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Is there anti–Europeanism in Spain?
A political analysis of Spanish parties' strategies and public opinion during the Spanish process of European integration

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation's main aim is to understand better if negative feelings within the country followed the Spanish European integration. Through a political analysis, this study aspires to elucidate which European achievements were obtained in Spain by the different governments between 1982 and 2004. The attempt is to answer the question of whether there is anti–Europeanism in Spain by analysing the Spanish parties' strategies and public opinion during the Spanish European integration process.

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INTRODUCTION

The following chapters study whether there is anti–Europeanism in Spain, with an analysis of political parties' strategies and public opinion – also based on what was written in the newspapers of the time – during the European integration period.

The resolve of Spain to play a vital role in the integration of Europe reveals a desire to prevent political marginalisation regardless of the efforts to achieve this purpose. Europe has come to represent a substantial communal desire, a widespread hope for national revitalisation and progress in the nation. After the fall of an authoritarian government and the successful transition to a modern and democratic status, by the time the Spanish state joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1986, the concept of entering Europe was generally considered a significant achievement for the full recovery of national self–esteem. The prevailing narrative of Spanish national grandeur incorporates the notion of "belonging to Europe," symbolising the quasi–mythical accomplishment of the transition to democracy.

It has consequently been viewed as a significant improvement in the nation's worldwide standing, not just in terms of political strength and economic development but also in terms of ethical esteem. Consequently, in the instance of the collective psychology of Spain, embracing European supranationalism and demonstrating support for the European integration project has yet to conflict with national inclinations. In contrast, joining Europe was precisely what the nation wanted.

Several other causes exist for Spain's desire to join the European Economic Community. Initially, political factors influenced Spain's decision to join the EEC. After General Francisco Franco died in 1975, Spain moved to a democratic administration and endeavoured to become a modern and progressive nation. Joining the EEC would demonstrate Spain's commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law to the world community. It would also give Spain a chance to play a more active role in international affairs and contribute to the unification of Europe.

Secondly, economic factors also significantly influenced Spain's ambition to join it. The Spanish economy was primarily reliant on agriculture and tourism, and it was beset by problems such as high unemployment and inflation. Accession to the EEC would offer Spain access to the more extensive and diverse economies of EEC member states, opening up trade and investment prospects.

Thirdly, security concerns also lead Spain to join the EEC. The commitment of the EEC to free trade and open markets would provide Spain with a more stable economic environment and lower the likelihood of a financial crisis. In addition, participation in the European Community would increase

Spain's political stability by integrating the nation with a group of democratic states. The European Economic Community gave Spain a chance to gain access to more extensive and diverse economies, position itself as a modern and progressive nation, and provide more political stability. In summary, economic, political, and security concerns motivated Spain's desire to join the EEC.

The first chapter gives a general overview of the post–Franco political panorama. This was a moment of great innovation during which all the Spanish political parties took moderation positions in a *homologación* "homologation" during their political campaigns. This demand for moderation derived precisely from a European request. Only truly democratic states could be members of the European Economic Community.

In the political transition of the right, this party's reshaping went through *Alianza Popular* (AP), which changed at the behest of its founder Manuel Fraga Iribarne, ending with the new name of *Partido Popular* (PP). However, it will not be enough given Fraga's closeness to the Spanish dictator's politics, and the PP will not be able to win the elections until 1996.

Even the regional parties manage, during this period, to assume an essential role in Spain, given their interests in being part of the European institutions. Consequently, the Convergence and Union in Catalonia and the Basque Solidarity obtained actual results in the first democratic polls, reaching up to 16% during the 1986 regional elections.

However, the real winner was the Socialist party, the PSOE of Marquez and Guerra, which managed to move away from Marxist ideologies and to be flexible during the political campaign. Thus, on October 28, 1982, González's *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE) won the national political elections in Spain. Socialists would have seen the EEC as a venue for establishing a "Social Europe," a goal supported by other socialist parties within the continent. The effort to create this socialist union in Europe is analysed in the second chapter.

Regarding public opinion, it is examined how the main political parties in Spain merely reflected the resounding support of the people for the European integration process. Two–thirds of all Spaniards continually backed the European project during the 1980s. The general idea was that joining Europe would complete the country's modernisation process and that the European market offered significant net gains to important sectors of the Spanish economy, such as agriculture, mass–production enterprises, and small businesses.

The pro–European policies of the new Prime Minister González and his junta are studied starting from the following chapter, where it is also investigated how they covered this socialist political victory of 1982 given premises. From ABC with its article "A Historical Day" and El País

"Hallelujah for Europe" to the speech of King Juan Carlos I in Madrid, the whole nation was hopeful for the changes that the future years of PSOE policy would bring.

The triumphalist discourses that developed in Spain during its accession to the EEC serve as an example of this mentality and can be used to trace such views. The Prime Minister's televised address to the Spanish people on March 29, 1985, in which he informed them that his Foreign Minister had negotiated an agreement in Brussels to sign the Accession Treaty that would make Spain's participation in the EEC possible on January 1, 1986. This portrayal of Europe as a Spanish source of inspiration was also evident in the terminology used by the major national media at this time, which named González "*el renovator*" thanks to that significant achievement.

However, the following paragraphs show how, beginning in 1982, that pro–Europe excitement took a different shape. Due to the rigid Maastricht standards, a currency crisis, a recession, high inflation, and severe fiscal measures being the norm, the enthusiasm started to differ and become more critical. ABC and El País' views on European integration became increasingly focused on national goals during the period of institutional transition – which started in 1986 with the accession of Spain and Portugal – and their general perspectives began to change. During the 1980s, public support for Europe was mainly unquestioning in the Community, even as Spanish media became more critical of EU integration.

The second chapter ends with the scandals that crossed the Spanish Socialist Party, the so–called "Juan Guerra Case". Despite successful events such as the Barcelona Euro–Mediterranean Conference, the signing of a new Transatlantic Agenda with Bill Clinton, and the designation of the European single currency (euro), Spanish public sentiment remained unchanged. The attempt to form *Programa 2000* was also in vain. It was an effort to make programmatic change through decisions jointly with the other socialist parties in Europe. Significant was the Spanish PSOE's alliance with the German SPD. Together the two parties tried to uphold the concept of socialist autonomy vis–à–vis the trade unions in the elaboration of socioeconomic policy to gain more comprehensive public support, notwithstanding the potential for conflict with workers' organisations. Indeed, this strategy entered into the frame of González's government debate with the labour unions, which criticised the administration for not helping workers and not being interested in the high degree of unemployment within the country.

As can be studied in the third and final chapter, all those criticisms brought the defeat of González's PSOE and the People's Party of Aznar victory in the Spanish electoral polls in 1996. Indeed, the newly elected party displayed flexibility over some nationalists' claims, restrained its

ideological discourse, and moderated its social and economic policies by engaging in dialogue and negotiating with workers' unions to achieve new agreements. That policy wanted to persuade citizens that the PP was a moderate party giving the party's leader a prominent role in the reinvention of Spanish conservatism. The main goal to increase the Spanish position within member states was obtained during Aznar's first term in charge. Indeed, at the beginning of the twenty–first century, Spain's per capita income was the greatest it had ever been, at 83% of the average of the European Community, and the unemployment rate had decreased to 11%.

On a European level, Aznar's government sustained a firm intergovernmental policy, and the domestic political environment and Spanish citizens' views on the EU became increasingly intertwined. During the 1990s, people's overall perception shifted due to the influence of the media, political elites, and organised business interests. By the decade's conclusion, public expectations created by official rhetoric that was more nationalist had grown to be a more notable restriction on Spain's options in Europe. That change arose mainly due to the political strategies of the opposition Aznar represented during Gonzalez's tenure. Indeed, the PP's leader was always critical of the socialist party's policies, which did not perform – according to the *Partido Popular* – the Spanish national interests.

It is interesting to analyse how although national interests had reached broader importance, this had always maintained the Spanish sense of belonging to Europe and the will to achieve greater integration. Eurobarometer outcomes indicated that most Spaniards did not perceive a conflict between their national identity and being part of the European Union. In contrast, people who identified as national and European increased from 50% in 1996 to 72% in 2000. At the same time, the percentage of those who identified as entirely Spanish has decreased from 43% to 20%. Consequently, Spain's national and European identity compatibility was more than the EU average.

Aznar's second term in charge started in 2000, resulting in a decisive absolute majority electoral win. Despite the public statements on the will to continue negotiating reform proposals with local nationalist groups and even the PSOE, the PP leader now had far more power to carry out his programme. Since the party no longer depended on regional parties, the Spanish Prime Minister strengthened his patriotic image and stopped dealing with labour unions.

The second part of the last chapter presents the controversies surrounding Aznar's second term in office foreign policy strategies. These included the Parsley Island conflict and the Yak–42 plane crash in Turkey. However, the most serious mistake made by Aznar was the emphasis he placed on USA ties, particularly following the Twin Towers attack on September 11, 2001. Because of the

government's fervent support for the American invasion of Iraq, anti–war demonstrations have often taken the shape of large–scale marches, as the one that saw millions of Spaniards take to the streets in February 2003. Three days before the 2004 midterm elections, an Islamist terrorist attack on several suburban trains in Madrid resulted in 192 fatalities and more than 1,500 injuries, making it the deadliest terrorist incident in Spanish history. This event epitomised the worst aspect of this policy's attitude towards the USA at the time. Even though Mariano Rajoy was chosen to succeed Aznar as head of the People's Party, it did not reverse the party's sharp slide in public favourability. The results of 2004 elections reflected the animosity that had pervaded the PP's second term: the PSOE received 42% of the vote and 164 seats, as opposed to the 148 seats the People's Party was able to hold.

Finally, the conclusion presents the answer to the dissertation's main aim, which is – as previously stated – to understand better if anti–Europeanism has ever resided in the Spanish realm. All the findings are shared in that part, thus concluding the study.

CHAPTER 1. The importance of being part of the European Community – how European integration moved parties toward a moderate position

1.1 The Spanish *homologación*

This first chapter focuses on how the Spanish myth of Europe was very much alive before it became part of the European Economic Community. This feeling can be explained by analyzing how parties and public opinion presented the EEC as a means of substantial evolution from every point of view – social, political, and economic – and for this reason, how internal change was necessary to become part of it. It follows an observation of those changes made by different Spanish parties to align themselves to the community standards. The last paragraph also analyzes how the regional parties of Catalonia and Basque Country, particularly important in Spain, have consistently supported the EEC since they are seen as a means to initiate a decentralization of power in Spain and have more representation at the European level.

After the death of General Francisco Franco in 1975, there was a demand for moderation in the political sphere, which resulted in a shift towards parties with more moderate positions and policies. This transition towards more moderate viewpoints by both right and left parties might be seen as a harmonization of European aspirations for modernization and democracy in Spain. Furthermore, democracy was a prerequisite for membership in the European Economic Community at the time. Specifically, the Spanish proposal to join the EEC gave rise to this sovranational structure.[1] Since the beginning of the democratic transition, Count Casa Miranda, leader of the Spanish diplomatic team in Brussels, approached Christian Calmes, then Secretary General of the EEC, with Spain's proposal to begin discussions in 1962.[2]

Because of the Spanish request to begin negotiations to bind the country to the EEC, the Political Commission of the Parliamentary Assembly was compelled to endorse the Birkelbach

[1] Morata, F. and Mateo, G. (2007) *España en Europa – Europa en España (1986–2006)*. Barcelona: Edicios Bellaterra.

[2] Cavallaro, M. E. (2012) *La Spagna oltre l'ostacolo. La transizione alla democrazia: storia di un successo.* Catanzaro: Rubbettino Editore.

Report.[3] The Report marked an anomaly within the Community's processes since it stated that only countries with a democratic settlement in which people participate in the government's decisions could be admitted to the EEC. This report indicates that:

"*Only states which guarantee on their territories truly democratic practices and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms can become a member of our Community. It is also inconceivable that a State whose foreign policy is diametrically opposed to our own could become part of our Community.*"[4]

All further efforts to align with the other members of the Community emanated from this point.

The notion of Europe was crucial in a number of ways. First, from a political perspective, all groups shared a vaguely defined goal of *homologación* (equality) with Western Europe, for example, the construction of a political system similar to those of Spain's closest neighbours, to end the anomaly that Francoist Spain had represented in recent history. Second, political forces shared the objective of entering the EEC, which required this political transition and maintained vigilance over it. In this regard, Spain's admittance to the Council of Europe in November 1977 – prior to the proclamation of the Constitution – had considerable symbolic significance since it meant the recognition of Spain as a democracy. Lastly, the participation of European individuals, parties, and foundations in the Spanish transition to influence its outcomes or favour certain players – such as the German SPD in favour of PSOE – helped deepen relations between the new Spanish elites and the EEC nations.[5]

The Spanish application to the EEC was submitted formally on 28 July 1977, barely six weeks after the country's first democratic elections, which were won by the Union of Democratic Centre (UCD), headed by prime minister Adolfo Suárez. Although there was no discussion in the Parliament before the application, it had the unanimity of the chamber's approval. All parties had named EEC membership their top foreign policy objective in their election platforms. This made Spain the first

[3] Willi Birkelbach CBE – 12 January 1913 – 17 July 2008 – was a West German politician who was a member of the West German Bundestag. Between 1952 and 1964, he also served as an increasingly important Member of the European Parliament.

[4] O'Donnell, G. et al. (1991) *Transitions From Authoritarian Rule: Prospects For Democracy*: *Volume 3: Comparative Perspectives*. Baltimora, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, p.21.

[5] Pereira Castañares, J. C. and Juste, A. M. (1991) 'España ante el proceso de integración europea desde una perspectiva histórica. Panorama historiográfico y líneas de investigación', *Studia Storica. Historia Contemporánea*, 9(1), pp. 129–152.

nation to seek EEC membership with the backing of all parties, unlike Greece and Portugal, the two other candidate countries in the same years, when communists and subsequently socialists opposed the application.

Three main factors account for this consensus:

- joining the EEC would mark the end of Spain's (relative) worldwide isolation during the Franco era.
- It would diminish reactionary positions and incentives to reverse the democratic process (mainly from the Army), securing the country's democratic foundation.
- All parties recognized that joining the EEC would positively affect the Spanish economy owing to the significance of the economic exchanges currently conducted between the states already members.[6]

Other researchers have viewed the pro–European consensus as a coincidence, not an agreement. Depending on their ideologies, several historians describe the European integration process with many connotations for the Spanish political parties throughout the transition. Thus, the socialists would have seen the EEC as a venue for developing a "Social Europe," an aim shared by other European socialist parties. In the framework of the Eurocommunist strategy devised in those years with the communist parties of Italy and France, Europeanism would be a vehicle for the Communist Party – who had only stated its support for a democratic Spain entering the EEC in 1972 – to separate themselves from Moscow. The political centre and right would have seen European integration as a chance for economic progress and corporate expansion. Nationalist parties from Catalonia and the Basque Country would have set their expectations for the gradual collapse of the centralist state on the concept of "Europe of the peoples."[7]

The symbolic significance of European integration also dominated parties' communication methods. In election manifestos, legislative debates, and media appearances, parties defended their Europeanism more often with cultural and historical reasons than with economic or strategic ones. It is possible to claim that the major parties maintained a consistent discourse, arguing that Spain's membership in the European Union was sufficient to justify all attempts to enter the EEC, regardless of the economic or political gains.

[6] Álvarez Miranda, B. (1996) *El sur de Europa y la adhesión a la Comunidad. Los debates politicos*. Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.

[7] López Gómez, C. (2014) 'Europe as a Symbol: The Struggle for Democracy and the Meaning of European Integration in Post–Franco Spain', *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 10(1), pp. 74–89.

By gaining membership in the EEC, Spain's Europeanness would finally be acknowledged, and the matter of its secular character would be solved. In addition to providing answers to particular challenges associated with economic growth and consolidation of democratic institutions, entering the EEC was seen as the conclusion of Spain's quest for its own identity. The speech made by King Juan Carlos during his investiture, affirming that Immediately following his investment as King of Spain, Juan Carlos I delivered his inaugural speech to the Cortes, the non–democratic parliament that Franco had founded. In that speech, he declared:

"*The idea of Europe would not be complete without a reference to the Spanish people and the consideration of the work carried out by many of my predecessors. Europe must count on Spain and we Spaniards are Europeans. It is a necessity of this moment that both sides understand this, and that all of us draw consequences from it.*"[8]

At a time when contacts with Spain were momentarily halted, but a new era began with the death of the dictator, the reference to "Europe," which in this context must be regarded as a synonym of the EEC, was an attempt to lend some significance to an otherwise insignificant period. The government, the political parties, and the social organizations – part of the transition to democracy – were all aware of how important it was to obtain support from the European Communities.

It was essential for the development of the political reforms and their acceptance of the democratic system in Spain once all of the requirements for membership in the EEC had been met. This was a condition for membership in the EEC. Therefore, this fuzzy notion of Europe was prevalent in public discussions throughout the year and a half that elapsed after Franco's death and before the first democratic elections in June 1977.

These elections took place in Spain. Relations with the EEC countries were a priority for the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, José María de Areilza,[9] who visited all the capital cities of the EEC States in order to convey the message that things were changing and that a democratic Spain would soon "knock on the door of the Community." This was done to convince the EEC that Spain would soon become a member of the Community.[10]

[8] ABC, 'El Rey habla a su pueblo', 23/11/1975.

[9] José María de Areilza, born August 3, 1909, in Portugalete and died in Madrid on February 22, 1998, was a Spanish diplomat and politician. He is considered one of the architects of the Spanish democratic transition and a member of the National Council of the *Movimiento*. *The Movimiento Nacional* (National Movement) or *Movimiento*, was the official designation of the state apparatus of Francoist Spain between 1937 and 1976.

[10] De Areilza, J. M. (1977) *Diario de un ministro de la monarquía*. Barcelona: Planeta.

The European Parliament kept a close watch on the events in Spain. In May 1976, a Resolution was passed based on a report provided by a French member named Maurice Faure. This Resolution stated that the acceptance of Spain into the Community was contingent upon the country's ability to implement political reforms successfully.[11] Simultaneously, the Spanish press, which was less censored back then, expanded its interest in the European Communities in the notion that the admission of Spain would be a breeze once the political hurdles were cleared.

Political scientists and historians have stressed that the transition from dictatorship to democracy in Spain was constructed upon the "consensus" of the many forces that took part in it. They say this is an essential aspect of the transition. Although the remaining structures from the Francoist regime, such as the Army, the *Movimiento* and part of the administration were reluctant to introduce any reforms whatsoever. Although some members of the leftist opposition refused to accept any pact with the Francoist elites, the "negotiated reform" was ultimately the successful way that allowed for the gradual transformation of the dictatorship into a democratic system through legal changes. The concept of Europe, which may have a variety of distinct meanings, was essential to the formation of this agreement in several ways. Furthermore, in Spain, as in Italy or Germany, European integration has served to make possible the recovery of lost power and influence. For this reason, in marked contrast to other countries, neither the question of the loss of sovereignty associated with belonging to the European Union nor the eventual erosion of national identity has been raised beyond a few small groups nostalgic for Francoism. In reality, Spain's membership in the European Union has strengthened both the sovereignty and the national identity of the Spaniards.[12]

The feelings of the major parties in Spain only mirrored the overwhelming popular support for the European integration process. Throughout the 1980s, approximately two–thirds of all Spaniards consistently supported the European project. Political and business elites highlighted the significant economic benefits that joining the EC would bring to the Spanish economy: a vast market and a place to find readily available capital.[13]

From a political perspective, the EEC was an essential vehicle for bolstering democracy. The economic benefits of the Community's membership were likewise seen to be substantial. Spain's

[11] *Journal Officiel des Communautés européennes*, 08/06/1975, 125(26).

[12] Powell, C. (2005) *Construir Europa desde España: Los nuevos desafíos de la política europea*. Madrid: Real Instituto Alcano.

[13] Boix, C. (2000) 'Managing the Spanish Economy within Europe', *South European Society and Politics*, 5(2), pp. 165–190.

unwavering support for the Economic Community generally resulted from the idea that the country's modernization process would be completed with a merger with Europe and that the European market offered substantial net gains to significant sectors of the Spanish economy like:

- agricultural producers;
- mass–production companies (e.g., the automobile industry);
- small firms in industrial districts (e.g., shoe–makers, furniture–makers) that still competed on price;
- a great mass of unskilled and semi–skilled labour, comparable in wages and qualifications to eastern European workers.

The Institute for public opinion's opinion polls reveals widespread support for adherence throughout this time. The evolution of the percentages in favour and opposing joining the EEC was: in 1976: 74 – 4%, 1978: 56 – 4%, 1979: 67 – 7%, 1980: 65 – 4%, 1983: 65 – 11%, 1984: 70 – 6%, 1985: 66 – 7%. Surveys have occasionally asked about the specific causes of this support. For instance, analysing the year 1979, it is possible to see how 52% of those surveyed said that Spain's industry would profit from entering the Common Market, while 10% said the reverse. The 55% said that agriculture would increase and 9% disagreed; 53% said employment; 58% said trade links, and 52% said tourism. However, 17% of those surveyed in a comparable study that same year believed they were "fully informed on the advantages and disadvantages of entering the Common Market" (68% did not). The identical question in 1980 produced the following results: 1% felt "very well informed," 14% felt "somewhat knowledgeable," 46% felt "little informed," and 28% felt "not at all informed." In other words, there was a poor comprehension of the effects of entering the Communities, which the same polls attributed to the people surveyed lack of interest in the EEC's technical concerns.[14]

[14] Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (1985) 'La opinión pública española ante la Comunidad Económica Europea, 1968–1985', *Revista de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, 29(1985).

1.2. Transition of the political right

As previously stated, after the 1978 Constitution, the Spanish political right undertook a lengthy and, at times, relatively quick process of political, intellectual, and organizational restructuring to meet the European Community membership requirements.

Indeed, the conservative right–wing party named People's Alliance – the Spanish *Alianza Popular* (AP) – founded in 1976 rapidly started to change. This party's reshaping culminated in 1989, when the party's founder Manuel Fraga Iribarne, decided to change the name to People's Party – *Partido Popular* – (PP).[15]

Fraga understood that, even though the primary political problem was to consolidate the new system of government, the state's priority was to modernize the country's economy, which lagged well behind Europe. He desired a doctrinal remaking of the party to accommodate the new democratic wave sweeping Spain.

The problem was the same for the Communist leader Santiago Carrillo, who evoked painful recollections of the Spanish Civil War. Similarly, Fraga was closely connected with the Franco government. Under the politically unstable but academically competent Fraga, it was commonly believed that the AP would remain unelectable. In fact, in 1977 – 1978, 69% of the electorate (including 73% of its voters) saw the AP as a Francoist party, while just 33% thought it to be democratic.[16]

At the time, *Alianza Popular* can be viewed as a convergence platform for those who sought opening after the dictatorship, those who wished to create a centrist political space while remaining

[15] Manuel Fraga Iribarne (1922–2012) is one of Spain's most intricate and polyhedral politicians of the second part of the twentieth century. In 1945, he joined the Corps of Parliamentary Lawyers, and in 1947, he enrolled in the Diplomatic School. In 1948, he was appointed Professor of Political Law at the University of Valencia, and in 1953, he became a Professor of State and Constitutional Law at the University of Complutense. A few years later, in 1953, he was the Education Council's secretary. He was named Minister of Information and Tourism in 1961. He maintained the position until 1969 when a partial government corruption scandal led to a complete cabinet reorganization. As a result, Franco nominated him for the position of ambassador in London, where he established contacts with several individuals from the Tory environment and the right wing of the Labor Party. In 1975, he returned to Spain and became a member of the cabinet again, holding an essential role as Minister of the Interior during high regime instability and rising internal and external political conflict.

[16] Heywood, P. (1995) *The Government and Politics of Spain.* London: MacMillan.

conservative regarding civil and political liberties and the defence of the nation as a political community.[17] This method was characterized as a "history of ambitions and failed intents."[18]

In 1976, AP was a political alliance composed of six small parties in a federal structure, created by ministers or civil governors who had differing political viewpoints during the dictatorship's final years, but were unified under little political change. Among those were Manuel Fraga and Jose María de Areilza of *Reforma Democrática*, Cruz Martínez Esteruelas' *Unión del Pueblo Español*, Federico Silva Muñoz's *Acción Democrática Española*, Laureano López Rodó's *Acción Regional*, Licinio de la Fuente's *Democracia Social*, and Enrique Thomas de Carranza's *Unión Nacional Española*. In three years (until the III AP conference in December 1979), a coalition led by Fraga supplanted the other founding personalities. At this time, the AP significantly relied on its leader, whose intellectual evolution was in some ways simultaneous to the party's development and whose quest for an autonomous ideological and electoral space, which also attempted to maximize the party's appeal by forming political alliances.[19]

After its III National Congress, the AP also began an extensive renewal process. To relaunch itself as a catch–all organization, the party made the strategic choice to refer to itself as "liberal–conservative" as opposed to "right–wing" and added that it was "reformist, popular, and democratic." However, its political rhetoric remained consistent with the traditional principles of the Spanish right, emphasizing authority, public order, and religion.[20]

The collapse of the centre–right Union of the Democratic Centre, *Unión de Centro Democrático* (UCD), which had dominated Spanish politics from 1977 to 1982 under President Adolfo Suárez, and the transformation of the conservative People's Alliance into the leading representative of the right in Spanish politics, were the initial causes of these changes.

In 1979, 50% of AP voters classified this force as being on the right and 35% as being on the far right. At the same time, 30% of all voters identified the party of the right and almost 50% on the far right. In 1982, when the political situation stabilized, 64% of AP voters assessed the party to be on the right and 27% on the far right. In a time when voters' ideological preferences were defined by

[17] Del Rio Morillas, M. Á. (2016) 'El nacimiento de Alianza Popular como confluencia de proyectos de supervivencia franquista (1974–76)', *Segle XX, Revista Catalana d'Història*, 9(107), pp. 107–134.

[18] Richard, G., Sani, G. and Shabad, G. (1988) *Spain after Franco: The Making of a Competitive Party System*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

[19] Montero, J. R. (1987) 'Los fracasos políticos y electorales de la derecha española: Alianza Popular, 1976–1986', *Reis*, 39(7), pp. 7–43.

[20] Vedi supra.

moderation and abhorrence of radicalism, constituents continued to view the party as part of the far–right (54%) as opposed to a conventional conservative party (39%).[21]

Manuel Fraga's doctrinal restructuring of the party did not provide the anticipated electoral outcomes in this setting. The AP's journey was defined as "resistance without success"[22] since the party aimed for victory but could only establish itself as the conservative opposition until the decade's conclusion. Nonetheless, Fraga's efforts helped the conservatives escape the maze they found themselves in when the constitution was ratified. Fraga adapted the doctrine without substantially modifying core authoritarian beliefs about order over political and civil liberties, patriotism, and the morally conservative values inherited from the Francoist regime. He depended on Francoist symbolic structures and needed more experience with political pluralism and explicit political action coordinates. Fraga never questioned the natural law character of the Spanish country. However, he somewhat reimagined and modernized the concept of political community in contrast to the Francoist perspective that viewed the nation as a "unity of destination in the universal."[23] Thus, Fraga restructured Francoist symbols and narratives to fit the new democratic framework.

From December 1978 to October 1982, Fraga engaged in intensive intellectual labour to reform the guiding ideas of the right within the new democratic framework. In the context of the need to consolidate Spanish democracy, removing political violence and pressure from the far right and the military in a country without an advanced democratic culture, the AP leader updated the political doctrine of the democratic right by combining the core principles of pre–Francoist Spanish conservatism with elements of Margaret Thatcher's moral economy.[24]

In this context, "reshape" is used instead of "foundation" or "transformation" to describe the Spanish conservative worldview. Fraga belonged to a generation that did not directly witness the Civil War,

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[21] Maestu Fonseca, E. (2020) 'Spanish Conservatives at the Early Stages of Spanish Democracy: Reshaping the Concepts of State and Community in the Thought of Manuel Fraga', *Genealogy*, 4(1), p. 22.

[22] Vedi supra.

[23] Op. cit.

[24] The "moral economy" describes former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's beliefs regarding the economy. Much of this is consistent with the conventional characterization of Thatcher's philosophy as neoliberal. In deindustrialization, the notion of the moral economy provides a valuable framework for considering concerns about economic policy. As noted by Florence Sutcliffe–Braithwaite, Thatcher's approach to policy was fundamentally moral: "though Thatcherites borrowed ideas from many sources, their political project had a single driving purpose: the moral (and secondarily economic) renewal of Britain."

Reference: Tomlinson, J. (2021) 'Deindustrialisation and 'Thatcherism': moral economy and unintended consequences', *Contemporary British History*, 35(4), pp. 620–642.

unlike the regime's most extreme conservative elements. It is owing to several reasons, including, on the one hand, Fraga's affiliation with the reformist movement, which has called for restricted and regulated political reform since 1969. During the transition, Fraga's views were contested by both the far–right, which questioned constitutional legitimacy, and the centre–right, which included Christian Democrats and liberals. Despite that, during the establishment of democracy, Fraga remained the emblematic heir of pre–democratic ideals on the right.

Conservative thought reshapes its political beliefs by attempting to reconcile economic modernity and acceptance of a certain degree of political plurality while keeping a unique and autonomous character. Fraga's reformist nature diverges from the continuance of the consensus of the transition years, consequently, as he worked on his democratic political platform, he reconstructed the prior political ideals within the new democratic context, including the new constitutional framework, while preserving the notion of a nationalist party and a protector of Christian morals.

In the framework of a more extensive ideological and political redefinition, a significant shift occurred in the formulation of the Spanish right's European policy. In this way, the Spanish right's conventional orientations saw significant alterations and excellent continuity throughout this period.[25] The perspectives of the right toward Europe, reflecting growth in those parties' Europeanism, are directly related to the perceptions of the integration process held by the Spanish population and the necessity to accommodate the European preferences of Spanish voters. It was undoubtedly also the solid popular support for Spain's EEC membership[26] that, since 1989, arose the new PP, making it the primary rival of the Spanish elections.[27]

Regarding the relationship with Europe, it is also interesting to see how Fraga wrote about the relationship between Spanish regionalism and the European Community.

According to him, in order to have total European cohesion, it was necessary to overcome the problems that Spain experienced at the regional level and translate these problems at the European level. It was a question of various factors. As Fraga explained, the regional underdevelopment was due to geographical factors: isolation, poor soil quality, difficult orography, and lack of natural resources. However, also due to factors of the economic structure: predominance of the primary sector

[25] Llamazares, I. (2005) 'The Popular Party and European Integration: Re–elaborating the European Programme of Spanish Conservatism', *South European Society and Politics*, 10(2), pp. 315–332.

[26] Eurobarometer reports that respondents with good opinions of Spanish participation in the EU have consistently outweighed those with opposing views. (Source: online – Eurobarometers).

[27] Hooghe, L., Marks, G. and Wilson, C. J. (2002) 'Does left – right structure party positions on European integration?', *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 35(8), pp. 965–989.

("old structure") or of the industrial sector ("new structure"). Finally, a problem was stated in the institutional factors: it may derive from an excessive centralization to the forced unification of unequal regions or, on the contrary, the forced partition.

According to Fraga, the European institutions were able to iron out these problems. Indeed, he stated that the objectives of European regional policy were to contribute to economic integration, to correct imbalances, harmoniously distribute economic activities and to aid overcoming the economic crisis, assisting declining regions.

Furthermore, a positive factor is that the principles of this Community regional policy would not affect the free play of competition, starting with the prior aid of the Member State, which should act as a regulator of the European contribution. Indeed, Fraga underlined how the objectives of the Commission included the priority of job creation and improving productivity.[28]

In conclusion, the process of change of the Spanish right has been gradual since the post–Franco period. It is possible to observe – throughout the most crucial figure from right politics of Manuel Fraga – how political ideas, while remaining conservative, have embraced the new democratic and pro–European wave overcoming Spain and the other European states at the time.

[28] Fraga Iribarne, M. (1989) 'La política regional en Europa', *Anales de la Real Academia de Ciencias Morales y Políticas, Ministerio de Justicia*, pp. 129–160.

1.3 Transition of the political left

During the democratic consolidation in Spain, not only the right but also the left–leaning Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) became more moderate. Mostly influenced by Felipe González Márquez[29] and the progressivist Alfonso Guerra,[30] the PSOE followed the procedures of democratic centralism.

However, during the democratic transition era, when the Socialist party began to advocate for Spain's membership in NATO, this moderate approach was already started.[31] It continued in May 1978, when González stunned party members by casually stating to a gathering of journalists in a Barcelona restaurant, that he would propose abandoning the Marxist designation at the party's next Congress. True to his word, González suggested deleting Marxism from the party's bylaws but faced significant pushback from the extreme party's supporters.

The PSOE's official endorsement and eventual renunciation of Marxism must be understood in the context of a power–winning election strategy. Having established itself as the dominant force on the left, the party tried to replace the *Unión de Centro Democrático* from the centre of Spanish politics. To do this, the PSOE renounced its Marxist roots and sought to project a moderate, centrist image.

In this way, the PSOE embraced a more moderate approach to become a contemporary, all–encompassing political party whose philosophy was subordinate to pragmatic economic management. The PSOE's domination of Spanish politics, at least until the early 1990s, indicated the efficacy of this tactic.[32]

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[29] Felipe González was the Secretary–General of the PSOE from 1974 to 1997, and the third Prime Minister of Spain from 1982 to 1996.

[30] Born on 31 May 1940, Alfonso Guerra González is a Spanish politician. He was the longest–serving deputy of the Congress (from 1977 to 2015). He represented the province of Seville from 1977 to 2015. From 1982 until 1991, he served as Vice President of the government of Spain as a prominent member of the PSOE.

[31] The Spanish left had opposed the United States since the Spanish Civil War due to indirect American assistance for the nationalist front via the operation of U.S. oil firms in Spain and the issuance of loans from private businesses. Relationships deteriorated with Potsdam when the U.S. implicitly supported the continuation of dictatorship and, in 1953, after signing the Pact of Madrid. According to these pacts, the U.S. could set up military bases in Spain in exchange for economic support and diplomatic recognition. According to the Socialists, joining NATO would have posed a nuclear threat in addition to altering the status quo.

[32] Op. Cit.

The metamorphosis that the PSOE was able to master throughout the democratic transition, which led to the Spanish party's electoral victory, is an intriguing aspect of the democratic transition.

The Communist Party of Spain (PCE),[33] on the other hand, was unable to achieve unanimity. It was believed that the PCE, led by the Santiago Carrillo,[34] was in an ideal position to strengthen communist organizational coherence. Moreover, while the PCE could reasonably claim credit for its central role in resisting Franco, it could also make scathing statements about the PSOE's obscurity as an opponent of the tyrant.

Due to these factors, the PSOE's victory against the PCE was a triumph of flexibility in political circumstances. Both parties attempted to persuade voters of their impeccable democratic credentials while downplaying their Marxist nature. In essence, throughout the transition, both parties were required to address the problem of the significance and relevance of Marxist concepts in sophisticated industrial nations. In Spain, as elsewhere, capitalistic processes had muddied class definitions central to any Marxist political party. Meanwhile, the emergence of new social movements, such as feminism, ecology groups, and peace campaigns, undermined the claim of Marxist movements to be the principal anti–system alternatives. After Franco's death, these challenges were compounded by a conservative military elite unwilling to tolerate the participation

[33] The Communist Party of Spain, *Partido Comunista de España* (PCE), is a Marxist–Leninist organization. The PCE was raised in 1921 following a split in the PSOE. The PCE was created by individuals who opposed the social democratic wing of the PSOE since this side rejected the PSOE's incorporation into the Communist International founded by Vladimir Lenin two years earlier. The Spanish Communist Party, *Partido Comunista Español*, and the Spanish Communist Workers' Party, *Partido Comunista Obrero Español*, merged to become the PCE. The PCE was initially legalized in April 1931, following the creation of the Second Spanish Republic. The PCE garnered significant support in the months preceding the July 1936 Spanish coup that sparked the Spanish Civil War and was also a key force during the conflict. Franco formed a military dictatorship after the defeat of the Republicans, during which the PCE was one of the most severely persecuted parties, with explicit legislation prohibiting communist parties, among others.

[34] Santiago José Carrillo Solares (18 January 1915 – 18 September 2012) was a Spanish politician who served as the Communist Party of Spain's General Secretary from 1960 to 1982. During the Civil War, his involvement in the Paracuellos atrocities – a series of mass executions of citizens and soldiers committed by the Republican party during the Spanish Civil War before and during the Siege of Madrid in the early phases of the conflict – was especially contentious. During Francisco Franco's dictatorship, he was exiled and became a leader of the democratic resistance to the regime. As the leader of the PCE, he would subsequently play a pivotal role in the transition to democracy. Later, he accepted Eurocommunism and democratic socialism, and from 1977 to 1986, he was a member of the Congress of Deputies.

in Spanish politics of what it viewed as subversive Marxist parties. Marxism ideological baggage became too difficult to afford for the PSOE and PCE.[35]

The Communist party continued to adhere to the political objective of "high" Stalinism, which is monolithic unity primarily manifested via democratic centralism. Indeed, if the PSOE ultimately prevailed thanks to its image, it may be because the Socialist Party was more likely than the communist one to be perceived as following the norms of the democratic game. At the same time, most PSOE supporters in 1977 and 1979 were unaware that the party identified as Marxist, while the PCE was inevitably linked to the Soviet Union. Faced with the need to adapt to modern society, the communist had to relax the party's principles, stating its commitment to democratic ones (thus risking the loss of its defining characteristic) or perish. Indeed, a significant factor in the PSOE's success was that its leaders could impose on the party democratic features much more effectively than the Communists.[36]

After the election, the two major left parties experienced an almost complete reversal of fortunes: the PCE suffered from growing internal dissension against a bureaucratic and rigidly inflexible leadership, culminating in highly damaging splits. The PSOE, on the other hand, became increasingly dominated by González and Guerra, which imposed essential innovations with the support of the other party's members.[37]

Another key to the PSOE's success was its leaders' strategy to use their party authority to acquire and retain the support of the "new middle class." This achievement may be measured by the fact that just 19.1% of its votes in the 1982 election were from manual laborers, whereas 32.1% of its new members in 1983 were professionals, office employees, and technicians. These alterations were precisely coupled with the need for political moderation of public opinion.

Finally, with the breakup of the UCD together with those shifts toward moderation made by left and right parties, the Spanish political system at the beginning of the 1980s gained the hallmarks

[35] Tezanos, J. F. (1985) 'Continuidad y cambio en el socialismo español. El PSOE durante la transición democrática', *Sistema: revista de ciencias sociales,* 68/69(1985), pp. 19–60.

[36] Tiersky, R. (1985) *Ordinary Stalinism: Democratic Centralism and the Question of Communist Political Development.* London: Allen & Unwin.

[37] Heywood, P. (1987) 'Mirror-images: The PCE and PSOE in the transition to democracy in Spain', *West European Politics*, 10(2), pp. 193–210.

of a contemporary, almost flawless two–party model, with the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party and the People's Party emerging as main protagonists on the political stage.[38]

[38] Cavallaro, M. E. (2010) 'Le transizioni mediterranee e il declino del modello continentale', *Ventunesimo Secolo*, 9(23), pp. 9–31.

1.4. Regional parties and Europe

This chapter analyses the political scenario of Catalonia and Basque Country, the two regions with the most seats in the Spanish Parliament. After presenting those regional parties, it follows a study about their support for European Institutions and how the Community safeguarded their regional autonomous identities.

Regional parties and legislatures have gained particular prominence in Spanish politics since the country's return to democracy, which is one of the most evident developments.[39]
In general elections between 1979 and 1982, national parties received an all–time high of 84% of the vote. Between 1986 and 1989, their vote percentage decreased to 78% and 74%, respectively.[40] This decline in national support is especially evident in Catalonia and the Basque Country, the two areas with the highest feeling of national identity.

In recognition of this development, the majority of national parties have granted their regional branches considerable autonomy, as in the case of the Socialists' Party of Catalonia, *Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya* (PSC–PSOE), which, despite being organically linked to the Madrid–based PSOE under the terms of a 1978 Unity Protocol, has full sovereignty within Catalonia.[41]
Also, the Catalan equivalent of the communist national United Left, *Izquierda Unida* (IU), called Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia, *Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya* (PSUC), is totally independent.
Finally, the party which dominated Catalan politics since the first autonomous elections in March 1980 – and then dissolved in 2015 – was the Convergence and Union, Catalan *Convergència i Unió* (CiU), a conservative coalition composed of the Democratic Convergence of Catalonia (CDC) and its smaller counterpart, the Democratic Union of Catalonia (UDC).[42]
The only other significant nationalist organization in Catalonia is the Republican Left of Catalonia, *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*, (ERC). The ERC has continuously embraced an extreme

[39] This occurred following the aim for decentralization of authority that happened to exist following the extremely centralized Franco regime. He imposed his vision of a unified Spain – "*una, grande y libre*" – fashioned in the image of imperial glory, which had aimed to eliminate regional differences within Spain.

[40] Op cit.

[41] Maravall, J. M. et al. (1992) *Socialist Parties in Europe*. Barcelona: ICPS.

[42] Puigjaner, M. (1989) *Catalonia. A millenial country*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya.

nationalist posture until, in 1992, it accepted the demand for complete Catalan independence and was joined by the remains of Free Land, *Terra Lliure*, a former terrorist group dissolved in 1995.[43]

Speaking about the other central autonomous region of Spain, the Basque Country – also called Basque Autonomous Community – it is possible to observe how the Basque Nationalist Party, *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV), was created in 1895 by the nationalist Sabino Arana, played a significant role in the Spanish political realm. Since the post–Franco transition to democracy, the PNV's ideology has grown along Christian democratic and centre–right lines and even if it is comparable to that of CiU, the PNV initially had a more extreme posture toward autonomy. In 1986, the party split, resulting in the formation of Basque Solidarity, *Eusko Alkartasuna* (EA), a competing non–confessional social democratic centrist movement. Significant were the 1986 regional elections when the EA won 16% of the vote and 13 seats, denying the traditional nationalist party its first win since the formation of the Basque regional government. However, the PNV has strengthened its position as the significant nationalist movement in Basque politics heightening its ties with bankers, business leaders, and labour unions. It also formed an efficient alliance with the PSOE, with whom it has ruled the Basque Country since 1986 (with a brief interruption in 1990).[44] Also important in the Basque Country was the far–left Basque Country Left, *Euskadiko Ezkerra* (EE), which Later, in 1991, merged with the Socialist Party of the Basque Country, *Partido Socialista de Euskadi* (PSE), the branch of the Basque PSOE, the resulting party is the current PSE–EE.

Analysing those regional parties' views of Europe, they were positive because entering the Community meant having more autonomy and representative power within its institutions.
European programs have bolstered regional decision–making power, even in governments where regions lacked substantial capabilities.[45]
Thus, the regions were compelled to establish themselves as competent players representing their regional interests in Brussels. In addition, the idea of subsidiarity, initially established to govern the distribution of powers between the Community and its member states, has been appropriated by the Committee of the Regions and other regional platforms. It is now relevant to the distribution of responsibilities between regions, on the one hand, and Europe institutions and national governments, on the other. Lastly, on a symbolic level, this decision–making process has thrust regions and regional

[43] Op. cit.

[44] Op. Cit.

[45] Keating, M. (1998) *The New Regionalism in Western Europe: Territorial Restructuring and Political Change*. UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

politicians into the European arena, establishing them as significant actors in the EEC policymaking process.[46]

Considering the EEC's added value in offices, votes, and policymaking, it is possible to observe how the most ethnoregionalist parties would tend to be more pro–Europe than their main competitors due to the empowerment of regional actors and the development of an EU regional policy. Additionally, the traditional party electorates are more split than ethnoregionalist party electorates on the EEC integration dimension than on others, such as the left–right wing.

Therefore, ethnoregionalist parties benefit from politicizing the emerging "cleavage" inside the EU. Those examples are visible in Spain, where the CiU and PSOE are the two most pro–European parties.[47] Access to information and the increased ability of autonomous communities to influence decision–making via the participation of regional specialists in the Council's working groups and regional councillors in their formations, are the most significant feature for the regional parties. The dissolution of the government monopoly in representing state's interests results in more openness of Spanish viewpoints and interdependence between the two levels of government regarding the European Union.[48] Also, recognizing the co–official languages of the autonomous communities in the EU has been a permanent obligation since 1986, even though Spain has not established its linguistic diversity in the Accession Treaty. Alternatives were supplied in response to this request to accommodate Spanish requirements. Initially, the enacted legislative documents of the European Parliament and Council will be translated into the co–official languages of Spain. Concerning the use of Catalan/Valencian, Galician, and Basque in written interactions with Union institutions and advisory bodies, the Spanish government must translate into Spanish any writings in these languages intended for European institutions, as well as any potential responses.[49]

Within the European Institutions, the Council not only addresses the inclusion of additional Spanish languages but also encourages teaching European languages, such as non–official ones. In

[46] Jones, B. and Keating, M. (1995) *The European Union and the Regions*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

[47] De Winter, L. and Gomez–Reino Cachafeiro, M., (2002) 'European Integration and Ethnoregionalist Parties', *Party Politics*, 8(4), pp. 483–503.

[48] Stephenson, P. (2013) 'Twenty years of multi–level governance: 'Where Does It Come From? What Is It? Where Is It Going?', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 20(6), pp. 817–837.

[49] Today, in oral interventions before the Council and seven other organizations or bodies of the Union, such as the EP or the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), the use of Spanish languages other than Castilian is guaranteed following their specific internal rules.

response to Spanish objections, the Council based its decision on the effort to make the Union closer to all its inhabitants while respecting its linguistic variety.[50]

In conclusion, the autonomous regions have representation within the European Institution independent from the national one, and many safeguards for their language and cultural uniqueness have always pushed the regions to be pro–European, despite whatever independence impulses they may harbor. This fact is politically noteworthy because it creates a singularity in the European populist landscape, where regional independence groups are usually anti–European.

[50] The "Europeanization" of linguistic diversity defended by the socialist government, at an annual cost of one point five million euros to the State, presents a crucial paradox: Spanish citizens who regularly use Catalan, Valencian, Galician, or Basque, now enjoy rights in Europe that they do not have in Spain. The use of specific languages is restricted, for example, in written communications with government institutions and advisory bodies. The exception is the Senate, which permits Catalan, Valencian, Galician, and Basque textual contributions but only oral participation in one of its Commissions. In contrast, the Constitution of 1978 stipulates that "the plurality of linguistic patterns in Spain is a cultural treasure that must be preserved with exceptional care".

CHAPTER 2. The feelings toward the EEC during the Socialist government (1982 – 1996)

2.1. How media and public opinion covered entering the EEC

As presented in the first chapter, it can be discussed how both the right and left parties in Spain have changed their mindset to be more in line with the standards required by the members of the European Community. It follows the analysis of the first PSOE government started in 1982. The study focuses on how the party's actions faced the requests of the EEC's Maastricht Treaty standards and how (or if) the public opinion's positive feelings towards the Community have changed. After analysing the party's attitude referred by the Spanish media, the chapter focuses on the PSOE economic policies to address the main issues the Country had to face entering the Community until the 1992 Maastricht Treaty.

On October 28, 1982, President of the Spanish government Felipe González Márquez was elected with 48.11 percent of the vote and 202 deputies. At this moment it started an immediate creation of a Europeanized national self–image, accompanied by first initiatives to meet Community norms. Those attitudes can be tracked within the triumphalist discourses that evolved in Spain during its entry to the EEC to exemplify this mentality. An excellent example is the Prime Minister's televised statement on March 29, 1985, in which he informed the Spanish people that his Foreign Minister had stipulated an agreement in Brussels signing the Accession Treaty that would make Spain's membership into the EEC feasible at the start of the following year on 1 January 1986:

"*Today, with honor and pride, I address all the residents and peoples of Spain to convey a message of optimism for our future. In the wee hours of this morning, a monumental, irrevocable step was taken toward our merger into the European Economic Community [...] This is an act of immense importance for Spain. It signals the end of our age–old isolation as a historical truth. It also represents our involvement in the shared fate of Western Europe. For democratic Spain, the Spain that lives in freedom, it also represents the conclusion of a battle by millions of Spaniards who have equated freedom and democracy with integration in Western Europe. For Spain as a social reality, as an economic reality, it unquestionably represents a challenge, the challenge of modernity and competitiveness, a task to which I am certain our workers, businesspeople, scientists, professionals, and society as a whole will rise [...] I believe we have the responsibility to do so, and*

we will fulfill this responsibility by leaving our descendants with a more economically efficient, culturally sophisticated, and socially tolerant Spain."[51]

This depiction of 'Europe' as Spain's inspiration was also traceable in the language adopted by the two principal national media during this historic moment. In an article titled "*Aleluia por Europa*," the editor–in–chief of El País stated that the encounter with "Europe" signified, above all, "*the discovery of a mental and ideological space still new to us, in which the words invoked for so long by Spanish intellectuals – tolerance, freedom, and rights – are deeply rooted in a manner that will inevitably and happily benefit us*."[52]

Similarly, ABC's cover portrayed an EEC door that welcomed Spaniards into its jurisdiction by opening wide. An editorial in this newspaper, titled "*Un Dia Histórico"* – A Historical Day – stated that this achievement was:

"*a turning point that will anchor us, for a long time, in the orbit of the nations in which individual rights, free enterprise, and the freedom of ideas impose themselves on any totalitarian temptation [...] a space which is still, despite everything, the geographic platform of reason and liberty*."[53]

It is important to note how El País contributed to the formation of pro–European attitudes as a project of the left, associating the Europeanist feeling with an endless and continuous civil war and explaining how a portion of the population has always understood that ideas and proposals for societal transformation had been beneficial to Spain. In a 1981 essay, it was also said that via these ideas – concerning culture, education, and equal rights – one entered a phase of wealth distribution, accumulation of technological, scientific, and economic benefits in which participation was required.[54] The acceptance of Spain into the EEC as a member country marked the beginning of European integration and was always accompanied by genuine excitement. The indiscriminate use of the prefix "euro–" to enhance or raise the appeal of any item or service is one example of how this "European fashion" was represented.[55]

[51] El País, 'España ingresará en la CEE el 1 de enero de 1986', 30/03/1985.

[52] El País, 'Espana y Portugal ingresáran en el Mercado Común europeo el 1 de enero de 1986', 31/03/1985.

[53] ABC, 'El Mercado Común abre sus puertas a Espana', 29/03/1985.

[54] El País, 'La situación política pendiente de los juicios por el 23 febriero', 21/06/1981.

[55] Examples of this "European fashion" were the *Euro–residencias*, a collection of retirement homes that had neither relation with Europe nor the EEC. Another example is the *eurocola*, a cola drink the business Pascual

All the leading political figures in Spain, like King Juan Carlos, González, and his entire cabinet, the heads of Spain's regional governments but also the President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, and other EEC authorities, together with Spanish bankers, business people, trade union were enthusiastic of this achievement for the Accession Treaty. One of the reasons why business people were in favour of joining was customs duties, which, once within the European Community, no longer exist between member countries. Indeed, the Community provides free movement of people, goods, services and capital. The accession of Spain to the EEC – like an extension of a customs union – will change the relative competitive position of the exports of third countries vis–à–vis Spanish exports in the markets of the enlarged Community. While exports from the new member (Spain) will enter, after the completion of accession, duty–free in the markets of the ten member countries of the EEC, exports from third countries will still have to face the tariff.[56]

Following the signing of the Treaty of Accession on January 1, 1986, Spain and its neighbour Portugal entered the European Economic Community. His Majesty King Juan Carlos I presided over the signing in Madrid's *Palacio de Oriente*, delivering an address welcoming the several foreign representatives present at the occasion.[57] Famous was also the speech of Tierno Galván, the mayor of Madrid, who issued a special proclamation in which he referred to Europe as "the Reason of the universe, which leads the rest of the world's peoples with the light of knowledge and the health of its feelings."[58] Adding that "we are more European than we have ever been," he wanted to demonstrate its devotion to the cause.

The whole ceremony was televised live from the Royal Palace's vast hall exemplified the utmost significance the Spanish government attached to the ceremony. The whole nation was therefore invited to join in this civic ritual of national self–adoration.

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invented to compete with Coca–Cola in the Spanish market. Both instances may be found in Spain. This spontaneous surge of popular Europeanness was satirized in the TV program *Ya semos europeos* (shown in 1989) by the theatrical company Els Joglars. The comedy presented an ancient and traditional Spain in which all efforts to europeanize its image was a masquerade.

[56] Yannopoulos, G. N. (1987) 'Trade effects from the extension of customs unions on third countries: a case study of the Spanish accession to the EEC', *Applied Economics*, 19(1), pp. 39–50.

[57] Powell, C. (2014) *La larga marcha hacia Europa: España y la Comunidad Europea, 1957–1986.* Madrid: Real Instituto Elcano.

[58] Op. Cit.

The main centrepieces of the ceremony were remarks by the King and Prime Minister González, in which Europe was portrayed as the climax of Spain's successful transit to modernity and democracy. Juan Carlos I, for example, greeted European dignitaries in the following manner:

"Spain is honored to host the most distinguished guests of the European Communities and their constituent states. You symbolize what the Spanish people think of when they think of Europe: the ideas of liberty, equality, pluralism, and justice, which also guide the Spanish Constitution. The Spanish people greet you with pleasure, cognizant of the immense importance of this occasion".[59]

ABC's front–page headline read in capital letters "Madrid, capital of Europe," and its main editorial referred to the admittance into Europe as "a Copernican revolution and the beginning of a crucial logic for our nation."[60]

[59] El País, 'A Ias 20.53 de ayer Espana firmó el tratado e adhesión a la Comunidad Económica Europa', 13/06/1985.

[60] ABC, 'Madrid Capital De Europa', 13/06/1985.

2.2 PSOE economic policies pre–Maastricht (1982 – 1992)

Combining what is written in the previous paragraphs, the historiography analysed brings an evident positive attitude towards Europe, going to underline this European myth that had characterized Spanish politics and society from the period of democratic consolidation up to the entry into the EEC in 1986. The study is now concerned with verifying whether these optimistic sentiments have changed with the crisis Spain suffered before the signing of the Maastricht Treaty.

Since 1982, when the Maastricht requirements, a currency crisis, a recession, and high inflation combined to end a period of significant public expenditure, strict fiscal policies have been the rule, the PSOE was forced to balance the spending necessary to create a fairer society and the kind of monetary restraint that would allow the nation to compete in the rapidly changing global free–market economy. Because it had inherited a situation in which state institutions, infrastructure, and productive faculties required urgent radical modernization.[61]

The PSOE's electoral triumph in 1982 signalled the end of the political transition and the beginning of an unabashedly pro–Europeanist economic policy outlook. The job of political modernization was completed in Spain, as it was in the other newly emerging democracies in Southern Europe, within the context of the globalization of political and economic liberalism. The Socialists faced the challenge of balancing the demand for social improvements with the need to restructure the struggling economy in the context of the growing influence of globally mobile capital, which explains the PSOE's seemingly paradoxical adoption of an openly liberal economic policy strategy. Therefore, there was no genuine attempt to govern the economy through mass public supply, state ownership of the means of production, or national demand management. Instead, limited monetarism was imposed by PSOE governments to align Spain's economic policies with those of its EU allies.[62]

The austerity measures implemented by Miguel Boyer, minister of economy, treasury, and commerce, and his successor Carlos Solchaga, bore similarities to the repressive policies carried out by right–wing governments and did not sit well with purported socialism. They were intended to reduce inflation, the public sector deficit, and the balance of payments deficit, as well as to encourage

[61] Murphy, B. (1999) 'European integration and liberalization: Political change and economic policy continuity in Spain', *Mediterranean Politics*, 4(1), pp. 53–78.

[62] Holman, O. (1996) *Integrating Southern Europe: EC Expansion and the Transnationalization of Spain*. London: Routledge.

foreign investment and start a process of industrial streamlining to ease negotiations over EEC membership.[63]

Despite a significant increase in welfare spending between 1975 and 1982, the PSOE thus sought to strike a balance between economic efficiency and redistribution to improve the economy's competitiveness and performance. As a result of all those measures, the overall tax burden in Spain increased by 36% between 1980 and 1988, the highest increase in the EC.

The administration was charged with being indifferent to the amount of unemployment since, despite a slow decline from over 21.5 percent in 1985 to 15.9 percent in 1990 (before rising once more), this figure was still about double the 8.4 percent EEC average. Equally concerning were the adverse effects of unemployment on young people, with 30.5% of Spaniards between the ages of 16 and 24 reporting joblessness in 1991.[64] González was prepared to forego short–term economic concerns in favour of longer–term political objectives, albeit this was not a risk–free move.

The practical implementation of socialism was postponed to a later time as an idealistic goal that could only be attained by laying the groundwork for economic modernization through European unity. The PSOE was forced to face the undeniable truth that old egalitarian mechanisms, such as national demand management, state ownership, and mass public provision, had to various degrees become rusty, in line with social democratic parties across Europe. The rhetoric of social transformation, fairness, and opportunity was always simple to speak; yet it proved to be more challenging to translate into actual politics.

The point is that the Community membership had a significant role in this situation. Integration into the EC, which is regarded by many as one of the first González administration's greatest successes, had a considerable influence on the framework and execution capabilities of Spanish macroeconomic policy. The initial terms of entry and subsequent moves towards ever–greater economic and political union under the 1987 Single European Act and two intergovernmental conferences, including entry to the exchange rate mechanism of the EMS in 1989, significantly reduced the government's latitude for macroeconomic policy. This trend, of course, was sharply accelerated by the terms of the Maastricht agreement. [65]

However, two points should be highlighted: first, the GDP began to grow by more than 5% by 1985; and second, although the González government's handling of the unemployment problem was one of

[63] Powell, C. (2001) *España en democracia, 1975–2000*. Spain: Plaza & Janés.

[64] Allard, G. and Bolorinos, J. (1992) *Spain to 2000. A Question of Convergence.* London: Economist Intelligence Unit.

[65] Harrison, J. (1993) *The Spanish Economy. From the Civil War to tilt European Community*. London: Macmillan.

its biggest mistakes, the general public and the media did not change their views on the necessity of implementing Maastricht standards because Spanish electors distrusted political parties, so they preferred Europe as a lifeline for economic problems. Furthermore, even though states had to meet strict economic criteria to enter Maastricht, the fault of the domestic economic crisis in Spain was not considered to be the fault of Europe. Instead, this happened, according to the Spanish citizens, due to the mismanagement of the Spanish state coffers.

Support for Europe stems significantly from the idea that Spain can only leave its historical isolationism, which has put it behind its rivals and peripheral to global events, by becoming a member of the Community. Spain must seek convergence with its central European competitors to realize its objective of being one of the core economies at the forefront of an integrated Europe. However, suppose Spain's economy is not integrated with other European nations. In that case, it may face negative repercussions and be relegated to a permanent second–class position within the Community. Because of this, convergence is seen as being extremely important.[66]

Home opinion was mainly uncritical of the Community during the 1980s. At the time, the country's deficit–GDP ratio could not meet the Maastricht criteria, so the blame was placed on the political parties and not on the European institutions and the criteria they sanctioned. This is part of the discourse of solid respect for Europe rather than for parties within the Spanish state. Indeed, a generation adopted European practices as the paradigm of development.[67] The business sector, whose push for further Europeanization, desired the profitability and efficiency of European Community enterprises. The unions hailed EC membership primarily to guarantee the democratic rights they had been denied before, and there was agreement among political parties over the desirability of admittance.[68]

The percentage of Spaniards persuaded that the 1992 plan was a "positive thing" for them was greater than that of any other country between 1985 and mid–1989, progressively increasing to 70% by the end of the decade.[69]

During the late 1980s, domestic Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) discussion was minimal. The EMU aimed at the coordination of economic and fiscal policies, a shared monetary policy, and the introduction of the euro as a common currency. Domestic players did not participate

[66] Cavallaro, M. E. and Kornetis, K. (2019) *Rethinking Democratisation in Spain, Greece and Portugal*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

[67] Perez–Diaz, V. (1987) *El retorno de la sociedad civil*. Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Economicos.

[68] Richard, Y. (1999) 'The Domestic Politics of Spanish European Economic Policy, 1986–94', *South European Society and Politics*, 4(1), pp. 48–70.

[69] *Eurobarometer Reports*, (1985–1989), n. 25–32.

in a comprehensive analysis of the anticipated effects of the single currency or a meeting of the more technical parts of the planned EMU timeline. Before Maastricht, domestic public opinion was mainly concerned with cohesion transfers. This compelled the government to demand a better deal in Maastricht than it would have otherwise accepted.

2.3 A greater integration to solve crisis (1992 – 1996)

As described in the previous paragraphs, this public spending policy tested by the PSOE led to an extraordinary increase in the deficit, just as a new recessionary economic cycle was opening up in the West under the impact of the Gulf War and German reunification. The government adopted the first measure to curb social spending in April 1992 with a law that reduced unemployment benefits, both in amount and duration, while tightening the conditions for access to unemployment insurance. This measure, known as the Solchaga Convergence Plan and unanimously rejected by the trade unions, who called a general strike in May 1992, was the first step towards the end of the social democratic policy initiated in 1989, among other things, because the government had drastically reduced the public deficit to try to meet the conditions of the European Union Convergence Program.[70]

However, despite the economic difficulties, the PSOE administration believed that the solution was to enhance European integration, not to challenge EC membership. The socialist administration fought hard for EU cohesion funding at the Edinburgh Council because it resolved to remain within the EMU despite the severe economic crisis.

Indeed, the advantages that Spain has gotten from the EU's Cohesion Funds have been a significant aspect of the country's Euro–enthusiasm, as they have been viewed as a crucial tool in the country's ongoing process of "catching up" with its more developed European neighbours. During the 1991 negotiations of the Maastricht Treaty, the Spanish government most vehemently defended the necessity of establishing these funds, not only in defence of Spain's national interests but also as a principle of solidarity essential to the future success of the EU project.[71] The Spanish government argued that only by developing this system of economic solidarity could the harmonious growth of European integration be ensured. In this manner, Spain assumed the position of the EU's leading proponent of social cohesion as a cornerstone of the European integration agenda.

Spain acquired 27% of EU cohesion grants between 1994 and 1999, compared to Greece's and Portugal's 11.55% and Ireland's 5%.[72]

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[70] Marín Arce, J. M. (2000) 'Diez años de gobierno del PSOE', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Serie V Historia Contemporánea*, 13(1), pp. 189–209.

[71] Spohn, W. (2005) *Entangled Identities: Nations and Europe*. London: Routledge.

[72] Powell, C. (2002) 'Spanish membership of the European Union revisited', *Documentos de Trabajo del Real Instituto Elcano*, 2(2002), pp. 1–17.

The majority of the restructuring of the Spanish economy was based on the liberalization of the labour market, which was fiercely opposed by trade unions, most notably during the 14 December 1988 general strike, which paralyzed the nation and compelled Prime Minister González to revise his economic program. This fact highlighted the divorce that has taken place between the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party and the General Workers' Union, *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT), after an intimate partnership lasting a century.[73]

From this moment, the European myth started to change. Indeed, the EU became a subject of political debate. The conservative PP criticized the socialist policy for relying on EU money greatly. *Izquierda Unida* and a few radical nationalist parties on the periphery raised grave misgivings about the Maastricht Treaty. IU was concerned about social expenditure cuts and the preponderance of liberalism shown by the convergence criteria. IU introduced a rejection amendment and abstained from the ratification vote to indicate its opposition to the Maastricht Treaty. The Basque *Euskadiko Esquerra* voted against ratification on the centre–periphery axis, saying that the Treaty strengthened the Spanish central authority. This argument did not gain much traction among nationalist parties on the periphery then, but it would resurface with force over the subsequent period: during the ratification of the Amsterdam and Nice Treaties and the referendum campaign for the European Constitution.

However, despite the increased debate caused by the EU throughout these years, Spanish political parties have progressively supported the integration process. Even in the case of IU, the net proportion of positive speech about the EU climbed from 0.79 to 1.54 between 1977 and 1986. The critical stance IU chose was primarily directed at the prevailing neoliberal model of the EU; hence, we saw the formation of a soft rather than a harsh Euroscepticism, which would continue and intensify in the years that followed.[74]

After the general elections of 1993, the PSOE's minority status compelled it to seek political alliances. Given the divergent viewpoints of IU and PSOE, it was impossible to form a left alliance. Instead, PSOE opted to form a coalition with regionalist parties the Basque Nationalist Party and the Catalan *Convergència i Unió*. On European issues, these regionalist parties were closer to the PSOE

[73] Gillespie, R. (1990) 'The break-up of the 'socialist family': Party-union relations in Spain, 1982–89', *West European Politics*, 13(1), pp. 47–62.

[74] Ruiz Jiménez, A. M. and Egea de Haro, A. (2011) 'Spain: Euroscepticism in a Pro–European Country?', *South European Society and Politics*, 16(1), pp. 105–131.

than to the IU, particularly about the Single Market and EMU; their support for the socialist administration fuelled the pro–integration attitude.[75]

In conclusion, the EU's influence was more apparent due to the actions adopted during an economic crisis. Second, despite the early consensus on European integration and the sacrifices made to join the EC, support for European integration began to erode with the commencement of the EMU project. Increased criticism was spearheaded by IU, which condemned the lack of a social dimension in the European integration process. Consequently, the EU has become a more divisive subject along ideological lines. As previously stated, the ruling party, exhibited a more significant proportion of net favourable speech about the EU.[76]

Nonetheless, it is crucial to highlight how the media covered this crisis period and its relationship to entrance into the EC. During the period of institutional transition of the EC that began in 1986 with the accession of Spain and Portugal, ABC and El País views on European integration were increasingly focused on the goal itself, and their overall perspectives began to diverge.

From 1986 to 1997, ABC's opinion pieces tended to be critical of the European Community and its successor, the European Union, for example, while addressing EMU. They saw European integration only through the lens of Spain's national interests. The significant elements of this policy were to resist integration when it was damaging to Spain's short–term national interests and to prevent Spain from falling behind if other countries continued with superior integration plans. Thus, the daily newspaper emphasized the need to maintain Spain's voting power in the EU in the face of enlargement, pushed for a delay in the abandonment of EMU, and resisted the idea of a two–speed Europe in which Spain would be relegated to the back seat. It also opposed the European Parliament's intrusion into Spain's sovereignty and advocated cooperation on foreign policy and defence issues.

In addition, the national journal positioned the European Union as a platform for Spain to exhibit its worth. Thus, when Spain took the chair of the Council of Ministers, the editorial underlined that this was a chance for Spain to display its management skills and capacity to fulfil the agenda. Nothing was stated about the practical ability of the agenda or Spain's participation in crafting it. The same concern for Spain's reputation was evident in the newspaper's criticism of Spain's reliance on European Union Structural Funds, which, in its view, presented the impression of a perpetually impoverished nation.

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[75] Guerrero, S. E. (2003) 'Apoyos parlamentarios antes que gobiernos de coalición. El caso español: 1993–1996 y 1996–2000', *Política y Sociedad*, 40(2), pp. 77–88.

[76] Real–Dato, J. and Sojka, A. (2020) 'The Rise of (Faulty) Euroscepticism? The Impact of a Decade of Crises in Spain', *South European Society and Politics,* 1(28), pp. 1–28.

In contrast to ABC, the articles in El País, during this period, concentrated far more on the institutional aspects of European integration. The newspaper's writings favoured a politically unified Europe, the EMU, and a strengthening of the power of the European Parliament. The journal was also sharing positions sustaining that the ultimate Spanish goal should have been the establishment of a social Europe.

El País's stance on European integration was equally driven by the need to safeguard Spanish national interests. Contributors to El País made it evident that one of the advantages of European Union membership was that it would offer Spain a stronger voice in international affairs and be an excellent source of economic assistance. For instance, the newspaper's reluctance to grow to Central and Eastern Europe would diminish Spain's influence in the decision–making process and possibly lead to a reduction in the cohesion funds it was getting from the European Union.

ABC revealed that El País's desire for further European integration exceeded the needed safeguarding of national interests. Indeed, it was believed that the predicted advantages of the European Union to peace and addressing global challenges were a risk for economic concerns.

The two publications' most differing viewpoints were mainly on EMU. El País urged accelerating the process and supported the inclusion of the most significant number of countries possible, while ABC's donors incessantly sought to postpone or even abandon EMU.[77]

[77] Medrano, J. D. (2003) *Framing Europe Attitude to European Integration in Germany, Spain and The United Kingdom*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

2.4 Spanish left against the Solchaga Convergence Plan

As previously examined, divergent opinions on EMU were also spreading not only among the leading Spanish media but as well among trade unions and left parties such as the UGT and PSOE. More specifically, it has been Solchaga Convergence Plan to sign a rupture between lefties parties. It is crucial to analyse how, even if in favour of the European Monetary Union, the left parties in Spain disagreed about the Economy Minister – Carlos Solchaga[78] – Convergence Plan.

Indeed, this scheme shattered any last concept of the Spanish left as a "family" that included the socialist administration.[79] Everyone claimed that nominal convergence would make actual convergence more difficult. According to Julio Anguita,[80] the Maastricht proposals for EMU featured a "conservative dynamic" that was lacking from the single–market agenda.[81] The emphasis on labour market flexibility would trap Spain in a low–skilled, low–paying rut. To catch up with the rest of Europe, Spain needs expansionary policies. The convergence criteria should include actual indicators (unemployment rates, regional inequalities, investment rates, growth, and manufacturing strength), with the EC committing to achieving them before EMU began.[82]

[78] Carlos Solchaga Catalán, born in Tafalla, 1944, is a Spanish economist and politician who was Minister of Economy and Finance between 1985 and 1993. He obtained a degree in Economic Sciences from the Complutense University of Madrid (1965). He obtained his doctorate in 1968, and received a contract in Development Planning and later worked with the Ministry of Finance and Commerce, Luis Ángel Rojo. He was part of the Research Service of the Bank of Spain until 1974, where he specialized in issues of international economics and if he was in charge of conducting the Balance of Payments and International Economics department.

[79] Colomer, J. (1992) *Development Policy Decision–Making in Democratic Spain*. Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Socials Avancats.

[80] Anguita González, J. (21 November 1941 – 16 May 2020) was a Spanish politician and historian. He was Mayor of Córdoba from 1979 to 1986, coordinator of United Left (IU) between 1989 and 1999, and Secretary–General of the Communist Party of Spain (PCE) from 1988 to 1998.

[81] *Boletin Oficial De Las Cortes Generales IV Legislatura*, 30/05/1991, 115(5), pp. 1–35.

[82] Youngs, R. (1999) 'The Domestic Politics of Spanish European Economic Policy, 1986–94', *South European Society and Politics*, 4(1), pp. 48–70.

All of these players rejected – first tacitly and increasingly officially – the necessity to subjugate domestic concerns to protect the parity of the peseta in the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM).[83]

It must be clarified that none of these left–wing players rejected the EMU idea; as indicated by the officials of the General Union of Workers, the party backed the Convergence Plan but not Maastrich.[84] The UGT saw Maastricht as "the manifestation of a political resolution to progress towards a federal Europe".[85] The Convergence Plan would not help to solve unemployment, Spain's main structural problem. The issue were the disadvantages such as insufficient supply and demand of qualified employment and specialization in labour–intensive industries, resulting in a production shortfall for most capital products. Finally, also limited jobless participation in wage formation. In the worst–case scenario, the Plan would have even worst the unemployment situation, and this was the main worry of the Union of Workers. However, the Union saw the Treaty on European Union as a "necessary but inadequate" first step towards constructing a more balanced economic union with an appropriate central budget and redistributive policies.[86] Spain had no choice but to wait until a unified European fiscal policy and total political unity addressed the adverse effects of convergence.

In this climate of contrast between PSOE and workers' unions, José María Aznar,[87] leader of the People's Party, started to accuse the government of disinterest in social welfare, becoming the greatest opponent of González. In its 1993 election platform, the PP claimed that reducing the deficit would be the top goal of its economic strategy.[88] The party's leaders repeatedly referred to the need to encourage economic development via public investment with multiplier effects. They advocated for more infrastructure spending, training, education, and an all–encompassing energy strategy.

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[83] Zabalza, A. (1994) 'El Camino Hacia la Union Economica y Monetaria: Una Perspectiva Espanola', *Informacion Comercial Espanola*, 731(1), pp. 1–39.

[84] El País, 'Los europeos y el ejemplo británico', 26/05/1992.

[85] Vedi supra.

[86] Op. cit.

[87] José María Aznar, born in Madrid on February 25, 1953, is a lawyer and politician who served as Spain's prime minister from 1996 to 2004. His full name is José Mara Aznar López. Aznar was born in Spain to a politically engaged, conservative family. His grandpa was a friend of dictator Francisco Franco, and his father and grandfather worked for the government throughout the dictator's government.

[88] Vedi supra.

At the same time, a planned tax reduction was a fundamental component of the party's economic platform; this was the feature underlined as most clearly separating the People's Party from the PSOE.[89]

In addition, the PP attempted to capitalize on the stalemate between the government and the Unions by inching closer to the latter to form an alliance to combat the Convergence Plan's danger to employment.[90] The party refrained from accepting the government's contention that Spain's most crucial issue was its tight labour market.[91] Indeed, the re–establishment of social dialogue as part of a more consensual policy–making style featured prominently in the PP's electoral platform. Jose Maria Aznar openly stated that he was unwilling to tolerate a high degree of social unrest and hardship to meet European obligations.[92] Significantly, the more pro–European Christian Democratic wing of the party was warier of the sacrifices required to comply with convergence requirements, than the smaller group of admirers of British Conservative–style deregulation.

Despite the parties' opposition to the Convergence Plan, it was adopted by the administration of Felipe González. As lefties parties previously feared, the Plan immediately entailed tightening the conditions for obtaining unemployment benefits (12 months of contributions as opposed to 6 months previously). It also started the penalization of the unemployed who have not accepted a job or participated in vocational training courses, the elimination of barriers to the mobility of employees, the passage from 6 to 12 months of the minimum duration of employment contracts of limited duration, and the fight against fraud in unemployment benefits.

Following what affirmed Carlos Solchaga, the enhanced flexibility of the labour market would have permitted the creation of one million employees over the next five years. Solchaga noted that there was no aggression towards the employees and emphasized that the convergence plan accounted for a genuine increase in the buying power of workers.

During the parliamentary discussion on the State of the Nation, Felipe González had previously said that this program was "a national priority, and we will have to accept all the repercussions."[93]

Carlos Solchaga remained steadfast on this issue, maintaining that the convergence plan would be implemented regardless of the backing of labour unions and employers. In fact, according to the

[89] Colomer, J. (1992) *Development Policy Decision–Making in Democratic Spain*. Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Socials Avancats.

[90] Financial Times, 'Upset in Europe Construction Equipment Market', 1/06/1992, n. 3.

[91] Congreso, 17/12/1991, n. 155.

[92] Congreso, 01/06/1992, n. 204.

[93] Les Echos, 'La nouvelle équipe Gonzalez conforte l'option libérale de Madrid', 30/03/1992.

Minister of the Economy, "unions should have no special connection with the socialist government. They should be regarded similarly to any other interest organization."[94]

In addition to the consequences on worker welfare, another difficulty associated with the Convergence Plan was the stringency with which the Spanish government implemented the steps to join the final phase of EMU. Inflation, which reached 5.9% in 1992, was driven mainly by service prices (+10.2%) and wage growth (+8.8%), with the slight increase in food prices offsetting the rise in VAT and energy expenses. Indeed, these restrictive measures in 1992 were followed by a different drop in price rises to that seen in the major developed nations.[95]

[94] El País, 'Solchaga: "Hemos de reorganizar el proyecto del PSOE sin sindicatos"', 15/01/1989.

[95] Garcia, I. (2018) 'Spain and EMU', *Review of Financial Economy*, 89494(2018), pp. 58–74.

2.5 The end of González's government

By 1995, after the signing of the Treaty, the economic metrics of inflation, GDP, and job creation were all pointing in a good direction. However, González was obliged to rely on the backing of Catalan nationalists led by Jordi Pujol to continue in government following the 1993 elections. Pujol mainly explained his support by citing the necessity to maintain the stability required to satisfy the Maastricht standards, a goal most international observers thought Spain could not achieve. Additionally, by 1995, González was under increasing pressure from the media and the opposition to resign due to a series of financial and political scandals that had severely weakened his reputation and popularity.

Based on what the leading newspapers published about this era, the "Juan Guerra case" was the impetus that made corruption the "most pressing issue in Spanish politics." This controversy arose in January 1990 when the mass media began to report on the actions of Juan Guerra, the brother of the Socialist government's deputy Prime Minister since 1982, Alfonso Guerra, while he had an office in a governmental building.

The issue that drew public attention to this case was not the revelation that a Socialist had become wealthy via questionable methods but rather the simple connection that could be established to Guerra, the vice–prime minister. According to the facts provided, Juan Guerra went from a terrible economic condition before the socialist election triumph in 1982 – when he was collecting unemployment benefits – to holding significant assets, primarily real estate. The basis of his fortune was his employment as a broker in firms that dealt with some level of government, often local councils with a majority of Socialists that gave building permits, public contracts, etc. Before the 1982 socialist triumph, his brother Juan had served as his secretary in Seville (his hometown and parliamentary district).

When the PSOE was in power to fulfil his duties as his brother's assistant, Juan Guerra began using an office in the central government's mission in Seville, although not being a public worker. Many others regarded Alfonso's usage of a public edifice as political cover for his brother's activities (which, in turn, were identified as influence peddling or trafficking). Thus, according to opponents, the use of public facilities gave a regular person the appearance of power and made his brokering operations easier.

This incident marked the beginning of the Socialist Party's loss of public trust or credibility, which it had enjoyed since its historic triumph in 1982. However, this was only one instance of improper behaviour by the PSOE to come to light. The mass media remained affected by what may

be termed "transition syndrome." The media played a crucial part in the transition to democracy, displaying its significance on different occasions. Thus, the press was staunchly pro–democracy and unwilling to pursue information that could endanger the new regime.[96]

Another scandal was covered by mass media as the possible end of the González government. The so–called Anti–Terrorist Liberation Group (GAL) Scandal, according to which the secret police collaborated with Spanish criminals to arrest members of the ETA, a Basque terrorist group.
Although González said he was a stranger to the facts, El País covered the point with "The Final Stage," thinking about the possible resignation of the premier. Furthermore, his rival PP members used these devices against him in his political campaign.
González, fully knowing that the 1995 presidency would be his final opportunity to make an impression on the European scene, made every effort, but to no avail. Despite successful events such as the Barcelona Euro–Mediterranean Conference, the signing of a new Transatlantic Agenda with Bill Clinton, and the designation of the European single currency (euro), Spanish public sentiment remained unchanged. [97]

They were unable to reduce the tensions caused by political debate, which were a veritable problem for the previous government under González. Indeed, it was ridiculed daily by scandals in the courts and subjected to a campaign of harassment and aggravation in the media and Congress, where the votes of Catalan nationalists sustained the socialist parliamentary minority.
The disclosure of the CESID papers – some documents stolen by Colonel Juan Alberto Perote – containing recordings of illegal phone taps that allegedly revealed the responsibility of leading socialists in the GAL case, precipitated the resignation of the minister of defence, Julián Garcia Vargas, and the withdrawal of Catalan support from Parliament by Jordi Pujol. The only thing left to do was schedule an early election for March 1996 and wait for the government's loss, ending a decade of socialist dominance.[98]

Even after the Treaty was signed in 1995, when the economy exhibited clear indications of progress, including positive indices for inflation, GDP, and job creation, González's reputation did not alter. The last effort to change the destiny of PSOE was the effort to create a new political program through the so–called *Programa 2000*.

[96] Prevost, G. (1995) 'The End of the González Era?', *The World Today, Royal Institute of International Affairs*, 51(10), pp. 193–196.

[97] Op. cit.

[98] Casanova, J. (2014) *Twentieth – Century Spain: A History*. UK: Cambridge University Press.

2.6 *Programa 2000* and the effort to create a European Socialism

The proposal for the PSOE to create e European Socialism, goes back to September 1985, when Alfonso Guerra initiated a series of yearly conclaves comprising 35 to 50 socialist leaders and intellectuals, two years before the formal discussion was organized. Participants included Manuel Escudero,[99] who was later appointed coordinator of *Programa 2000*, and the social scientists Tezanos and Elias Diaz, who later produced a series of publications based on the discussions. Participants discussed how to handle the period's economic crisis and advance toward some kind of economic democracy, create an alliance with emerging social movements, and ensure the adoption of a welfare state in Spain.[100]

Simultaneously, there were frequent interactions with various socialist parties. There were discussions on programmatic change with the Austrian, German, Dutch, British, French, Portuguese, Italian, Swedish, and Norwegian parties. The studies of international issues benefited from seminars attended by economists from the United States, Italy, Portugal, Britain, Germany, and Scandinavia.[101] Throughout this moment, the PSOE retained a prominent position within the Socialist International. González headed over the group that wrote the new Declaration of Principles for the International, ratified in June 1989 to replace the declaration from 1951.[102] *El Socialismo del Futuro*, a new publication backed by the International that claimed to incorporate eminent political and intellectual personalities and foster discussion amongst socialist thought currents, was also published by the Spanish socialists' exponents. The German SPD was the primary point of reference for the Spaniard's publications.[103]

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[99] Escudero was born in San Sebastián, Gipuzkoa, on March 29, 1946. He earned a bachelor's degree in Business Sciences from the Universidad de Deusto and a doctorate from the London School of Economics. Between 1991 to 2005, he taught macroeconomics at the IE Business School in Madrid and directed the Global Compact Research Center at the Levin Institute. Linked within the PSOE, he was elected to represent Madrid in the Congress of Deputies in 2003. Escudero afterward withdrew from political activity, returned to the PSOE, and was named secretary for the PSOE's Economic Policy and Employment Area.

[100] El Socialista, 15/05/1987, n. 429.

[101] El Socialista, 30/09/1990, n. 510.

[102] PSOE, *Programa 2000* (pamphlet), 1987.

[103] The Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), also known as the German Social Democratic Party or the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, is the oldest political party in Germany and one of the two largest parties in the nation (the other being the Christian Democratic Union). It highlights the necessity of addressing

Indeed, since 1975, as the historian Antonio Muñoz has shown, the German Social Democrats decided to give the PSOE all possible support[104] to help it become the main party of the Spanish left, thus counteracting the influence of the PCE. Thus, Germans intended to prevent the Iberian socialists from being receptive to French influence generally and, in particular, to their idea of the union of the left.

Indeed, the support that German Social Democracy could offer to the PSOE through the SPD, the government of which they were a part, the Unions, and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation – a German party–affiliated organization linked to the SPD – was probably more significant than any other SI[105] party could have provided. Furthermore, through diplomatic and governmental channels, the German Social Democrats could provide the PSOE with an interlocutor within the Spanish government González. Moreover, German support was intended to provide the Spanish socialists with the possibility of competing with the communists differently without having to seek an alliance with them. All this made the SPD a very influential actor.

For European socialism in the Iberian Peninsula, it was at stake to define the predominant ideological trend within the SI and the meaning of democratic socialism. Since the spring of 1975, the different ideological currents within the SI, clashed to gain influence among the Iberian socialists.[106] In addition, another factor explains this confrontation, which is probably even more relevant for the German Social Democrats than the ideological and political factors, the geopolitical factor: the risk was that the Portuguese and Spanish transitions could destabilize the process of international relaxation. Another issue was linked with the Conference on European Security and Cooperation, which was about to take place in Helsinki.

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the social needs of employees and those in society who are disadvantaged while simultaneously advocating for the modernization of the economy to meet the demands of globalization.

[104] Muñoz Sánchez, A. (2012) *El amigo alemán: el SPD y el PSOE de la dictadura a la democracia*. Barcelona: RBA.

[105] In 1951, a group of political parties to establish democratic socialism came together to form what is now known as the Socialist International (SI), a worldwide organization of political parties. It comprises political parties and organizations with socialist and labor–oriented orientations.

[106] Flandre, C. (2007) *Socialisme ou social–démocratie? Regards croisés français allemands, 1971–1981*. Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan.

Finally, the potential risk this entailed for the ostpolitik[107] developed by the German Social Democrats led the SPD to try to counter the influence of French socialism in both Spain and Portugal.[108]

Throughout the years, both parties – the PSOE and the German SPD – upheld the concept of socialist party autonomy vis–à–vis trade unions in the elaboration of socioeconomic policy in order to gain more comprehensive public support, notwithstanding the potential for conflict with the unions.[109] This will is highlighted in González *Programa 2000*, probably also to redeem himself after Solchaga's Plan.

Additionally, *Programa 2000* reflected the SPD's worries about adjusting economic development to environmental protection demands, although this was less significant in Spain. There, the expression of ecological concern served as helpful ammunition for the Guerristas in their fight against neo–liberals, with their emphasis on growth and competitiveness. However, both sectors of the PSOE are committed to closing the developmental gap in Europe and have argued against the poorer countries being required to meet the same environmental standards as the wealthier countries.

The declaration released after the PSOE's revitalization effort was a manifesto, not a program.

A few policy proposals were submitted during the 32nd Congress, although the document emphasized broad concepts over particular promises. The most significant change declared in the Manifesto was the PSOE's decision to relinquish its self–definition as a workers' party but retain the name Spanish Socialist Workers' Party.

Due to Guerristas' ulterior objectives in launching the process, the product's quality could have improved: to the degree that *Programa 2000* had factional aims, it was unlikely to generate a meaningful discussion. From the beginning to the end, the left and liberal components of the party played only peripheral roles.

Internal criticism emerged only during the last phases. Culture Minister Jorge Semprûn criticized the Manifesto's lack of knowledge of the market economy, argued that the new program was obsolete before it was even authorized, and said that programmatic renewal was impossible without first renewing the party infrastructure. *Izquierda Socialista*, the PSOE's left–wing faction, also voiced

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[107] Beginning in 1969, *Neue Ostpolitik*, which translates to "new eastern policy," was the process of normalizing relations between the Federal Republic of Germany (also known as West Germany) and Eastern Europe, in particular the German Democratic Republic (also known as East Germany). The term Ostpolitik is a shortened version of the German phrase. Willy Brandt, who served as the fourth Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) from 1969 to 1974, was the first person to implement these policies.

[108] González, A. G. (2020) 'La evolución del PSOE en la Transición entre el socialismo del sur de Europa y la socialdemocracia europea', *Ayer*, 117(1), pp. 75–7102.

[109] Op. cit.

criticism. Its leader, Antonio Garcia Santesmases, found the "new internationalism" theme of the Manifesto to be reminiscent of the more idealistic PSOE of the 1970s.[110] While most groupings of the left, including *Izquierda Unida*, found nothing appealing in *Programa 2000*, it did play an essential role in bringing Enrique Curiel[111] and other left exponents into the PSOE. Although Curiel and his colleagues did not play an organized role in the renewal process, the PSOE's reiteration of some traditional democratic socialist ideas (support for the welfare state, references to equality and solidarity) reassured these ex–communists that the PSOE was resistant to the neo–liberalism associated with several government ministers and party technocrats. In addition, they believed that the *Manifiesto* was more internationalist than the liberals desired.[112]

The immediate primary results of *Programa 2000* were to strengthen Guerrista's control over the party (but not the government) and to develop a tiny network of PSOE sympathizers, which may serve as a foundation for future steady expansion. However, the mounting public demand for Guerra's resignation due to his brother Juan's role in the corruption case, marked the end of the González administration.

[110] Walker, D. (1989) 'Towards a Predominant Party System? Spain since 1977', *Strathclyde Papers on Government and Politics*, 65(1), pp. 1–106.

[111] Enrique Curiel (15 April 1947 – 2 March 2011) was a Spanish politician who belonged to the Spanish Communist Party and the United Left. Additionally, he served in the Spanish Senate.

[112] Op. Cit.

CHAPTER 3. Spain and Europe during the People's Party's government (1996 – 2004)

3.1 The coming into power of Aznar: from the *refundación* to the 1996 and 2000 elections

The *Alianza Popular*'s electoral stagnation added to the failure of the coalitional strategy followed by Fraga, ended to generate both internal dissent and criticisms, as well as external distrust in his capability to lead the AP to the national government. By the end of 1987, Fraga resigned as party leader after ten years at the helm of the AP, and Hernández Mancha,[113] a politician from Andalucía, was elected as new AP's president. However, the party's younger leader, proved inefficient: a stark contrast to the aggressive Fraga, Mancha was plainly out of his depth when challenged with the formidable PSOE machine.[114] By 1988 the intra–party conflicts had become an open and public battle, which led the AP into a profound crisis and worsened its electoral prospects. To remedy the situation, Fraga temporarily returned to the party presidency to alleviate the problems and integrate smaller centre–right parties into a refunded one.

In January 1989, the ninth party congress approved Fraga's agreement with the People's Democratic Party and the Liberal Party, former AP coalition partners during the 1980s, which dissolved their parties and entered the renamed People's Party. Hence, 12 years after its foundation, the reborn party could finally encapsulate all the national centre–right and suitable political families. A few months later, Fraga proposed to appoint José María Aznar as the party candidate for prime minister for the 1989 general elections, and that was approved.

Aznar was a relevant member of the party's dominant coalition and the young president of the Castilla–León autonomous government. When Aznar was elected party president, it became evident that the party's primary competitive strategy would be to occupy the centre of the political spectrum. The fight for the electorate of regional right–wing forces would be a complementary but secondary strategy. It was a clear *refundación* (refoundation) tactic since the PP had merged all the national centre–right and right political parties into a single one.[115]

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[113] Antonio Hernández Mancha is a former Spanish politician who served as the party's president from 1987 to 1989. In 1989, he resigned from his position. Mancha worked as a lawyer and businessman after leaving politics.

[114] Heywood, P. (1991) 'Governing a new democracy: The power of the prime minister in Spain', *West European Politics*, 14(2), pp. 97–115.

[115] Baón, R. (2001) *Historia del Partido Popular: del Franquismo a la Refundación*. Madrid: Ibersaf Editores.

The municipal and regional elections of 1991 constituted the initial test of Aznar's plan. They demonstrated that the PP was expanding phenomenally among urban and well–informed voters and that it was succeeding in its effort to attract centrist voters. Immediately after these elections, the party leader stated that the Socialist and Popular electorates had become contiguous. In that way, he wanted to demonstrate that his future competitive approach will also be geared toward attracting moderate PSOE supporters. The 1993 general elections showed, this time more clearly, that Aznar's competitive policy was succeeding. Although the PP lost again, its vote share increased from 26% to 35%, while the centrist UCD became an extra–parliamentary party and the ruling PSOE lost its absolute majority. Thus, by 1993, the PP was the only national party representing the centre–right and right of the political spectrum within the Spanish Parliament.[116]

Consequently, the PP did not alter its competitive strategy but strengthened it. In 1994, the effectiveness of this tactic was astounding: for the first time in history, the PP outperformed the PSOE in a European Parliament election by over ten percentage points. The PP replicated its victory in the regional and local elections of 1995: it obtained the most votes in 11 of 13 autonomous communities and won municipal polls for the first time.

This policy remained constant until the 1996 national elections, in which the PP was the clear frontrunner.[117]

Indeed, after 20 years in opposition and 14 years of the PSOE's rule, the People's Party won the 1996 general elections. However, contrary to expectations, it did so by a tight result: fewer than 300,000 votes separated the two biggest parties. It obtained 38.8% of the vote, compared with 37.6% for the PSOE. The narrow margin of its victory forced Aznar to seek the parliamentary support of the Catalan, Canary Islands, and Basque regional nationalist parties.

In May of the same year, Aznar formed his single–party minority government, which was by all standards a "party government", including members from each of the PP's ideological families and historical stages.[118]

During his governments, between 1996 – 2000, and 2000 – 2004, Aznar used his power to work diligently to gain support for most changes.[119] Not only did the new Aznar leadership of the PP erase

[116] Op cit.

[117] Gunther, R. et al. (2004) *Democracy in Modern Spain*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

[118] Montero, J. R. (1987) 'Los fracasos políticos y electorales de la derecha española: *Alianza Popular*, 1976–1986', *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, 39(1), pp.10–30.

[119] Van Biezen, I. (2003) *Political Parties in New Democracies Party Organization in Southern and East–Central Europe*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

these outdated themes from its election platforms, but it also gradually presented a policy balance of liberal economic policies and sustainable social welfare programs.

As previously stated, the first Aznar term, between 1996 and 2000, was marked by the pact with CiU, the Canary Islands Coalition (CC), and the PNV. Partly in exchange for that backing of regional nationalist groups, the devolution of authority from the central government to the regional administrations expanded.

During this period, the government's parliamentary minority forced the party to display flexibility over some nationalists' claims, restrain its ideological discourse, and moderate its social and economic policies by engaging in dialogue and negotiating union agreements.[120]

In this first period in power, the PP worked to achieve the macroeconomic convergence standards imposed by the European Union as a prerequisite for entering the initial group of nations adopting the euro, which was the most important goal of the new government. Consequently, the party administration implemented a budgetary consolidation and market liberalization program. All of this was supplemented by one of the most extensive privatizations of big parastatal enterprises in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and, at the conclusion of its first term in power, a reduction in income tax rates.[121]

These policies taken by the Finance Minister, Rodrigo Rato,[122] successfully reduced interest rates, inflation, and the public deficit, in order to achieve the convergence conditions established by the Treaty of Maastricht, to entry the monetary union. The vitality of its exports and the increase in investment and private spending, allowed the Spanish economy to develop faster than other countries of Europe for several consecutive years, at a rate above 4%. At the beginning of the twenty–first century, Spain's per capita income was the greatest it had ever been, at 83% of the average of the European Community, and the unemployment rate had decreased to 11%. As a result, the budget deficit decreased from over 7% of GDP in 1995 to 3.1% of GDP in 1997. By 2002, government finances were balanced. In 2003, the public debt decreased to 52% of GDP, 16 percentage points less

[120] Casanova, J. and Andrés, C. G. (2014) *Twentieth–Century Spain: A History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[121] Balfour, S. (1996) 'Bitter Victory, Sweet Defeat. The March 1996 General Elections and the New Government in Spain', *Government and Opposition*, 31(3), pp. 275 – 287.

[122] Rodrigo de Rato y Figaredo, a Spanish politician who served in the Council of Ministers from 1996 to 2004, was born on 18 March 1949. In addition, he was the ninth managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) from 2004 to 2007 and the president of Bankia – a Spanish Bank – from 2010 to 2012.

than in 1996.[123] This economic development was consistent with the political leader's statement in the Wall Street Journal interview just one year after his election. When asked what the secret to the Spanish miracle was, Aznar answered "*yo soy el milagro*" ("I am the miracle"), alluding to the economic recovery of Spain.[124]

Like mentioned earlier, in his coming into power, Aznar distinguished himself from his predecessor González by accommodating the demands of labour unions. Even if the PP leader accepted economic liberalism, this philosophy evolved to become more accommodating to the interests and needs of labour unions in response to the Spanish circumstances of the time. Given the history of the two Aznar governments, it is not unexpected that he maintained social partnership agreements and conceded the key union requests during his first term in office. However, Spain needed stability to keep on track and fulfil a key economic goal: qualifying for inclusion into the first phase of the EU's single currency project, the euro. For that reason, the Prime Minister decided to enforce a slew of stringent labour law amendments by decree, without consulting the Spanish Parliament or the unions themselves, once he achieved an absolute majority. The latter replied by calling for a general strike, which garnered widespread support despite being practically ignored by the leading media. Indeed, Aznar maintained complete subservience of state television and radio to government objectives. Nevertheless the conclusion stunned even the labour leaders: the PP's leader retracted the changes and sought even greater moderation of his party.[125]

Those political strategy is part of the Aznar "drizzle theory": the government policy outputs and the fulfilment of electoral promises would have gradually persuaded citizens that the PP was a moderate party giving to the party's leader a prominent role in the reinvention of Spanish conservatism.[126] That strategy wanted also to convince the Spanish public opinion, that the party was capable of governing efficiently, thereby improving its electoral fortunes. Secondly, the agreement between the PP and the major regional centre–right parties allowed the conservatives to get closer to their nationalist Basque and Catalan counterparts, which may have improved the People's Party's electoral prospects in these areas. The opinions of the PP and these nationalist parties – CiU and the

[123] El País, 'El precio de la vivienda ha crecido tres veces más que los salarios en los últimos 15 años', 16/09/2003.

[124] The Wall Street Journal, 'Interview to Prime Minister Jose María Aznar', 20/05/1997.

[125] Woodworth, P. (2004) 'Spain Changes Course Aznar's Legacy, Zapatero's Prospects', *World Policy Journal*, 21(2), pp. 7–26.

[126] Rodríguez, M. (2002) *Retrato de Aznar con paisaje de fondo*. Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros.

Basque Nationalist Party, PNV – regarding the eventual territorial allocation of powers in Spain, however, maintained them as far apart as they were before 1996.

Anyway, before December 1998, Aznar's "drizzling rain idea" appeared ineffective. According to opinion polls, the PP retained a slight edge over the PSOE. Therefore, Aznar utilized the 13th party congress, held in 1999, to underline the party's message of moderation and to rebuild the party leadership by replacing Álvarez Cascos,[127] the party's secretary–general since 1989, with Javier Arenas,[128] a more moderate politician.[129] Arenas linked Aznar's "reformist core" to those of Schroder, Blair, and Clinton. Uncertain of its significance, he rejected all the conventional conceptions of the political centre. Indeed, he stated:

"it is not the exclusive option of a party, nor equidistance between right and left, nor the intermediate zone between liberalism and extreme socialism. It is an attitude of openness contrary to sectarianism."[130]

[127] Spanish politician Francisco Álvarez–Cascos Fernández, born 1 October 1947, was Secretary–General of the governing Partido Popular from 1989 to 1999 and President of Asturias from 2011 to 2012. He was elected People's Party Secretary–General during the 9th National Congress. He was re–elected three times at the PP national conventions in Seville (1990) and Madrid (1992). During Aznar's governments was the First Vice President of the Government, Minister of the Presidency, and then Minister for Development. He left Congress in 2004. He was in the scandal as part of the Bárcenas affair, a controversy of People's Party corruption. The scandal is based on findings that Luis Bárcenas – a former party treasurer and senator – possessed 48 million euros in Swiss bank accounts. El Mundo newspaper released portions from handwritten records known as *Los papeles de Bárcenas* "Bárcenas papers". These records revealed that the PP maintained a parallel accounting system to record illicit financial contributions and utilized these funds to pay top party members and cover everyday costs.

[128] Javier Arenas Bocanegra is a Spanish politician. Born on 28 December 1957 in Seville, he was President of Centrist Youth, the UCD youth movement, in the early '80s. Arenas became Deputy Mayor of Seville and Vice President of the Commission of Justice and Government in the Andalusia Parliament. He is the speaker for the PP and Senator for the Autonomous Community of Andalusia. He was responsible for the 2000 Pact for Liberties and Anti–Terrorism, a bipartisan agreement between the PP and PSOE, signed by President Aznar and the leader of the opposition Zapatero. During Aznar's governments, he was charged as Employment Minister, People's Party Secretary General and then Public Administration Minister. As Álvarez–Cascos, also Arenas, allegedly received 234,320 euros in the Bárcenas affair scandal.

[129] Gillespie, R. (1996) 'Aznar's victory in Spain', *Mediterranean Politics*, 1(1), pp. 124–130.

[130] La Vanguardia, 'Javier Arenas', 14/04/1999.

This and several other remarks demonstrate that the PP viewed its transition to the political moderation as a question of rhetoric rather than policy. In other words, the self–definitions as a centre party or a party of the centre–right were driven mainly by electoral considerations.[131]

An important point that marked the political stability, economic success and social tranquillity that characterized the first years of the Aznar administration, was the Basque terrorist group's declaration of a cease–fire. In fact, it made possible to halt the hostilities in the Basque Country. But despite those achievements, the opinion surveys never suggested that the PP would obtain an absolute majority in the subsequent elections.

However, in the general elections of March 2000, Aznar's party finally and surprisingly achieved an absolute majority with 183 seats and 44.5% of the vote. The electoral win gave the PP leader much more authority to implement his agenda, notwithstanding his public declaration that he would continue to negotiate reform ideas with regional nationalist groups and even the PSOE. In reality, Aznar was able to enhance his nationalistic profile only after the 2000 elections, when his party ended its dependence on regional nationalist parties.

The resounding win of March 2000 general elections was followed by another crucial event. Indeed, the PP's happiest moment was in January 2002, coinciding with its fourteenth national convention: Aznar was re–elected as party president for the final time, since he reiterated that he would not run again as party leader or candidate. Thus, Aznar delivered his "legacy": a political agenda for the next decade whose primary objective was to convert Spain into one of the world's leading democracies. Nevertheless, his legacy also revealed a change in his political concerns, as terrorism and nationalism had become his top concerns.[132]

Post–election research indicates that between 1996 and 2000, the profile of PP voters altered drastically and became more evenly spread across socioeconomic groups than in previous elections. In addition, the PP surpassed the PSOE as the largest party among voters aged 60 and over, a crucial demographic constituting 27% of the entire population. However, the unexpectedly high conservative majority did not indicate that the Spanish electorate had switched in favour of the conservatives.

[131] Balfour, S. (2004) *The Politics of Contemporary Spain*. London: Routledge.

[132] Astudillo, J. and García–Guereta, E. (2006) 'If It Isn't Broken, Don't Fix It: The Spanish Popular Party in Power', *South European Society and Politics*, 11(3,4), pp. 339–417.

Actually, the PP gained 600,000 more votes in 2000 compared to 1996, while the Socialists and Communists lost 1.5 million and 1.4 million votes, respectively.[133]

In other words, the electoral outcome was attributable more to the abstentionism of previous leftist supporters – the abstention rate climbed from 22% to 31% – than to the PP's ability to recruit new votes as a moderate party. Indeed, the electoral triumph in 2000, other than enabling the PP to rule alone, had no significant effect on the party's competitive strategy.[134]

[133] Barreiro, B. (2002) 'La progresiva desmovilización de la izquierda en España', *Revista Española de Ciencia Política*, 5(1), pp. 183–205.

[134] Tusell, J. (2002) *El gobierno de Aznar. Balance de una gestión, 1996–2000*. Barcelona: Crítica.

3.2 The People's Party foreign policies

As previously noted, Aznar's government projected its support for a neoliberal economic model into the European integration process, advocating for deregulation, free markets, economic competitiveness, and welfare state reforms. Nevertheless, the fact that Spain profited enormously from European cohesion and structural subsidies placed restrictions on the PP's support for the whole European agenda.

Furthermore, Spanish nationalism did not result in antagonism against the European integration process; the conservative focus on the permanence, integrity, and unity of the Spanish nation and state grew increasingly congruent with an intergovernmental perspective of the EU.[135] This stance was centred on existing conditions in which national executive branches should play a central and leading role within the European Institutions. This perspective on Europe is essential for comprehending the proposals and policies that the PP administrations supported and championed in the EU between 1996 and 2004. The intergovernmental model for Europe would if anything, boost the influence of the Spanish government vis–à–vis nationalist forces on the periphery from a conservative standpoint. A remark by José María Aznar on the future architecture of the EU reveals the underlying relationship between Spanish nationalism and an intergovernmental model for Europe. Indeed, he asserted that Europe is comprised of solid and stable sovereign nations. While many people favoured a European model in which national governments would disintegrate, the Europe that emerged is not a post–national Europe but an EU composed of consolidated federal states. There are signs of this state–centred perspective of the EU in the attitudes of local and regional PP leaders.[136]

In the economic realm, Aznar's administrations pushed for economic policies and reforms consistent with the party's overall economic paradigm. The PP administration supported fiscal austerity policies and the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP).[137] First, Aznar's governments made a concerted effort to balance the Spanish budget and satisfy the pact's standards, rejecting any chance of delaying Spain's entry into the euro. Moreover, in 2003, when the Council of Ministers suspended the Stability and Growth Pact's enforcement measures, the Spanish leader harshly denounced this action.

[135] Pereira, J. C. (2003) *La política exterior de España 1800–2003*. Barcelona: Ariel.

[136] Op. cit.

[137] The Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) is an agreement between all 27 member nations of the European Union to promote and sustain the Economic and Monetary Union's stability (EMU).

In 2000, Aznar advocated a considerable breakthrough in liberalising vital markets and lessening government participation in business in collaboration with British Prime Minister Tony Blair. The two leaders took deregulatory measures and wanted a reduction of the public sector in the economy. It was with The Lisbon Strategy, that Spain and UK, endorsed their economic ideas. Often known as the Lisbon Agenda or the Lisbon Process, it was a 2000 action and development plan for the European Union's economy between 2000 and 2010. However, the limited execution of these measures prompted Blair and Aznar to issue a joint statement in February 2003 urging additional economic reforms in Europe. This time focused on improving labour markets to decrease unemployment and boost competitiveness.[138]

Another critical policy pursued by the administration of Aznar, was the opposition to any effort to decrease the cash infusions that the Spanish economy received from European cohesion initiatives. It was especially evident during the 1999 European Council meeting in Berlin, which addressed the EU's economic agenda for the subsequent seven years. At this summit, Aznar resisted attempts by net contributors to reduce cohesion funds, presenting the final agreement as a significant victory for Spanish economic interests. At the 1997 European Council in Amsterdam, the Spanish government successfully lobbied again for a declaration indicating that the specific Spanish situation should be considered when discussing member states' future role and voting power. Due to the diminution of Spanish voting power necessitated by the 2003 constitutional draught, Aznar's government fully supported the agreements reached in Nice 2000 regarding the voting power of states in the European Council and staunchly opposed the voting changes proposed in 2003 by the Convention on the Future of Europe.[139]

This resistance was bolstered by the Spanish government's vision of European integration as a strictly intergovernmental process that should not result in a federal political structure. Since national governments would continue to be the primary players in the European game, and since national interests would drive their interventions, it was essential to fight for the greatest possible voting weight in the EU.[140]

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[138] Llamazares, I. (2005) 'The Popular Party and European Integration: Re–elaborating the European Programme of Spanish Conservatism', *South European Society and Politics*, 10(2), pp. 315–332.

[139] As a result of the Laeken Declaration, the Convention for the Future of the European Union, often known as the European Convention, was adopted by the European Council in December 2001. Inspired by the Philadelphia Convention, that led to the ratification of the United States federal Constitution, the goal of this Convention was to generate a constitution for the European Union for the Council to adopt.

[140] Marks, G. and Wilson, C. (2000) 'The past in the present: a cleavage theory of party response to

The firm intergovernmental policy sustained by the Spanish government was also raised on the EU constitution issue. Indeed, only left–leaning parties, and some media adopted the notion. In this vein, El País titled one of its leading articles, "*A por la Constitucion*" (Let us get a Constitution).[141] The newspaper argued that Europe needed a constitution to clarify and renew the principles underlying its creation, revitalizing its fundamental objectives to strengthen its institutions. However, neither did right–wing politicians nor scholars, approached the question of a constitution enthusiastically. Indeed, they claimed that legitimacy must remain indirect, mediated by member states. It asserted that the future adoption of a document known as a constitution would not alter the reality based on a treaty ratified by member states.

On this subject, Aznar embraced the central concept of European neo–constitutionalism. A model of European constitutionalism argued and presented by academics about the idea of a Constitution that respects member states' legal systems. Aznar termed it expressly "the pluralistic concept of constitutionalism." This intellectual viewpoint has impacted politicians' perspectives. Some referred to the concept of constitution as a trap,[142] while others stated that using the term "constitution" as opposed to "treaty" is a cosmetic or even deceptive move.[143] Rubio Llorente, former president of the Constitutional Court of Spain and prominent constitutionalist, argued that the proposal to equip the EU with a constitution is constructed as an incomprehensible discourse due to the inadequacy of language or the confusion of ideas. They were claiming that the judicial construction of a potential EU constitution is unstable.[144]

Another issue was the separation of responsibilities that the Constitution would have created. No Spanish contribution to the discussion accepted the suggestion to establish a list of duties. This system – considered a German priority and an obsession with the German Lander – was deemed unsuitable for the reasons outlined below. On the one hand, the catalogue model is considered a mechanical translation of German federalism at the EU level.[145] Moreover, this paradigm is foreign to the constitutional traditions of several member states with vastly different territorial histories:

European integration', *British Journal of Political Science*, 30(3), pp. 433–459.

[141] El País, 'A por la Constitucion', 09/09/2002.

[142] Ortega, M. (2001) '¡Viva la Constitución europea!', *Política Exterior*, 15(82), pp. 87–98.

[143] De Areilza, J. M. (2001) 'La reforma de Niza ¿Hacia qué Unión Europea?', *Política exterior*, 15(79), pp.104–119.

[144] Montero, C. (2004) 'The Spanish Intellectual Debate on the Future of the EU: Who Was Mobilized and with What Effects?', South European Society and Politics, 9(1), pp. 82–96.

[145] Elorza, J. (2001) 'La UE después de Niza', *Política Exterior*, 79(84), p. 97.

Europe comprises highly centralized states, semi–centralized states, one state of autonomous regions (Spain), and other federal states. Due to the interdependence of sectors of activity, a list would soon become obsolete. Worse, a definite allocation of competencies through a list would halt integration at its current state. Specifically, those policies that provide the legal and instrumental basis for the integration process. Equally acceptable is the amendment of the notion of subsidiarity. Lastly, the Union and its member states coordinate their effort to ensure the proper execution and administration of Community powers rather than wasting excessive time on the allocation of powers per se.[146]

Another argument on the centralised power of Countries, emerged when Aznar argued that the EU debate had to be limited to the power–sharing method between the Union and its member states. He thought that any attempt to expand the debate to other areas – such as the regions in general and the autonomous regions of Spain – would undermine the EU as a whole. Josep Piqué, Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated that the internal division of responsibilities is constitutional. Consistent with this position, the government did not sign the Declaration on Subsidiarity of the Nice Treaty – which would have extended this concept to the regions – and did not provide any vehicle for autonomous community involvement in the discussion.[147]

Another debate related to EU institutions happened in Spain. Those were only crucial after the Convention and the start of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), the formal procedure for negotiating amendments to the EU's founding treaties. The introduction in April of a document containing the first suggestions on EU institutions elicited a robust response from the Spanish government's officials. One of the reasons was that Aznar was favourable to the status quo that had been agreed upon in Nice, hence maintaining that conditions became a primary aim. The administration addressed the problem of institutions in February 2003, when France and Germany announced the plan. The principal parts of the Spanish–British institutional project was the election of the president of the European Council, the revision of the system of rotational presidencies, and the establishment of team presidencies. Nevertheless, those suggestions mainly passed unreported. Neither Spanish intellectuals nor the media paid much attention to the projects.[148]

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[146] Closa, C. (2001) 'The Domestic Basis of Spanish European Policy and the 2002 Presidency', *European Studies*, 16(1), pp. 40–65.

[147] Bourne, A. (2003) 'The Impact of European Integration on Regional Power', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 41(4), pp. 597–620.

[148] Bourne, A. (2008) 'Europe, Constitutional Debates and the Spanish State of Autonomies', *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 9(3), pp. 283–300.

Finally, talking about People's Party foreign policies, it is vital to assess the Spanish anti–terrorist judicial and police cooperation policies with other EU member states and the United States, since they were one of the Aznar administration's primary focuses. Indeed, Aznar's governments advocated the abolition of political asylum for EU residents within Europe, beginning with the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam. It also pushed to give Europol a role in the prosecution of terrorism, to establish an anti–terrorist section inside this agency, to compile a single European definition of terrorist acts, and to publish a list of terrorist groups.[149] The Europol cabinet and the Europol anti–terrorist section fell under the direction of Spanish police officers. In 1999 Aznar also proposed a deepening of European cooperation against extremism and organized crime at the European Council in Tampere. In 2002, the Spanish leader made the fight against this phenomenon the top priority of the Spanish EU presidency, pressing for the formation of joint anti–terrorist investigation teams, the strengthening of Europol and the creation of a framework for the European arrest warrant and surrender procedures, the so–called Euro–warrant.[150]

The course followed by the Spanish administration in international and European affairs is revealed by the government's response to the US invasion of Iraq and its participation in the intra–European divides caused by this international crisis. As stated previously, the decisions made by Aznar's administrations were congruent with the ideological principles behind the PP's global and European policy.[151] The Spanish president frequently emphasized the significance of Spain's transatlantic connection. Several factors contributed to the importance of this pledge. Among these were the appeal that the American model of capitalism now had for the Spanish right and the PP's ideological proximity to the Republican administration's perspectives. This contiguity extended to other foreign matters, including hostility towards the Castro regime.[152] Aznar's collaboration with

[149] Irish Times, 'Bush tell Karzai of his 'deep sadness' at deaths of civilians during US raids', 07/06/2002.

[150] Jünemann, A. (2003) *Euro–Mediterranean Relations After September 11*. London: Frank Cass.

[151] Arias, M. D. (2013) 'The Dynamics of Public Opinion towards Aznar's and Zapatero's Foreign Policy: the European Constitution and the War of Iraq'. Oslo University: MS thesis.

[152] Fidel Castro, born on August 13, 1926, in Birán, Cuba and passed away on November 25, 2016, was the political leader of Cuba between 1959 and 2008, who converted his nation into the first communist state in the Western Hemisphere. Once entrenched as Cuba's leader, he pursued increasingly extreme measures, including the nationalisation of Cuba's private trade and industry, the implementation of broad land reforms, and the expropriation of American firms. Castro's anti–American policies alienated the United States. In February 1960, his commercial pact with the Soviet Union increased American mistrust. In 1960, most commercial links between Cuba and the United States were cut, and in January 1961, the United States terminated diplomatic

the Blair administration in the European integration process enhanced the significance of the transatlantic commitment. This collaboration concerned the essentially intergovernmental view of the unification process and particular shared objectives constructing the European economic model, as evidenced by the agenda of Lisbon and other combined activities of the British and Spanish administrations.[153]

In contrast, Aznar had a predominantly unfavourable opinion of the French and German governments' involvement in developing European unification. The Prime Minister disapproved the irresolute pro–market policy reforms implemented by both administrations and did not share their apparent desire to convert the EU into an autonomous entity, capable of counterbalancing the United States in the international arena. Despite the unpopularity of this geopolitical decision among Spanish voters, the Iraq crisis afforded Aznar the chance to enhance Spain's transatlantic commitment and to join an alternative European alliance to the one led by France and Germany.[154]

relations with the island nation. Cuba relied more on favourable Soviet trade policies to preserve its quality of life in the face of the United States' ongoing trade embargo. The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 ended Cuba's considerable Soviet subsidies. Castro fought the consequent economic collapse and shortages of consumer goods by permitting limited economic liberalisation and free–market activity while maintaining tight control over the nation's political life.

[153] Powell, C. (2004) '¿Qué habría sucedido si Aznar no hubiese apoyado la guerra de Irak en 2003?', pp. 299–319 in Townson, N. (2004), *Historia virtual de España (1870–2004)*. Madrid: Taurus.

[154] Balfour, S. (2005) *Contemporary Spanish Politics.* London: Routledge.

3.3 Aznar's approach toward Europe: EU policies and Spanish public opinion

Limiting the power–sharing method and maintaining a solid intergovernmental nature for European integration processes stems from a need to protect Spanish national interests. This ideology is undoubtedly linked to the People's Party's nature and the political strategy that the latter had pursued in the years in which González was in power.

Indeed, during their time in opposition, the PP criticized the PSOE's European policies as an integral part of their election campaign, arguing that the Socialists did not effectively protect Spanish interests in Europe. Consequently, a portion of the pro–PP electorate adopted a more sceptical stance toward Europe. Nonetheless, when the PP won the general election in 1996, it had to realigned the voters with Euro–optimism, restoring public support for the EU.

Over the time, the domestic political climate grew increasingly interwoven with Spanish public opinion about the EU. In fact, influenced by mass media, political elites, and organized economic interests, people's general view did change during the '90s. By the decade's end, public expectations established by a more nationalist official rhetoric had become a greater remarkable restraint on Spain's options in Europe.[155]

Since both public opinion and the mass media have become increasingly significant aspects of political action in Spain, the subjective perspectives and special interests of various media organizations heavily influenced the viewpoint of society. This mobilization of public opinion by the mainstream media is one of the defining characteristics of Spain's recent political history.

These political tactics were the basis of the replacement of the socialist administration of Felipe González with the government of the People's Party.[156] Because Spanish public opinion broadly supported the basic concept of Europe, PSOE foreign policy was built on the concept of "greater Europe", independently from the needs of Spanish citizens. This strategy was criticized during the period 1992 – 1996 by the PP opposition, in order to enhance its standing with the Spanish population. Anyhow, by diminishing González's reputation as a European leader, the PP determined its future European policies. Unlike its socialist counterpart, the People's Party stance did not resist

[155] Skola, C. (2005) 'Spanish Foreign Policy and the Impact of Ideological Change', *Modern Spain emerges*, Paper 7, pp. 55–64.

[156] Youngs, R. (2000) 'Spain, Latin America and Europe: The complex interaction of regionalism and cultural identification', *Mediterranean Politics*, 5(2), pp. 107–128.

the concept of greater Europe but rather emphasized a more critical evaluation of the national interest. This common good was comprising both the disadvantages and advantages of European membership. Once the PP was in power, this evaluation means became the strategic way for communicating the administration's accomplishments to the Spanish civil society.[157]
According to data from the Spanish public research institute, the *Centro de Investigations Sociological* (CIS), the support for the EU in 1999 was 67% and rising. However, the PP was restricted by the expectations it had created and the public pledges it had made. In European discussions, any concessions needed a more compelling rationale or explanation regarding an external factor.

Another problematic factor to consider in changing of political tactics by Aznar in 1996 was that, in general, the Spanish people could recognize mainstream media's ideological or pro–government stances. When asked to classify newspapers, television, and radio stations according to their ideological position on the left or right, Spaniards can respond clearly. Public television is typically associated with the ruling party at the national and regional levels. During the transition to democracy, when there was a clear distinction between "pro–dictatorship media" and "democratic media," people learned to recognize the ideological stances of the news. That phenomena influenced both way of communications and Spanish public opinion. Given this context, the attitude toward information in Spain, became sceptical of the neutrality of the media.

Thus, after the PP won the 1996 election, left–leaning voters watched more frequently Tele 5 news – which was not pro–government – while conservative voters went to the state channel and Antena 3. In any case, it became increasingly difficult to shape public opinion and a large part of this process varied according to the communication channel chosen by the public. Even the information regarding European problems and the government's performance in EU, differed according to the media via which it was communicated. However, the opinion toward the cost–benefit in the EU was positive: in 1999, 41% of the PP electorate believed that EU membership made it simpler to obtain employment.[158]

[157] Gillespie, R. (1999) *Spain and the Mediterranean.* Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.

[158] Centro de Investigaciones Sociologicas (1997) *La opinión pública ante el proceso de integración europea*, Estudio 2246. Madrid: CIS.

Due to the government strategy concerning the European knowledge, there were apparent discrepancies in popular perception. During the first Aznar administration, Spanish society favored a more profound commitment to the broader European concept and embraced certain more defensive attitudes. It was of course a result of the Conservatives' European strategy, which viewed the relationship with the European Commission as a battle over a variety of sectoral interests, even though, the Spanish minister eventually explained that the government did not accuse the European Commission of being inherently biased against Spain. In 1999, 81% of Spaniards believed that an EU Parliament's duty was to fight for national interests rather than to represent transnational ideological groups due to the influence of this defensive stance. There was no national goal in modern Spain that was not inextricably tied to the recovery of its European vocation.

Even if neither of the two major Spanish parties questioned the significance of EU membership for Spain's future, multiple divisions have emerged between their approaches to the European integration process. The European integration policies of José María Aznar have been more pragmatic and utilitarian than those of his socialist predecessors. Conservatives, unlike socialists, do not view political unity as a necessary counterbalance to the EU's free economic goal. Consequently, they have emphasized the economic benefits of the European Monetary Union more than the development of a "social Europe" or the promotion of European federalism. It was important to prevent European institutions from interfering excessively in social and economic policy.[159]

This whole process caused the PP government to acknowledge the self–imposed limitations of its public opinion approach. Suchlike, towards the end of its first term, the government began to argue that belonging to the lead group of the EU countries was an objective that needed to be more compatible with the vehement defence of existing structural and cohesion fund benefits. Given that, these advantages implied an inferior status and were intended to give ministers greater negotiating freedom by discouraging individuals from judging European policy solely in terms of money.[160]

These interests–based European policy carried on by the People's Party has always had, as a widely accepted goal when discussing European policies during the PP election campaign, the achievement of a European currency policy. It was also portrayed in the dominant political discourse as a crucial objective Spain had to attain; otherwise, it would fall behind again, as it had in the past.

[159] Juste, M. (1998) *Franquismo y Construcción Europea (1951–1962): Anhelo, necesidad y realidad de la aproximación a Europa*. Madrid: Tecnos.

[160] Alaminos, A. (2000) 'Domestic actors and Spanish European policy', *Mediterranean Politics*, 5(2), pp. 93–104.

When the successful admission into the euro was achieved in May 1998, Prime Minister Aznar praised it as proof that Spain had finally caught "*el tren de la historia*" ("the train of history") by adopting the unified European currency.[161] This triumphalist language was excellently portrayed in an essay titled "*La Hora de España, La Hora de Europa*" ("The Hour of Spain, The Hour of Europe"), that Aznar wrote in February 2000, one month before he won the general elections with an absolute majority. In this article, Aznar explained that he did not know the doubts the opposition expressed concerning the country's possible efforts to join the other major European nations. The Spanish Prime Minister stated that he always felt democratic Spain might climb to the position it was entitled to receive due to its merits. Indeed, the euro had finally become a reality, and Spain had regained its position in the European scenario.[162]

Finally, in order to get a comprehensive understanding of PP's European policies, it is important to examine one last essential feature of Spanish realm: the Spanish regions positions in the decision–making process toward the EU integration with the PP political leadership. That because the public opinion cannot be separated from the regional realm of the Country. The Spanish citizens always asked for more regional relevance in the European agreement. Indeed, the Treaty of Maastricht and, subsequently, the Treaty of Amsterdam authorized regional ministers to represent member states in EU discussions and, since 1993, several regional administrations in Spain have asserted this option, particularly those of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia. Like its PSOE predecessors, the PP administration was hesitant to let regions take advantage of this option. Nevertheless, Aznar approved those policies because of their importance to the voters.[163]

[161] Barbé, E. (1999) *La Política Europea de España*. Ariel: Barcelona.

[162] Jáuregui, P. (2000) 'National Pride and the Meaning of 'Europe': A Comparative Study of Britain and Spain', *The Sociological Review*, 48(1), pp. 173–260.

[163] Jeffery, C. (2014) *The regions and Amsterdam: Whatever happened to the third level? Reforming the European Union – from Maastricht to Amsterdam*. London: Routledge.

3.4 Eurobarometer results: have Spanish sentiments toward Europe changed?

Once observing how Aznar's European Policies had to adapt to public opinion changes of attitude, the next paragraph displays an analysis based on the findings of the Eurobarometer on the feelings of the Spanish voters towards Europe since 1996 with the electoral victory of the People's Party.

Recent Eurobarometer outcomes indicate that most Spaniards do not perceive a conflict between their national identity and participation in the European Union. In contrast, people who identify as national and European increased from 50% in 1996 to 72% in 2000. At the same time, the percentage of those who identify as entirely Spanish has decreased from 43% to 20%. Consequently, Spain's compatibility between national and European identity is significantly greater than the EU average. In the Eurobarometer of Autumn 2000, Spain placed top among all EU member states in terms of the total proportion of individuals who consider themselves to be European. The most logical explanation for the attachment that the majority of Spaniards have towards Europe, is that the EU membership has been intimately associated with the modernization, democracy, and restoration of Spain's worldwide standing.[164]

In fact, according to a recent Eurobarometer study, 78% of Spaniards feel proud of their nation – compared to the EU average of 69% – and 59% cite "being European" as a source of national pride – compared to the EU average of 33% –.[165]

Most Spaniards currently exhibit a reasonably high level of national pride, and a portion of this sense of collective self–respect may be attributed to their status as Europeans. In other words, EU membership is primarily viewed as bolstering Spanish national pride. It can thus be mixed with national feelings without difficulty. Since being European is often seen as a source of pride, the Spanish nation's EU membership makes it a more attractive object of collective identity. Indeed, most Spaniards surveyed agree that the EU should have a more significant role in their everyday lives in the twenty–first century.[166]

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[164] Roller, E. (2001) 'The March 2000 general election in Spain', *Government and Opposition*, 36(2), pp. 209–229.

[165] *Net results for national pride*, (2000), Eurobarometer 54.

[166] Closa, C. (2001) 'The Domestic Basis of Spanish European Policy and the 2002 Presidency' European Studies, 16(1), pp. 2–48.

According to the Spanish Center for Sociological Investigations (CIS), Spaniards generally view the European Union as beneficial for general economic development, job opportunities, infrastructure development, consumer rights, introduction of new technologies and culture.[167]

The main observations in which Europe was depicted as Spain's ongoing development and as the fundamental vehicle for the country's future progress, is that in a certain perspective, Europe is something that has pulled Spain away from a backward past. Even if some viewed the economic impacts of entering the European Union adversely, there was no credible alternative to Spain's EU membership.

In conclusion, Europe is a subject of identification for many Spaniards, but mainly as a symbolic and emotional resource of Spanish national identity, it is as if Spain's joining Europe made Spaniards better Spaniards.[168] Therefore, the Spanish view Europe mainly as a component of the national project. It was a priority for Spain's development rather than a supranational enterprise with its ambitions.

The 2001 research for the European Commission, which conducted a qualitative investigation of attitudes toward expectations on the EU in 15 member states and the nine candidate nations, also gave some intriguing statistics on Spain. Most Spanish citizens spontaneously highlighted the beneficial political and economic improvements in their nation over the previous two decades. This narrative of recent national history asserts that Spain's worldwide influence is far more significant, within the framework of the EU and NATO than during the isolationist and autocratic era.

At the same time, a persistent sense of inferiority is indicated by the negative feelings of many Spaniards. It is over the standing of Spain in the eyes of more powerful nations in Northern Europe and the perceived continuance of an arrogant attitude of these countries towards Spain, that those feelings took place. It also suggested that the Spanish believe naturally closer to the Mediterranean Latin countries, whose traditions are relatively similar to theirs. In contrast, Northern European countries are associated with political austerity and gloom.[169]

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[167] CIS (1997) *Estudio 2246*. Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.

[168] Stråth, B. and Triandafyllidou, A. (2003) *Representations of Europe and the Nation in current and prospective Member–States: Media, Elites and Civil Society: The Collective State of the Art and Historical Reports*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the EC.

[169] European Commission (2003) *Report from the Commision on European Governance*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

In addition, variations between socioeconomic categories and respect for the European Union are considerable. The more educated urban Spaniards from major cities are more likely to identify as citizens of a European political project based on shared historical and cultural roots. Those from middle–sized provincial towns, on the other hand, prefer to link Europe with a vision of modernity constructed in the 'North' and imposed from above.

Another critical achievement to analyse is how Spanish politicians managed the EU's eastward expansion to keep positive those attitudes toward European integration. Indeed, Spain's posture has been characterized by both warm statements of support for the candidate nations and apprehension that this process may result in a significant loss of the cohesion funds from which the country has previously received. In this way, Aznar knew to keep the support of public opinion without going against European policies. In this counter–balance strategy, the government maintained the party's interests and the voters' approval.[170] In 1995, both the Spanish parliamentary chambers and King Juan Carlos I affirmed that the EU's eastward expansion was a "moral and political imperative" in a joint proclamation, emphasizing the Spanish special solidarity with those states.[171]

As in other Southern European nations, the prevailing attitude on this process in Spain is first characterized by a sense of solidarity for countries whose struggles are perceived as comparable to Spain's totalitarian past and subsequent transition to democracy. From this perspective, the expansion process is viewed as a moral obligation owed to countries through a similarly process of regaining wealth and reputation by returning to Europe. At the same time, however, this sympathy is accompanied by the apprehension that the accession of Central and Eastern European nations to the EU might significantly diminish the cohesion funds from which Spain has previously benefitted. Nonetheless, these anxieties are accompanied by the remark that it was the moment for Eastern European nations to receive help, just as the Spaniards did during their inclusion into the European integration process.[172]

Nonetheless, the common idea was that opening new markets would enhance Spain's relative status within the EU by establishing it as one of the major powers of the more developed Western half of the continent.

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[170] Carmela M. et al. (2002) 'European Union Enlargement. Effects on the Spanish Economy', *La Caixa Economic Studies*, 27(1), pp. 21–54.

[171] Torreblanca, J. I. (1999) 'España y la Ampliación: mito y realidad', *Economía Exterior*, 11(1), pp. 111–118.

[172] Boyd, C. (1997) *Historia Patria. Politics, History, and National Identity in Spain 1875–1975*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

In this view, Spain has been a typical example of how national feelings, far from impeding European integration, may instead generate a widespread sense of "belonging to Europe" and a desire to contribute to the mission of European unification. In the collective memory of Spain, winning entry into Europe became a source of national pride not just in the realms of political power and economic wealth but also of moral rectitude.[173]

In conclusion, public opinion is positive towards the European integration process during the People's Party years of administration. It is interesting to analyse how although national interests had reached broader importance, this has never diminished the Spanish sense of belonging to Europe and the will to achieve greater integration.

[173] Abellán, J. L. (1988) 'El significado de la idea de Europa en la política y en la historia de España', *Sistema*, 86(7), pp. 31–44.

3.5 The end of Aznar's government

As analysed in the previous paragraphs, Aznar has always known how to balance his political choices with the voters' approval. However, these policies of openness to dialogue and continuous reconciliation between the party's political ideology and the will of public opinion changed during the second and last term of the People's Party president between 2000 and 2004. Below follows the study of how from the party open to dialogue with the unions of workers and the needs of citizens, the PP has finally proved to be more attentive in preserving the overseas settler territories and friendships with the USA. Those procedures led to protests and, ultimately, a terrorist attack which inevitably led to the defeat of Aznar's party in the 2004 elections.

The economic boom, the image of competition, careful spending and efficient management, social dialogue, successful anti–terrorism actions, and the internal crisis of the PSOE, coupled with the abstention of specific sectors of the left, go a long with explaining the absolute majority obtained by the PP in the general election of 2000, with 44% of the vote and 183 seats. However, the new administration suddenly abandoned its attitude of cooperation and centrist moderation, revealing its leader's nationalist aspirations for Spain. Aznar became a moralist reformer who operated independently of the prevailing social conditions and the consensus that had to be forged to make decisions with lasting effects.[174]

The changes happened gradually, during the first term, the PP started to display signs of this concept of power. Indeed, the Prime Minister started to increase the control over aspects such as the public media and education policies. He also interfered with the judiciary and made some strategies of privatizing public companies and appointing political comrades to run them. Nevertheless, the actual essence of the neoconservative mission became increasingly apparent in 2001.[175]

This change of political perspective appeared in the rupture of dialogue with workers' unions, which was the base of Aznar's political campaign during his first term in power. This attitude brought in the spring of 2002 to a countrywide strike over the reform of unemployment benefits by the government set up by Spanish labour unions. Nonetheless, the November 2002 Prestige tragedy exemplified the utter collapse of faith between his administration and many of the governed. While the oil started to slick from the stricken tanker in Galicia to the north coast of Spain and into France,

[174] Casanova, J. and Andrés, C. (2014) *Twentieth–Century Spain: A History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[175] Vedi supra.

the PP leadership refused to accept responsibility for their extremely problematic crisis management. Several weeks after the accident, Aznar could not visit the devastated coastline and became the focal point of a countrywide wave of anti–government rallies that included many PP members.[176]

There were episodes of controversy also in the foreign policy of the second term in power of Aznar. Among those the Yak–42 air crash in Turkey – resulted in more than sixty military personnel deaths – is one of the most critical aspects that damaged drastically the leader image.[177]

Another international dispute started about Parsley Island – Perejil in Spanish and Leila in Arabic – located 147 meters off the northern coast of Morocco, which was Moroccan for that Country. Still, Spain has always been unsure of its identity.[178] The international fight started with the deployment of a small contingent of mokhaznis, Moroccan para–police Auxiliary Forces, later replaced by marines, to the islet during a period of escalating tension between Rabat and Madrid in 2002. It finally caused alarm in Ceuta, located a few kilometres east of the Strait of Gibraltar. Spain viewed this deployment – followed by the flying of the Moroccan flag – as an effort to change the status quo, which, if unopposed, would create a dangerous precedent for the other Spanish possessions in North Africa.[179]

It is interesting to analyse how both States – Spain and Morocco – featured in the Barcelona Process or Euro–Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), through which the EU would have been able to assist directly with conflict resolution in the western Mediterranean.[180] The Partnership began in 1995 with the Euro–Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona. It was arranged by the European Union to

[176] Woodworth, P. (2014) 'Spain Changes Course, Aznar's Legacy, Zapatero's Prospects', *World Policy Journal*, 21(2), pp. 7–26.

[177] In 2003, Ukrainian–Mediterranean Airlines Aircraft 4230, a chartered international passenger flight flown by Ukrainian UM Airlines using a Yakovlev Yak–42D, crashed. On May 26, 2003, while on the route from Manas International Airport in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, to Zaragoza Airport in Spain, the Yak–42D attempted to land at Trabzon Airport in Turkey to refuel but crashed into a mountain near Macka, Trabzon, due to excessive fog. The plane was returning from Afghanistan with Spanish troops. All 62 passengers and the whole crew of 13 perished. It remains the third–worst aircraft accident in Turkish history.

[178] Iñigo, M. (2004) 'The Economic Step Between Neighbours: The Case of Spain– Morocco', *Mediterranean Politics*, 9(3), pp. 165–200.

[179] Zoubir, Y. H. and Amirah–Fernández, H. (2008) *North Africa: politics, region and the limits of transformation*. Abindgon: Routledge.

[180] Tocci, N. (2007) *The EU and conflict resolution: promoting peace in the backyard*. London: Routledge.

develop ties with nations in the Mashriq and Maghreb areas. The alliance set the groundwork for the Union for the Mediterranean, which eventually came to be.

The Parsley Island incident became the first test for the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) rather than the EMP. Indeed – through the Charter on Peace and Stability in the Mediterranean – the Partnership had already suspended active efforts to establish a region–wide security community–based.[181]

As a result, there was no mechanism to discourage aggressive behaviour in an escalating bilateral conflict involving Spain and Morocco, two of the EMP's most enthusiastic participants. With an EU member state viewing the Moroccan deployment as hostile and demanding a CFSP reaction, it became a test of the Union's cohesion and a way to investigate the importance of various European actors in foreign policy.[182]

Finally, in 2003 – 2004 it was adopted the European Neighbourhood Strategy – whose guiding document made also specific reference to the Western Sahara conflict – and it started to raise hopes for a more significant EU role in conflict resolution in the western Mediterranean. The final clue was to create a stronger cooperation between the EU and its neighbours through the so–called "ring of friends policy", with the desire to develop a greater regional and sub–regional cooperation among also Southern Mediterranean nations.[183]

The fact that the Parsley Island crisis was settled through international mediation with the intervention of the U.S. Secretary Of State, Colin Powell, clearly shows that the EU could not solve the conflict alone.[184] For the European Union, as opposed to the United States, the deciding factor was that one of the parties was Spain, a member state, hence, the concept of solidarity was invoked.

Despite those bilateral disputes, from the public opinion perspective, Aznar's gravest mistake was the direction of his foreign policy, which prioritized relations with the United States, particularly after the September 11, 2001 attack on the Twin Towers. As a result of the government's ardent

[181] Vaquer i Fanés, J. (2004) 'The European Union and the Western Sahara', *European foreign affairs review*, 9 (1), pp. 93–113.

[182] Gillespie, R. (2010) 'European Union responses to conflict in the western Mediterranean', *The Journal of North African Studies*, 15(1), pp. 85–103.

[183] Johansson–Nogués, E. (2004) 'Profiles: A 'Ring of Friends'? The Implications of the European Neighbourhood Policy for the Mediterranean', *Mediterranean Politics*, 9(2), pp. 240–247.

[184] Cajal, M. (2003) *Ceuta, Melilla, Olivenza y Gibraltar. ¿Dónde acaba España?*, Madrid: Siglo XXI.

support for the American invasion of Iraq, protests against the war took the form of massive rallies, such as those in February 2003, when millions of Spanish came to the streets.

The worst moment of this policy's attitude toward the USA happened three days before the political election of 2004, when an Islamist terrorist assault on several Madrid suburban trains left 192 people dead and more than 1,500 wounded, making it the worst terrorist incident in Spain's history.

The terrorists' primary political purpose was to convince Spain to abandon its military backing for U.S.–led operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The extremist groups may have also hoped that Spain would be the weakest link in the U.S. alliance in Iraq, causing other coalition allies to depart.

Even though Mariano Rajoy[185] was elected to succeed Aznar's leadership, it did not stop the substantial decline in public popularity of the People's Party. Indeed, on the 14th of March 2004, Spanish voters went to the polls to express their unhappiness with how the situation was handled in response to the government's reaction, which linked the terrorist assault to the Basque far–left organization ETA. This response was viewed by many as a manipulation of information.

The resentment that had permeated the PP's second term in office materialized in those elections' results: the PSOE got 42% of the vote and 164 seats, compared to the 148 seats maintained by the PP. José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero was set to become the fifth Prime Minister of democratic Spain following the 1978 Constitution. The PSOE received 42,6% of the vote, but the PP received just 37%.[186]

During his final speech, Aznar said that Spain differed significantly from 1996. The country then seemed forced to live in dire conditions. Many people still needed to imagine a future without work. There were too many unemployed and elderly without social security pensions who were about to enter a crisis. There was distrust in politics, and Spain needed a change of government and parties. It was then that Spanish politics became more honest and turned the page of scandals. The People's Party presented itself in the elections with a centrist, moderate reformist program. The objectives were clear: more dynamism and more Europe.[187]

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[185] Mariano Rajoy Brey – born 27 March 1955 – is a Spanish politician. Rajoy was a Minister under the Aznar administration, occupying different leading roles in different Ministries between 1996 and 2003. He was the Opposition leader between 2004 and 2011 under José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's government. He served as Prime Minister of Spain from 2011 to 2018, when a vote of no confidence ousted his government.

[186] Astudillo, J. and García–Guereta, E. (2006) 'If It Isn't Broken, Don't Fix It: The Spanish Popular Party in Power', *South European Society & Politics*, 11(3–4), pp. 399–417.

[187] Aznar, J. M. (2004) 'Ocho años de gobierno', *Cuadernos de Pensamiento Político*, 2(1), pp. 3–14.

CONCLUSION

Spain has achieved many goals towards European integration during the historical period analysed in this dissertation. Starting from May 1976, with the European Parliament Resolution based on a report provided by the French member Maurice Faure, it was stated that the acceptance of Spain into the European Economic Community was contingent upon the country's ability to implement political reforms successfully.

Since that moment, barely six weeks after the country's first democratic elections won by the Union of Democratic Centre (UCD), headed by prime minister Adolfo Suárez, the Spanish application to the EEC was submitted formally on July 28, 1977. All parties had named EEC membership their top foreign policy objective in their election platforms, and it had the unanimity of the chamber's approval. This made Spain the first nation to seek EEC membership with the backing of all parties.

The same year, it followed another important initiative for European integration under the UCD term. The new Minister of Foreign Affairs, José María de Areilza, visited all the EEC States' capital cities to convey the message that things were changing and that a democratic Spain would soon become a member of the Community.

During the '80s, approximately two–thirds of all Spaniards consistently supported the European project. Political and business elites highlighted the significant economic benefits that joining the EC would bring to the Spanish economy: a vast market and a place to find readily available capital. The Institute for public opinion's polls revealed widespread support for adherence throughout this time. The percentage in favour of joining the EEC was always at least 50% or more. When asked about the specific causes of this support, the public opinion shared that Spain's industry would profit from entering the Common Market and that agriculture would increase as employment, trade links, and tourism.

On October 28, 1982, the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party won the elections, and the President of the Spanish government Felipe González Márquez was elected with 48.11% of the vote and 202 deputies. At this moment, it started an immediate creation of a Europeanized national self–image, accompanied by the first initiatives to meet Community norms.

Since 1982, in order to achieve the Maastricht requirements, Spain has had a currency crisis, a recession, and high inflation. The PSOE was forced to balance the spending necessary to create a fairer society and the kind of monetary restraint that would allow the nation to compete in the rapidly changing global free–market economy. As a result of all those measures, the overall tax burden in

Spain increased by 36% between 1980 and 1988 – the highest increase in the EC – and the administration was charged with being indifferent to unemployment.
González idea was to forego short–term economic concerns in favour of longer–term political objectives, albeit this was not a risk–free move.

However, the majority of the population was not critical of the Community. At the time, the ratio of the country's deficit to its gross domestic product did not match the Maastricht standards. Therefore the blame was placed on the political parties and not on the European institutions and the criteria they sanctioned. This is part of the rhetoric of solid consideration for Europe, as opposed to disregard for Spanish political parties. With its quest for deeper Europeanization, the business sector aspired to the profitability and efficacy of European Community businesses. There was consensus among political parties over the necessity of entrance. The unions applauded EC membership in order to secure the democratic rights they had previously been denied. The percentage of Spaniards who believed the 1992 Maastricht plan was something positive was higher than in any other country and increased to 70% by the end of the decade.

The first action toward European integration was the agreement for signing the Accession Treaty. It was held in Brussels by the PSOE Foreign Minister Francisco Fernández Ordóñez on October 28, 1985. It would have made Spain's membership into the EEC feasible at the start of the following year on January 1, 1986. It confirmed that public opinion's positive idea toward Europe was right. Indeed, the GDP grew more than 5% by 1985.
The news was covered with enthusiasm by all the media: El País, ABC and television channels spoke about that day as the one who changed Spain, being finally democratic, free and concerned with tolerance and rights. Also, his Majesty King Juan Carlos I referred to Spain as more European than ever before.

Although unemployment was still a high percentage, the public and the media did not change their views on implementing Maastricht standards because Spanish electors distrusted political parties. Hence, they preferred Europe as a lifeline for economic problems. Furthermore, even though states had to meet strict economic criteria to enter Maastricht, the fault of the domestic economic crisis in Spain was not considered to be Europe's responsibility. Instead, this happened, according to the Spanish citizens, due to the mismanagement of the Spanish state coffers.

The following year, in 1986, the Spanish government of González also signed the Single European Act, which supported the review of the treaties established by the European Community and introduced a standard foreign and security policy for the member states. The main goal was to establish the base for greater political integration and economic and monetary union that would have been codified in the European Union Treaty – the Maastricht Treaty – in 1992.

It was then that started a weak euro–scepticism, but mainly toward the way the Socialist government managed entering into Europe. The problems started with the Maastricht proposals for the Economic Monetary Union (EMU) – successor to the European Monetary System (EMS) –which entered into force on March 13, 1979, and was also signed by Spain. The new EMU envisaged the adoption of a single currency and the consequent creation of a centralised monetary authority for the states of the European Union, known today as the European Central Bank (ECB). In order to enter the EMU, the Spanish Economy Minister, Carlos Solchaga, did not protect – following the idea of other lefties parties and public opinion – the parity of the peseta in the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) and started an expansionary policy that would not help to solve unemployment and the other main structural problems of the Spanish economy.

Indeed, the idea behind the stabilisation package was to defend Spain's place in the EMS via devaluation of the peseta and follow any German directives on monetary and exchange rate policies. Because any attempt to evade those would attract – according to Solchaga – harsh sanctions from the market and a costly loss of credibility. Following these parameters, the Solchaga Convergence Plan did not include actual indicators, such as unemployment rates or regional inequalities, with the EC committing to achieve them before EMU.

Therefore, the internal measures of the Spanish minister aroused discontent among the population and the Spanish workers' unions. Those parts were not against the idea of Maastricht and, therefore, the EMU. Instead, they needed to be more sceptical about how Spanish politicians managed the criteria for implementing them.

The end of Gonzalez's government was also due to this attitude toward workers' unions and the policies to meet the Maastricht criteria. Furthermore, even if Aznar's long–term policy did bear fruit later, it was too late, and in 1996 the new People's Party with Prime Minister Aznar won the elections.

During his first term in power, the PP could take the distance from the previous socialist government. Indeed, it moved toward more dialogue with workers' unions and implemented a budgetary consolidation and market liberalisation program.

At the beginning of the twenty–first century, Spain's per capita income was the greatest it had ever been. The policies of Finance Minister Rodrigo Rato successfully reduced interest rates, inflation, and the public deficit, to achieve the convergence conditions established by the Treaty of Maastricht, to enter the monetary union. All those measures entered a Spanish nationalism that did never result in antagonism against the European integration process; the conservative focus on the permanence, integrity, and unity of the Spanish nation grew increasingly congruent with an intergovernmental perspective of the EU. This stance was centred on existing conditions in which national executive branches should play a central and leading role within the European Institutions. Indeed, the primary aim of the Aznar government was to protect Spanish interests within European integration processes.

First, the PP administration supported fiscal austerity policies and the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP). Aznar's government made a concerted effort to balance the Spanish budget and satisfy the pact's standards, rejecting any chance of delaying Spain's entry into the euro.
Signing the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 and the Treaty of Nice in 2003, Aznar always protected Spanish interests, resisting any attempts to decrease the cash infusions that the Spanish economy received from European cohesion initiatives. He presented the final agreements as a significant victory for Spanish economic interests. In Nice, he opposed himself to the effort to decrease the voting power of Member States. The People's Party stance did not resist the concept of greater Europe but rather emphasised a more critical evaluation of the national interest.

The main observation in which Europe was depicted as Spain's ongoing development and as the actual vehicle for the country's future progress is that, from a particular perspective, Europe has pulled Spain away from a backward past. Also, during the People's Party government, Spaniards generally view the European Union as beneficial for general economic development, job opportunities, infrastructure development, consumer rights, and the introduction of new technologies and culture. Even if some viewed the economic impacts of entering the European Union adversely, there was no credible alternative to Spain's EU membership.
The positive attitude of public opinion toward the Aznar government changed during his second period in charge between 2000 and 2004. Indeed, the rupture of dialogue with workers' unions and episodes of controversy in the PP's foreign policy brought to strikes, antigovernmental rallies and ultimately to the end of the Aznar government.
However, it is essential to highlight that Spanish citizens criticised the foreign policy – especially the Spanish participation in the anti–terrorism policies and U.S.A. war in Iraq – but it had never been

critical toward European integration. Even though people wanted to preserve national interests, it did not mean a change in the euro–enthusiasm typical of the Spanish population.

In conclusion, the answer to the question of whether there was anti-Europeanism in Spain during European integration is simple. Despite taking a more nationalist and intergovernmental turn, Spain has never presented a natural anti-Europeanism for the European integration project. Indeed, after reading the previous chapters, it is possible to analyse how the various parties and public opinion, as well as the mass media, have always favoured the European Union. Indeed, it was entering Europe that made Spain a democratic country and increased economic growth, civil rights, and international security, developing a union of markets, freedoms, and general cooperation over the years.

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SUMMARY

Is there anti–Europeanism in Spain? A political analysis of Spanish parties' strategies and public opinion during the Spanish process of European integration

The first chapter focuses on how the Spanish myth of Europe was very much alive before it became part of the European Economic Community. This feeling can be explained by analysing how parties and public opinion presented the EEC as a means of substantial evolution from every point of view – social, political, and economic – and for this reason, how internal change was necessary to become part of it.

Because of the Spanish request to begin negotiations to bind the country to the EEC, the Political Commission of the Parliamentary Assembly was compelled to endorse the Birkelbach Report. The Report marked an anomaly within the Community's processes since it stated that only countries with a democratic settlement in which people participate in the government's decisions could be admitted to the EEC. All further efforts to align with the other members of the Community emanated from this point. Spain's admittance to the Council of Europe in November 1977 – prior to the proclamation of the Constitution – had considerable symbolic significance since it meant the recognition of Spain as a democracy. The Spanish application to the EEC was submitted formally on 28 July 1977, barely six weeks after the country's first democratic elections, which were won by the Union of Democratic Centre (UCD), headed by prime minister Adolfo Suárez. All parties had named EEC membership their top foreign policy objective in their election platforms. The symbolic significance of European integration also dominated parties' communication methods. In election manifestos, legislative debates, and media appearances, parties often defended their Europeanism. At a time when contacts with Spain were momentarily halted, but a new era began with the death of the dictator, the reference to "Europe" – which in this context must be regarded as a synonym of the EEC – was an attempt to lend some significance to an otherwise insignificant period. The government, the political parties, and the social organizations – part of the transition to democracy – were all aware of how important it was to obtain support from the European Community.

The feelings of the major parties in Spain only mirrored the overwhelming popular support for the European integration process. Throughout the 1980s, approximately two–thirds of all Spaniards consistently supported the European project. Political and business elites highlighted the significant economic benefits that joining the EC would bring to the Spanish economy: a vast market and a place to find readily available capital.

The Economic Community generally resulted from the idea that the country's modernization process would be completed with a merger with Europe and that the European market offered substantial net gains to significant sectors of the Spanish economy like agricultural, mass–production companies, and small firms.

Different Spanish parties aligned themselves to the community standards. This process started after the 1978 Constitution, when the Spanish political right undertook a lengthy and, at times, relatively quick process of political, intellectual, and organizational restructuring to meet the European Community membership requirements. Indeed, the conservative right–wing party named People's Alliance – the Spanish *Alianza Popular* (AP) – founded in 1976 rapidly started to change. This party's reshaping culminated in 1989, when the party's founder Manuel Fraga Iribarne, decided to change the name to People's Party – *Partido Popular* – (PP).

During the democratic consolidation in Spain, not only the right but also the left–leaning Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) became more moderate. Mostly influenced by Felipe González Márquez and the progressivist Alfonso Guerra, the PSOE followed the procedures of democratic centralism. The PSOE's official endorsement and eventual renunciation of Marxism must be understood in the context of a power–winning election strategy. Having established itself as the dominant force on the left, the party tried to replace the *Unión de Centro Democrático* from the center of Spanish politics. To do this, the PSOE renounced its Marxist roots and sought to project a moderate, centrist image.

Also regional parties and legislatures – which have gained particular prominence in Spanish politics since the country's return to democracy – have consistently supported the EEC Institutions, since they are seen as a means to initiate a decentralization of power in Spain and have more regional representation at the European level. That due to the empowerment of regional actors within EU policies. Indeed, the increased ability of autonomous communities to influence decision–making via the participation of regional specialists in the Council's working groups and regional councillors in their formations, is one of the most significant feature for the regional parties. Also, recognizing the co–official languages of the autonomous communities in the EU has been a permanent obligation since 1986, even though Spain has not established its linguistic diversity in the Accession Treaty. The autonomous regions representation within the European Institutions independent from the national ones, and many safeguards for their language and cultural uniqueness have always pushed the regions to be pro–European, despite whatever independence impulses they may harbour. This fact is politically noteworthy because it creates a singularity in the European populist landscape, where regional independence groups are usually anti–European.

In the second chapter follows the analysis of the first PSOE government started in 1982. The study focuses on how the party's actions faced the requests of the EEC's Maastricht Treaty standards and how the public opinion's positive feelings towards the Community have changed. After analysing the party's attitude referred by the Spanish media, the chapter focuses on the PSOE economic policies to address the main issues the Country had to face entering the Community until the 1992 Maastricht Treaty.

When the President of the Spanish government Felipe González Márquez was elected on the second of December 1982, with 48.11 percent of the vote and 202 deputies it started an immediate creation of a Europeanized national self–image, accompanied by first initiatives to meet Community norms. Those attitudes can be tracked within the triumphalist discourses that evolved in Spain during its entry to the EEC to exemplify this mentality. An excellent example is the Prime Minister's televised statement on March 29, 1985, in which he informed the Spanish people that his Foreign Minister had stipulated an agreement in Brussels signing the Accession Treaty that would make Spain's membership into the EEC feasible at the start of the following year on 1 January 1986. This depiction of 'Europe' as Spain's inspiration was also traceable in the language adopted by the main national media during this historic moment.

All the leading political figures in Spain, like King Juan Carlos, González, and his entire cabinet, the heads of Spain's regional governments but also the President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, and other EEC authorities, together with Spanish bankers, businesspeople, trade union were enthusiastic of this achievement for the Accession Treaty.

One of the reasons why businesspeople were in favour of joining the European Community was the abolition of customs duties, between Member States, once entering it. Indeed, the Community provides free movement of people, goods, services, and capital. In this way, the Spanish accession to the EEC would have been the extensions of a customs union and change the relative competitive position of the exports of third countries vis–à–vis Spanish exports in the markets of the enlarged Community. While exports from the new member Spain will enter, after the completion of accession, duty–free in the markets of the ten member countries of the EEC, exports from third countries will still have to face the tariff. That mechanism was most important for the economic sector and public opinion to sustain the European accession project.

That enthusiasm shaped starting from 1982, when the Maastricht requirements, a currency crisis, a recession, high inflation and strict fiscal policies, were the rule. Indeed the PSOE was forced to balance the spending necessary to create a fairer society and the kind of monetary restraint that would allow the nation to compete in the rapidly changing global free–market economy. Because it had inherited a situation in which state institutions, infrastructure, and productive faculties required

urgent radical modernization. The austerity measures implemented by Miguel Boyer, Minister of economy, treasury, and commerce, and his successor Carlos Solchaga, bore similarities to the repressive policies carried out by right–wing governments and did not sit well with purported socialism. They were intended to reduce inflation, the public sector deficit, and the balance of payments deficit, as well as to encourage foreign investment. Despite a significant increase in welfare spending between 1975 and 1982, the PSOE thus sought to strike a balance between economic efficiency and redistribution to improve the economy's competitiveness and performance. As a result of all those measures, the overall tax burden in Spain increased by 36% between 1980 and 1988, the highest in the EC. The administration was charged with being indifferent to the amount of unemployment since, despite a slow decline from over 21.5 percent in 1985 to 15.9 percent in 1990 (before rising once more), this figure was still about double the 8.4 percent EEC average. The initial terms of entry and subsequent moves towards ever–greater economic and political union under the 1987 Single European Act and two intergovernmental conferences, including entry to the exchange rate mechanism of the EMS in 1989, significantly reduced the government's latitude for macroeconomic policy. This trend, of course, was sharply accelerated by the terms of the Maastricht agreement.

The public spending policy tested by the PSOE led to an extraordinary increase in the deficit, just as a new recessionary economic cycle was opening up in the West under the impact of the Gulf War and German reunification. The government adopted the first measure to curb social spending in April 1992 with a law that reduced unemployment benefits, both in amount and duration, while tightening the conditions for access to unemployment insurance. This measure, known as the Solchaga Convergence Plan was unanimously rejected by the trade unions, who called a general strike in May 1992. It was the first step towards the end of the socialist government. In fact, the Convergence Plan would not help to solve unemployment, Spain's main structural problem. The issue were the disadvantages such as insufficient supply and demand of qualified employment and specialization in labour–intensive industries, resulting in a production shortfall for most capital products. In the worst–case scenario, the Plan would have even worst the unemployment situation, and this was the main worry of the union of workers. However, the union saw the Treaty on European Union as a "necessary but inadequate" first step towards constructing a more balanced economic union with an appropriate central budget and redistributive policies. Spain had no choice but to wait until a unified European fiscal policy and total political unity addressed together the adverse effects of the convergence standards.

In this climate of contrast between PSOE and workers' unions, José María Aznar, leader of the People's Party, started to accuse the government of disinterest in social welfare, becoming the greatest

opponent of González. Despite the parties' opposition to the Convergence Plan, it was adopted by the González administration.

The Spanish media covered this crisis period and its relationship to entrance into the EC. During the period of institutional transition of the EC – that began in 1986 with the accession of Spain and Portugal – ABC and El País views on European integration were increasingly focused on the goal itself, and their overall perspectives began to diverge.

From 1986 to 1997, ABC's opinion pieces tended to be critical of the European Community and its successor, the European Union, for example, while addressing EMU. They saw European integration only through the lens of Spain's national interests. The significant elements of this policy were to resist integration when it was damaging to Spain's short–term national interests and to prevent Spain from falling behind if other countries continued with superior integration plans. Thus, the daily newspaper emphasized the need to maintain Spain's voting power in the EU in the face of enlargement, pushed for a delay in the abandonment of EMU, and resisted the idea of a two–speed Europe in which Spain would be relegated to the back seat. It also opposed the European Parliament's intrusion into Spain's sovereignty and advocated cooperation on foreign policy and defence issues. In addition, the national journal positioned the European Union as a platform for Spain to exhibit its worth. Thus, when Spain took the chair of the Council of Ministers, the editorial underlined that this was a chance for Spain to display its management skills and capacity to fulfil the agenda. Nothing was stated about the practical ability of the agenda or Spain's participation in crafting it. The same concern for Spain's reputation was evident in the newspaper's criticism of Spain's reliance on European Union Structural Funds, which, in its view, presented the impression of a perpetually impoverished nation.

While Spanish media started to be more critical toward EU integration, the support for Europe within public opinion was mainly uncritical of the Community during the 1980s. At the time, the country's deficit–GDP ratio could not meet the Maastricht criteria, so the blame was placed on the political parties and not on the European institutions and the criteria they sanctioned. This is part of the discourse of solid respect for Europe rather than for parties within the Spanish state. Indeed, a generation adopted European practices as the paradigm of development. The business sector, whose push for further Europeanization, desired the profitability and efficiency of European Community enterprises. The unions hailed EC membership primarily to guarantee the democratic rights they had been denied before, and there was agreement among political parties over the desirability of admittance.

By 1995, after the signing of the Treaty, the economic metrics of inflation, GDP, and job creation were all pointing in a good direction. However, González was obliged to rely on the backing

of Catalan nationalists led by Jordi Pujol to continue in government following the 1993 elections. Additionally, by 1995, the Spanish Prime Minister was under increasing pressure from the media and the opposition to resign due to a series of financial and political scandals that had severely weakened his reputation and popularity. Based on what the leading newspapers published about this era, the "Juan Guerra case" was the impetus that made corruption the greatest issue in Spanish politics. This controversy arose in January 1990 when the mass media began to report on the actions of Juan Guerra, the brother of the Socialist government's deputy Prime Minister since 1982, Alfonso Guerra, while he had an office in a governmental building. Another scandal was covered by mass media as the possible end of the González government: the so–called Anti–Terrorist Liberation Group (GAL) Scandal. According to certain findings, the secret police collaborated with Spanish criminals to arrest members of the ETA, a Basque terrorist group. Although González said he was a stranger to the facts, El País covered the point with "The Final Stage," thinking about the possible resignation of the premier. Furthermore, his rival People's Party members used these devices against him in his political campaign. González, fully knowing that the 1995 presidency would be his final opportunity to make an impression on the European scene, made every effort, but to no avail. Despite successful events such as the Barcelona Euro–Mediterranean Conference, the signing of a new Transatlantic Agenda with Bill Clinton, and the designation of the European single currency (euro), Spanish public sentiment remained unchanged. The last attempt to change the destiny of PSOE was to create a new political program through the so–called *Programa 2000*.

In the third chapter it is analysed how the *Programa 2000* strategy did not work out, and the People's Party leader José María Aznar won the 1996 general elections. However, contrary to expectations, it did so by a tight result: fewer than 300,000 votes separated the two biggest parties. It obtained 38.8% of the vote, compared with 37.6% for the PSOE. The narrow margin of its victory forced Aznar to seek the parliamentary support of the Catalan, Canary Islands, and Basque regional nationalist parties. Partly in exchange for that backing of regional nationalist groups, the devolution of authority from the central government to the regional administrations expanded. During this period, the government's parliamentary minority forced the party to display flexibility over some nationalists' claims, restrain its ideological discourse, and moderate its social and economic policies by engaging in dialogue and negotiating union agreements. Indeed, in his coming into power, Aznar distinguished himself from his predecessor González by accommodating the demands of labour unions. Even if the PP leader accepted economic liberalism, this philosophy evolved to become more accommodating to the interests and needs of workers' unions in response to the Spanish circumstances of the time.

The People's Party worked also to achieve the macroeconomic convergence standards imposed by the European Union as a prerequisite for entering the initial group of nations adopting the euro, which was the most important goal of the new government. Consequently, the party administration implemented a budgetary consolidation and market liberalization program. All those strategies were supplemented by one of the most extensive privatizations of big parastatal enterprises in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and, at the conclusion of its first term in power, a reduction in income tax rates. The economic policies taken by the Finance Minister, Rodrigo Rato, successfully reduced interest rates, inflation, and the public deficit, in order to achieve the conditions to entry the monetary union. The vitality of Spanish exports and the increase in investment and private spending, allowed the state economy to develop faster than other countries of Europe for several consecutive years, at a rate above 4%. At the beginning of the twenty–first century, Spain's per capita income was the greatest it had ever been, at 83% of the average of the European Community, and the unemployment rate had decreased to 11%. As a result, the budget deficit decreased from over 7% of GDP in 1995 to 3.1% of GDP in 1997. By 2002, government finances were balanced. In 2003, the public debt decreased to 52% of GDP, 16 percentage points less than in 1996.

In the general elections of March 2000, Aznar's party finally and surprisingly achieved an absolute majority with 183 seats and 44.5% of the vote. The electoral win gave the PP leader much more authority to implement his agenda, notwithstanding his public declaration that he would continue to negotiate reform ideas with regional nationalist groups and even the PSOE. In reality, Spanish Prime Minister was able to enhance his nationalistic profile after the elections, when his party ended its dependence on regional parties.

Thus, Aznar delivered his "legacy": a political agenda for the next decade whose primary objective was to convert Spain into one of the world's leading democracies. Nevertheless, his legacy also revealed a change in his political concerns, as terrorism and nationalism had become his top concerns. However, Spanish nationalism did not result in antagonism against the European integration process: the conservative focus on the permanence, integrity, and unity of the Spanish nation and state grew increasingly congruent with an intergovernmental perspective of the EU.

Part of this intergovernmental policies was Aznar's advocation on a considerable breakthrough in liberalising vital markets and lessening government participation in business in collaboration with British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Another critical policy pursued by the PP administration, was the opposition to any effort to decrease the cash infusions that the Spanish economy received from European cohesion initiatives. It was especially evident during the 1999 European Council meeting in Berlin, which addressed the EU's economic agenda for the subsequent seven years. At this summit,

Aznar resisted attempts by net contributors to reduce cohesion funds, presenting the final agreement as a significant victory for Spanish economic interests.

Another argument on the centralised power of Countries, emerged when Aznar argued that the EU debate had to be limited to the power–sharing method between the Union and its member states. He thought that any attempt to expand the debate to other areas – such as the regions in general and the autonomous regions of Spain – would undermine the EU as a whole. At the 1997 European Council in Amsterdam, the Spanish government successfully lobbied again for a declaration indicating that the specific Spanish situation should be considered when discussing member states' future role and voting power. Due to the diminution of Spanish voting power necessitated by the 2003 constitutional draught, Aznar's government fully supported the agreements reached in Nice 2000 regarding the voting power of states in the European Council and staunchly opposed the voting changes proposed in 2003 by the Convention on the Future of Europe.

The firm intergovernmental policy sustained by the Spanish government was also raised on the EU constitution issue. No Spanish contribution to the discussion accepted the suggestion to establish a list of duties. This system – considered a German priority and an obsession with the German Lander – was deemed unsuitable with national interests. On the one hand, the catalogue model is considered a mechanical translation of German federalism at the EU level. Moreover, this paradigm is foreign to the constitutional traditions of several member states with vastly different territorial histories: Europe comprises highly centralized states, semi–centralized states, one state of autonomous regions (Spain), and other federal states. Due to the interdependence of sectors of activity, a list would soon become obsolete. Worse, a definite allocation of competencies through a list would halt integration at its current state. Specifically, those policies that provide the legal and instrumental basis for the integration process.

The domestic political climate grew increasingly interwoven with Spanish public opinion about the EU. In fact, influenced by mass media, political elites, and organized economic interests, people's general view did change during the '90s. By the decade's end, public expectations established by a more nationalist official rhetoric had become a greater remarkable restraint on Spain's options in Europe. Since both public opinion and the mass media have become increasingly significant aspects of political action in Spain, the subjective perspectives and special interests of various media organizations heavily influenced the viewpoint of society. This mobilization of public opinion by the mainstream media is one of the defining characteristics of Spain's recent political history. Public opinion is positive towards the European integration process during the People's Party years of administration. It is interesting to analyse how although national interests had reached broader importance, this has never diminished the Spanish sense of belonging to Europe and the will

to achieve greater integration. Eurobarometer outcomes indicated that most Spaniards did not perceive a conflict between their national identity and participation in the European Union. In contrast, people who identified as national and European increased from 50% in 1996 to 72% in 2000. At the same time, the percentage of those who identified as entirely Spanish has decreased from 43% to 20%. Consequently, Spain's compatibility between national and European identity was significantly greater than the EU average. In the Eurobarometer of Autumn 2000, Spain placed top among all EU member states in terms of the total proportion of individuals who considered themselves to be European. The most logical explanation for the attachment that the majority of Spaniards had towards Europe, is that the EU membership had been intimately associated with the modernization, democracy, and restoration of Spain's worldwide standing.

The majority of Spaniards exhibited a reasonably high level of national pride, and a portion of this sense of collective self–respect may be attributed to their status as Europeans. In other words, EU membership is primarily viewed as bolstering Spanish national pride. It can thus be mixed with national feelings without difficulty. Since being European is often seen as a source of pride, the Spanish nation's EU membership makes it a more attractive object of collective identity.

However, those particularly positive attitude of public opinion toward EU integration, was not mirrored in national policies. Indeed, after the PP victory in the general election of 2000, started different episodes of controversy in the foreign policy of the second term in power of Aznar. Among those the Yak–42 air crash in Turkey – resulting in more than sixty military personnel deaths – is one of the most critical aspects that damaged drastically the leader image. Another international dispute started about Parsley Island, located 147 meters off the northern coast of Morocco, which was Moroccan for that Country. Still, Spain has always been unsure of its identity. The conflict of interest started with the deployment of a small contingent of mokhaznis, Moroccan para–police auxiliary forces, later replaced by marines, to the islet during a period of escalating tension between Rabat and Madrid in 2002. The Parsley Island crisis was settled through international mediation with the intervention of the U.S. Secretary Of State, Colin Powell, clearly showing that the EU could not solve the conflict alone. For the European Union, as opposed to the United States, the deciding factor was that one of the parties was Spain, a member state, hence, the concept of solidarity was invoked.

But Aznar's surely gravest mistake was the direction of his foreign policy, which prioritized relations with the United States, particularly after the September 11, 2001 attack on the Twin Towers. As a result of the government's ardent support for the American invasion of Iraq, protests against the war took the form of massive rallies, such as those in February 2003, when millions of Spanish came to the streets. The worst moment of this policy's attitude toward the USA happened three days before the political election of 2004, when an Islamist terrorist assault on several Madrid suburban trains left

192 people dead and more than 1,500 wounded, making it the worst terrorist incident in Spain's history. Even though Mariano Rajoy was elected to succeed Aznar's People's Party leadership, it did not stop the substantial decline in public popularity of the party. The resentment that had permeated the PP's second term in office materialized in those elections' results: the PSOE got 42% of the vote and 164 seats, compared to the 148 seats maintained by the PP.
During his final speech, Aznar said that Spain differed significantly from 1996. The People's Party presented itself in the elections with a centrist, moderate reformist program. The objectives were clear: more dynamism and more Europe.

In conclusion, the answer to the question of whether there was anti-Europeanism in Spain during European integration is simple. Despite taking a more nationalist and intergovernmental turn, Spain has never presented a natural anti-Europeanism for the European integration project. Indeed, after reading the previous chapters, it is possible to analyse how the various parties and public opinion, as well as the mass media, have always favoured the European Union. Indeed, it was entering Europe that made Spain a democratic country and increased economic growth, civil rights, and international security, developing a union of markets, freedoms, and general cooperation over the years.