republic. Bowers definitely appears as an apologist for the republic and many of his claims of the innocence of the republic and the guilt of the extreme right have been refuted by other historians such as Payne, Malefakis, and Manuel. His perspectives as an outsider and his personal experiences in Spain during the time about which he writes gives a clear picture of how distorted events at the time seemed to someone living through them. One could drive all over the country and not see any evidence of widespread revolt and unrest. Others could see it everywhere they step. The murkiness and opacity of the events unfolding in Spain in the 1930’s continues to create debate to this day on where the fault truly lay for instigating the civil war. My aims are of course to look beyond the events that directly corresponded to creating the decades-long Franco regime and instead to find the parcels of truth that link the events during the Second Republic to the current state of political affairs in Spain today.

²⁵ Inman E. Fox. “Spain as Castile: Nationalism and national identity.”

Chapter 3: The Origins and Historical Contextualizations of the Spanish Second Republic

The politics of Spain today has their roots in the 1930's during the turbulent Second Republic. In order to better comprehend the country's current multifaceted governmental and societal unrest, the Second Republic must be understood, and in order to better understand the Second Republic a brief history of Spain and its governmental structures, cultures, and general socio-economic features and circumstances have to be explained as well. This chapter will focus briefly on the previous forms of government in the Iberian Peninsula, the significant historical groups and events whose actions have direct correlations to today's government and citizenry, and what circumstances produced Spain's first modern political parties.

The Cortes Generales

Spain may not have an incredibly long history of democracy, as autocracy occupies a significant period of time in Spanish history, but its political parties and traditions for political organizing are more extensive and worth dissecting. While other nations like the U.S., UK, and France had some form of a congressional body beholden to constituents or electors by the 18th and 19th centuries, Spain for almost the entirety of that time was under an absolute or a slightly limited parliamentary monarchy with representative's positions being appointed, inherited, or bought.

The closest thing Spain had to a congressional body was the *Cortes*, which had been in existence since the Middle Ages. Existing in various forms since the 8th century, the *Cortes* - mainly in current day *Castile y Leon*- was an advisory council of nobles and village elders to the king which led the armies and handled the treasury. The king could

dismiss them at any time, and they could veto the king's requests/demands. Similar to the Estates-General in Revolutionary France, the *Cortes* during the late Medieval and early Renaissance periods would represent various estates, such as the clergy, nobles and commoners. Like in the Estates-General the third estate was that of the commoners and began to be represented to a small degree due to the balance of power shifting slightly towards the cities in the late Middle Ages and to the bourgeoisie as the *Reconquista* continued to drain the purses of the nobility. The *Reconquista* thus became a major reason for one of the first parliamentary systems in Europe to arise in Spain. The monarchs of the Christian kingdoms were almost always in need of money to finance their centuries long war against the Moors. So, nobles and aristocrats would finance the king directly or indirectly. For their financial support, they would be granted access to the *Cortes* or some form of autonomy for their lands and community. These grants of autonomy were called *Fueros*.

The *Cortes Generales* was still far from a democracy. Compilations of political parties forming to garner votes to influence government policy making wouldn't be witnessed until the late 19th century. We do get to witness the first glimpses of localized representative government in Western Europe occur in Spain when looking at the early years of the *Reconquista*. As the kingdoms pushed the Moors further south, the intentionally depopulated "no man's land," that previously separated the two factions, needed to be resettled.

La Presura and Behetría

The process of resettling the deserted buffer zone was known as the *presura*, and in 850 CE consisted of peasants autonomously and voluntarily moving to claim land to

settle on. Since the Christian Kingdoms were too weak to properly fund and defend a resettlement program, the kings would allow people to claim whatever land they wanted, and these villages would establish their own municipal councils called *consejos*. The open resettlement practice is very similar to how the United States in the 19th century populated the West and Midwest.

These newly created small medieval landowners would go generations without a king or lord vassalizing them, thus creating a very independent, perpetual, small landholding class, which as we will see later on played a key role in the development of the various political parties during the Second Republic- over a thousand years later. Such autonomously formed communities existed primarily in northern *Castile y Leon* just south of the Cantabrian Mountain Range. Extremely unique communities such as these are rare examples of independent villages during a time in Medieval Europe when feudalism would look to be the status quo. The villages would, of course, require some form of protection by a lord, as they lived in the frontier between two warring factions, but the *consejos* were also meant to be a counterbalance to that local Lord through the institution of *beheiría* in which “the peasant communities had the right (which was usually more than theoretical) to replace the lord they had elected if his exactions became intolerable.”²⁶

As the *Reconquista* continued south, the Crown of Castile would come to occupy around 70% of Spain’s current landmass. With an expanding power base, the monarchs sought to retain more direct control over their lands. There was more government structured resettlement in the lands between the Duero and Tagus rivers which were

²⁶ Malefakis, 52.

further south from the originally resettled “no mans land” near the Cantabric Range in northern *Castille y Leon* (see map in Appendix A). The municipal councils in these settlements were set up by the king, instead of organically developing from the communities themselves. Just as in *Castille y Leon* there remained no strong noble class in the area to exert its will on the peasant classes, so the situation remained moderately democratic.

After the unification of the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon in 1492, Spain for the next four and a half centuries would be under either absolutist monarchical, often seemingly theocratic, rule or some form of oligarchic parliamentary monarchy, primarily run by the nobles. The *Cortes* would, for the most part, always be in existence. Though, it stayed away from local representation and continued to be a privileged council of nobles and aristocrats whose power and influence ebbed and flowed depending on the monarch in power and depending on how strapped for cash the kingdom was. The local autonomy and independent Castilian character represented by the *consejos* would remain distinct cultural characteristics in parts of *Castille y Leon*, but much of Spain would develop in a drastically paradoxical manner.

To reaffirm, the *Cortes* cannot be equated with a congressional body representing any specific constituency, as its members were all either appointed by the monarch to represent a certain nobility, industry or class, or born into their position. Throughout much of the 19th century, the monarchy was girded by a constitution, of which several were written during this time, and much of the regular governance was carried out by the *Cortes*. The *Cortes* was divided into an upper and a lower chamber. There were political battle lines drawn at times, forcing members to side one way or the other, creating quasi-

parties principally during disputes over monarchical succession and its coinciding civil wars, of which there were many. There were liberals, republicans, moderates, and progressives that aligned themselves accordingly in the *Cortes*, and the term “political party” can be applied to them as they are groupings of individuals who sought to exercise political power collectively, though no unified platform or clear policy objectives were ever present.

Manuel refers to these political units as groups instead of parties, describing how throughout the early to mid-19th century (1808-1868) progressivists, moderates, and conservative groups squabbled for power and defended the king/queen when it suited them, but fought against the crown otherwise.²⁷ Spain’s incredibly high affinity for political individualism would always make any even semi-permanent political party relatively impossible and short lived. We do not find lasting political institutions until the end of the 19th century and into the years of the Second Republic in the beginning of the 20th century. Spain was simply far too turbulent with the numerous *pronunciamientos*, civil wars, rebellions, and general government instability for political parties to have a chance to gain any footing and adequately organize. Weber asserts that “Between 1814 and 1876, the Spanish military tried to overthrow the government on thirty-five occasions, succeeding eleven times.”²⁸ Under these circumstances, it would be impressive to see democratic parties formulate in any nation at any point in time.

Land Distribution and its Consequences

Crow believes the root of all Spain’s problems stem from unequal land distribution, a major factor that would influence the creation and membership of many of

²⁷ Manuel, 1938.

²⁸ Harrison, 52.

the political parties in Spain. The inhabitants of central and southern Spain were originally shepherds. It was the Romans who introduced the latifundio system and centuries later the Moors implemented large scale irrigation in parts of southeast Spain. Together these two developments promoted the idea of land proprietorship where it previously had not been an issue.²⁹ The inorganic and fast paced manner in which land would come to be parceled out due to historical events would play an extremely significant role in the political landscape. The northern regions of Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria, Basque Country, and Navarre which were all either not conquered by the Muslim Moors, minimally/partly subjugated, or very briefly occupied all have extremely high rates of land ownership (Map of Moorish expansion, Appendix A). 94% of landowners in these northern regions were small holders and those small landowners controlled about 33% of the land in Northern Spain.³⁰ These regionalized statistics hold true even to this day. This stands in direct contrast to southern Spain which was lengthily occupied by the Moors for centuries and has the lowest rate of landownership, being dominated by large estates owned by noble families and ecclesiastic orders. The Moors did not create the landed and landless disproportions; that responsibility falls to the Christian kingdoms once they pushed the Moors out of the peninsula.

A large number of small private landholders resided in northern Spain for reasons previously outlined, but as the *Reconquista* progressed, the now larger and stronger Christian kingdoms (namely Castile) were faced with a reinforced Muslim empire. A more extremist sect of Islam out of Morocco, adhered to by the Almoravid Berbers, came

²⁹ John, 1985.

³⁰Pascual Carrión in *Los latifundios en España* (Madrid, 1932), compiled by Edward E. Malefakis in *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain: Origins of the Civil War* (Yale University Press, 1970), 52.

to control the Caliphate around 1091 CE. In order to militarily keep up with the reenergized Almoravid Dynasty, the Christian kingdoms turned to Rome and the church for aid in the 12th century. Most of the crusader orders that existed throughout history were established in Spain for the purpose of fighting the Almoravids in the 12th century, as well as many more orders called in to aid in the fighting from abroad. Orders such as the Knights of Santiago, Knights of Calatrava, and the Knights of Alcantara were all formed in the 1100's in Spain for the purpose of protecting pilgrims on their way to the holy site at Santiago, the believed burial place of St. James, and were utilized heavily in the fighting against the Moors.³¹ Military orders established outside of Spain, like the Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitaller, were established around the same time in the Middle East and were called in to aid in the fighting against the caliphates in southern Spain. For payment, the Spanish nobles and crusading orders were given huge swaths of land in newly conquered southern Spain and Catalonia, where there are still enclaves today. Nobles and religious organizations would come to control a vast majority of the land in Extremadura, Andalusia, Murcia, and Castilla-La Mancha, due to the wars that took place there.

Northern Spain, where peasant settlement was independent and no widespread strong noble class came to control multiple large estates, contrasts starkly with how land was distributed in southern Spain. Government statistics in 1956 show that over 50% of the rural adult male population in Northern Spain were landowners, mostly small proprietors, and less than 10% of the rural adult male population in Southern Spain were landowners.³² Voting records from recent elections and from the Second Republic

³¹ Crow, 1985.

³² Junta Nacional de Hermandades, 1956.

indicate strong support for conservative candidates in northern Spain where proprietorship is common, while strong support for liberal/progressive candidates is common in southern Spain where landless day laborers historically constituted a majority of the population.

The Decadence of Spain as an Inhibitor to Democracy

The manner in which of Spain's political parties and its economy developed were deeply intertwined. The demographics and types of industries present in certain regions of Spain played a significant role in how rooted certain parties and ideologies became. Where there was greater land ownership and economic equity there was greater political and social conservatism. Where disparities were greatest is where Spain's political left thrived. The greater the inequality in a place, the further to the political left the populace voted. Spain's economy as a whole progressed inversely to the other Western countries. While European nations were creating global empires, Spain had finished completely losing theirs. Industrialization had fully matured in the West and the mass production of specialized goods was becoming automated. In Spain, 45% of the labor force was still employed in agriculture by 1930, and landless day laboring peasants continued to struggle against a semi-feudalistic societal structure in the countryside with only 20% of the population being landowners. Only 30% of Spaniards lived in localities with a population of more than 20,000- symbolizing an apparent lack of urbanization.³³ For comparison, by 1930 only 21% of the United States' workforce was employed in agriculture, 47% lived in locales with a population of 20,000 or more, representing a higher degree of urbanization and thus signifying a higher potential for industrialization

³³ Gabriel García-Badell, compiled by Malefakis, 29.
Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, 1969.

and development. Close to 58% of American farmers owned the land they worked in 1935 (in the middle of the Dust Bowl and Great Depression).³⁴

It was in the midst of this lagging development that Spain found itself attempting to experiment with democracy. Fox concisely summarizes his view of Spain's condition and preparedness coming into the 18th century and how its unfortunate state of affairs remained in perpetuity until the 20th century,

“The 1500's saw the amortization and donation of land to the church, which was exempt from taxes, and the privileges of the Mesta (sheep owners' union) led to the stagnation and neglect of agriculture... Imperialism, expansionism, and wars during Habsburg rule led to depopulation, poverty, idleness, and fanaticism and lack of unity, finally caused the decadence of Spain as a power. The result was that by the end of the sixteenth century, the administrative, political, economic, social and moral conditions of Spain, particularly in the dominant Castile, were in total decline. And the great historical institutions of the Middle Ages- the Cortes, the fueros, the municipal councils- had fallen into disuse”.³⁵

³⁶

The Medieval Catholic Church was inherently hierarchical and undemocratic. The unification of church and state in Spain greatly reinforced the classicism that would develop as well as severely retard the growth/acceptance of democracy that would eventually take a civil war to attempt to implement and defend a democratic government. The church would occupy a central role in ensuring societal order as an arm of the state by promulgating pro-monarchy stances and messages.

With the citizenry relatively uninformed, as Spain was still struggling to create a public-school system out from under the authority of ecclesiastical orders, they were left vulnerable to the propaganda campaigns of the various political parties. With literacy

³⁴ Black, John D., and R. H. Allen. "The Growth of Farm Tenancy in the United States." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 51, no. 3 (1937): 393-425.

Lebergott, 1966.

³⁵ Fox, 28.

rates relatively low, 25-30% around the end of the 19th century, enclaves of politically biased information were created primarily through the practice of public readings, leading to elections swinging wildly left or right depending on the amount of time and money put into a party's propaganda machines.³⁷ Not only was Spain scholastically ill prepared for a democratic government, but much of the Spanish populace did not know who or what they were voting for. A number of factors created a centrifugal political atmosphere in Spain. These include its classist social structure, physically fragmented geography, and Castilian centric mindset which focused on the peninsular unification of proudly independent nationalities into a homogenous system of government, all factors ill conducive to forming a unified republic.

***Caciquismo* and Feudalism**

In conjunction with the lack of information and proprietorship common throughout the countryside, there existed the *caciques*. *Cacique* comes from the Spanish name for the local indigenous chiefs who were in charge of ensuring subordination and cooperation with their Old-World Spanish rulers. Their rule was hereditary, and the term came to describe local "town bosses" in Spain, usually large estate owners, who controlled the political and social life of their locales in the countryside. After the Third Carlist War ended in 1876, the king allowed for a constitution to be written. It essentially vested power in the nobles, new rich landowners from the lands stripped from the church, rich industrialists, politicians, and the military. Spain was thusly ruled like an aristocratic oligarchy, though Alfonso XII continued to sit on the throne. The *caciques* and their dominion of rural life can be directly traced back to this event and to the tradition of the

³⁷ Ibid, 1999.
Frago, 573-599.

latifundio system heavily institutionalized in Southern Spain. Normally the *caciques* acted as judges handling civil disputes and collected taxes on the behalf of the government in exchange for political privileges and local authority.

The *cacique* system was famous for its corruption, especially regarding the maintenance of the integrity of elections as they were commonly known to alter vote tallies, usually in favor of conservative candidates and parties.³⁸ These practices can be viewed as a continuation of feudalism perpetuated by the medieval nobility or compared to the mafia bosses in Italy as both the *caciques* and mafia appeared in the 19th and 20th centuries as a result of resource deficient governments that had to rely on local power structures to enact and enforce their policies.³⁹ So entrenched was this rural oligarchy that even during the years of the Second Republic, many of the *caciques* who were former *Unión Patriótica* members (the party of former dictator Primo de Rivera), were now registered republicans, and they sat on the same village councils they always had and maintained their power structures. A local Aragonese reporter cited by Kelsey from 1932 describes the *caciques*, “they were not true devotees of any political party. They were, ‘simply those who are always in charge.’”⁴⁰

***Personalismo* and its Antagonism of Political Stability**

A common theme that would arise in Latin American politics is the importance of *personalismo*, the formation of parties or movements around a central figure, usually a man who represents some kind of masculine virtue as a caballero, *cacique*, or some other

³⁸ Dailey, 2012.

³⁹ Junco, 1999.

⁴⁰ Kelsey, 1991.

“relatable” populist. What surprised me in my research is the frequency in which political parties and movements in Spain were similarly conceived and perpetuated.

Every party and every sect has a singular identifiable figure attached to it, usually the founder. Seldom was the leader of a political party not its founder or at least a founding member. Once that leader/founder died or stepped down, the party broke up or its members begin a new party built around some other particular individual. Parties were and still are always built around an exalted leader, rarely around a unifying ideology or platform. Speaking from a culturally analytical standpoint, Harrison asserts that “when the Spaniard gets together with others to form a political party, he is doing nothing else than extending his ego to that party... thus the party is just as vociferous and intransigent as each one of its members.”⁴¹ This is definitely an unfair and inappropriate generalization, but many Spanish writers and intellectuals like Ortega y Gasset expressed very similar criticisms.

Exceptions amongst Spanish politics of course exist, and I believe the anarchists and communists during the Second Republic were the least dependent on any singular individual due to their grass roots decentralized structure. Spain continues to operate in a similar fashion today, with parties coalescing around a particular charismatic leader. The average age and obvious youthfulness of the party leaders in Spain today is evidence of the prevalence of *personalismo* a century later. The average age is around 40 years old with every leader looking like they could be in their late 20’s or early 30’s. The contrast in political culture is stark once considering the United States just finished choosing between two of the oldest presidential candidates to date. *Personalismo* most greatly

⁴¹ Harrison, 56.

impacts smaller fringe parties whose very existence depends on that spokesperson, while the larger ones like the Partido Popular and PSOE (*Partido Socialista del Obrero Español*) have maintained their positions with some structural integrity since the late 1980s.

Political Parties and their Constituencies

Political parties in Spain would form along social and economic lines, stretching all along the conservative to liberal gradient in the 20th century. On the right side of the political spectrum, were the monarchists, military, church, landowners, and industrialists. On the left were the academics- lawyers, professors, writers, middle class, industrial workers, peasant class, and revolutionary leftists such as Marxists, communists, and anarchists. Economics, social structure, class structure, values and morals, religion, and form of government were all issues within which the dozens of political parties found themselves navigating and negotiating their space. The parties' political stances, as far as liberal or conservative, were rarely set in stone. They more or less based their political positioning off of each other with their identities as liberal, conservative, leftist, or rightist completely dependent on the rhetoric and positions of the parties that surrounded them. If one party was known to be more conservative and another party occupied the political space to the left of them, they would then ensure their votes and rhetoric would always match accordingly and never stray to the same perspective and position as the other. The anarchists and communists were constantly infuriated with the policy making of the republicans and socialists in the Second Republic as they viewed it as too conciliatory and reformist. The right was constantly upset at the "extremism" and

“radicalness” in the exact same laws. The excessive polarization created mass governmental destabilization and ensured Spain was a powder keg.

The first real modern political parties to form in Spain were the results of international congresses and conferences like the International Workingmen’s Association (or the First International). Many leftist parties came out of these efforts to organize labor, taking place primarily during the Bourbon Restoration in the 1870s and 80s following the end of the Third Carlist War. The PSOE (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*), the oldest political party in Spain and one of the most prominent today, and the different anarchist federations/associations were inspired by the message of working class and peasant unification promulgated by Marxist- socialism, communism, and anarchism. These workers unions would come to assert greater political influence as their memberships increased over time. The unions and their subsequent political parties would experience times of great persecution and times of tepid toleration depending on who was in power.

The PSOE has managed to become one of the oldest parties thanks to its durability. It experienced relatively stable succession in leadership, given the extremely personalist nature of Spanish politics, remaining intact in name and platform. The PSOE was able to overcome the personalism in politics through its focus on a grand ideology enacted through grassroots style worker/political organizing, exemplified through groups like the UGT (which is discussed in the following paragraph). The PSOE historically portrays itself as radical and revolutionary, but the passing of time would prove this radical nature to be essentially mostly in its rhetoric, and once in power its members

were, and still are viewed to this day, as being excessively conciliatory, especially by other leftist parties.

The *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT) trade union was founded by the PSOE in 1888 in order to create an organized working-class power base throughout urban and rural Spain. The two institutions were very closely connected up until recent years as the UGT has become increasingly critical of the stances and actions taken by the PSOE. Membership in the PSOE was in fact a mandatory requirement in order to be a part of the UGT and vice versa. The UGT is the grass roots association of the workingman, which is who the PSOE has historically claimed to represent. For whatever plethora of reasons power has tended to moderate the PSOE, in the Second Republic and today.

Marxism in Spain

The PSOE, as previously stated, was affiliated with the First and the Second International, which were both congresses of Marxist socialists with the Second International excluding those who advocated anarchism. They initially advocated Marxist ideology with the revolution of the proletariat as a core belief, but throughout the Second Republic they continued to renege on their revolutionary principles, instead advocating government reformism once in power. By the end of the 20th century, they fully disassociated with Marxism and identified as democratic socialists. Though Marxism was proclaimed in their platform from their inception in the 1870s until the 1970s, some historians claim that amongst the earliest leaders of the PSOE there existed few actual Marxists.

Manuel clearly does not paint a positive picture of many far-left parties and ideologies like the communists or Marxist-socialists, as he ensures to express routinely

how insignificant and nonthreatening the early communist parties were and how the socialists in power “weren’t really Marxists,” almost as if reassuring the reader. This could be due to his writing from an American context and viewpoint at the end of the 1930s. Communism and Marxist-socialism were decidedly most feared and villainized in the U.S. leading up to WWII (when Manuel writes) and during the Cold War, and those sentiments were equally prevalent in the rest of the West. Events such as the Third International and the promulgation of comintern philosophy were pressing issues for many Western nations.

Manuel and many other historians (e.g., Crow and Bowers), describe most cabinet members of the first Republican-socialist coalition government of the Second Republic (1931-1933) as non-Marxist. While several historians go out of their way to label Spanish politicians as Marxist or non-Marxist, they do not always explicate their nomenclature. Marx covers a wide berth of philosophy and economic and societal theories. To label someone as a Marxist could mean their view of history, materialism, or revolution and class struggle. Manuel, Malefakis, Graham, Crow, and Goldner all reference Marxism in the context of violence, concluding that class struggle and revolution were the primary references. Crow proffers his denotation of Marxist and Marxism quite bluntly when he elaborates, “Only half of those preached violence and proletarian dictatorship” in regard to recently elected socialist and communist delegates in the Cortes.⁴² Crow connotes that to be a Marxist is to advocate for violence in efforts to achieve revolution and that it is the exception to not. Authors like Goldner and Malefakis imply class struggle and revolution when referencing whether individuals or political parties were Marxist like

⁴² Crow, 1985.

Crow, however they describe the political parties founded by proclaimed Marxists as seeking “revolution” through political and legalistic means, especially when contrasting them to the often more militant anarchists.^{43 44 45}

For a country like Spain, which so often has historically been described as culturally, materially, and politically decadent by both Spanish and non-Spanish intellectuals, the Spaniards ability to philosophically reimagine and repurpose the various inherited foreign ideologies- like socialism, Marxism, anarchism, and republicanism- is exemplary. Socialist Second Republic Minister of Education, Fernando de los Rios, who was not a Marxist materialist, creatively views socialism through a romantic Christian lens. This perception by both contemporary and earlier 20th century historians is generally consistent towards many of the founding members of the PSOE. They are seen as being the primary party who advocated for realistic honesty and accountability in government and in the courts, since a majority of the parties to their left, and even the left within their own party at times, were more revolutionary and less conciliatory in nature.

⁴³ Goldner, 118.

⁴⁴ Marx does advocate for revolution by the proletariat. This much is obvious when reading his aptly titled work *On Revolution*. Marx states himself that the “proletariat can and must emancipate itself”, then goes on to describe how revolution can take various forms. In some places, violence is necessary and in others it can be achieved without bloodshed, all depending on the norms and culture of the nation.

⁴⁵ Finance Minister Indalecio Prieto for example, a socialist party member, had a long-standing relationship with Bilbao industrialists- which a true Marxist would have trouble reconciling. Manuel describes him as nominally a socialist, but Marxism held little meaning to him. Minister of Labor Francisco Largo Caballero, “the monk of the socialist party” was often labeled as a social-fascist by many communist news organs, critiquing his apparent hypocrisy. Anarcho-syndicalists and communists together also often targeted him for his “reformism.”

Anarcho-syndicalist newspaper *Solidad Obrera* stated that he “lacked all credibility and the people were presented with the ‘same old socialist *enchufista*’” [puppeteer or string puller].

Regionalism

Other parties formed around regionalist and separatist issues. Spain is a highly diverse country politically, culturally, and geographically, leading to a strong desire for autonomy by certain regions of Spain such as in Galicia, Basque Country, and Catalonia. All of these regions are geographically isolated from one another due to the numerous scarring mountain ranges that divide the peninsula. To highlight how secluded Spain and its regions are, one simply has to look at how Spain has the second highest average altitude in Europe after Switzerland.⁴⁶ Obvious diversity manifests itself into a desire for independent government becoming expressed in the formation of political parties and various working-class syndicates aimed at achieving this autonomy. These regionalist political parties and various syndicates and workers' unions would principally exhibit a single goal-oriented platform, such as autonomy for their region, thus making their cooperation difficult in the *Cortes* - especially when it came to building and maintaining coalitions.

Spain currently has more than 20 registered regionalist parties with the largest and most outspoken being from Catalonia and Basque Country whose platforms have always advocated greater independent governance. The current regionalist parties' affiliations with past parties during the Second Republic can be difficult to trace due to name changes, various coalitionings, and the overall suppression of regional cultures and politics by the Franco Regime after the Second Republic; but parties like the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) and the Esquerra Republicana de Catalonia which were formed during or prior to the Second Republic are still active and relevant today.

⁴⁶ *La Moncloa*, 2020.

Anarchism in Spain

The anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists were the most significant political force during the Second Republic, though they were not a political party, as the association's platforms were strictly anti-political. Most modern definitions of a political party say that it is a group of like-minded individuals who come together to exert political influence to affect policy, as well as coordinate to get certain individuals elected who will represent their constituency's ideals in government. The anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists were by far the greatest political force, but never sought to elect candidates of their own. Their leaders actively discouraged political participation, as an ideological cornerstone of anarchism was to tear down all political structures. Anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists believed in the necessity of revolution with the purpose of toppling political structures with more zeal than any Marxists in Spain at the time. The belief in the use of syndicates was especially prominent in Barcelona and throughout the rest of Catalonia.

One of three CNT (*Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*) leaders, Francisco Ascaso, put revolution above all else, evidenced in his statement before the Republic's first General Election of 1931, "'Let no one doubt that we will not achieve our aims until we create the revolution,'" and another of the three leaders, Miguel Abos states that "Anyone who believes that in depositing a piece of paper in a box he has fulfilled his duty to society is indulging in a crass error[...]. The electoral struggle is no more than a simple process whose sole and exclusive aim is the maintenance of a bourgeois regime."

⁴⁷ The overcoming of the bourgeois regime was the ultimate goal for all anarchists, while many socialists followed the path of political reformism. The two instances when the

⁴⁷ Kelsey, 129.

anarchists cast their votes in national elections were in order to keep the extreme right from gaining power in the elections of 1931 and 1936.

Anarchism finds its roots in the theorizing of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Mikhail Bakunin. Proudhon, who lived during the first half of the 19th century, is primarily remembered for his theories on mutualism and its subsequent economic systems. Mutualism is the socialist/anarchist economic theory that individuals should receive the direct value of their labor for what they produce, and that the entire economic system is based on free market principles with voluntary free exchange of goods amongst a community. Bakunin is seen as the father of much of the Anarchist political and social theory. The theories put forth by Bakunin evolved from Marx's own. Where Bakunin broke away from Marx was in the difference in opinion on the role of government. Bakunin believed that there should not be a central authority or even a local authority, but that each individual community and each individual should operate autonomously with no laws governing the populace.⁴⁸ This form of libertarian communism would operate in conjunction with Proudhonian mutualist economics.

Bakunin's reason for breaking away from Marx was his belief that any dictatorship of the proletariat would be no different than a dictatorship of singular individual. The belief that revolution by the proletariat was necessary and inescapable was held by both theorists. The electoral struggle is no more than a simple process whose sole and exclusive aim is the maintenance of a bourgeois regime" and "Let no one doubt that we will not achieve our aims until we create the revolution".⁴⁹ It was this exact revolutionary rhetoric that put anarchist groups at constant odds with whatever political

⁴⁸ Manuel, 1938.

⁴⁹ Kelsey, 129.

party was in power, whether that be the socialists/leftists, centrist republicans, or conservatives.

Anarchism was very successful in Spain, parts of Italy and Eastern Europe. The places where the ideology was most welcomed were those that had large peasant classes, had a lack of industrial development, and where the populations were relatively isolated from each other and from a central government. Spain fit these criteria perfectly for many historical reasons, which were described more in depth previously. In a country like Spain where only 20% of the populace were landowners, there existed hundreds of thousands of landless day laborers with little contact or experience with any kind of central governing authority, aside from their own landlord or *cacique*. The only urban centers that were relatively industrialized were Bilbao in the north, Barcelona in the north east, and Madrid to a smaller extent in the middle of the country.

The isolation of Spanish communities in Central and Southern Spain, sequestered either in the mountains or huddled together for safety and protection amongst the great dry plains, creates the perfect environment for anarchist ideology to spread. When the civil war broke out in 1936, it was these communities that established and maintained their anarchist libertarian communistic societies until the end of the war in 1939. The substantial presence of anarchist groups in Spain and their subsequent impacts on the nation's political development is unique amongst Western nations as well as unique globally. Goldner asserts that just as the Russian Revolution is historically viewed as the litmus test for "Leninism, if not Marxism itself", the Spanish Civil War and the Spanish

Revolution in 1936 is viewed as the first and only prolonged and maintained experiment with Proudhonian Bakuninist conceptualized anarchism.⁵⁰

Syndicalism

Though anarchism found a home in Spain, it did not exist in a vacuum. It was constantly being influenced by outside forces and ideologies such as socialism and syndicalism. Syndicalism was a late 19th century French importation which advocated for a society based on trade unions alone.⁵¹ Other 19th and 20th century anarchist theorists included Peter Kropotkin who, like many syndicalists, believed in a society without a central government but organized around voluntary worker run enterprises.⁵² Both syndicalism and anarchism held antipolitical views. It was not simply that neither wanted a certain political party or candidate in power, but that they were against any form of government whatsoever. Syndicalism flourished primarily in industrialized urban environments that also held close French connections, such as in Catalonia.

Anarchists and syndicalists would come together in Spain to form anarcho-syndicalist trade unions with anarchist principles and ideologies with syndicalist structures. The decentralization preached by anarchism and accepted in the countryside was able to reach the cities through the focus on worker organization, while the laborers in rural areas were given systems and paths to greater organization which previously did not exist. Pure anarchism is counter cooperative, making it difficult to achieve far reaching change. Syndicalism provided that vital component that allowed for those who professed anarchist ideals to effect greater change through large scale organization. The

⁵⁰ Goldner, 118.

⁵¹ Manuel, 1938.

⁵² Goldner, 2016.

primary anarcho-syndicalist trade union was the CNT (*Confederación Nacional de Trabajo*) which by the time of the Second Republic had over a million registered members.

From a pure numbers standpoint, the CNT was by far the largest association of workers in Spain. By 1936 the UGT would come close to equaling the membership of the CNT and about 2 million workers were registered to either one of the organizations, roughly a quarter of the entire Spanish male workforce. While the socialist parties are seen by many historians as being the best honest shot at social change, some like Kelsey see groups like the CNT as undoubtedly being “chief among the groups on the left of the Spanish political spectrum which, from the middle of 1931, were beginning to agitate for social and economic reforms.”⁵³ With anarchists being usually radically anti-political and syndicalists being moderately anti-political, the anarcho-syndicalist CNT in a couple instances did encourage political participation. The utter size and strength of the CNT would, at times, force it to bring its membership to participate in some selective elections as a means to keep what they saw as more dangerous politicians from taking control of the government. Although they were against all parties simultaneously, there were still many right-wing groups that they were more against.

Communism in Spain

The anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists were not the solitary groups to the left of the PSOE and the other socialist parties. Communist ideology, support, and propaganda drastically increased in Spain leading up to and during the civil war. The populace was basically forced to pick a side between the communists and the fascists, but before war

⁵³ Kelsey, 1991.

broke out, they remained politically irrelevant.⁵⁴ In the 1931 municipal elections the various communist parties received around 67 votes out of the more than 80,000 available. Just like the anarchists, the communists had a Marxist perception of history and saw the growing divide between societal classes as a result of capitalism, thus believing revolution was a necessary means to an end. The Third International in 1919 and the initial establishment of Comintern had little impact on the politics and parties in Spain as the Prime Minister Primo de Rivera heavily suppressed Communist propaganda and organizing during the 1920's. The PCE, *Partido Comunista de España*, was founded in 1921 when the extreme left of the PSOE wanted to remain committed to the Third International, against the wishes of a majority of the party.⁵⁵

From the beginning, the communists in Spain were militant minded, much like anarchism was in the 19th century. After 1921 the communist party in Bilbao surpassed Barcelona (home of anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists) for the most acts of violence per capita.⁵⁶ Only once war broke out in the 1930s and the Spanish government began to receive ample political and military support from the Soviet Union did the acceptance and perpetuation of communism begin to rise exponentially. Goldner asserts that the scared middle classes fled to [the communist parties] due to the impact of "Soviet money, weapons, and NKVD advisors". The NKVD were a Soviet agency tasked with advising the Spanish government forces and increasing communist sympathies. Before the civil war, the PCE found its main constituency amongst the miners in Asturias and the industrial centers of Basque Country.⁵⁷ Other independent communist parties were

⁵⁴ Crow, 326.

⁵⁵ Manuel, 1938.

⁵⁶ Payne, 269-288.

⁵⁷ Manuel, 1938.

founded in different areas of Spain, like the POUM- *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*- in Catalonia, who disagreed with comintern and Stalinism. Unity amongst the communist parties was no more present than in any other party or coalition in Spain at the time and will be further explained in the succeeding chapter. POUM claimed to be the native communist party of Spain while the other communist parties had more apparent international connections and influences.⁵⁸

The majority of this paper will center on the parties to the left of the political spectrum as the right has been heavily investigated and written about, due to the rise of Franco, and there did not exist any identifiably concrete set centrist parties that had much of a lasting impact. Many of the republican, socialist, communist, and anarchist parties that were outlawed, repressed, or exterminated by the Franco regime have been relatively ignored, and their impacts on the contemporary Spanish political climate have been minimized or outright forgotten. The political situation of the Second Republic cannot, however, be aptly understood without addressing the right-wing parties and their involvement in the government as well as their role in its disintegration.

The Spanish Political Right

The most relevant and famous of all conservative rightist factions was the fascist Falange party (FE de las JONS), as it was to be the sole party during the Franco regime. It was founded by Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera, the son of former dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera. Before the Falange party, there were plenty of conservative groups that all were more or less based around ensuring national unity, restoring the monarchy, and protecting private property. Above all else rightist groups were united by their desire for

⁵⁸ Junco, 1999.

Spain to remain a Catholic nation and for the church to have an intimate role in society. Conservative parties and coalitions such as CEDA (*Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas*), the Carlist Traditionalist Communion, and *Renovación Española* believed themselves to be the saviors of Catholicism.

Unity amongst monarchists was also non-existent during the Second Republic. Carlists, who desired a monarch from one side of the Bourbon lineage, were openly hostile at times to the *Renovación Española* led by Calvo Sotelo, who sought for the currently exiled Alfonso XIII to be reinstated as king. What would separate the monarchists, traditionalists, and Catholic parties from more openly fascist parties like the Falange is their desire to maintain a parliamentary government while Falangists wanted a fascist state. Gil Robles, the founder of CEDA and *Acción Popular*, was known to go to Nazi rallies in Nuremberg, Germany and implemented many fascist-like rallies in Spain. Gil Robles intended for CEDA to be a center party for those to gather who felt disenfranchised by the socialists and republicans.⁵⁹ The party claimed to be the defender of Christianity, family, values, law and order, and property and its main constituency was middle class Christians and northern small landowners.⁶⁰

A Center for the Centrists

Leading up to the civil war Spain was of course heavily polarized. While growth was experienced greatest towards the fringes of the left and the right, Spanish politics still exhibited a large array of left-center and right-center parties. Most of the center parties were made up of intellectuals, lawyers, and other middle class well-informed constituents. Sadly, most of Spain was not privy to much of the information surrounding

⁵⁹ Manuel, 1938.

⁶⁰ Kerry, 2020.

political parties and their ideologies as the illiteracy rate at the end of the 19th century was around 75% and during the Second Republic the percentage of the population that was literate remained around 32%.⁶¹ Thus, the majority of the workers and day laborers in Spain would find themselves drifting to the extremes of the political spectrum. The only significant truly centrist party was the Radical Republicans lead by Alejandro Lerroux. Often simply called the “Radicals,” the party was made up primarily of Catholic conservatives who did not support monarchist politics. The Radicals were viewed as centrist at first but would find themselves moving further to the right as they were looked down upon by many on the left. Opportunist and tractable were often used to describe the party and Lerroux. Radicals would further alienate themselves from leftists as they rejected any laws put forth by the socialists unless the socialists were removed from certain cabinet positions when the PSOE and republican parties were in power and socialists continually refused to have any coalition with the Radicals.⁶²

A lot of the votes for Radical Republican candidates in the various elections were of course from landowners, industrial entrepreneurs, and other establishment types. Many conservative parties did surprisingly well in rural districts where *caciquismo* or small proprietorship dominated. The socialists and anarchists were extremely successful in the countryside and rural places as that is where the disproportions between rich and poor were the most apparent. This is no surprise as Marx states that “where the worker dominates, the International is bound to strike strong roots,” “international” referring to the socialist and Marxist efforts at worker unification.⁶³ In the general elections of 1931,

⁶¹ Fox, 1999.

Frago, 1990.

⁶² Manuel, 1938.

⁶³ Marx, 64.

1933, and 1936 the socialist/PSOE stronghold were the Southern Spanish regions of Extremadura, Andalusia, and the southern half of Castilla-La Mancha. In most nonurban locations people rarely saw any benefits of republicanism or any actual representatives of the government in Madrid, so they would vote for monarchists and Catholics in municipal elections.

The parties discussed are not an exhaustive list. There are dozens of parties all across the political spectrum, and all impacted the Second Republic in unique ways. The number of small regional parties elected to the *Cortes* would be significant; incidentally, their singularly envisioned platforms and lack of effort and attention towards national issues outside of their regional constituency would manifest their own set of problems, adding to the overall disfunction of the Republic. How the nation would physically divide itself politically is based on historical events and cultural traditions that created drastic political plurality and diversity which was perpetually addressed with force from the central government. Even though so many of the political parties had genuine intentions to change the country and its social structures for the better, the lack of compromise between factions meant that those in power were either never given a chance to implement significant change or they fell into the old establishment practices and enforced the status quo to keep themselves in power.

Chapter 4: The Second Republic

A New Government

The birth of the Second Republic (1931-1936) came about once the monarchy and Catholic Church reached their nadir in Spanish society and the social movements of 20th century Europe finally penetrated the Pyrenees into the repressive feudalistic social structures of the nation. The waning power of authoritarian structures in Spain, whether it be the Church, or the Crown or the Nobility, allowed for a greater dissemination of social movements such as anarchism, socialism, and republicanism. Increases in communications like telegraphs and railroads transported the messages of societal change to the very heart of Castilian Spain. King Alfonso XIII gambled the monarchy on military victory in the conquest of Morocco but failed miserably, thus losing much of the nation's faith in the military and the monarchy.

Alfonso quickly declared Miguel Primo de Rivera the President of the Cabinet of Ministers, effectively making Rivera the dictator in 1923. Spain had been operating as a pseudo-constitutional regime since the constitution of 1876, allowed by Alfonso II after the Third Carlist War (1872-1876) and the Bourbon Restoration (1874-1931), as was referenced in the previous chapter. Primo de Rivera would remain in power until he stepped down in 1930. His successor, Dámaso Berenguer, was ill suited to run a government and gave up his position as well in 1931.

Alfonso, as an escape, allowed for his cabinet to call for municipal (local community) elections for the first time in Spain in April of 1931. The results represented an overwhelming victory for the republicans.⁶⁴ There was no official declaration of the

⁶⁴ Anuario Estadístico de España, 1931.

establishment of the republic by the king or his parliament, as the king fled into exile without abdicating the throne. A conference of individuals representing various republican and socialist political parties and ideologies met in San Sebastian before the election, and they came to be known as the “San Sebastian Coalition.”

With the king gone, the San Sebastian Coalition, made up of republicans and socialists, basically declared itself and its members as the interim provisional government and cabinet until national elections could be held, and a constitution could be written. Crow does contest in his work, *Spain the Root and the Flower*, that the election was not as one sided as many portray it. The numbers as presented by the *Anuario Estadístico de España*, which match up with the data Crow provides, show the republicans and socialists with the clear majority, but the vote count is split on the right into monarchist and “other.” This category of “other” is primarily conservative votes which would mostly align with the monarchist platform, but the political and societal right had little time to organize, unite, and coalition as they were still reeling from the abruptness of the entire political ordeal. Therefore, the combined monarchist tallies with the “other” and the number of monarchist/conservative local representatives is much closer to equaling that of the republicans and socialists. The election result data, when looked at in this manner, portrays a country split almost in half instead of overwhelming in support of one side (Appendix B for table).

Notable individuals in the provisional government include: Provisional President and Prime Minister Alcala Zamora, Minister of the Interior Miguel Maura, Minister of War Manuel Azaña, Minister of Foreign Affair Alejandro Lerroux, Minister of Labor Francisco Largo Caballero, Minister of Justice Fernando de los Rios, and the Minister of

Finance Indalecio Prieto.⁶⁵ These individuals play major roles in the developments of the Second Republic and its institutions. The next six years are split into three parts by contemporary historians, the First Biennium or the Reformist Period (1931-1933), the Second Biennium or Conservative Control (1933-1935), and then the Popular Front Period (1936).

The Spanish Constitution of 1931

The provisional government set out to draft a constitution as its main declared purpose. The liberal and leftist delegates formed a constitutional committee, they planned to pass a constitution in the Cortes and then have a “proper” election under its newly established authority. The unicameral parliament set up by the constitution passed the constitutional draft in December. The new constitution retained the unicameral parliament and declared Spain a republic with delegates running for election in certain regions and being voted on through universal suffrage once individuals are over the age of 23. There was to be a President, with an appointed cabinet, who can dismiss the Cortes and call for reelections at any time. There was also a prime minister who more directly handles the affairs of the Cortes and was usually the representative of the majority party and is appointed by the President.

The Spanish Constitution of 1931 is one of the most interesting and unique in Europe. Within this document there resides characteristics of classic 18th and 19th century liberalism meshed with bits and pieces of *The Rights of Man*, references to Marxist class struggle, and other various “socializing tendencies.”⁶⁶ The reason for the constitution exhibiting such varying characteristics is that in the 19th and 20th centuries Spain found

⁶⁵ Manuel, 1938.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 69.

itself flooded by all kinds of social and political movements and ideologies. For centuries there were two primary motivators for why Spain was not concerned with the social and political developments of the rest of Western Europe- colonial expansion and the governance of authoritarian theocratic monarchies. The pursuit of colonial expansion, focusing on the extraction of overseas mineral wealth in the Americas, played a major role in distracting the Spanish government from having to deal with its own issues of land improvement, political reform, and industrial development; meanwhile, the authoritarian rule of the Hapsburgs, Bourbons, and Papacy (through the Counter Reformation and its ties to the state)- that for centuries isolated the peninsula- kept many societally pivotal events and ideas from crossing the Pyrenees. Movements such as the Reformation, Scientific Revolution, Enlightenment, and Industrial Revolution circulating throughout Europe since the 16th century, passively meandering across the Pyrenees, suddenly experienced an opening of the flood gates due to the unstable and weak monarchy in the century leading up to the Second Republic.

It was this classical liberalism that finally made its way into a lasting constitution, as there existed a few previous liberal constitutions in the 1800s that never lasted longer than a month to a couple years. Societal leaders and intellectuals had been attempting to implement progressive governing structures primarily since the Peninsular War and the imprisonment of king Ferdinand VII in 1808. Their ideology throughout the 19th century, the same ideology that inspired the creation of Spain's first constitution- The Constitution of Cadiz in 1812 (one of the first constitutions in the world), remained present in the centrist parties of the Second Republic. Just as I am arguing in this thesis for the relevance and impact on Spanish politics of the Second Republic, the same can be said of

the 19th century Spanish liberalism that lived on in the parties of the Republic. What was liberal one hundred years prior, now was considered centrist due to the developments of drastically more progressive and left leaning economic and social theories like Marxism, communism, and anarchism.

The Second Republic was heavily shaped by its political parties, and those parties were heavily shaped by the political ideologies that spread throughout the rest of Europe. Parties like Niceto Alcalá Zamora and Miguel Maura's *Derecha Liberal Republicana* (Liberal Republican Right) were more similar to the past century's liberals than they were to the other parties in their own republican- socialists coalition. Zamora and Maura still had a high regard for the Catholic faith, which was a stark contrast to almost every other party leader in the coalition on the left. They were only against the monarchy because of how anti-republican and anti-liberal the king had been. If the king and his appointed dictators had not heavily suppressed all republican and liberal thought and expression, Zamora and many other center republicans may well have been on the right.⁶⁷ Parties like Zamora's attracted the bourgeoisie middle class, industrial capitalists, and some landed Catholic non-monarchist segments of society due to their emphasis on classic liberal tenets such as inalienable rights of individuals, freedom of religion, separation of church and state, freedom of the press, and views on the protection of private property. Because of the repression by the monarchy and military during the 19th century, these platforms of liberalism were a hundred years late in relation to when they were argued over and implemented in other Western nations. The ability for political, social, and/or general ideological movements to resist eradication or antiquation,

⁶⁷ Malefakis, 163.

throughout the passage of time in Spain is fascinating and deserves more in-depth analysis in a possible future work.

Constitutional references to Marxism and socialism vary greatly in degree throughout the document as there were frequent absences by a large majority of the Cortes throughout its drafting process. Manuel makes a critical analysis stating, “scholars and intellectuals who leave their writing desks for the sake of the nation are apt to be soft fools and part-time revolutionaries.”⁶⁸ The “part-time assertion” holds true in regard to attendance during parliamentary and committee sessions, but the constitution itself is a fascinating compilation of earnestly held ideologies, morals, and tenets spanning a vast political spectrum due to the *Cortes* and drafting committees’ sporadic constituency. Even if the deputies were determined and disciplined enough to attend proceedings regularly, the inconsistency and fallibility of the elections and the constant censure by political oppositions kept a revolving door of representatives and cabinet members.

While the Spanish Constitution of 1931 is most definitely a patchwork or hodgepodge of different ideologies, it is precisely representative of the Spanish nation itself. Throughout my research I found constant references to Spain as being a country trapped in antiquity; ensnared in its Golden Age governing structures, theocracy, and literature of the 16th and 17th centuries, a modern country that cannot escape its past and achieve material or political progress. The constitution was the result of a land and people experiencing a polymorphic political amalgamation of absolutist monarchical beliefs and Enlightenment, 19th, and 20th century political theories. Crow’s view in the *Root and the*

⁶⁸ Manuel, 1938.

Flower coincides as he, in a literary fashion, associates the political promises and guarantees spouted by the progressive parties in power with Spain's most famous Golden Age literary work, *Don Quixote*. "Don Quixote had returned again to Spain, and was riding his undernourished nag across the desolate wasteland, shouting his redemption of the nation."⁶⁹

An example of the, at times, Frankenstein nature of the 1931 constitution is witnessed in its first articles. Article One states that "Spain is a democratic republic of workers of all classes, organized under a regime of Freedom and Justice."⁷⁰ Outright the vernacular identifies itself as both republican/liberal and Marxist. Democratic republic and freedom and justice are tenets from the republican classically liberal majority that existed in the first *Cortes*. The character of constitution changes with references to "workers of all class" and "organized under a regime." Marx was a strong advocate for worker unification as a way to eventually break down class barriers and this rhetoric is an obvious allusion to that ideology. The first article is not necessarily oxymoronic as it does not state that Spain will be a republic under Marxist principles or anything similar. There are simply bones being thrown to the more radical left of the republican-socialists coalition with these Marxist references and terminology. The end goal and result of Marx's political, economic, and historical theories are the establishment of communism in which no central state is necessary, which would directly contradict the labeling of the government as a democratic republic. Republicans and non-Marxist socialists, of which there were many as discussed previously, did believe in the necessity of some kind of central governing authority with no intention of eventually doing away with it; whereas

⁶⁹ Crow, 309.

⁷⁰ Const. of the Rep. of Spain., pt. 1-3, art. 1-50, Drafted: 1931.

in Marxism, at first there was to be the rule of the proletariat through a powerful central state- in a quite authoritarian manner as “organized under a regime” insinuates- in order to suppress possible bourgeois rebellion with the hopeful eventual creation of a communistic society without the need for government.

The socialist and communist parties influenced other articles in the constitution as well, such as in Articles 44 and 46 they express socialist platforms. They describe the government’s ability to nationalize any property they see fit and continually include terms like “socially useful” and “socially benefitting,” Article 46 states that “Work, in its various forms, is a social obligation...” implying that old mutualistic doctrine, where in order to achieve a mutually beneficent society, as socialists aspired, everyone must be an active participant in supporting that society.

An intriguing insight to the constitution that further convolutes and highlights its ideological patchwork is how the first reference to “property” is not even in reference to the classical liberals “right to private property,” or the socialists’ emphasis on the necessity to expropriate property from the bourgeois. The first mention of property is directed at the church and its nationalization, which is a tenet not directly associated with the socialist or Marxist left, but primarily with the leftist republicans like Azaña. The anti-religious, or more aptly anti-Catholic, segments of the constitution came from the primarily socialist left side of the coalition as well as a surprising number of center/center-left republicans. The two primordial causes for the Spanish Civil War in

1936 were land distribution/proprietorship and the anti-church legislation of the Second Republic.⁷¹

Article 14 lists the responsibilities of the Spanish state, with the first duty out of eighteen being the creation of a constitution and the delegation and upholding of constitutional rights, which makes logical sense. The very next duty listed at number 2- is the responsibility of the state to separate church and state. This duty is listed ahead of organizing national defense at 7th, monetary systems and management of banking at 12th, and the general treasury of the state at 17th.

Article 26 lays out the path that church-state dissolution would occur. It states that all religious confessions shall be considered associations subject to a special law, it abolishes state allotment for the clergy (a more contemporarily liberal moderate stance), and declares that any religious order shall be dissolved whose statutes impose another special pledge of obedience to an authority other than the legitimate authority of the state. While many of the cited authors throughout my research intersect on the belief that these anti-church measures were unnecessary and superfluous, creating more government resentment than anything, we shouldn't be surprised as liberals all over Europe and Latin America held anti-church sentiments due to its dominant role in their societies. These anti-clerical articles caused Niceto Alcalá Zamora, Miguel Maura, and many other deputies to resign or change party alignment as they themselves were devoted Catholics. From this point on the Left would only shift further left with no new centrist leaning parties joining the coalition.

⁷¹ For further in-depth research on the historical reasonings for the condition of land distribution, proprietorship, and its societal impacts in Spain read Edward E. Malefakis. *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain: Origins of the Civil War* (Yale University Press, 1970).

The delegates' biases are quite clear during the creation of this document as a whole. Since the overall spirit of the constitution was quite reflective of its creators, close to 50% of the population of Spain was left feeling alienated because of their Catholic faith. The 1931 municipal elections showed about 40-50% voted monarchist, which at this time is synonymous with being Catholic.^{72 73} During the 1933 election, when conservative parties were given a legitimate chance to organize after the sudden departure of the king and the immediate takeover by the San Sebastian Coalition, CEDA (the primary conservative party) won 115 seats and was the majority party- matching the "landslide" victory by the PSOE in 1931 who won 116. CEDA was a conservative party under the leadership of Gil Robles and in their platform, they state their purpose to be the defenders of the "Catholic Christian religion." The popular vote in the 1936 election was 4,654,116 for the left and 4,503,524 for the right, showing an almost complete even split with views on protecting the traditional Catholic faith being the principal motivator of the rights' votes.⁷⁴

The apparent disconnect between the constitution and the wishes of the average Spaniard can be attributed to the makeup of the deputies to the Cortes. The constitution was written by intellectuals who spent their time not amongst the masses, but in salons of other privileged and esteemed writers and aristocratic politicians. Out of the 282 left delegates elected during the 1931 general election, only 24 were considered "working

⁷² The church and the state had for centuries been mutually reinforcing and essentially synonymous when it comes to their role in government. In the early 20th century if one supported the monarchy, they were almost by default a Catholic as well, since the monarchy enforced traditional Catholic values and dogma almost always. There are plenty of Catholics however that were either fascistic or republican and did not support monarchy.

⁷³ Crow, 1985.

⁷⁴ Crow, 1985.

Dailey, 2012.

men”, the other 258 were lawyers, doctors, and professors.⁷⁵ We have already discussed the almost caste like classism apparent throughout the country due to Spain’s semi-feudalistic and semi-capitalistic society, which creates lords and ruling classes both from the landed gentry and the industrial bourgeois. The lack of urbanization ensured vast geographic space between individuals of differing classes as well. A vast majority of the people did not wish for the mass church burnings that were to occur immediately following the constitution’s passing and continuing on throughout the duration of the Republic, but the rhetoric of those in ministerial positions in the Cortes was responsible for much of it. The most in touch, able, and level-headed politicians more often than not were elected to powerless positions. Alcalá Zamora was widely respected by both sides of the aisle as a man of character and tact, but multiple times was elected President, a mostly ceremonial position, leaving more polarizing and agenda driven individuals like Manuel Azaña, Largo Caballero, Lerroux, or Gil Robles to create and pass actual legislation.

Propaganda and Violence During the Second Republic

Propaganda and violence, though separate matters, usually are mutually reinforcing and emanate from one another. Political and labor violence due to general societal and economic unrest were nothing new to Spain in the 1930s. During the first years of the republic, anarchist violence was still as prevalent as it had been from 1890-1921, subsiding some once Primo de Rivera took charge. Destabilizing the government was the anarchists goal no matter which party or ideology was in power. The less authoritarian and repressive the governmental regime the more individual *atentados*

⁷⁵ Ibid, 1985.

(killings), terroristic attacks, and planned strikes occurred- as was the result during the Second Republic. Contemporary historian, Stanley G. Payne, does not generally term the motives and actions by anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists in the early 20th century as terroristic, but instead states that the anarchist are perpetrating “selective political homicides” surrounded by general lesser acts of violence.⁷⁶ No matter who’s in power, the Second Republic under republicans, socialists, and conservatives, utilized objectively excessive military police forces like the Civil and Assault Guards to quell unrest equally if not more so than the previous authoritarian regimes. Acts of political violence had become so prevalent in fact that the CNT’s own publication, *Solidaridad Obrera*, published an article on April 22, 1930 pleading for restraint of its own members. Entitled “Its Time to Stop” the article called upon CNT and FAI organizational committees to earnestly announce “that they are absolutely opposed to a return to individual *atentados* [killings], a procedure that is completely inefficient in material order and in the moral order renders abhorrent those who resort to such tactics”.⁷⁷

The impact of media and its pivotal role in modern politics is well understood. Exponentially less demonstrated and comprehended is the manner in which media and propaganda impacted the political elections of nearly a century ago. The use of propaganda in Spain in the 1930’s was ubiquitous. From the anarchists on the extreme left to the fascists on the extreme right, every party and corresponding ideology had its own newspaper, journal, or regular bulletin. The Spanish papers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries are the golden age of reporting in Spain, and the objective standard of journalism worldwide due to their extensive reporting and their impetus for holding

⁷⁶ Payne, 271.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 271.

politicians accountable. With each ideological facet of society having a connected media source there, of course, exists plenty of bias in many of the publications, but the political and social affiliations of those papers were not kept hidden, and the vast number of publications allows for a comprehensive view of Spanish society at the time. Bias in this case is not connoting that the newspapers' information was wrong or deceitful (though at times this did occur), as all journalists and reporters came from a specific context and retained a point of view, this bias does not make their work inherently wrong. The same clarification should be made about propaganda. A common misconception is that propaganda is inherently false. This, too, is not the case. It simply has an agenda or message it seeks to convince the audience of.⁷⁸

Just as Spain was the proving ground militarily for the USSR, Germany, and Italy, it was also the testing site for their ideologies and for examining the methods by which those ideologies could best be spread and societally retained. Leftist and rightist propaganda thus received ample financial support from those same nations. Germany and Italy for example would sponsor conservative parties and their media outlets to spread awareness of either the dangers of communism and socialism, or they would publicize newspapers, poster, or pamphlets advocating the hope that lies in traditionalism, monarchism, or nationalism. The vast numbers of strikes, riots, revolts, and overall apparent lawlessness under the subsequent administrations provided the political right for the next three to four years the opportunity to heavily ramp up its propaganda campaigns and ensure that the public was made aware of every atrocity committed under the

⁷⁸ Stanley, 2015.

oppositions watch, often accompanied by consistent exaggeration.⁷⁹ Alongside actual visible disorder, there existed conjured events precipitated by right wing insurgents that were made to appear as if rampant leftist anarchy was flooding the media.⁸⁰ Conservative political groups benefit from the transient lawlessness, as it sways public opinion in their favor, convincing many to adhere to their calls for a return to traditional Spanish-Catholic societal values under the guidance of the church, or a return to monarchical and/or fascistic governing structures as they were “obviously” the only forms of government that could bring order and unity to such a turbulent nation in need of strong handed unification.

The right was increasingly successful in their propaganda as their message of unity is an intrinsic aspect amongst the ideographs surrounding the church, the monarchy, and the nation. Basically stating, these concepts themselves are easily recognizable symbols for strength, peace, and unity which is what the conservative constituencies desired most. Essentially, they sought a return to some exalted reminiscent status quo. CEDA and the right in general were substantially more well-funded than the leftist parties, as it was the party of the established wealthy and the property owners.⁸¹ The media campaigns they thus put out were extensive and achieved great results in the elections of 1933 and 1936.⁸²

⁷⁹ Manuel, 1938.

Kelsey, 1991.

Kerry, 2020.

⁸⁰ Crow, 1985.

⁸¹ Kerry, 181-208.

⁸² The elections of 1936 were hotly contested. The conservatives lost but there was a plethora of voter fraud claims, which is supported and evidenced by many historians.

Anarchist and communist propaganda were extremely successful in urban areas.⁸³ The purpose and role of propaganda during the Second Republic can be hard to discern. As Giana Padden, a former Greenville University honors student, stated in her thesis over women's roles in propaganda and the Spanish War, propaganda was often times a form of art, or an ideograph, that necessitates interpretation and can mean different things to different people.⁸⁴ Propaganda was not solely used by the right to attack the left or for the left to attack the right but was also used to leech support away from those parties and organizations on the same side of the political spectrum. When Miguel Primo de Rivera resigned, within two weeks the CNT organized two propaganda tours in the region of Aragon as a result of the threat of UGT growth/support which had been legalized under Rivera. The PSOE and the UGT cooperated with the government under Rivera in the 1920s, leaving a sour taste in the mouths of the communists and anarchists throughout the existence of the Second Republic. The growth of trade unions in general, but especially by the CNT in the 1920s and 1930s, Kelsey attributes to the increasing polarization of the country, but the use of propaganda tours and printed media can easily be partially credited with the growth of these organizations and their corresponding political parties as well.⁸⁵

The First Biennium, The Left in Power 1931-1933

The general elections held in June before the constitution was drafted showed a clear republican-socialist majority in the Cortes. But the electoral laws that were utilized at the time heavily discriminated the vote count in favor of large coalitions. Under the

⁸³ Kelsey, 1991.

⁸⁴ Padden, 2017.

⁸⁵ Kelsey, 21.

electoral law put into effect by the San Sebastian Coalition, however slim the margin of victory, the triumphant party would come out with 75% of the seats from that district. The right, barely having time to react to the new change in government, were left scattered and disunited. The popular vote remained close to 50% on both sides, but due to the arcane and unfair electoral laws, an over representation by leftist candidates skewed the government. Democratic as the general election of 1931 was, women were still not allowed to vote, though they would be in the next two in 1933 and 1936, but they could run for office. Even after the election there was a lengthy process of annulling ballots and certain elections for specific candidates repeatedly came under question. Ballots would be re-cast and recounted while various elections in some parts of the country were held again until by October the representation was more or less cemented (Crow, 1985).

With the constitution passed, elections should have been held immediately following, but due to the fear of a monarchist or anarchist revolt, the delegates of the Cortes chose to keep the current government (under heavy influence by the ministers) until elections would be held again in 1933. *El Debate* and *El Sol* newspapers quoted Azaña, the Prime Minister and leader of the Republican Action party, declaring that the current Cortes should stay in session in order to ensure that the new republic has a “leftist leaning.”⁸⁶ It would be easy to see statements like this and criticize the politicians for being biased or underhanded, but that would be myself casting the first stone as all countries have sought means to stability during trying times in whatever way they sought fit. Azaña and many in the republican-socialist coalition believed the best way to unify Spain and bring decent living standards to its people was through their chosen political

⁸⁶ “LA SESIÓN DE AYER EN LA CÁMARA,” *El Sol*, September 9th 1931.

ideology, whether that be socialism or liberal republicanism, in contrast to the other possibility that they could be staying in power for power's sake.

Groups with opposing ideological platforms inhabiting the same space was not necessarily the most detrimental inhibitor to reconciliation. The outright refusal to capitulate to any other parties' government that was not their own, and the personalist egocentric culture of Spanish politics was the greatest pitfall. Weber explains that before the elections of 1936, "the leader of the Spanish Socialist Party, the leader of the National Monarchy Bloc, the leader of the Communist Party, and the Anarchists all publicly affirmed that they would respect the results of the elections if they won, but never – loud applause- if they lost."⁸⁷ To say a government or nation cannot succeed because of irreconcilable political views is quite fair, but they can persevere. In the case of Spain and the Second Republic, the refusal to compromise or even adhere to any authority outside their own would be the rationale for the decades-long fascist dictatorship to follow.

As a hypothetical, imagine if the United States had peacefully broken away from Great Britain and then attempted to form a government, instead of a violent revolution. The people and leaders in the American colonies, just as in Spain, were not all anti-monarchists and so many did not even agree on what type of government would be the most appropriate. The revolution forced a majority of the monarchists out, leaving squabbling over federalists or anti-federalists to predominate. The situation in Spain was much more similar to a hypothetical U.S. where the colonies would have been forced to reconcile and compromise with politicians and constituencies who would have been incredibly against a federal republic. Spain was convulsing with instability and Azaña

⁸⁷ Harrison, 52.

and many other republicans and socialists believed that a change in leadership now could result in widespread unrest. Only history can judge whether or not it was the correct decision.

With Alcalá Zamora as the President and Azaña as the Prime Minister, politization only worsened. Anti-clericalism became as integral to being a member of the left as being Catholic was to being on the political right. Azaña made enemies on the left and the right as his anti-clericalism knew no bounds. Stating in *El Debate y El Sol* “Spain has ceased being Catholic”, thus alienating the right, and his censorship of Communist and Anarchist newspapers critical of his government as well as his administration’s continual backing of industrialists during worker strikes, alienated those on the left.⁸⁸ Signed into law was the prohibiting of burial in “religious” cemeteries or donation of money or property to the church unless specifically outlined in the departed’s will. Nine out of ten Spaniards died without a will, essentially barring the church from serving a primary purpose and not allowing priests or the property to have any involvement with an individual’s afterlife.⁸⁹

Though religious laws were some of the most controversial, they were not the only legislation passed. There was ample education, land, worker, and military reform legislated between 1931 and 1933. Historians, such as Crow, regarded the greatest achievement of the Second Republic to be its education initiatives.⁹⁰ The first prerogative was to secularize the educational system from the church which exclusively retained the rights to educate the youth of the nation for centuries. The first Minister of Education in

⁸⁸ El Sol, Sep. 9th, 1931.

⁸⁹ Crow, 311.

⁹⁰ Crow, 1985.

1931, Marcelino Domingo, founded around 3,000 secular schools and his successor Fernando de Los Rios established 7,000.⁹¹ The funding and stability of these schools, of course, was sporadic, as those of the compulsory school age of six to twelve: 58.4 percent attended school in 1908 and only 56.6 percent in 1934, but the utter quantity and scale by which the education system was restructured and established in such a short time speaks volumes to the determination of the ministers.⁹²

Socialists were heavily involved in the government of the Second Republic without question. They were an integral part of the republican-socialist coalition and one of the most stable and enduring political parties in Spain's history. Just as there was debate amongst anarchists over whether or not to be involved in politics, even if to achieve a desired ideological goal, the socialists found themselves struggling with the same question in their own party. Julián Besteiro, the President of the PSOE until 1931 and of the UGT until 1934 stated "If we remain in power, in the long run we either allow ourselves to be taken advantage of by others or we have to exercise a strong hand and become dictators. And I fear a Socialist dictatorship more than a bourgeois dictatorship. We could defend ourselves from the alter; with the former we would ourselves be committing suicide."⁹³ Besteiro was afraid that Spain was not ready for a socialist revolution and that if the socialists continued working in government their politics would become diluted by having to work with other more maligned parties. They would be taken advantage of, essentially. He was afraid of the party's socialism being tainted and

⁹¹ Ibid, 1985.

⁹² Kerry, 2020.

⁹³ Payne, 58.

also believed if their party was in power, they would become dictators trying to force a revolution on a country that was not ready for it.⁹⁴

As the only real working-class party, the socialists were responsible for passing ample pro-worker legislation. For example, Largo Caballero, the Minister of Labor, and Indalecio Prieto, the Minister of Public Works, pumped through a steady stream of decrees and reforms: Wage earners and soldiers were exempted from payment of the income tax, there was to be an eight hour workday and 48-hour work week as provisioned by the Washington International Labor Conference, and there were to be assessments of unworked and worked lands as well as worker accident compensation.⁹⁵ With labor grievances being one of the most prevalent social and economic issues of the time, *Comités Paritarios* were established to help resolve such disputes.⁹⁶ These were appointed committees of employees and employers established under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, and continued by the Second Republic. If workers had a grievance, rather than striking and rather than the employer violently breaking the strike, the workers or the employer would take their case to the *Comités Paritarios* who acted as a court set up to be the intermediary. The committees however lacked any teeth and therefore neither employees or employers adhered to or respected the *Comités Paritarios* authority. Along with these labor councils there were laws passed with protecting seasonal agricultural workers and other laborers from unfair hiring and firing practices, such as proprietors and leasers being restricted to hiring within specific regions known as *Terminos Municipales*. Even these and other proposed agrarian reforms were heavily

⁹⁴ Manuel, 1938.

⁹⁵ Crow, 1985.

⁹⁶ Kelsey, 21.

criticized from both the left and the right. *El Debate*, the primary Catholic organ, and *La Epoca*, a conservative Journal, assailed the *laboreo forzoso* (boundary law) decree as a “Draconian measure without parallel in Europe,” further exhibiting the inability for the republican-socialist government to satiate either side of the aisle of the *Cortes*.⁹⁷

The socialists were, of course, not alone in their coalition. The second largest party in the *Cortes*, and a part of the republican-socialist coalition, was Lerroux’s Radical Republican Party. The Radicals, as they were often called, initially occupied the center-left of the political spectrum, but once tensions between socialists and Radicals continued to rise, both sides eventually refused to be a part of any coalition government where the other was present, and the Radicals were forced to the center-right seeking shelter amongst the rightist coalitions. Payne puts much of the blame for the disfunction of the first elections of the Spanish second Republic on the republicans for not working with the socialists and for the left republicans refusing to participate in a moderate republican government.⁹⁸ Due to Azaña, leader of Republican Action, being named Prime Minister over Lerroux and the general rampant anti-clericism and polarization created by the left republicans and socialists, Lerroux shifted his party’s alliance away from the republican-socialist coalition to the right. Without a majority in parliament anymore Azaña called for a vote of confidence in which 2/3 of the deputies abstained. President Zamora called for Azaña to resign and new general elections were held in 1933.

The Second Biennium, Conservative Control 1933-1936

In this election the conservative right was the victor, almost entirely flipping the seat count. CEDA, Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas, as the majority

⁹⁷ Malefakis, 172.

⁹⁸ Payne, 1993. Pg. 71.

party was denied the Prime Minister position by Zamora who feared its leader Gil Robles for his extreme right fascist views. Zamora was not convinced that Robles, once in power, would seek to prolong the republic. Alejandro Lerroux was thus appointed as Prime Minister since the Radicals were the second largest party. They were the only true “center” party at the time and had just recently shifted their alliance from the socialists to the conservative right.⁹⁹ The constant shifting of the Radicals led by Lerroux, created animosity amongst those on the left and the right as they were seen as opportunistic and ambitious.

The drastic swing from left to right can also be attributed to the tightening of control by *caciques* after the first couple years of the Second Republic, by 1933 and 1936 the elections showed a severe suppression in many regions of socialist votes. *Caciquismo* was the reverted to system by the republic, as it had been for the last century.¹⁰⁰ Reducing the number of conservative votes in each of the elections according to the calculated amount of ballot altering and voter suppression perpetrated by the *caciques*, the victorious parties would remain about the same, but it further suggests the country being more split down the middle politically rather than overwhelming to one side as the electoral representation appears to suggest.

Lerroux found himself running a minority government. Many CEDA members were appointed to ministerial positions as without CEDAs support Lerroux would be unable to stay in power. Lerroux’s government immediately went about rolling back every reform put through by the previous administration, whether it was agrarian/land reform, ecclesiastical reform, military reform, or labor reform. Almost all republican

⁹⁹ Junco, 83.

¹⁰⁰ Kelsey, 29.

supporters were removed from the military and bureaucratic positions. Strikes and outright revolts rippled throughout the country, with the miners' strike in Asturias in October of 1934 culminating in a revolutionary occupation of Oviedo. The Moroccan Army Corps, a part of the Spanish army composed of indigenous Moroccans and Spanish officers, was transported from Morocco to northern Spain to suppress the insurrection. Foreshadowing his ascension to power, Francisco Franco was the general in command of the army that quelled the riots quite violently with atrocities being committed on both sides.

The suppressing of the revolutionaries in Asturias had a drastically greater societal impact than could have been imagined at the time. It was in Asturias and Cantabria, the region directly adjacent, that the Romans experienced the fiercest fights in the Iberian Peninsula and is famously remembered to this day for its fortitude and resolve (Maps in Appendix A). Asturias is a region even more famed for its successful resistance to Muslim Moorish conquest a millennia ago. It alone holds that distinction over all other parts of Spain and even today it is a great source of pride for its people. The prince of Spain has the title Prince of Asturias. The *Reconquista* began in Asturias and all the other of Catholic Spain's great historical endeavors stem from Asturias. Modern Spain traces its historical roots back to Asturias. The experience of the people in its capital of Oviedo, seeing the columns of Moroccan Muslim soldiers led by Spanish General Francisco Franco, march into and finally conquer the "unconquered land," was the most egregious insult to so many Spaniards. Dramatic and zealous references would be drawn from the events at Oviedo in 1934 by both sides throughout the next election cycles. Asturias itself

would become the martyr that drove the extreme left sectors in Spain to declare open revolution in 1936 against the military coup.

The Radical Republican and CEDA led government would last until 1936 when the Radical Republicans pulled their support from the coalition as their own party disintegrated. The conservative side of the Radicals would break away and join more rightist groups like CEDA or FE-JONS, while the more progressive side would join other center-left or center-right groups like Azaña's Republican Action as many in the party became disillusioned with how their interests had been represented. Zamora called for reelections due to the loss of a ruling majority in the *Cortes*. 1936 proves to be a decisive year as an unprecedented complete unification of nearly all leftist groups into the Popular Front and the National Bloc united all the rightist groups.

General Elections of 1936

Under the Popular Front coalition, the left would win a landslide of electoral seats. The socialists controlled the parliament as the largest party but necessitated the cooperation of all leftist parties in order to maintain their parliamentary majority. The party tied with CEDA for the second most deputies is the Left Republicans, a recently formed coalition between Azaña's Popular Action and Marcelo Domingo's Radical Socialists.¹⁰¹

Elections took place from February to March; the next few months would be the most tumultuous in Spanish history. The right did not believe the elections were fairly carried out and began conspiring for a military coup as there remained zero trust in the

¹⁰¹ More often than not the term "radical" in Spanish politics implies that a party is more to the right and conservative, as is the case with the Radical Socialists and Radical Republicans, Spanish party nomenclature was by far one of the most dubious obstacles during my research.

electoral processes. Payne declares that Spain's processes of democracy ceased with the General Election of 1936.¹⁰² Whatever occurred electorally, the results are that there remained no center parties, PSOE leader Indalecio Prieto was nominated for the Prime Minister position but was vetoed by an envious Largo Caballero and the left wing of his own party who despised Prieto's moderation- causing more instability, and mass riots by CNT and FAI affiliated anarchists, rural anarchist towns were declaring their independence and establishing their own long anticipated mutualistic libertarian communities, and Communist and socialist groups took matters into their own hands to free political prisoners and occupy government buildings.¹⁰³ Azaña was once again called upon to form a government, in which he would serve a dual role as President and Prime Minister due to his forcing of the abdication of Zamora through a constitutional loophole.

Claude Gernade Bowers, the American ambassador to Spain during the Roosevelt administration from 1933-1939, was an avid supporter of the Republic. He wrote extensively about the perceptions of Gil Robles and CEDA and other rightist groups towards the Popular Front government. Constant claims of communism dominating the nation and controlling the government were heard echoing from publications like *ABC* and *El Debate*. The right wing calls for action were in defense of traditionalist Spain and Catholicism, reinvigorating latent histories of past crusaders and their glories. Bowers clarifies in 1936 after the election, that "there did not exist one communist in the Azaña government". He stated that Azaña hated communism and fascism and that his ministers were all conservative republicans, further claiming that out of 473 deputies to the *Cortes*

¹⁰² Stanley G. Payne and J. Palacios. *Franco: A personal and political biography* (University of Wisconsin Pres. 2014), 105.

¹⁰³ Manuel Alvarez Tardio. "Mobilization and political violence following the Spanish general elections of 1936." *Revista de Estudios políticos* (2017), 177.

only sixteen were from a communist party. Gil Robles even presented a “list of grievances” to the *Cortes* in which he had comprised a list of church burnings and other forms of civil unrest. Bowers claims to have driven across the country to many of the places that Gil Robles details in his list of grievances committed by the republic and says that he found no such anarchy described in the propaganda of Franco and the fascist governments of Europe. Crow points out that Bowers does not say Robles’s stats were objectively inaccurate, but does say that every brawl, crime, vandalism, “issue” was listed for the use of propaganda.¹⁰⁴ More than likely there the truth lies somewhere in the middle between Robles and Bowers. Violent strikes and riots were carried out by leftist militants and grieved citizens, and the conservatives were quick to acquire whatever bits of truth they could to further propagate heinous exaggerations and possible falsehoods against the republic.

So much anger over the last two or three years of conservative right government control had built up and the politicians and syndicalist organizations were ready to exact revenge by purging right wing supporters from all government positions and public offices as well as a general persecution of rightist news outlets and political organizations. Gil Robles and Francisco Franco are detailed to have repeatedly asked for Zamora and then Prime Minister Manuel Portella Valladares to declare Spain in a state of war. President Alcala Zamora refused to institute marshal law as he was afraid that it would escalate matters even further.¹⁰⁵ On the surface this request from those far right individuals appears to be an obvious segue to instituting a fascist dictatorial regime, but

¹⁰⁴ Crow, 326.

¹⁰⁵ *Heraldo de Madrid* ¡A por los trescientos! España ha condenado lo dos años de tenebrosa política de inmoralidad y persecución. Tuesday, February 18, 1936.

many contemporary historians cite numerous primary sources that state this was not the intention.¹⁰⁶ Robles and Franco desired to have a military quelling of the violence like in Asturias in 1934, thus proving their path forward was the most sustainable to the general public who wished for stability. However, political assassinations ramped up once again to the point where Falangists and anarchists, socialists, communists were burying their leaders on the same days. The assassinations of many key political figures on the right prompted those hesitant generals, including Franco, to act swiftly by staging a coup. Multiple leftist prime ministers and presidents would come and go from office as the republic limped along through 1936 and throughout the civil war.

The electoral count and the popular vote in 1936 were just as misleading as in the previous two elections. Nonsensical and unenforced electoral laws during the Second Republic were simply one of the many catalysts of dysfunction existent during this period. Wide arrays of accusations of voter fraud have been well documented and investigated with modern debates ranging primarily over its existent and overall impact on deciding the winning coalition. The Popular Front did win the popular vote, but only by a measly percentage or two. As listed in the previous section, the vote count was 4,654,116 for the left and 4,503,524 for the right. Payne and other investigative historians have verified these vote counts to be relatively accurate considering the prevalent voter fraud in some provinces. One can easily imagine how members of the *Cortes* could be easily misled when looking out over their assembled deputies. The socialist and other leftist members could readily assume the entire country supported their endeavors, further encouraging their bold and extreme legislation. Their greatly visible inferior

¹⁰⁶ Tardio, 152-154.

representation in the *Cortes* caused the right to feel like an endangered minority backed into a corner. They felt they had to retaliate in an extreme and drastic fashion. What would happen next took the form of a military coup and ending with a civil war.

The six years Spain was under the authority of the Second Republic seems rather irrelevant to most. The topic of the republic rarely comes up in conversation. The 1930s are seen as the dark decade in Spanish history due to the instability and perceived grander events to come that take the attention away from the Second Republic and its historical and political impacts on Spanish society. The political culture in Spain today is eerily similar to the political environment in the 1930s. Parties unwilling to work together, rampant polarization, and their inability to see beyond their immediate power-hungry agendas continues to plague Spain today just as it did then. The focus on form over substance and culturally exalted pragmatism is a common characteristic ascribed to Spain throughout the last few centuries. Highly intellectual philosophy, theology, and political and social theorizing proliferate from the peninsula, but inability for politicians and leaders to enact those ideologies and bring them to life has always been more of a struggle. The great diversity of political parties in Spain today is no different than eighty to ninety years ago. The importance of individualism to many Spaniards has been apparent for centuries and the great geographic, cultural, and ethnic diversity of Spain creates not only an abundance of regional parties, but also plays a key role in the manifestation of a vast array of national political parties that cover almost every available inch of the political spectrum.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

What the Past can Teach us about Today

One of the primary purposes of studying history is to understand the present in order to better predict the future. We gain wisdom through the experiences of those who have come before, and through that wisdom we hope to contextualize our experiences. From my personal observations and experiences of the present situation in Spain arose a curiosity to seek out the roots of the current societal and political polarization/fragmentation. What I ascertained was that the political instability and polarization should not be seen as a new spontaneous and temporary phenomenon brought on by Covid or recent economic recessions. The problems of party in-fighting, adhering to vague constitutional articles, regionalism, and the problems of differing ideological visions for Spain's future have their roots firmly anchored in the Second Republic. The political and ideological questions being debated over at that time were never resolved due to the ensuing civil war and the decades-long Franco Regime, which artificially prorogued these issues. Only now, since the return to democracy in 1978 (when the current constitution was drafted), is the nation of Spain confronting them openly and organically.

The last decade and its misfortunes have simply accelerated and exacerbated the unresolved issues, such as the autonomy of the communities and what foundational ideological principles Spain should be rooted within and grow forth from. To this day, Spain continues to wrestle with its inclination for conservative traditionalism and its extreme desire for radical societal transformation personified by the left, as is represented in its "quasi-federalist" governmental structure. Spain continually tries to balance

between the old and the new, never quite relinquishing its past and never quite jumping into its future, but instead lumbers forward persistently dragging one foot and advancing with the other. It is difficult to operate a functioning government and achieve meaningful progressive legislation when entire sections of the nation are actively antagonistic towards its foundational existence, while others seek to continue to build off what has been constructed already. The inherent disfunction existent throughout Spain's political history was on full display in the last elections. In La Plaza Mayor and La Puerta del Sol, the two main squares in the capital of Madrid, there were daily protests, rallies, and events held by different social activist groups and political organizations (Appendix C).

Elections of 2016-2019

Spain has had four elections in four years, when there is supposed to be a single general election every four years. Each of these elections came at the heels of political scandals and dysfunctional coalition building. Since the post-Franco return to democracy in 1978 the number of political parties has steadily increased, exponentially during periods of economic and social unrest- such as the 2008 Recession and the Catalanian Independence Movement beginning in 2009 with the symbolic referendum on independence in 2012.

The election in 2015 was the most fragmented election in Spain since its return to democracy. The winning party, the PP, only received 28% of the vote and the second-place party, the PSOE, received the lowest vote count ever in its history at 20%.¹⁰⁷ In order to have a majority government a party needs the support of 175 of the deputies in the parliament, roughly translating to around 39-40% of the popular vote to put a party in

¹⁰⁷ Ministerio del Interior, 2021.

the majority. The 2015 elections officially made Spain a multi-party system with the extreme left wing *Podemos* earning 20% and arguably the most centrist party, *Ciudadanos*, earning 13% of the vote. Communist party *Unidas Podemos* was formed in 2015 as a coalition of 16+ leftist parties and various other coalitions. Its current primary constituent members are *Podemos* and the United Left, with the United Left's primary party being the PCE (Appendix D for abbreviations). *Unidas Podemos* seriously contests the current Spanish constitution, as many parties in their coalition have the stated goal to bring about the "realization of the emancipating ideal of communism."¹⁰⁸

The general elections of 2015-2019 had the lowest majorities for the winning parties since the return to democracy, with the highest margin being 33% of the vote going to the PP in 2016 and the rest were around 28%. The most significant aspect of this low margin of victory throughout the four elections meant that either the PSOE or the PP, with one or the other being the second-place party, could potentially form a majority government through tactful coalitioning. As 176 seats could be achieved by either party, it essentially initiated an arms race to see which party could get a favorable agreement signed first. The competition between the parties caused further stagnation and polarization rather than either party bringing about an actual stable government.

Then in 2019 new corruption stories and scandals involving PP leader Mariano Rajoy and many other PP officials, led to the only successful prime ministerial vote of no confidence in the *Cortes*' history, precipitating another national election in April 2019. In the election, the PP eked out a measly 17% of the seats in the *Cortes*, and the PSOE returned as the largest party, still with only a meager 29% of the vote. Newly founded far

¹⁰⁸ Goldner, 2016.

right Vox drew many of those lost PP votes and reached exponential growth, going from almost 0% of the popular vote to about 10% in one election. *Ciudadanos* achieved their highest vote total at 16% and the newly formed coalition of *Podemos* and the United Left, *Unidas Podemos*, had 14% or so (Appendix B).

Almost as if following a concrete pattern, no coalition could be formed by the PSOE in order to equal at least 175 seats. No leftists would work with leftists and no rightists with rightists, and the congress was starkly void of centrist parties. Elections were then held again in November of 2019 and the results represented a greater fragmenting of the government, with far-right Vox growing in support and center-right *Ciudadanos* shrinking to near extinction while the PSOE (essentially operating as the left's "center" party) also lost several seats. The number of parties being represented in the *Cortes* was at a record high. There were 14 either autonomous or independent coalitioned parties, each occupying anywhere from 1-4% of the vote. Around 66 parties were on the ballot for the November 2019 elections, further underscoring the significance of the disunity in the parliament.¹⁰⁹

The primary parties in the current coalition government are the PSOE and *Unidas Podemos*. *Unidas Podemos* though an adamant extreme left wing communist party, primarily campaigned as an anti-establishment and anti-austerity party.¹¹⁰ Not even a year into the coalition, tensions were growing between the two partners. The same criticisms leveled at the PSOE by the communist and other leftist parties 80 years ago arose once again. The PSOE historically has been criticized by those on its left as being conciliatory, establishment, and too willing to compromise their socialist principles once

¹⁰⁹ Ministerio del Interior, 2021.

¹¹⁰ Minder, 2019.

in power. During the Second Republic the slander leveled at the PSOE included accusations that they were untrue Marxists, revolutionary in rhetoric only. With the return to democracy in the 1970's, the party officially separated from and denounced Marxism as part of its platform, identifying instead as a social-democratic party.

For those who have trouble seeing how the Second Republic could have any meaningful connection to Spanish politics today, they simply need to look at the parties active today and the political alignments voted for in each region of Spain (Appendix B). The PCE, PSOE, ERC, and PNV were all active major parties during the republic, and still are majority parties today, despite a half century of being clandestine. The regions and communities that voted left still vote left today, and those that voted right still vote right (see election results maps in Appendix B). A 40 year predominately fascist dictatorship could not erase the political institutions established during the Second Republic and they continue to influence Spain today. Southern and Eastern Spain were leftist strongholds in the 1930s, socialist and anarchist specifically, and continue to vote predominately socialist today. Asturias, once Spain's communist bastion, is the lone continually leftist voting Community in the north. Castilla y Leon, La Mancha, and Galicia still vote for conservative parties a majority of the time, while Madrid is normally divided relatively evenly just as it was before Franco. Basque Country and Catalonia's leading parties remain almost entirely unaltered in name or platform. The heavily leftist ERC, founded in 1931 still holds the majority of the deputies in Catalonia's national and provincial elections, and the Basque EAJ-PNV conservative nationalist coalition,

founded in 1895, also maintains its position as the dominant political party in its region, just as it did decades previously.¹¹¹

Governmental mistrust, centralization, and regionalism

There has been an overall decline in trust in the national political processes of Spain since 2008, due to repetitive corruption scandals and the 2008 financial crisis which heavily impacted the country. This has led to an increase in sectarianism and support for movements towards a more regional and decentralized form of government in places like Catalonia and Basque Country (more akin to a federal system), while it has led to a growing support for more government centralization in central and southern Spain.¹¹² Correspondingly, there exists an ethno-cultural deviating shift as more and more of the populace do not wish to even identify as ethnically or culturally Spanish, preferring to identify solely with their *Patria Chica*, their local region/community.

One of Spain's leading news outlets, El País, contends that there is a widespread feeling throughout the nation that partisan calculations play a disproportionate role in politics and that:

“Spain is quickly advancing toward the turbulent waters of populism and increasingly radical polarization, increasing the desire for greater local government where trust and accountability can be better established and maintained. Extreme positions are gaining traction, with Madrid as a hyperbolic ideological battlefield for the right-left axis, where the right ‘champions of freedom’ fight against the anti-fascists and communists, and Catalonia continues to be mired in its own damaging, disruptive dynamics.”¹¹³

The fractalization has even reached the provincial levels with early elections called in Murcia and Madrid due to political quarrels alongside blaringly disruptive riots in

¹¹¹ “Spain Political Parties” *Norsk Senter For Forskningsdata*, 2021.

¹¹² Jedwab and Kincaid, 2018.

¹¹³ Moreno, “Spain’s Populist Drift,” *El País* (Madrid). Mar. 16, 2021.

Catalonia in response to their politicians being jailed for holding allegedly illegal referendums on independence. Spanish society is well aware of the recalcitrant climate. El País voices the societal concerns on the impacts of the obstinate actions of its political parties stating that “this radical effect is not welcome: Madrid and Spain need something different.”¹¹⁴

The desire for decentralization nationwide has grown year after year since the fall of Franco, as Franco established a hyper-centralized state. The suppression of regional autonomy and culture was a means to achieving stability and order through unity under the monarchy and the church, with the national power base being Madrid. Those in favor of greater decentralization reached 60% at its highest point leading up to the 2008 Recession.¹¹⁵ In 2013, 70.4% of Spanish citizens from Catalonia thought the level of self-governance for the Autonomous Communities was insufficient and 48% supported independence.¹¹⁶ Currently people see the decentralization model as insufficient for polar opposite reasons. Catalans and Basque say the current state is not decentralized enough, and the rest of the regions say there is too much decentralization as it is.

Basque Country and Catalonia are the wealthiest regions of Spain and for centuries have sought their own governance. The perceived ineptitude of Madrid to properly handle the 2008 recession was reason enough to seek greater independence, because the rest of the nation, in their view, was simply draining their own tax revenue. Catalonia pays ten billion euros more in taxes than it gets back. Contributing around 20% of Spain’s taxes, Catalonia only receives 14% percent back for public expenses.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Jedwab, 2018.

¹¹⁶ *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas*. Compiled by Jedwab & Kincaid.

¹¹⁷ Paluzie. *Marketplace*, Sept. 29, 2019.

Andalusia, the poorest region in Spain, gets more than eight billion euros more than it pays in taxes.¹¹⁸ The rest of the country sees the semi-independent regional governments as inefficient and costly, as is voiced by many conservatives who argue that decentralization creates “a completely irrational system of multiple legislation, administrative, duplication, and unnecessary institutions that also were highly politicized,” thus other regions want more central government control.¹¹⁹

Parties’ Support for Centralization or Decentralization

Spaniards’ dedication to their distinct regions and provinces, their *Patria Chica*, is still a significant pervasive factor in their political affiliations, just as it was during the Second Republic.¹²⁰ On the national and regional level, parties on the left tend to support decentralization and more independence for Spain’s distinct regions, with the right usually desiring more unity and greater centralization (although some outliers do exist). Interestingly enough, not all the separatist parties are politically aligned with the leftists who reciprocally support their autonomy. The alignment of regional separatist parties along the left-right axis generally follows the overarching alignment of the region itself. Every region has their conservative and liberal separatist parties, indicating a desire for separatism is not an inherently left or right platform. Catalonia as a whole tends to be very liberal, so its largest separatist parties are leftist, while Galicia and the Basque Country are nominally conservative, therefore their separatist parties are rightist.

The rejection for state centralization and the support for more federalism was surprisingly advocated for not by the political left or right, but was advocated the most by

¹¹⁸ Berwick. *Reuters*, (London). Sept. 21, 2017.

¹¹⁹ Jedwab, 67.

¹²⁰ Goldner, 122.

the “apolitical” anarchists of the 19th and 20th centuries.¹²¹ Anarchism became a significant force during the Second Republic due to the regionalist rejection of state centralization. Goldner uses the term “federalism” often when describing the political and governmental structures anarchists sought to implement. Spanish federalism- if not federalism in general- is inherently regionalist and is more or less the natural form of government of the Iberian Peninsula, aside from direct independence for the majority of the regions in Spain.¹²² Today, as in the past, Madrid generally still seeks to establish a strong unitary state, despite the nation’s contrary natural centrifugal tendencies.

The anarchists, of course, went to further extremes and advocated more extreme policies than the radical parties of today have any intentions of doing. Anarchists did not “create the cooperative pattern of village life,” they merely capitalized on its already existent culture and spirit historically inherent to much of Spanish society, referred by some historians as the innate “unadulterated Iberianism.”¹²³ Today’s debates are not necessarily over communal land sharing and cooperation in the mutualist sense as the anarchists fought for during the Second Republic, but the spirit and innate desire in Spain for more local control of government/society was at the center of the anarchist movement and is obviously apparent in many modern-day Autonomous Communities. It is incredibly difficult to govern a nation as if it is a cultural, economic, and political united whole when its inherent historical, social, and regional diversity directly contradict that form of government, as the previous chapters have contextualized and clarified.

¹²¹ The anarchists were devoted to their abstention from politics, but often used their collective power to influence elections.

¹²² Ibid, 123.

Crow, 1985.

Junco, 1999.

¹²³ Ibid.

Party Relations

People who pay attention to Spanish politics may find it very odd that there exists such large support for parties that are openly antagonistic towards the constitution, governmental institutions, and the societal structures of the country itself.¹²⁴ As seen in the previous chapters, Spanish society is historically filled with politically antagonistic and revolutionary groups. Junco states quite well that even just amongst the republicans in 1931 they “were divided regarding the depth of the proposed reforms as well as regarding crucial aspects of the organization of the state in charge of those reforms (unitary or federal) and above all regarding adequate strategies to implement the desired changes.”¹²⁵ Parties like *Unidas Podemos* and *Vox*, who both have clear points of contention with the constitution and the structure of the government, are very similar to the communist and far right parties during the Second Republic who disagreed to such a grave extent that it engulfed the country in a civil war. The current left coalition of the PSOE and *Unidas Podemos* may break apart in the near future, as after the initial shock of the pandemic, politicization and criticism of the actions taken by the government during the pandemic are now under critical review by the opposition parties. I don’t believe the parties today will get to that extent, but the relationship and overall dynamics within the parliament and between the parties themselves can be contextualized and relativized through this comparison.

Conclusion

The very distinct characteristics I observed while in Spain shattered my previously held frameworks and worldviews and prompted my desire to better understand

¹²⁴ i.e., separatists and extreme leftist/rightist parties.

¹²⁵ Junco, 82.

the country and its history. I observed a surprising lack of interest in religion (as well as an outright disdain for it), pro-Franco rallies, counter protests over exhuming Francisco Franco's body from a national cemetery, the prevalence of socialist and communist symbols and ideology plastered throughout Rivas and Madrid, and the incredible diversity of a country half the size of Texas. These factors coalesced to exponentially increase my curiosity in the country and its people. While there was a surprising lack of popular discussion around the civil war during my time there, the evidence of its occurrence was obvious and everywhere. Craters dotting the landscape around Rivas hint towards a time of extreme violence and societal upheaval. What could have led to so much destruction that almost a century later its physical presence remains? Through my research, I encountered a surprising lack of information regarding the events leading up to the civil war and Franco's eventual rise to power. Information on the Spanish Second Republic and a coherent historical analysis of the political systems of Spain before the late 1970's was comparatively scarce when compared to the civil war itself and the Franco Regime.

I first had to break my view of Spain being a cohesive political and cultural whole. The most culturally and politically unified the Iberian Peninsula had ever been, was during its centuries long Roman Occupation. Before then and ever since, Spain's diversity has been on full display. Its multicultural composition of Celtic, African, Muslim Moor, Vandal/Gothic, Jewish, Greek, Phoenician, and Latin roots is equally as varied as its physical topography. Surface scarring mountain ranges, dry plains, and few navigable rivers have separated the peoples of Spain and their cultures, creating regional enclaves with different values, customs, and languages.

The Kingdom of Spain was only ever able to come about because the hundreds of years of war with the Moors unified the individual Christian kingdoms. The *Reconquista* united a vast collection of nations against a common enemy with the support and authority of the Catholic Church. The Spanish monarch's relationship with the Catholic Church was the most pronounced and extensive in Europe from the 15th to the 20th centuries. The monarchy and the church remained intimately connected for centuries, and the church sought to maintain such a central and visceral authority in Spain's society that the reaction against it in the 20th century was comparative to the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution. The discovery of the New World and its wealth created an affluent nobility that disproportionately came to control large Romanesque style *latifundios*. With seemingly infinite sums of gold coming from the Americas, the landed and monied nobility felt no need to develop the land and the economy in Spain itself, therefore leading to a lack of economic, societal, and political development impacting the generations to come.

The great disunity, inspired by sectarianism and regionalism, brought about numerous regional revolts and rebellions throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The nobility and bourgeois classes were pushed to constantly seek stability, usually placing their trust in the monarchy or through military rule. The political systems and parties that would arise out of such a plagued society would go on to greatly reflect the diversity of the nation. The progressive movements of the Scientific Revolution, Reformation, Enlightenment, and Industrial Revolution all came late to Spain, arriving by the end of the 19th century with the collapse of the monarchy. The six-year lifespan of the Second Republic became the primary outlet for Spain's centuries long repressed political

movements. Though previous constitutions and governments were established, all previous attempts at forming a true constitutional monarchy or republic were met with force and rebellions within a year or so, returning to absolutist rule and leaving little time and/or ability to lay down lasting political institutions. The high rates of participation in the general elections during the Second Republic served to exemplify the societal desire for democracy in Spain, but the parties that sprouted in different parts of the country for differing personalist and egocentric reasons found it nearly impossible to work with one another.

Spain today exists as a “quasi-federalist” unitary parliamentary monarchy, heavily politically fragmented. For decades, Spain was ruled under a single party fascist dictatorship. Since then, Spaniards have zealously embraced democracy and political plurality. Not every political institution and party that arose was brand new or unfamiliar in the last few decades. The political system in Spain essentially appears to have picked up where it left off in the 1930s. The exact same far left separatist ERC, conservative separatist PNV, communist PCE, and socialist PSOE returned to national politics with all the pre-civil war baggage and presuppositions more or less intact. Those unresolved societal questions and issues brought forth during the Second Republic, and deferred by the Franco regime, continue to sow discontent and tension in the government today.

The modern political turmoil and governmental instability in Spain is nothing new and should be viewed as a continuation of the events, parties, and political institutions established and perpetuated during the Second Republic. The tensions in Spanish politics today should be viewed as a result of past historical circumstances- such as reasons for inequality in land proprietorship, the separatism inherent in many of its regions, and the

personalism/egocentrism of so many of its parties and their leaders. The polarization and fragmentation of every party in Spanish politics can be traced back to the way the parties interacted with one another one hundred years ago, and that polarization is better understood once in the proper context. Seeing how events transpired and played out in the 1930s for Spain, the voters or the politicians can study the past, to better understand the present, and to build a brighter future for themselves and the country.

Appendices

Appendix A

Figure 1



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¹²⁶ "Geographic Map of Spain", Mapsofworld.com

Figure 2



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¹²⁷ "Al Ándalus, the extent of the Moorish" *Wikimedia Commons Repository*.

Figure 3



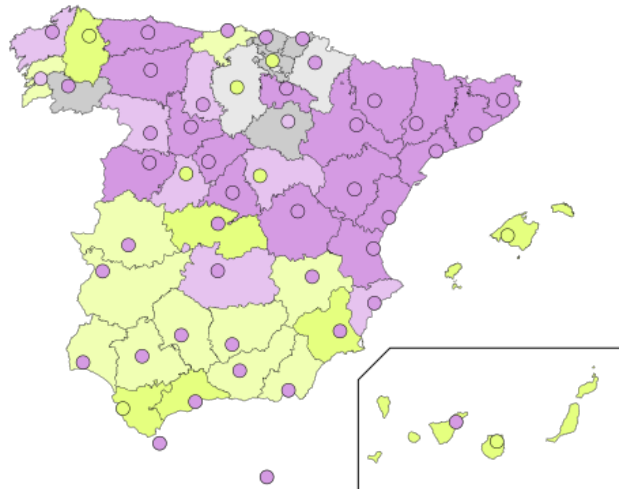
128

¹²⁸ "Political Map of the Regions of Spain", *Wikimedia Commons Repository*.

Appendix B

1931 Spanish Municipal Election Results.

Figure 4



129

Republicans, Socialists,
Communists:

□ <50%

■ >50%

Monarchists:

□ <50%

■ >50%

Other:

□ <50%

■ >50%

Table 1

Candidates	Seats					
	Total seats		Automatically proclaimed		Elected	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Republicans	34,368	42.71	13,940	46.77	20,428	40.32
Socialists	4,813	5.98	887	2.98	3,926	7.75
Communists	67	0.08	10	0.03	57	0.11
Monarchists	19,035	23.65	6,065	20.35	12,970	25.60
Other	15,198	18.89	6,043	20.28	9,155	18.07
Unknown	6,991	8.69	2,859	9.59	4,132	8.16
Total	80,472	100.00	29,804	100.00	50,668	100.00

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¹²⁹ "Municipals 1931 Espanya," *Wikimedia Commons Repository*.

¹³⁰ "Municipals 1931 Espanya by political affiliation," *Wikimedia Commons Repository*.

1933 General Election

Figure 5



Table 2

Party	Seats Won
PSOE	59
ERC	19
Republican Action	5
Galician Autonomous Party	6
Radical Republicans	100
CEDA	110
Agrarian Party	36
Basque Nationalists	60

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<u>Color</u>	<u>Politic</u>	<u>Primary Party</u>
Dark Blue	Right	CEDA
Light Blue	Center Right	Radical Republicans
Green	Center	Catalan and Basque Nationalists and other center republican parties
Red	Left	PSOE

¹³¹ "Spanish general election map, 1933" *Wikimedia Commons Repository*.

Table 3

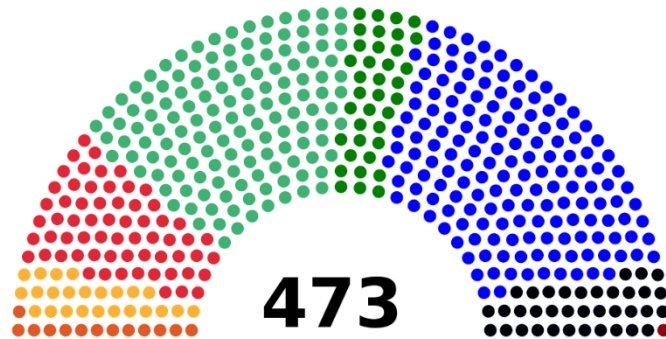
Party	Name in Spanish or Catalan	Abbreviation	Seats
Spanish Socialist Workers' Party	Partido Socialista Obrero Español	PSOE	59
Communist Party of Spain	Partido Comunista de España	PCE	1
Republican Left	Izquierda Republicana	IR	14
Democratic Federal Republican Party	Partido Republicano Democrático Federal	PRD Fed.	4
Radical Socialist Republican Party	Partido Republicano Radical Socialista	PRRS	1
Catalan Left	Esquerra Catalana	EC	21
Radical Republican Party	Partido Republicano Radical	PRR	102
Conservative Republican Party	Partido Republicano Conservador	PRC	15
Liberal Democrat Republican Party	Partido Republicano Liberal Demócrata	PRLD	9
Independent Republicans	Republicano Independiente	RI	10
Catalan League	Lliga Catalana	LC	21
Basque Nationalist Party	Partido Nacionalista Vasco	PNV	12
Spanish Confederation of the Autonomous Right	Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas	CEDA	120
Spanish Agrarian Party	Agrarios (Minoría Agraria)	A	31
Independents of the Right			13
Traditionalist Communion	Comunión Tradicionalista (Carlista)	CTC	20
National Block	Bloque Nacional	RE	15
Independent Monarchists			4
Spanish Falange	Falange Española	FE	1
Total:			473

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¹³² "Congreso de los Diputados de España 1933 (por facciones)" *Wikimedia Commons Repository*.

Figure 6

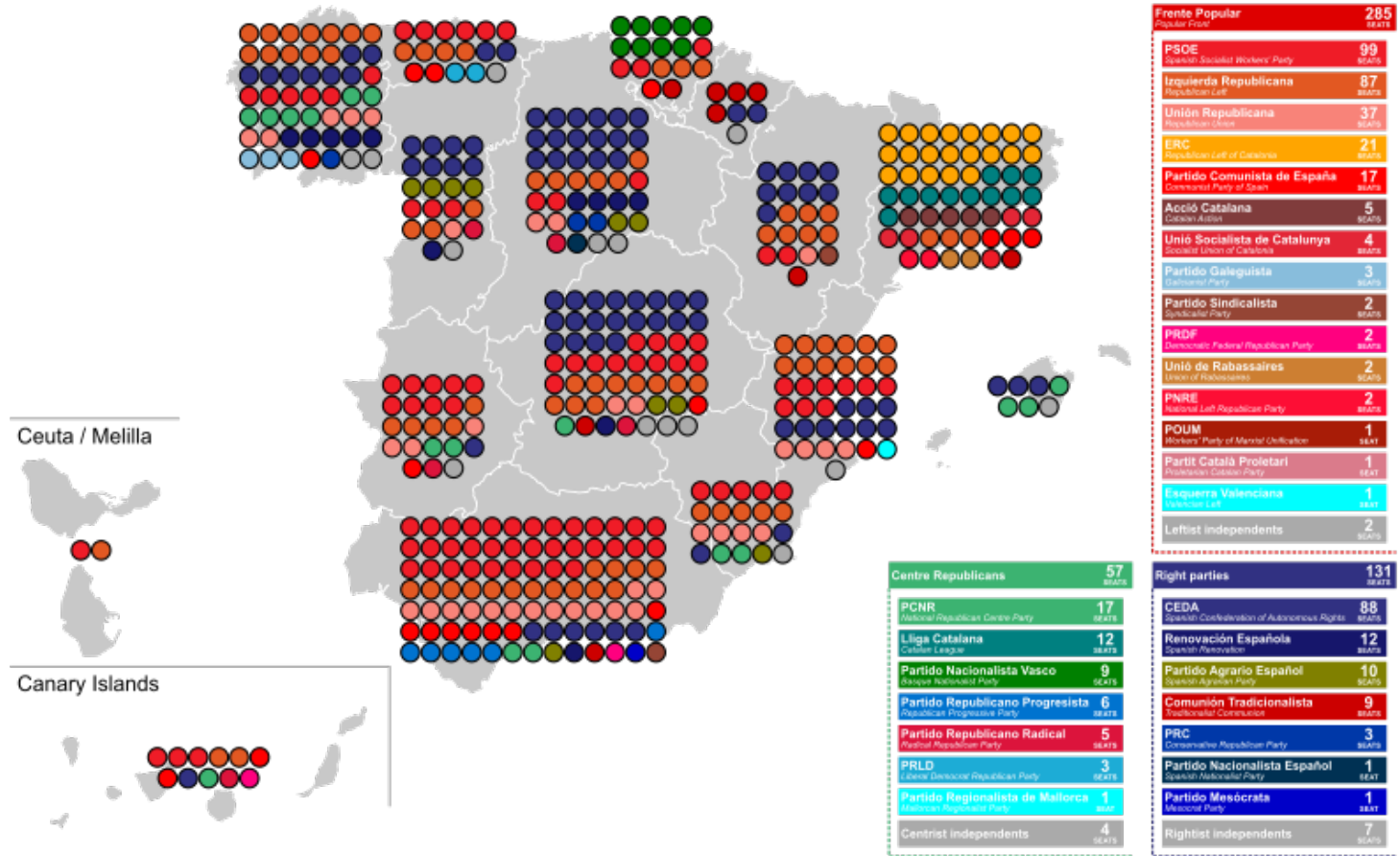
The Cortes (Congress of Deputies)



- Left Republicans: 13 diputados
- Left Nationalists: 24 diputados
- Marxists (Socialists): 63 diputados
- Center and Center Right: 138 diputados
- Center and Nationalist Right: 37 diputados
- Right: 161 diputados
- Monárquicos de extrema derecha: 36 diputados
- Falange: 1 diputado

1936 Spanish General Election

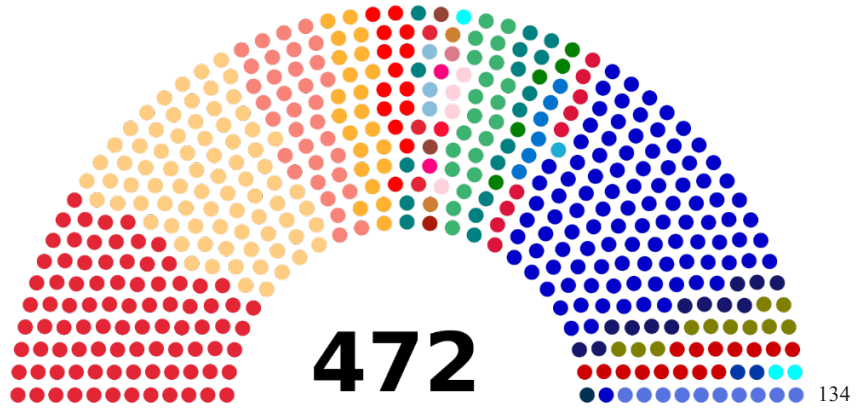
Figure 7



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¹³³ "1936 Spanish general election - Detailed Results" *Wikimedia Commons Repository*.

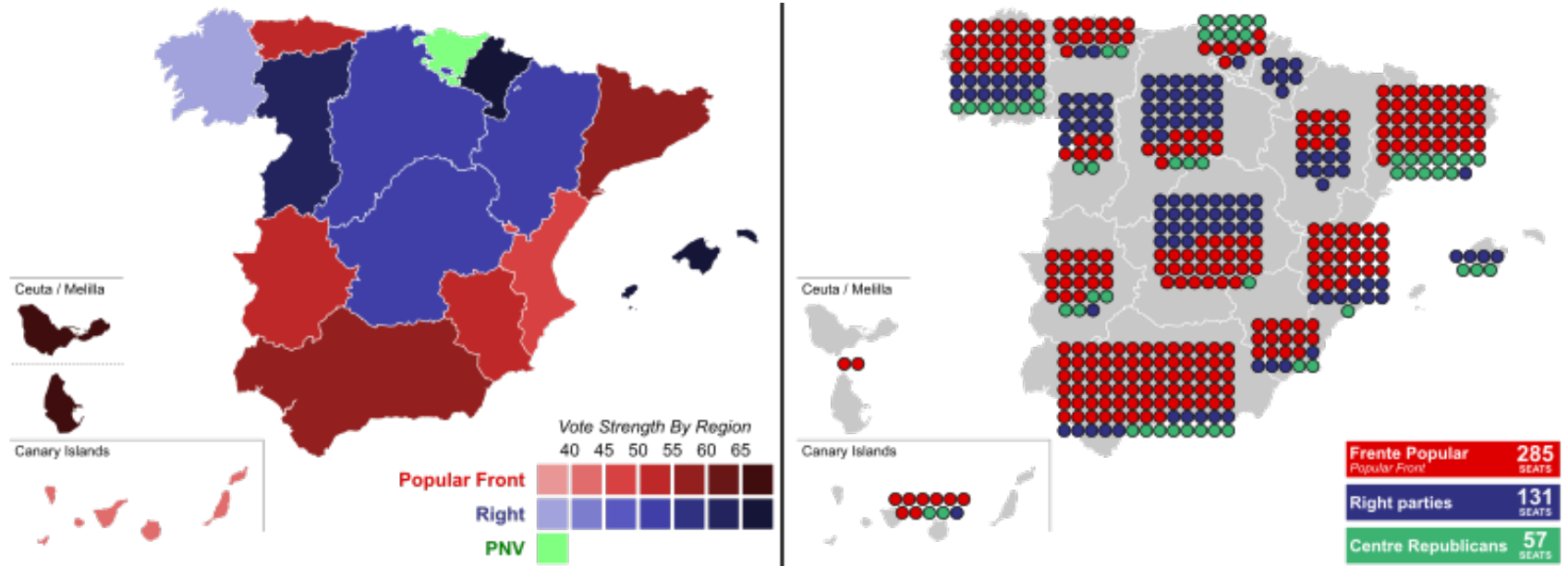
Figure 8



¹³⁴ "Congreso de los Diputados de España 1936 (por partidos)" *Wikimedia Commons Repository*.

Figure 9

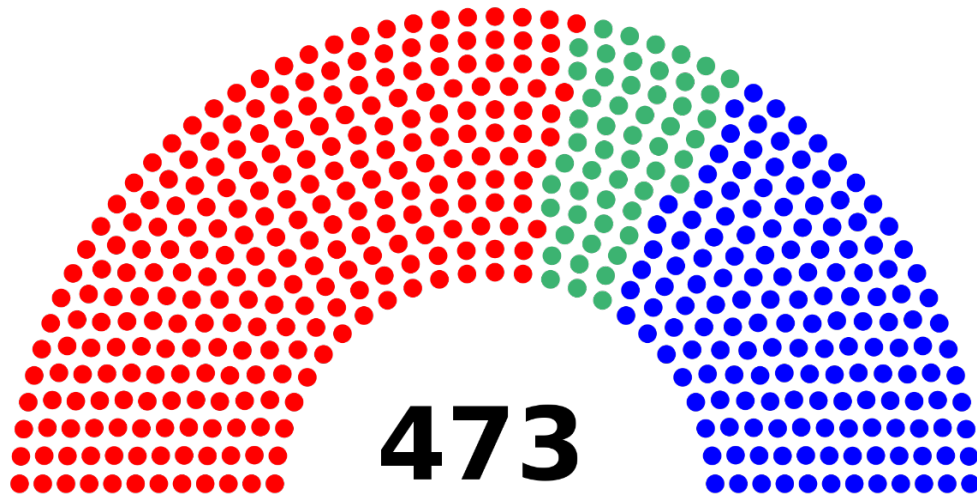
135



¹³⁵ "1936 Spanish general election - Detailed Results by Coalition" *Wikimedia Commons Repository*.

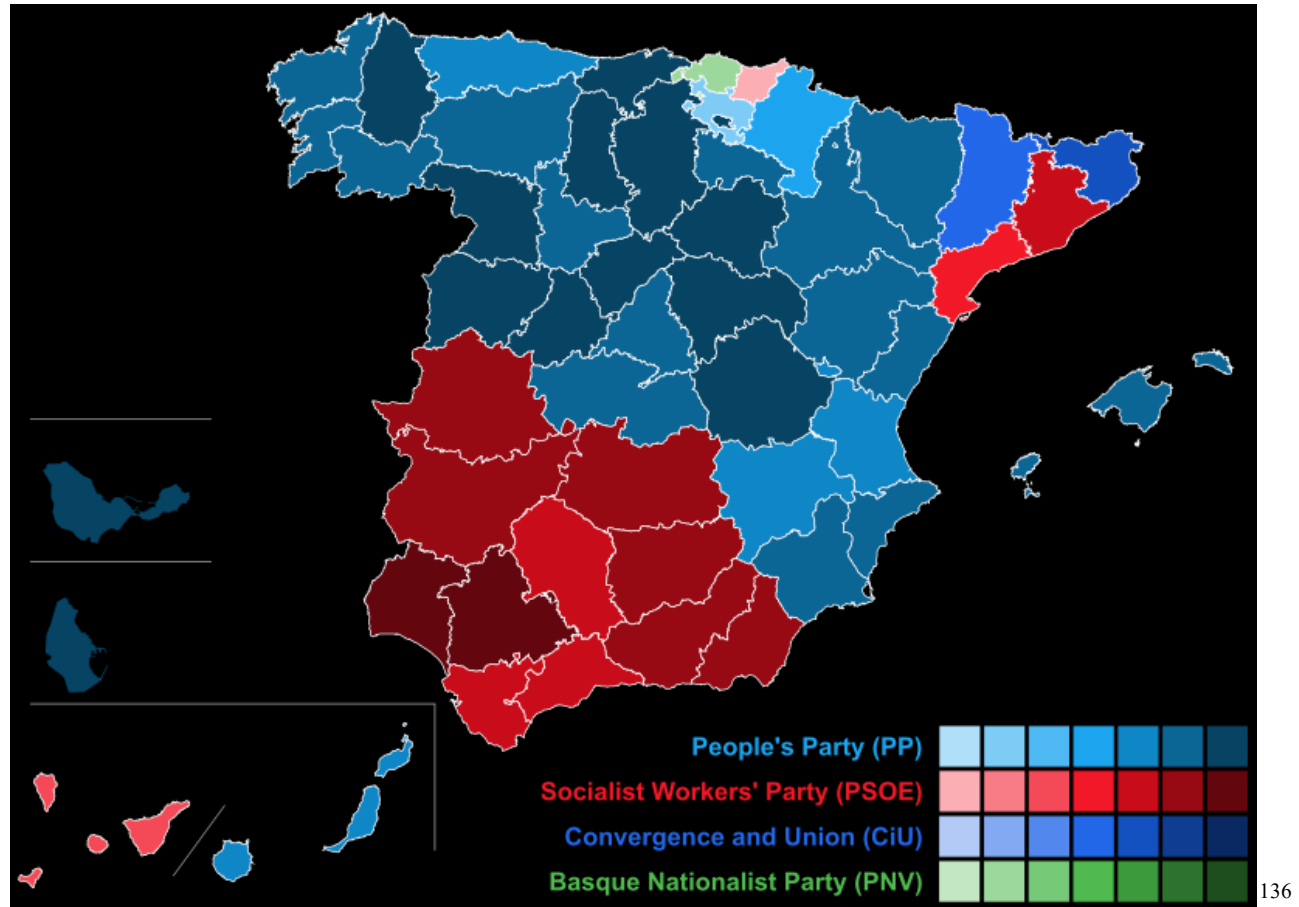
Figure 10

Composition of the Cortes in 1936



1996 Spanish General Elections

Figure 11

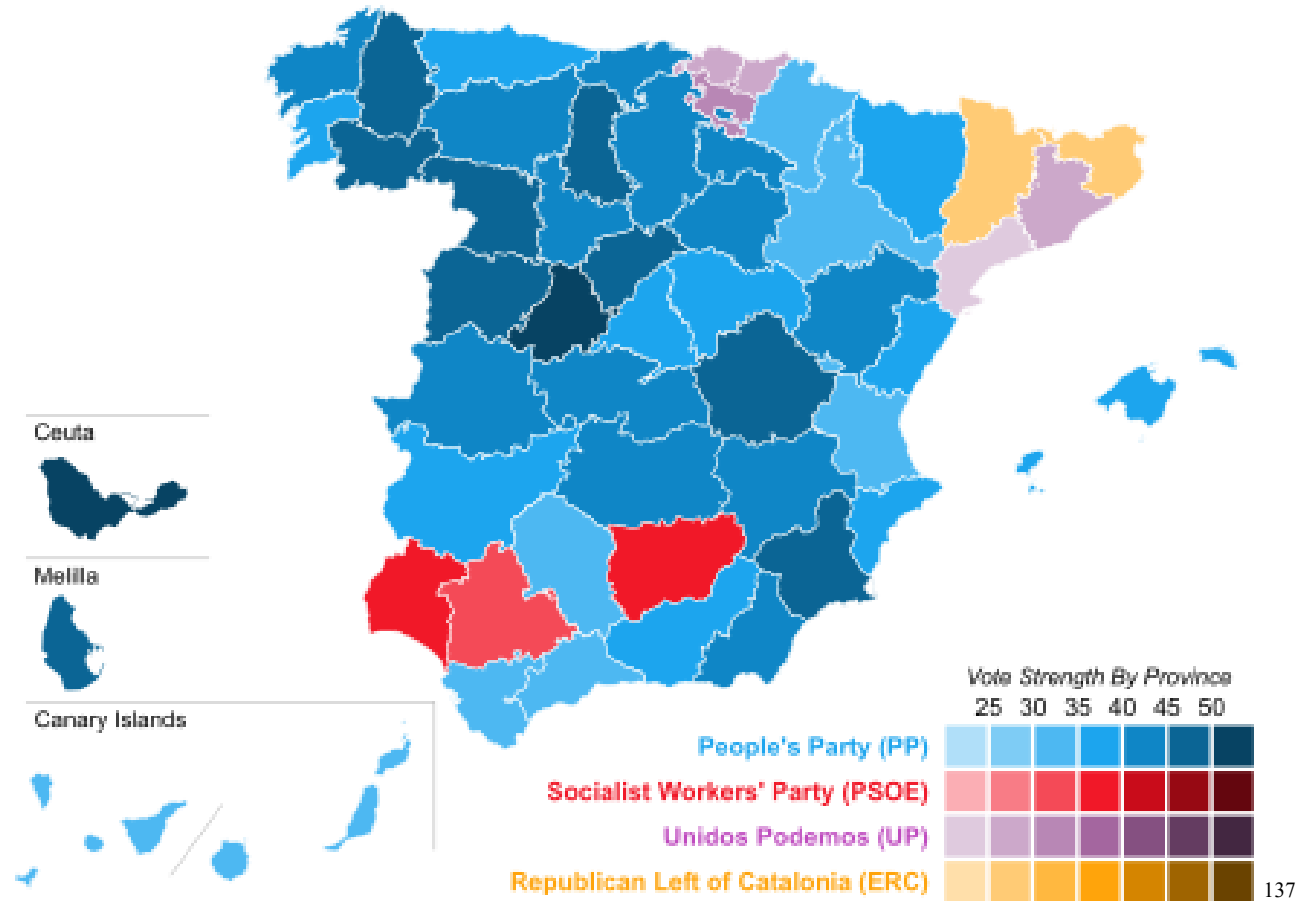


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¹³⁶ "1996 Spanish election – Results" *Wikimedia Commons Repository*.

2016 Spanish General Election

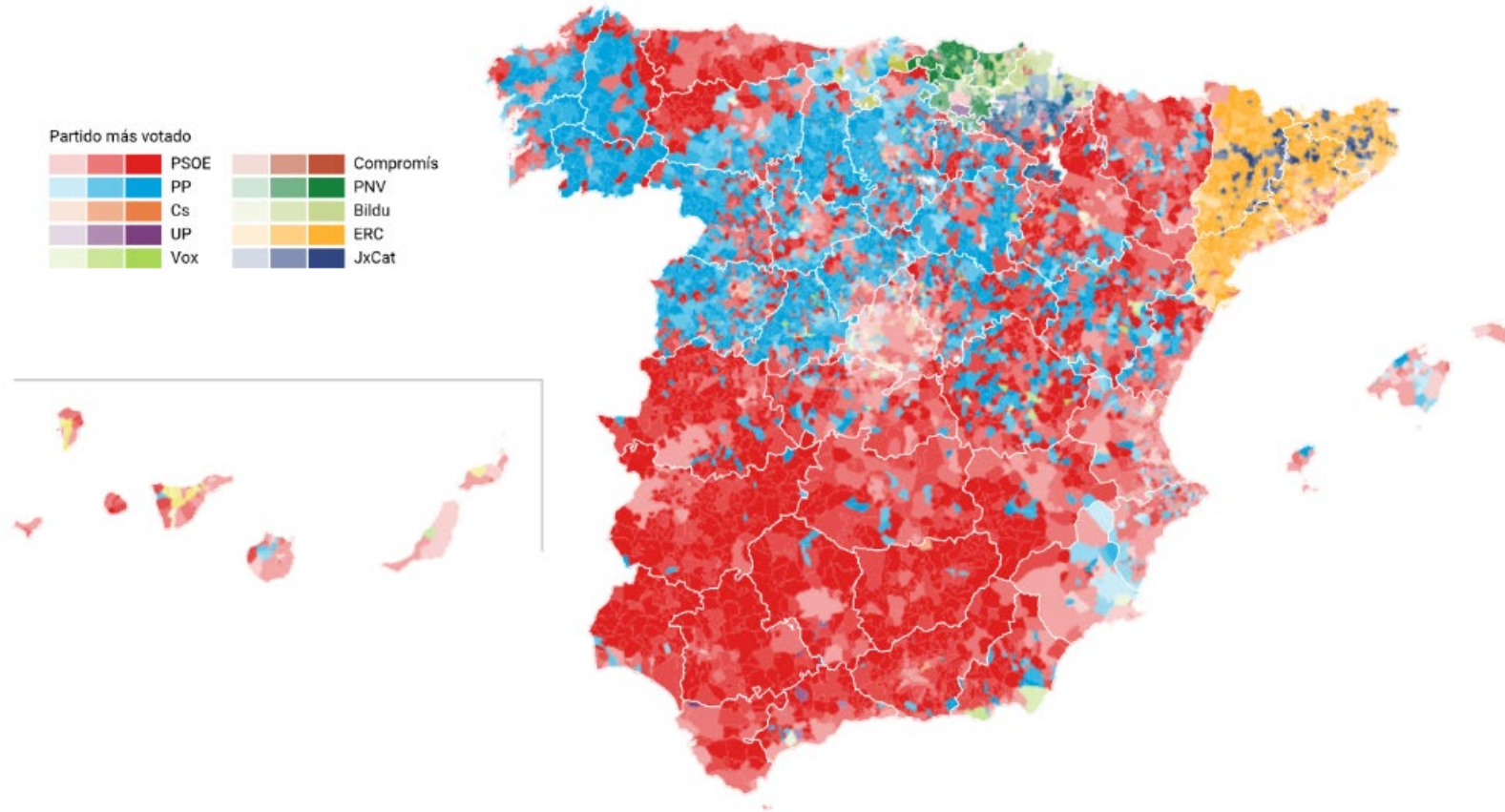
Figure 12



¹³⁷ National Institute of Statistics. "2016 Spanish election – Results" *Wikimedia Commons Repository*.

November 2019 General Election

Figure 13



¹³⁸ "November 2019 Spanish general election - Vote Strength" *Wikimedia Commons Repository*.

November 2019 General Election by Province

Figure 14

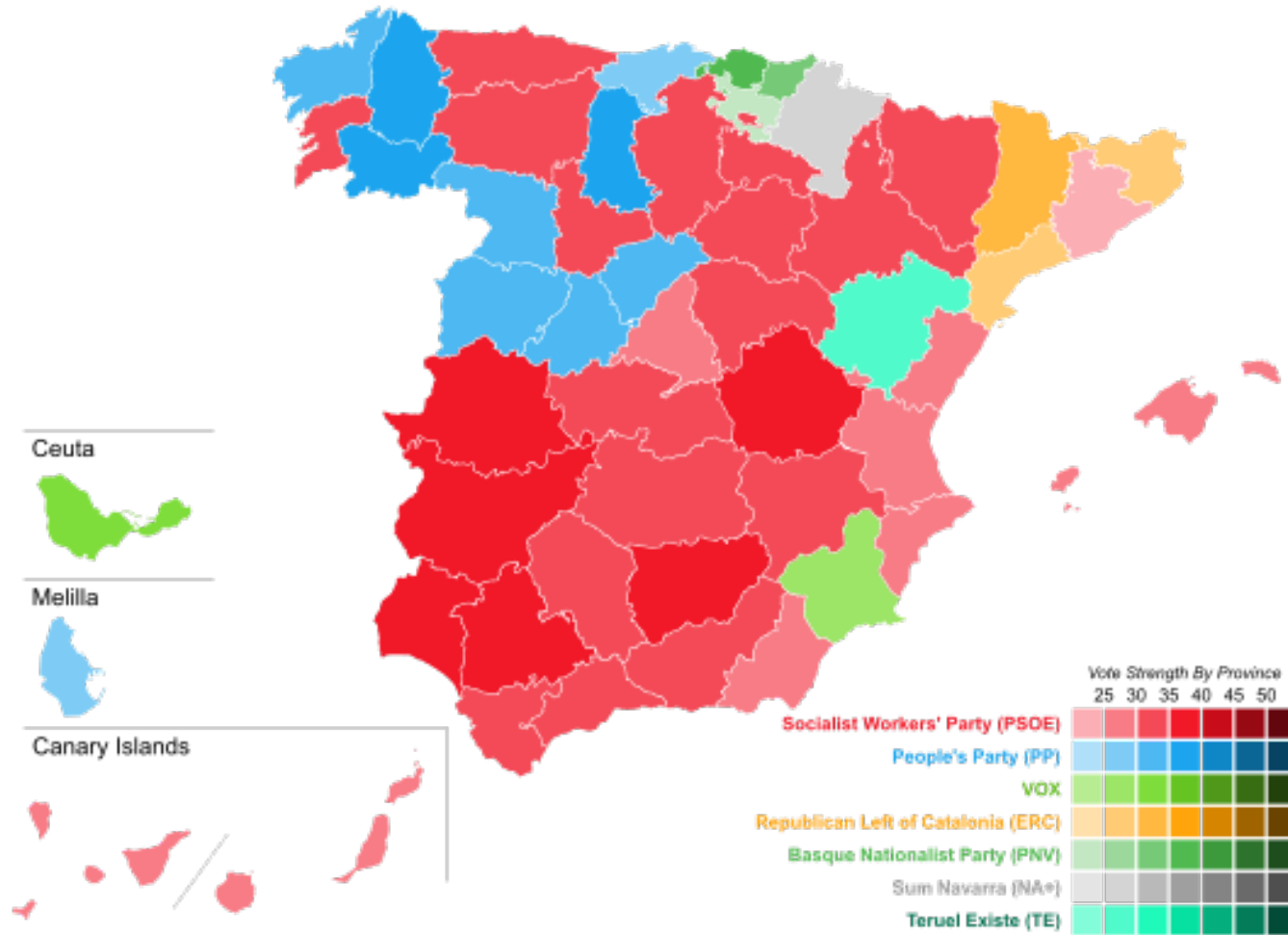


Figure 15

Congress of Deputies

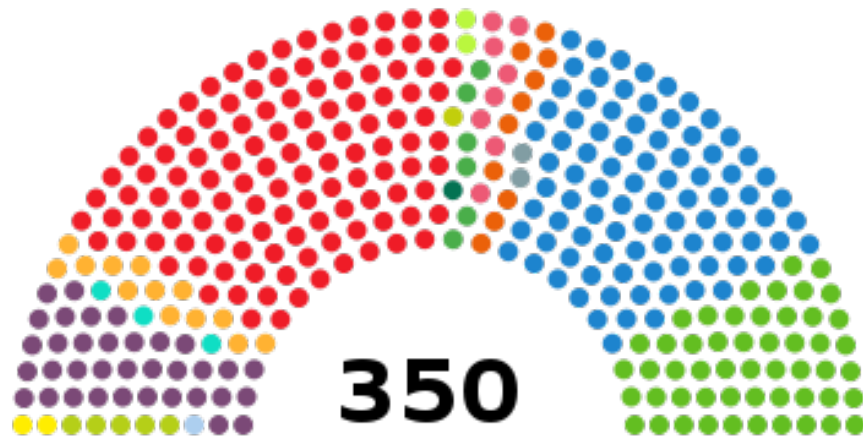
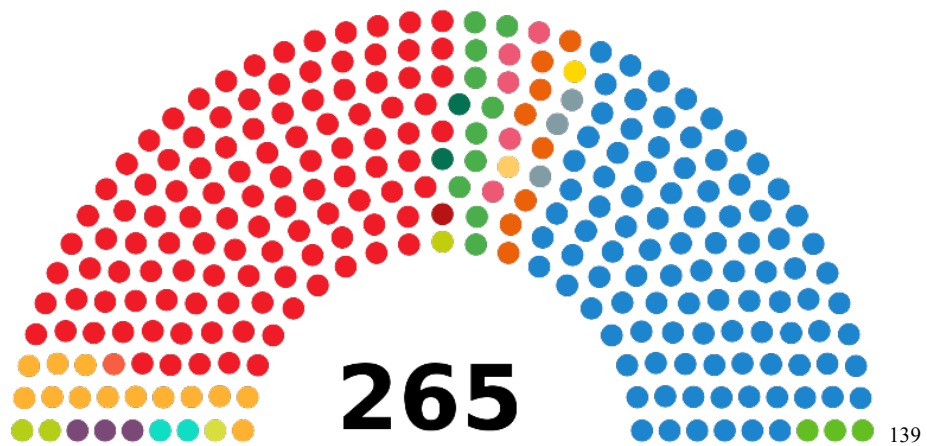


Figure 16

Senate



¹³⁹ "SpainCongressDiagram2019" Wikimedia Commons Repository.

Table 4

Summary of Spanish elections for the Congress of Deputies, 1977–2019

Election	UCD ^[a]	PSOE	PP ^[b]	IU ^[c]	CDC ^[d]	PNV	ERC ^[e]	BNG ^[f]	EHB ^[g]	CDS ^[h]	CC ^[i]	UPyD	Cs	Com.	Pod. ^[j]	Vox	MP
1977	34.4	29.3	8.3	9.3	2.8	1.7	0.8	0.1	0.2								
1979	34.8	30.4	6.1	10.8	1.7	1.6	0.7	0.3	1.0								
1982	6.8	48.1	26.4	4.0	3.7	1.9	0.7	0.2	1.0	2.9							
1986		44.1	26.0	4.6	5.0	1.5	0.4	0.1	1.1	9.2	0.3						
1989		39.6	25.8	9.1	5.0	1.2	0.4	0.2	1.1	7.9	0.3						
1993		38.8	34.8	9.6	4.9	1.2	0.8	0.5	0.9	1.8	0.9						
1996		37.6	38.8	10.5	4.6	1.3	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.2	0.9						
2000		34.2	44.5	5.4	4.2	1.5	0.8	1.3	Boycotted	0.1	1.1						
2004		42.6	37.7	5.0	3.2	1.6	2.5	0.8	Banned	0.1	0.9						
2008	Dissolved	43.9	39.9	3.8	3.0	1.2	1.2	0.8		0.0	0.7	1.2	0.2				
2011		28.8	44.6	6.9	4.2	1.3	1.1	0.8	1.4		0.6	4.7	Did not run	0.5			
2015		22.0	28.7	3.7	2.2	1.2	2.4	0.3	0.9		0.3	0.6	13.9	[k]	20.7	0.2	
2016		22.6	33.0	[k]	2.0	1.2	2.6	0.2	0.8	Dissolved	0.3	0.2	13.1	[k]	21.2	0.2	
Apr. 2019		28.7	16.7	[l]	1.9	1.5	3.9	0.4	1.0		0.5	Did not run	15.9	0.7	14.3	10.3	
Nov. 2019		28.0	20.8	[l]	2.2	1.6	3.6	0.5	1.2		0.5	[m]	6.8	[n]	12.8	15.1	2.4

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¹⁴⁰ National Institute of Statistics, *Wikimedia Commons Repository*.

Appendix C

Figure 17¹⁴¹



¹⁴¹ Political Rally. Puerto del Sol, November 2019.

Appendix D

Abbreviations:

Table 5

AR (RA)	Acción Republicana (Republican Action)
CEDA	Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas (Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Rights)
CNT	Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (National Workers Confederation)
ERC	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (Left Republicans of Catalonia)
FAI	Federación Anarchista Ibérica (Iberian Anarchist Federation)
FE de las JONS	Falange Española de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista (Spanish Phalanx of the Councils of the National Syndicalist Offensive)
IU (UL)	Izquierda Unida (United Left)
PCE	Partido Comunista Español (Communist Party of Spain)
POU M	Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (Workers Party of Marxist Unification)
PP	Partido Popular (Popular Party)
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers Party)
UGT	Unión General de Trabajadores

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