

**FROM RELUCTANT CHOICES
TO CREDIBLE COMMITMENTS**
**FOREIGN POLICY AND ECONOMIC
AND POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION:
SPAIN 1953-1986**

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1. The general argument

The evolution of Spanish foreign policy from the early 1950s to the late 1980s may be explained in a way that suggests some considerations of a more general nature. This evolution holds some puzzles, one of which is the apparent continuity of the objectives of Spanish foreign policy throughout a period extending over two political regimes opposed to one another: the authoritarian state under General Franco and liberal democracy.¹ Clarification of this point requires scrutiny of the institutional and cultural premises of Spanish foreign policy and the interplay between governmental decisions and the civil society.

After explaining the background (sociopolitical coalitions and Franco's mentality) to Franco's foreign policy after the civil war (section 2), we focus on the policy choices regarding foreign policy and economic matters of the 1950s and early 1960s (section 3). These decisions had an enormous impact as they marked a significant departure from the earlier years and led Spain along a path of increasing involvement in the economic and defense systems of the West. We argue that these decisions (or options) were "reluctant" insofar as they were made with only partial awareness of their consequences: of the domestic conflicts which could arise from them, and of the subsequent pressures placed on Spain's political institutions and political culture. Francoist leaders were confident they could control these conflicts and these pressures on the assumption that the conditions of Spanish involvement with the West were such that a tacit pact was established according to which Spain would accept a peripheral position and a reduced status within the Western community in exchange for the latter allowing her to maintain the *differentia specifica* of her political regime. In a way, the point of (quasi) equilibrium for this political exchange was reached around 1962, when the Spanish government asked to open negotiations aimed at achieving the Statute of Associated State of the European Community, and the Community's reply was that, though the Statute of Associate was out of the question due to Spain's political regime, an increasingly close economic relationship between Spain and the Community could be contemplated.

This point of (quasi) equilibrium lasted for the next fifteen years. During this time, extraordinary transformations took place in Spanish civil society (Pérez-Díaz 1993) resulting in changes in the basic dispositions of the general public (its informal rules and social conventions: see section 4) which, in turn, led to the gradual redefinition of Spain's national interests and national identity by underlining that the country did belong within the Western European community.² Spain's transition to democracy (or political liberalization) in the mid 1970s did not alter the main objectives of her foreign policy, but it did make the culmination of that trajectory possible: her actual entry into the European Community and into NATO (see section 5).

First, democracy removed possible objections from other member states to the legitimacy of her application, given that a democratic Spain now fulfilled the criteria set for integration into the Community and into NATO (allowing here for some inconsistency on the part of the NATO members willing to accept the presence in the Alliance of countries with authoritarian governments, such as Portugal, Greece and Turkey, at least during some period of time). (Still, it should be remarked that acceptance by these foreign countries could not substitute for the

¹For a different view, see Alonso Zaldívar and Castells (1992, pp. 205-253), and Arenal (1992).

²On the theory of civil society and its application to the Spanish case, see Pérez-Díaz (1993).

will of the Spanish people on the matter. Though the West could impose democracy as a precondition for full membership, Spanish democracy came about not because of such a condition being imposed on her but as a result of largely endogenous processes. In fact, Western pressure on Spain to change into a democracy was never too strict, and a non-democratic Spain remained a peripheral, but still significant, member of the geopolitical and economic system of the West for more than three decades.)

Second, democracy allowed for the development of a public sphere (a space for public debate) in which Spanish opinions and will regarding matters of foreign policy were clarified and made explicit. Though in Franco's later times the public's disposition followed suite to economic liberalization and the transformations of civil society, the foreign policy implications of those changes could not be articulated in an explicit and coherent way. Public debate was distorted and constrained by censorship and political repression (somehow mitigated during the 1960s and 1970s); and even oppositional parties lacked the informational base, the perspective and the sense of responsibility which can only be developed in an atmosphere of freedom and open deliberation as correlates to political accountability. By contrast, the transition to democracy created the incentives and the opportunities necessary for the public and the (new) political parties to articulate their arguments and to state their commitments. These commitments became "credible" not simply because the new political class made them, but because they were made in a framework of formal institutions and of basic dispositions which seemed well established by this time.

Thus, the combination of continuity and discontinuity in Spanish foreign policy over the thirty odd years which stretch from the early 1950s to the mid 1980s corresponds to a sequence of growing Spanish involvement (as much economic and defensive as political) in the Western system which begins with the reluctant choices of Franco in the 1950s, continues throughout the changes in civil society and public dispositions in the late 1950s, the 1960s and early 1970s, and leads on to the explicit and credible commitments of democratic Spain. Spain started as a peripheral member of the Western-European community, and ended as one of its fully-paid up members.

Four considerations of a more general character may be inferred from the discussion of the Spanish experience.

First, this experience shows how in the long run an authoritarian state's foreign policy can be influenced by a policy of economic liberalization (the effects of which far exceed those of a defense policy of alignment with the West) as it carries the economy towards a growing and seemingly irreversible interdependence with those of the capitalist democracies.

Second, this experience suggests that the long term effects of such policy of economic liberalization come about mostly indirectly, by means of the development of a civil society and by changes in public dispositions, which prepare the way for changes in the basic premises of any foreign policy, namely: in the definition of a national interest and of a national identity. This change in the public disposition may be considered one of the basic preconditions for credible commitments being made in the matter.

Third, it may likewise be inferred from this experience that another (second) decisive factor in the formulation of credible commitments regarding foreign policy on the part of both the state and the public lies not so much in the mere change in character of the national polity

from authoritarianism to democracy, as it does more specifically in the development of a public sphere.

Fourth, the discussion of the Spanish experience may qualify the current debate about the interplay between internal and external factors in the determination of foreign policy.³ Though that debate may have been enriched by the two-level games approach put forwards by Putnam (1988) and others in an attempt to apply game theory to foreign policy by considering that the principal actor (the statesman) is performing on two stages (the international and the domestic) at the same time (so that the results of his actions on one stage constrain or broaden his margin for manoeuvre on the other), still that approach consider state actors who have stable preferences and act strategically.⁴ Our argument directs attention to actors other than mere state actors, to the formation process of the actors' preferences, and to a range of actions wider than the one confined to the strategic ones. This argument refers to a theory of civil society (Pérez-Díaz 1993 and 1995) and makes some use of Oakeshott's conception of social and political dispositions (Oakeshott 1991).

2. Franco's policies in the 1940s: their cultural and sociopolitical premises, and their international environment

Franco's initial foreign policy was in keeping with his mentality and sociopolitical basis, and his international environment. It was the policy responding to the goals of an ardent nationalist and to the sober understanding of a resolute and consistent 'realist' thinker.⁵ On the one hand, the Spanish state was to look carefully after its own interests: at the very least, its survival; at best, its chances for increasing its power and its wealth (possibly through colonial expansion). On the other hand, it tried to achieve these ends by behaving as a calculating, rational actor in a world where moral or legal considerations had little more than merely rhetorical or symbolic relevance, and which was plunged in a war of immense proportions over which it could exercise no control and little influence. Therefore, Franco's alliances were purely instrumental including those with the nations that had helped him to win the war. Gratitude did not extend beyond the limits of self-interest and Franco made it quite clear to Hitler that it was not in Spain's interest to become involved in a world war of uncertain outcome (especially in the condition in which the country found itself after the civil war), unless Hitler was willing to press the French into accepting the colonial demands that Franco put forward (Preston 1994, pp. 469ff.), probably knowing only too well that Hitler would not agree to them.

Though Franco's views were broadly shared by a coalition of social and political forces (most of the Army, the Church and the business community, part of the middle classes and the peasants, and a political class comprising several "political families" such as Falangists,

³On the evolution of this debate, see Moravcsik (1993, pp. 5-17); an interesting critical review of the dominant theories on international relations in the post Second World War period is to be found in Gaddis (1992/93).

⁴One of the major attempts to apply empirically and refine theoretically Putnam's schema can be found in Evans, Jacobson and Putnam eds. (1993).

⁵'Realist' in the usual sense given to the term in the literature of international political science since Hans Morgenthau.

traditionalists, Catholics and others, and civil servants), Franco's nationalist vision of the world was colored by a particular mentality which was a consequence of some crucial formative experiences. It was the experience of an 'Africanist' military officer engaged from the very beginning of his career in a colonial war in Morocco in which he played a significant part from 1912 to 1926.⁶ Franco shared, along with many of his fellow officers in the Army, a sentiment of national humiliation for the long decline suffered by Spain since the mid XVIIth century. In their view, Spain had been reduced from the rank of a world power first to a regional power, then to a peripheral player, and finally to a battleground where other nations could fight each other *par personne interposée*. Spain had lost her wealth, power and status at the hands of other nations and she had been pushed out to the margins of what was assumed to be the civilized world. Historical grievances against rival nations, dreams of renewal and renaissance in terms of the national glory to be attained at the expense of those rivals: this was the stuff that most of the patriotic ruminations of those Spanish military men were made of. In this melancholic and somewhat bitter drama, other nations could be but occasional friends or dangerous rivals to watch out for. The Moroccan adventure, coming almost immediately after the humiliation inflicted upon Spanish pride by defeat at the hands of the United States in 1898, offered an opportunity both to compensate for and reinforce these sentiments.⁷ In this respect the Moroccan experience was something akin to a dress rehearsal for the full spectacle of the civil war, when a large part of the nationalist side was seized by a quasi-mystical exaltation of the Spanish nation and considered the war as a first stage towards, and a precondition for, national rebirth.

This 'nationalist' outlook was combined with an antiliberal stand of a particular kind, the legacy of a particular historical development. In fact, the Spanish army's traditions of the XIXth and (the first part of the) XXth centuries were not antiliberal: well on the contrary, the most distinguished Spanish officers of the XIXth century were both liberal and nationalist (Payne 1977). They became gradually more detached from the liberal-constitutional order after the disaster of 1898, when they had to face the unpopularity of the Moroccan wars and what they regarded as the increasing ungovernability of the country. Nevertheless, the Army supported the constitutional monarchy of 1876 (with the interlude of a "soft" dictatorship between 1923 and 1929, which the Army was first instrumental in imposing and later deposing); accepted the second republic in 1931; and, still more to the point, even many of the military officers (including Franco himself) who rebelled against the established government in 1936 did so while proclaiming their allegiance to the republic (Payne 1967).

However, the military officers' understanding of the political situation in Spain in the thirties was decisively influenced by their uneasiness at the social conflict and the public unrest for which they held political party rivalries responsible, and by those parties' apparent inability to handle regional centrifugal forces, and to provide some modicum of economic prosperity. They also resented the lack of sympathy towards, and the absence of ideological affinities with

⁶See Payne (1967); see also Preston (1994, p. 35), where he includes Franco's comment to Manuel Aznar: "Without Africa, I could scarcely explain myself to myself;" for a more nuanced judgement on Franco's 'Africanism', see Alonso Baquer (1993, pp. 24-29).

⁷Some of Franco's sentiments and beliefs can be traced through his cousin Franco Salgado-Araujo's collection of private conversations with him. See Franco Salgado-Araujo (1976).

the Army on the part of the leftist parties that had governed between 1931 and 1933,⁸ and which returned to power in the spring of 1936. Furthermore, they were alarmed by the explosion of political, social, regional and anticlerical passions that same spring of 1936 (which they interpreted in the light of the revolutionary events in Asturias in 1934), and distrusted the government's apparent leniency in dealing with the situation. Thus, the basic authoritarian features built into the army's routines and military ethos, combined with this interpretation of the situation in the end led these officers to sympathize with some of the authoritarian traditions present in the Spanish political culture of the time. These traditions ranged from the propertied classes' pragmatic distaste for social conflict to the outright opposition to the liberal order shared by clerics and intellectuals (both those of a Catholic conservative bent, always reluctant to make a lasting peace with political liberalism, and those belonging to the new cohorts of Spanish fascism).⁹

The Army's (political) 'anti-liberalism', shared by the sociopolitical coalition of propertied classes, clerics, conservative politicians and fascists, had three important features: it was compatible with a capitalist economy; it refrained from totalitarianism and allowed a limited political pluralism; and it gave the political leadership a wide margin for manoeuvre in order to adapt its policies to the circumstances.

In the first place, the coalition's antiliberal stance was more political than economic as the anti-capitalist inclinations (and rhetoric) of the Church and the Falangists fitted in well with a long tradition of state interventionism in the economy fully compatible with the interests of the propertied classes (industrial, financial and agricultural). The latter were interested in an open market economy only up to a point: they had been barricaded behind one of the highest tariffs in the world since the beginning of this century (reinforced by the Cambó tariff of 1922: Serrano Sanz 1987) and they were apparently happy to see the state regulate the labor market, repress strikes and persecute the unions. Neither did they have any fundamental objections to the rhetoric and (within certain limits) the institutions of 'corporatism', which seemed to form part of the 'spirit of the times' for some decades (having been tried out in one form or another by all sorts of proponents of both right and left in the twenties and thirties).¹⁰

Secondly, the attacks of this coalition on political liberalism were qualified by the refusal of the majority of its components to seeing a truly totalitarian order emerge. Totalitarianism ran against deeply ingrained traditions in the Church, the Army, the business community, the professions, the middle classes and the peasants (of the Northern half of the country). All these groups took for granted that the denial of civic freedoms on the part of the authoritarian regime was meant not for them but for those defeated in the war (including the 'liberals' themselves as well as the socialists, communists and anarchists). As a result, although the new state began by imposing strict censorship and the forced unification of political organizations (first into "the party" and later into "the movement") it was open enough to accommodate several

⁸In fact, not having agreed to a reform of the army in the 1930s, a large number of army officials retired from active service.

⁹On social and clerical conservatism, see Tusell (1984), Pérez-Díaz (1993), and Payne (1984).

¹⁰On business traditions since the beginning of the century, see Linz (1981), Cabrera (1983), Pérez-Díaz (1993), and López-Novo (1992). Corporatism clearly influenced the institutional design of the transitory regime of Primo de Rivera (Velarde 1969, pp. 68-69).

"political families" (the Falange, the Carlists and the Opus Dei, among others) (Linz 1964), and to initiate a (slow but near-continuous) process of institutionalization of its political regime.

Thirdly, in these conditions, Franco enjoyed a wide margin for manoeuvre enabling him to define his role and the policies which he considered most appropriate to each situation. In fact, being a man of some basic ideas but no precise ideology, he defined himself as the arbiter between the political families, his function centering not so much on achieving (a mechanical) equilibrium amongst them as on redirecting and manipulating the pressure they exerted with the aim of maintaining the political regime and his own personal power. From this perspective, Franco followed the evolution of the arguments of and the social support for these political families occasionally deciding at each critical moment for one or other of the opposing tendencies, but he took extreme care to confer the different parts of government on different families as a means of ensuring that the debate would follow its course, thus reducing the likelihood of challenges to his own authority. His commitment to political principles and institutions may have been genuine enough, but it was always subordinated to his disposition to move cautiously and focus on his main long term goals.

Given these institutional and cultural premises, as well as the limited resources available to Franco for the task of reconstructing the economy and watching over the general upheaval created by the Second World War, there should be no doubt about where his tactical priorities lay. He applied his acute sense of reality to the tasks of controlling the domestic situation and surviving within the international context. His foreign policy may be interpreted as a (rather brilliant) exercise in survival techniques in an environment little short of chaotic, where he took advantage of his margin for manoeuvre (opened up to him by the diffuse 'antiliberalism' of the sociopolitical coalition which supported him) to experiment with opportunist adaptation to the circumstances. Franco's initial moves, with Spain as a non-belligerent power sympathetic to the Axis, cannot be explained by a firm commitment to the Fascist cause but rather by a pragmatic opportunism which Franco would continue to take pride in when he approached the Allies once Hitler's fortunes started to wane. Thus, together with this change of fortune in the World War in favor of the Allies came the corresponding softening of gestures and rhetoric from the Francoist state as well as a new equilibrium in the distribution of influence among its different political families.¹¹ Although these changes appeared to have a limited effect in the mid forties, as they were not sufficient to allow Spain entry into the United Nations and to avoid that the majority of foreign ambassadors left Madrid, they were to give fruit later on. Within a few years, the ambassadors were back in the wake of the new international climate of the Cold War, when in the West, and in particular the United States, the political and socioeconomic elites had reached the conclusion that the realism and staunch nationalism of General Franco deserved some kind of recognition and appreciation, on condition that his pro-capitalist stance should increase (and for some observers in the hope that his limited pluralism would eventually give way to a liberal regime).

¹¹Accounts of this period of Franco's foreign policy can be found in Viñas (1984), and Portero (1989).

3. The crucial strategic choices of the 1950s: economic liberalization and linking Spain to the West

Franco's diplomatic isolation, which was already on the wane by the late 1940s, came to a definitive end in 1953 with the U.S.-Spain Agreement for the use of military bases on Spanish territory and the Concordat between the Vatican and Spain. In fact, both pieces of diplomacy were clearly connected to each other and, although the importance of other factors and other agents must not be overlooked, we should remember the role played by prominent Catholic leaders in this respect both inside and outside Spain. Catholics within Spain had achieved a certain preeminence in Spanish politics after the ministerial reshuffle in 1945 (to the detriment of the Falangist wing, and as part of a process by which it was intended to present a less 'Fascist' image to the outside world), and had focused their energies on foreign relations, searching for a reinforcement of Spain's geopolitical position and the legitimacy of her political regime abroad. Their efforts ran parallel to those of other Catholics outside Spain, particularly in the United States, who were instrumental in persuading the North American establishment and public opinion of the convenience of bringing nationalist conservative Spain back into the Western fold (Pollack 1987, p. 14): not a difficult task in view of the climate of the Cold War and the Korean War in the fifties.

But the signing of agreements was not only a matter of geopolitics and diplomacy, since economic considerations also formed part of the argument. From the U.S. point of view, it made sense to include Spain in the 'grand strategy' of communist containment as well as the international economic policy which has been labelled "embedded liberalism" (Keohane 1984). According to this, American hegemony was used in the promotion of the long term interests of an expansionary capitalist system which required the diffusion of a number of international economic regimes which, in turn, required financial stability and the opening up of markets on the part of as many nations as possible located within the sphere of US influence. In the case of Spain, her incorporation into this sphere could not be achieved through the Marshall Plan or other forms of European integration (all of which were linked to the outcome of the Second World War in which Spain had not taken part); but it was worth achieving by other means. This was the intention of the agreements of 1953 which, although centered on the geopolitical dimension of that strategy, also contained recommendations relative to economic matters.¹²

From the Spanish viewpoint, however, outside pressure to liberalize the economy was to be taken *cum grano salis*. After the war a kind of *modus vivendi* or connivance had been established between business and politics. While foreign trade was controlled by the state through quotas and specific import-export licenses, the highly detailed governmental regulation of the economy seemed to guarantee stable economic returns (and political influence) for important sectors of the business community. The country, as a whole, achieved some industrial development and a steady rise in agricultural production although, given that Spain was building on a poor industrial base and considering the destruction caused by the civil war

¹²Articles 2.1.b) and 2.1.e) of the Agreement on economic assistance. The US Congress had decided in 1951 to grant economic help to Spain for an amount of \$1 million. To this were added another \$25 millions. However, the United Nations' opposition to these measures led the US administration to abandon them allowing the Import-Export Bank, however, to grant a \$62.5 million credit to Spain. See Ros *et al.* (1978, p. 249).

and her exclusion from the benefits of the Marshall Plan, it took her until the early fifties to reach anew the same level of economic activity as in the twenties.

After a short-lived euphoria around 1953-1955, the economic climate took a turn for the worse to the point of making a change in economic policies towards a more liberal position look almost inevitable. The economy had been growing at an annual rate of about 4% between 1953 and 1955 (Carreras *et al.* 1989), but given the state's lack of control over its own spending and lax monetary policies, economic growth fueled inflation, which was further reinforced by across-the-board rises in nominal wages decreed by the Ministry of Labor in 1956 in response to labor unrest. The result was even more inflation, running at 10.8% by 1957 (Ros *et al.* 1978, p. 442). This in turn aggravated the problems of the external sector. Import-substitution policies, which combined considerations of principle with sheer necessity, had been in place since the end of the civil war and a cumbersome system of quota assignments and the concession of special import-export licenses had been introduced. To the banking community, which was becoming increasingly powerful and had growing interests in Spanish industry,¹³ and the majority of the economic profession (Anderson 1974), industrial development now seemed to require a more uniform and general system to regulate foreign trade, a reduction in tariffs and, above all, a simpler and more flexible exchange rate mechanism to substitute the kind of multiple exchange rates then in force.

Although the adoption of liberalizing measures was favored by foreign influence and stimulated by internal economic interests, their actual implementation cannot be fully appreciated without taking into account the effects of a change in mentality on the part of the economic profession. For some years, economic experts had been gaining in importance in the civil administration and on the staff of banks (and perhaps the larger corporations). A new generation educated at the Faculty of Economic Sciences (established in 1944) at the University of Madrid graduated in the early fifties. They had been trained in the virtues of the various brands of neo-Keynesianism that were becoming mainstream, orthodox economic thinking in the international agencies of the time such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.¹⁴ They began to take up posts in the universities, the Chambers of Commerce, private banks, the Ministry of Commerce and other public agencies and, as academics and civil servants, they soon led the public debate on Spanish political economy, engaging in discussions with foreign colleagues and experts. Within a few years, the majority of them (and particularly those working in the Ministry of Commerce) found themselves arguing in favor of financial stability, expanding trade and the opening up of the Spanish economy to the rest of the world, and supporting policies which would replace price controls with monetary and fiscal policies which were considered a more sophisticated and efficient means of state intervention in the economy. Some of them combined these arguments with others in favor of the abolition of monopolistic practices or the restriction of competition, and of reducing the concentration of

¹³Particularly active in arguing the case was the Servicio de Estudios of the Banco Urquijo. Also, in 1951, the four largest private banks funded a study group on the likely effects on Spain of an economic integration with other European countries. The study group was coordinated by José Larraz, a former Finance Minister. Larraz later resigned as coordinator of these studies (1960), precisely because his lack of enthusiasm about association or integration into the Common Market was not shared by the banks. See J. Larraz (1961).

¹⁴Many Spanish authors have coincided in the decisive role played by these experts in the negotiation and drafting of the stabilization plan of 1959 (in particular by those working at the Ministry of Commerce and the Bank of Spain). Interesting insiders' accounts can be read in Varela (1990), Sardá (1970), and Fuentes Quintana (1986).

economic power in Spain (Velarde 1954).¹⁵ The professional authority of these arguments was substantially reinforced by their apparent confirmation in reality: by the rates of economic growth apparent in Western European countries in the fifties and after the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957, and by the general convertibility of their currencies in 1958.

This background of difficulties in the external sector of the economy, of changes in the professional debate, and of the evolution of the European economy explains the genesis and content of the 'new economic policy' of Francoism, summed up in the Stabilization Plan of 1959. The crucial move in that direction came in 1957 when Franco appointed his eighth government. The reasons for his decision were probably relatively simple, although at the time they were shrouded in mystery, and later they were to be overvalued in view of the consequences. Franco was dissatisfied with the state of the economy and wanted a new team made up of people who, as well as being politically loyal, appeared sensible and pragmatic when they discussed economic matters and who were able to work together (which had not been the case in his previous government). Such were the Ministers of Commerce and Finance, Alberto Ullastres and Mariano Navarro Rubio, followed somewhat later by Laureano López Rodó as Planning Commissioner and Gregorio López Bravo as Minister of Industry, all of whom were members of the Opus Dei.¹⁶ The new economic ministers took tentative steps in the fields of fiscal and monetary policies in 1957 and 1958 and, above all, they embarked upon two operations which were to give them a considerable degree of "legitimacy" for the policies which they hoped to implement at a later date. First (*ad extra*), they placed Spain within a network of international economic organizations and then proceeded on a round of consultations with leaders and experts at the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, from which they then undertook to accept the general recommendations and the corresponding rules of the game (Varela 1990; Viñas *et al* 1979, p. 1019). Second (*ad intra*) they introduced a system of information and consultation to a strategic sample of Spanish public opinion made up of civil servants, professionals, entrepreneurs and those responsible for a variety of public and private organizations, to whom they sent questionnaires and from whom they requested advice regarding the outlines of a new economic policy. This new policy was characterized by fiscal austerity, reform of the system of exchange rates and liberalization of the Spanish economy, with the elimination of most price controls and, to a large extent, the liberalization of foreign trade, making Spain more attractive to foreign investors. It is noteworthy that the Spanish response was practically unanimous in favor of the plan, including that of the economists closest to the Falange and the civil servants in the Ministries of Labor, Agriculture and Industry: ministries habitually concerned with detailed intervention in the economy (Anderson 1974). With the ground prepared, the crucial opportunity for the formulation and application of this policy came shortly afterwards when two years of high inflation and mediocre economic

¹⁵See also Juan Velarde's account of those times in the preface to his book *Sobre la decadencia económica de España* (Velarde 1969, pp. 26-41).

¹⁶A year earlier, in February 1956, Franco had dismissed two ministers (Ruiz-Giménez in Education and Raimundo Fernández-Cuesta as Secretary General of the Movement) who had proved unable to contain political unrest in the universities. By preventing political liberalization from going farther, this move seemed to contradict the main thrust of Franco's policy devices on the economic front.

growth (1957-1959) ended in an acute crisis in the balance of payments.¹⁷ Faced with the specter of a return to the 'ration book', that is, to the penury and isolation of the immediate postwar,¹⁸ Franco dutifully complied with his ministers' advice and the critical decision on the Stabilization Plan of 1959 came to be made.¹⁹

It is all too easy in retrospect to magnify what really happened in 1959 and to impute to the main actors of the drama an understanding of the situation and a foreknowledge of the consequences which they lacked. We have to distinguish between the significance derived from events in view of their consequences and the significance they had in the eyes of the people who caused them (or allowed them to happen) at the time. The Spanish Stabilization Plan of 1959 (which was only partially modelled on the French plan of the preceding year) consisted of three kinds of measures. First, and this was the key measure, the system of multiple exchange rates was replaced by a single rate of 60 pesetas to the dollar, resulting in a substantial *de facto* devaluation of the Spanish currency. Second a program of foreign and domestic trade liberalization was introduced which aimed at a substantial reduction in the levels of protectionism and state intervention, replacing most of the system of quotas and licenses by a new tariff law and increasing the flexibility of the internal markets. Third, a ceiling was placed on public spending and on credit to the private sector, by means of which an attempt was made to curb inflation and reduce internal demand (Anderson 1974; Varela 1990; Sardá 1970).

From Franco's point of view, this was a move coherent with a conservative, statist and nationalist strategy. The plan was an *ad hoc* solution to a momentary crisis with which to avoid the worst consequences of an unexpected downturn in events, an opportunity to increase state control of the economic situation (control of inflation and, perhaps, of public spending) and a means of strengthening the prestige of the peseta as a stable currency and, therefore, of the political regime itself insofar as it would bring to an end the embarrassment and source of corruption created by a flourishing black market in foreign currencies. It was therefore a statist and conservative move which attempted to reassert state control over socioeconomic life, not a move towards intentionally relaxing that control.²⁰

Moreover, behind General Franco's decision lay his preoccupation with defining Spain and the Francoist state's place within the new European order. In this respect, Franco and his ministers took a long term view. They felt that the liberal, capitalist order in Western Europe had a sufficient number of conservative and authoritarian components so as to permit a *modus vivendi* between Europe and Spain. The European economies were engrossed in experiments with mixed economies which the Francoists saw as similar to their own (with its mixture of

¹⁷At the beginning of July 1959 the balance of the Spanish Institute for Foreign Reserves was -76.3 million dollars, and import licenses already granted amounted to 208 million dollars, according to the calculation made by one of the main authors of the drafting of the Stabilization Plan: Juan Sardá (1970, pp. 469-470).

¹⁸Navarro Rubio, Minister of Finance, used this argument in order to persuade Franco of the necessity of the plan (Navarro Rubio 1991, pp. 125-126).

¹⁹All this is a curious example of the interrelations between foreign and domestic policies, and gives an idea of the limits to the 'two-level games' approach in its present form.

²⁰Part of the introduction to the text of the plan is indicative in this respect: "A greater economic flexibility ... does not, under any circumstances, suppose that the state abdicates the right and the duty to watch over and control the economic development of the country. On the contrary, this function can be exercised with greater agility, by eliminating unnecessary interventions" (Comisaría del Plan 1965, p. 44).

markets and indicative planning, state control of the economy and tax policies)²¹ notwithstanding the anomaly of the repression of free labor unions on the part of the Francoist state.²² However this anomaly was important and it was linked to the ostensible difference between political regimes. In spite of this, for a long time the Francoist political class indulged in the belief that the difference was not that great "in reality", and that the Francoist regime was not that different from the fifth French Republic which embodied authoritarian, personalistic, traditional and even conservative values which were not that far removed from its own mentality.²³ In the last instance, the Francoists imagined that their anticommunism would prove a sufficiently solid base for envisioning some sort of long term convergence between the Spanish regime and the more conservative elements of European politics. However, in the event of this not occurring, there was always the possibility of falling back to a defensive revindication of the "Spanish difference" in the name of some mysterious and deeply felt national idiosyncrasy: in which case they would hope to come to a commercial agreement with Western Europe and be left to their own devices as regards political matters.²⁴ Such would appear to have been the mental scenario of Franco and his ministers when they committed themselves to their new economic policies. However, the actual consequences were to differ considerably from their expectations. In order to explain this divergence we must place these policies within the context of the actual behavior of the economy and the political circumstances at the time.

The economic consequences of the plan were quite impressive, although to talk of consequences and suggest a strong causal link between the policies (*outputs*) and the effective results (*outcomes*), may be to engage in a *post hoc propter hoc* fallacy. What is clear is that the initial response of Spaniards to the new policy (accustomed as they were to fearing and distrusting state authority, at least on economic matters) was to overreact to its recessionary components and the economy came to an abrupt halt. But it took less than a year to recuperate: GDP, which dropped 0.5% in 1960 grew at a rate of 3.7% in 1961 and 7% in 1962 (Sardá 1990). What happened is that Spain was able to benefit, thanks to the plan, from the wave of sustained growth in the Western economy. Foreign capital poured into the country and (most unexpectedly) two massive flows of people commenced between Spain and the rest of Europe, which were to play a crucial role in the Spanish economy in the years to come: hundreds of

²¹See, for example, López Rodó (1971, pp. 302-303).

²²Repression which went considerably further than the 'policy of exclusion' of the worker movement introduced in France and Italy during the 1950s.

²³López Rodó valued the Constitution of the Vth French Republic highly for not subordinating the Government to the deliberative Assemblies, which he considered "a form of defective organization" (López Rodó 1971, p. 87).

²⁴See, for instance, the words of Alberto Ullastres (Minister of Commerce at the time of the Stabilization Plan, and later Spanish Ambassador to the European Communities), in December 1966, in answer to a question posed by *L'Européen* on Spain's lack of democracy: "In the meantime, please leave us alone, because Spain, which Europe has needed and will need, is the eternal Spain, with her [own] virtues and defects, her greatness and her servitude." Quoted in Ynfante (1970, p. 343). Or the words of Franco himself in 1962: "Given that on socio-economic issues we are working towards the same goals, our profound difference with Europe is not material but spiritual. We understand that what characterizes and breathes life into our Western civilization are the values of the spirit, since society would collapse if it were not illuminated by those values, and it is precisely in defense of this that we find ourselves most apart" (Del Río Cisneros 1975, p. 791; also pp. 631 and 792).

thousands of Spaniards emigrated to Europe in search of work and millions of European tourists came to spend their holidays in Spain. This was what provided a stable solution to the Spanish balance of payments problem and not (as was expected) the upsurge in Spanish exports which were never to match the increase in imports.²⁵

Impelled by the winds of European prosperity, the Spanish economy grew at a rate of about 7.5% a year between 1961 and 1963 (Carreras *et al.* 1989, pp. 561-562), without the state ever managing to control either public spending or inflation in spite of the latter having been the central objectives of the Stabilization Plan (as they were later to be of the Development Plans of the 1960s). The Francoist state tried to ensure that this growth had political effects and became part of the solution to its problems of legitimacy. We know that the legitimacy of any state is built up on the basis of motivations where collective interests and sentiments weigh equally or more heavily than (and are at times confused with) ideological arguments or constitutional arrangements. Perhaps for that reason, the Francoist politicians thought that economic growth would contribute to legitimizing the Spanish state: because it satisfied wide interests, and because a prolonged period of peace and prosperity could wipe out or at least soften the feelings associated with the memories of "suffering-and-penury" of the civil war and post war period, even on the part of the social groups who were defeated. Furthermore, as economic growth went on the Francoist state embarked upon a (cautious and hesitant) strategy of political semi-reform (by which it was hoped that 'perhaps and in due course' the Francoist political regime would be brought closer to the Western model).

The government embarked upon this semi-reformist strategy in a spirit of gradualism and experimentation and with profound ambivalence, always ready to withdraw into its old habits of authoritarian domination and political repression as soon as the costs or risks of its semi-liberal strategy became too high for its taste. In this respect, Franco's taste was very demanding, as was his aversion to overlooking the slightest challenge to his personal authority; this attitude (and a similar propensity towards defensiveness and inflexibility) became more marked in the late sixties and early seventies in reaction to the terrorist activities of ETA. Thus the semi-liberal strategy failed because, although it opened up the field for social pluralism and public debate (thanks to the laws which regulated collective bargaining and works councils, the new Press Law of 1966 and the *de facto* semi-toleration of political and union associations, strikes and propaganda), it fell short of any basic reform of the political institutions. The state therefore failed to gain, at least to the extent that it wanted or needed to, in legitimacy in the eyes of the Spanish public or in the prevailing public opinion in Europe. As a result the implicit *ad hoc* compromise reached between Spain and the European Communities in 1962 led to a stalemate which lasted until the death of Franco in 1975. In 1962, Spain applied for negotiations that could ultimately have led to membership of the Communities at almost the same time as these had accepted the basic conclusions of the Birkelbach report to the effect that they committed themselves not to take into consideration any applications for membership from countries whose political regime was not of the same liberal-democratic kind as those of the then members of the Communities (Pereira Castaños 1991, p. 94). So that when in 1970 Spain came to a preferential economic agreement which was quite satisfactory to her interests, her prospects of becoming a member of the Communities without changing her political regime continued to be nil. The combination of this exclusion from the Communities with her

²⁵Exports grew at an annual accumulative rate of 11.2 per cent for the period 1961-1975; imports grew at a rate of 15.1 per cent (Viñas *et al.* 1979, pp. 1291, 1390).

exclusion from the Atlantic Alliance (for more complex motives: see *infra*) relegated Spain to a peripheral position within the Western geopolitical bloc to which she still remained tied, however, as much by the preferential agreement of 1970 as by her pacts with the United States.

4. Preparing the way for the domestic support needed for the "credible commitments" of Spanish foreign policy later on: changes in civil society and the public disposition in the 1960s and early 1970s

In general terms, creating an environment that induce credible commitments entails a complex institutional framework of formal rules, informal constraints and enforcement mechanisms (North 1990, p. 58). Now, as third party enforcement is difficult and unlikely in international transactions, formal institutions and informal constraints have to make up for it. But if we approach the subject from the perspective of a two-level game, the formal institutions and informal constraints to look for are not only those (of the external game) that link the national state with an international environment which may reward and discipline the national state's behavior; equally relevant are those rules and informal constraints (of the domestic game) that apply to the interplay between the political class and the public, in order to make sure the domestic support needed for trusting that the politicians' formal commitments in matters of foreign policy will be followed by deeds. From the viewpoint of this "domestic game", credible commitments are the result of a fairly complex development which involves both the political elites and the public, and in the course of which the contents of those involvements become articulated and are made fully explicit. In the Spanish case, such development went through three stages: first, that of the elite's choices of economic liberalization and Spain's entry in formal international institutions (see *supra*: section 3); second, that of institutional and cultural transformations implying changes in civil society and public dispositions (this section 4); and third, that of a democracy and of a public debate (see *infra*: section 5).

The most important consequences of the new policy of economic liberalization occurred in an indirect way and only to the extent that this policy, both in its inception and its implementation, was connected to a set of social, cultural and institutional changes (acquiring its full significance thanks to and as a result of this connection). The changes consisted of the development of some fundamental components of Spanish civil society including her markets, her voluntary associations and the scope for public debate (Pérez-Díaz 1993). This development, resulting in the activation of certain public dispositions, transformed the basic premises of the definition of Spanish national interest and identity, paving the way for significant changes in the definition of her foreign policy at a later date (even though, given the limited development of the public sphere, some of these changes were only to occur in a semi-articulated and implicit way).

In spite of the protectionist caution reflected in the tariffs of 1960 and the preferential agreement of 1970, the new economic policy led to the Spanish economy opening up to foreign markets to an ever increasing degree. Between 1961 and 1975 exports rose from 5% to 8.3% of GDP and imports rose from 7.5% to 13.4% (Viñas *et al.* 1979, pp. 1291, 1320); between 1959 and 1973 net inflows of private long-term foreign capital rose from \$43.6 million to \$1,133.1 million (Gámir *et al.* 1975, pp. 141-143); between 1959 and 1975 the annual number of tourists entering Spain rose from 4.1 million to 30.1 million; and throughout the sixties and early seventies more than one million Spaniards emigrated temporarily or permanently to other

countries of Western Europe (Carreras *et al.* 1989, p. 76). These movements, in turn, brought about a massive exodus from the countryside to the cities leading to all kinds of socioeconomic (and cultural) transformations in rural and urban environments, which caused the proliferation of innumerable problems of adjustment to change and conflicts of interest as well as to the emergence of associations of all kinds. The latter were formed as channels through which some sectors of the population might have a voice and some form of representation in public affairs, and might be able to put pressure on the relevant authorities. In industry works councils were set up to further negotiations on collective bargaining, which was becoming increasingly frequent in the sixties, accompanied by the use of debate and pressure tactics of all kinds, including strikes. Business, in turn, increased its organizational capacity, driven to do so not only by the experience of collective bargaining but also by the on-going debate with the economic authorities (which received additional stimulus from the debates among the commissions for the Development Plan). The legal professions and the ecclesiastical establishment became active in connection with business and labor issues, setting up new organizations and instilling new life into the old ones (Pérez-Díaz 1993). All this contributed to the creation of industrial associations and to others of a neighborhood or urban nature which likewise pressurized the local authorities, and constituted alternative institutions for the representation of interests in public affairs. The (cautious) overtures of the government on the question of an information policy were welcomed with impatience, on the one hand, by these associations and, on the other, by a new generation of journalists and media editors who made it a point of honor to continually test the limits of official toleration. These changes combined with dispositions on the part of Spaniards to produce changes in their perception of the interests and identity of the nation which were to have important political implications.

Oakeshott has drawn attention to the importance of people's political dispositions, or inclinations, as distinct from their articulated attitudes and opinions, "to think and to behave in certain manners, to prefer certain kinds of conduct and certain conditions of human circumstances to others, to be disposed to make certain choices" (Oakeshott 1991, p. 497). Oakeshott refers in that text to the 'conservative disposition' but we can generalize from his comments and assume that such dispositions, conservative or otherwise, are the outcome of processes of habituation that have taken place, and been furthered, by relatively stable institutional contexts; but we can also assume that such processes can be affected by certain crucial events. Applying this to the period under consideration, we observe that the most generalized disposition among Spaniards was anything but conservative, and this applies equally to the Spaniards with attitudes and opinions of an explicitly 'conservative' nature. The Fascists and military men rebelled in 1936 not in order to conserve but to eradicate most of the traditions which had accumulated in Spain in the previous century or century and a half. They rebelled in the name of a 'platonic idea' of Spain which, in some way seemed to have been lost in her 'dialectic descent' into historical reality. They proclaimed that they loved Spain and were ready to die for her. However, their declaration of love did not refer to the real Spain but to an ideal Spain. Thus young Spanish fascists used to express their patriotism by saying that they loved Spain precisely because they did not like her:²⁶ a baroque statement much in the same vein as Tertulian's declaration of faith *credo quia absurdum*: "I believe because it is absurd to believe". That expression of love had a disquieting masochistic twist to it. Those who

²⁶In the words of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the founder of Falange, himself, in his speech at the Cinema Madrid in 1935 (Primo de Rivera 1945, p. 70).

proffered it took for granted that a love of Spain was based on a feeling of scant appreciation or esteem and even less respect for the real Spain. Their love was based on the fact that the real Spain did not deserve it and it was this lack of merit that urged them to give it to her.

All of this (emotionally a little strange, though perhaps attractive under certain conditions) is, in any case, just the opposite of the 'conservative disposition' since, as Oakeshott suggests, the latter asserts itself when there is much to be enjoyed and, therefore, which deserves to be loved (Oakeshott 1991, p. 408). The stuff of the conservative disposition is made up of pleasure and contentment with what really exists and distrust of any change that could destroy the source of contentment. 'Spanish conservatives' were, on the contrary, a dissatisfied and discontented lot and much the same could be said of their political adversaries, moderate or extreme. Liberals such as Ortega (a liberal *mâitre à penser* who had, however, a profound influence on Spanish fascist mentality) and members of the '98 generation (or in a different way, the Catalan generation of 1901) were extremely critical of the real Spain that they knew and dreamed of changing; not to mention the socialists, the anarchists and the communists whose dreams were even more intense. The civil war arose out of this confused confluence of dreams, out of this generalized discontent of people who did not feel at home nor at ease in the world in which they were obliged to live. This is why the language of socialist or national-syndicalist revolution came so easily to their lips, and why it stayed around for so long (and provided common ground which eased the transition of quite a number of fascist and ultramontane Catholics into the radical progressivism of the sixties).

It was natural for people of such an unconservative disposition to feel attracted to the kind of "rationalist politics" to which Oakeshott refers (Oakeshott 1991, pp. 55ff), based upon ideas, principles and plans for the reconstruction and reform of existing institutions. Contemporary Spanish politics, from the beginning of the nineteenth century right up to the civil war had been of that kind: political regimes following one another in an endless succession of constitutions, governments, manifestos and *pronunciamientos*, punctuated by guerrilla warfare, urban violence, revolutionary rhetoric and intense partisanship, all in the name of political principle. The civil war of 1936-1939 was the culmination of the tradition of "rationalist politics"; and the politics of the conservatives who won the war was a *sui generis* version of the same. They wanted to begin the construction of a new Spain from the foundations up, once they had eradicated the Spain contaminated by hostile principles. They were full of ideas and plans for the transformation of Spanish life: just as the Catholics tried to reconvert Spain to the Catholic faith (according to the canons of what would later be known as national-catholicism: Pérez-Díaz 1993) so Francoist politicians, together with their followers and allies, tried to reconstruct Spanish politics, society and (to some extent) the economy. To do this, public discourse under Francoism maintained the call to "principles" (first of the Falange and later of the National Movement) and apparently rhetorical references to the 'coming revolution' for a very long time. It is clear that this talk was not persuasive for many to whom the grandiloquent phrases rang hollow; but it resonated with the disposition of a country unhappy with its recent past and the present and probably haunted by the bitter memories of the civil war.

The modifications to economic policy and the resulting socioeconomic developments of the late fifties and sixties can be understood as an opportunity for Spaniards at that time to express their disposition for change rather than for preserving what they had. Thanks to this, the desire (or dream) of a different life, escaping out of the present, was given a new direction. Economic development and the opening up of Spanish economic and social life to Europe made

it possible for many people to give free rein to their desire for change and believe in its imminent realization.

It was not only, or even mainly, people of (declared) unconservative attitudes and opinions who took advantage of this opportunity. Those whose explicit beliefs and ideas were of a conservative nature showed equal or even greater enthusiasm, and they did so in many ways, particularly through a profound transformation of their daily lives. 'Conservative' housewives 'invented' the 'consumer' culture and radically modified the contents of their homes. The offspring of well-to-do middle class families, dutiful sons and demure daughters 'invented' sexual permissiveness and changed their social mores and patterns of courtship in a very few years. 'Conservative' farmers discarded their traditional agricultural techniques and implements, leaving their Roman plows and mechanical sowers and harvesters to rust in caves or out in the open air (if they were not forgotten or sold off as scrap iron). In a similar spirit ('conservative') priests gave themselves up to a frenzy of liturgical renewal and modernization banishing their old images of curly, golden-haired little angels, bearded, stolid saints and sweet, sentimental virgins, many of which ended up in the flea markets to be sold off to antiquaries throughout the country.

Following the same logic, municipal architects, urban planners and town councillor conspired to alter urban spaces in an equally radical way. They filled them with new buildings which imitated the international style of working-class cottages so 'admired' by Tom Wolfe, with their 'imaginative' straight lines, low and 'intimate' roofs and so 'authentic' cement or brick facings, while ('conservative') mayors, spurred on by urban speculation and the comprehensible desire for grandeur, applied themselves to the task of modernizing their cities. And so they did. Demolishing the old mansions and widening old streets for cars to get in and out of the old centers more easily, cutting through narrow lanes, secluded plazas and little corners to fulfill a collective dream, so that where silence had once reigned supreme there should now be noise, speed and progress.

All these modern and mundane rearrangements of everyday life and the human and physical landscape are of some relevance to our subject because they demonstrate the unconservative disposition of the population as a whole and because, linked to the changes in markets, the variety of associations that sprang up and the public sphere of the sixties, they brought a profound change in the definition of the Spanish situation (affecting the masses as much as civil servants, businessmen, academics, clerics or other elites), including the definition of national interests and identity, all of which was to affect the debate on, and to some extent the content of, public policies in general, and foreign policy in particular, in the sense of making them fit in with a definition of Spain which had to become increasingly close to the standards set by the rest of the countries in Western Europe.

It so happened that the debates on public policy issues (mostly limited to economic and social policy matters: the Stabilization Plan, the Development Plans, incomes policies, concerted action, town and country planning, welfare provisions, etc.) were held with increasing reference to (and compared with) European experience of the matter, in search of European solutions to Spanish problems. At the same time, the interdependence between problems in Spain and Europe became increasingly obvious to the point that people of all political shades eventually recognized the fact that the economic growth and sociopolitical stability of Europe were a precondition for our own prosperity. In time this led to the conviction that the very identity of Spain included being linked to and forming part of Europe.

It was not a question of being in Europe or having Europe as a reference point but rather that Spain was an inseparable part of Europe.

All this shaped foreign policy preferences in public opinion and eventually found an application in specific diplomatic issues during the last phase of Francoism (under the minister Fernando Castiella [1957-1969]). Spain, protected from a hypothetical Soviet invasion by the military might of NATO, could afford to play along as a free rider (similar, in fact, though not identical, to what France was able to do) so that the strategic worries of the Spanish state were concerned with the fate of disputes on the southern flank of the peninsula. All of them were gradually influenced by the general "Europeanization" of the understandings and preferences of the public and elites. It seemed that the issue of Gibraltar (occupied by the British since the XVIIIth century, and whose return was a question of principle for the Spanish) would only be dealt with within a European framework: as the object of a dispute to be discussed by the Spanish and the British as fellow members of the same European community of nations.²⁷ The issues of Moroccan independence (in the fifties) and Equatorial Guinea (1968) and the Spanish Sahara (later on) were to follow the same pattern of the general European decolonization process, with almost no attempt to diverge from that pattern.²⁸ Only the problem of the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, claimed by Morocco, could still be treated as an issue of a different nature. Even so, most people thought that even if a review of the standing of the two cities could be postponed, it would have to be carried out in due course in a more general context, possibly linked to the issue of Gibraltar. Likewise in the case of the Canary Islands (Spanish since the late XVth century) it seemed that their Spanish character could be defended with a greater chance of success in the long term against the claims of the pro-independence parties the more Spain was perceived as being an integral part of the Western community.

In economic and political, though not strictly strategic, terms, the attention of Spanish foreign policy in its widest sense concentrated on relations with Western Europe, it becoming increasingly obvious that the satisfaction of specific sectorial interests of the Spanish economy (fisheries, industry and agriculture) all depended on the accommodation of these interests to the corresponding European interests. This only corroborated the diffuse message of the changes in institutions, culture and everyday life to which we have already referred. In sum, Spaniards came to the conclusion that the general orientation of their foreign policy could be none other than to increase involvement not only in the Western community but more specifically in the group of countries of Western Europe, and this conclusion came to seem the most natural thing in the world. In view of this, the ritual references of Spanish diplomacy to the 'special relationship' with Latin America and the Arab countries (which, by the way,

²⁷In 1967, Franco himself began to speak in these terms: "... friendship and understanding with Spain is of far more value and transcendence to Great Britain than maintaining in their possession a few archeological redoubts ... I would like to banish from this negotiation the erroneous concept of a struggle between nations in which there can be winners and losers, replacing it with that of an unavoidable fact of our time, the resolution of which will be to the benefit of both nations and in the service of Western Europe" (Del Río Cisneros 1975, p. 811). In spite of this perspective, a couple of years later, Franco ordered the closure of the gates which separate La Línea from Gibraltar.

²⁸Although it would appear that Carrero Blanco intended to do so (against the wishes of Castiella), in that he pushed hard for a Statute of Autonomy, resisting the concession of independence demanded by the United Nations (García Domínguez 1977).

provided most of the oil on which the Spanish economy depended)²⁹ although emphatic, could not disguise the fact that those regions of the world were not the principal targets of Spanish foreign policy, nor were such references the best indicator of what was in reality its main focus.³⁰

5. Democracy and the public sphere: from the transition (in the mid 1970s) up to Spain's entry into the European Community and the NATO referendum (in the mid 1980s)

The democratic politicians who came to power in the mid 1970s were able to build their foreign policy on two complementary foundations: they made use of the institutional network they found themselves in as a result of the foreign policy traditions of the Franco's years; and they were able to move beyond that tradition by appealing to the general dispositions of the public which resulted from the transformations of the 1960s and 1970s. The transition to democracy gave rise to a new structure of opportunities for Spanish foreign policy, making the integration of the country as a full member of the Western Community possible. This occurred as the consequence of both internal and external factors. The United States and Western Europe had supported the transition (that of Spain and, in general, of the countries of Southern Europe: Whitehead 1986) and this support had a persuasive effect on the socio-political coalition which had formed the basis of the previous regime: it convinced the doubters (in the Army, the business world and the bureaucracy) of the absence of any alternative to the course taken by Adolfo Suárez and the King Juan Carlos in the spring of 1976, reducing their fear of change and stimulating their interest in the advantages of full integration with the West.

This external pressure was consistent with the processes of change in Spanish life and the evolution of both the pro-Western disposition of public opinion (and the development of the public sphere) and the strategies of the political class. The different parties were in agreement on the fundamental direction of foreign policy towards full integration with Europe (in contrast to what happened in other democracies in transition in the South of Europe, like Portugal and Greece: Álvarez-Miranda 1994); but this direction did not require any alteration to the objectives of what had been Franco's foreign policy for over the past twenty years.

The government of Suárez expended most of its energy on the task of ensuring the success of the democratic transition and foreign policy was sidelined for most of his tenure. Initially Suárez was content to formalize the application to join the European Community in 1977: a unanimous application from all the Spanish parties to which the Community, embroiled in an institutional and financial crisis from which it only extricated itself in about 1985, gave a polite answer and recommendations of patience. Suárez had inherited the renewed bilateral treaties

²⁹Franco in 1973: "In the present hydro-carbon crisis our traditional friendship with the Arab nations acquires a special relevance, and these people have known how to respond to this sentiment by placing our homeland among their friends" (Del Río Cisneros 1975, p. 831).

³⁰These references were not purely ritualistic. Franco's 'colonial' or 'imperial' worldview was colored by beliefs about the role Spain had to play in the shaping of a community of Hispanic nations. Moreover, in the view of Spanish diplomats the courting of these Third World countries was seen as the only means for getting support for Spain's long held vindication over Gibraltar, in view of the opposition or indifference displayed by the Western powers. This pattern of support from some and indifference or opposition from others can be confirmed by the votes cast in the General Assembly of the UN on the fight for Gibraltar: Morris and Haigh (1992, pp. 36-37, 44-45 and 159-160).

with the United States (negotiated in 1976 by the minister José María Areilza: Areilza 1977), which he believed were compatible with minor and rhetorical diplomacy (such as the gestures of embracing Castro and Arafat, and sending a Spanish delegation to the Conference of Non-Aligned Countries in 1979). These symbolic counterpoints to the basically pro-Western orientation of his foreign policy reflected part immaturity and part inertia in the maintenance of a tradition of 'calculated ambiguity' (or naive Machiavellism) of our diplomacy from the times of General Franco, although it may be that Suarez's strategic thinking had already changed by 1980 when, possibly influenced by the geopolitical implications of the second petroleum crisis, he authorized the minister Marcelino Oreja to negotiate Spain's entry into NATO.

For their part, the left-wing parties appeared on the political scene as bearers of a vaguely, perhaps superficial, anti-American feeling comprising a combination of resentment towards the United States (partly because of the support Franco had received for over twenty years), anti-capitalism and sympathy for so-called "Third World causes", as well as a confused and unarticulated vision rejecting "the politics of the blocks". However, the Spanish socialists depended too much upon their European counterparts not to have to modify their position sooner or later. Thus they gradually toned down their rhetoric and moved closer to mainstream thinking within the European socialist family, under the influence of the German socialists, particularly Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt. As for the communists, eager as they were to gain credibility as a democratic party (and become, as they were called at the time, "Eurocommunists"), they moderated their expressions of solidarity with the Soviet Union, but they were, in any case, of only secondary importance.

In these circumstances, it was remarkably easy to achieve an all-party consensus on the application for entry into the Community, which was backed by public opinion. Such a move, unanimous and supported by public opinion, could never have been made under the Francoist state, only becoming possible with the arrival of democracy at the end of the process just described. Yet, that move brought strategic and geopolitical consequences in its train which both the political class and public opinion were relatively slow to recognize because they did not realize that being a full member of the Communities implied a change of perspective and altered the nature of the relationship with Europe. As a peripheral element in Europe, Spain could take refuge behind a rhetoric of distance or neutrality between the blocks. But as a full member of the Community, Spain could only enjoy the political and economic benefits inherent in that position if she also accepted the corresponding obligations on matters of foreign policy and defense. Thus, even if the general European orientation of Spanish foreign policy was unquestionable, the capacity and willingness of Spaniards to understand and assume the consequences seemed hesitant and reluctant. In fact, understanding and living with these consequences has been (and is) difficult; and overcoming this difficulty may be seen as a test of the political maturity of the Spanish political class and public opinion, and as a telling illustration of the importance of developing the public sphere in order to achieve the articulation of a consistent (and credible) foreign policy.

This difficulty was reinforced by the fact that Spain's application coincided with French reticence (based on the fear of competition from Spanish agriculture) and the climate of "Europessimism" prevailing, as a result of unsolved institutional and financial problems, until the summit of Fontainebleau in 1985 (Keohane and Hoffman 1991). It was reinforced also by the fact that the consensual nature of Spanish foreign policy was called into question when, shortly after the attempted military coup in February 1981, the Minister of Foreign Affairs,

José Pedro Pérez Llorca, in the government of Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, engineered the almost backdoor entry of Spain into NATO in the fall of 1981. The socialists denounced the move on procedural grounds, arguing that it should have been previously agreed on between the government and the socialists. The government suggested that, had they been consulted, the socialists would have made impossible the move for purely electoral reasons. The government tried to justify its decision as part of a general strategy to provide credibility to the Spanish candidacy to the European Community, and, later, as an attempt to create an apparently irreversible situation which the socialists (who were soon expected to come to power) would be unable to change (Calvo Sotelo 1990, p. 204). Up to what point this tactic of the creation of a *fait accompli* is an *ex-post facto* 'rationalization' or not is a difficult question. The fact is that the socialists took electoral advantage of the issue of Spain's entry into NATO to attract leftist-minded sectors of the public to vote for them in the elections of the fall of 1982, suggesting insistently and emphatically that, once in power, they would take Spain out again.³¹

As we have suggested earlier, it is probable that around 1981-1982 the socialists were well on the way to being converted to 'Atlanticism', as other European socialists had been; but it may be that the opportunity for an electoral advantage offered by the liberal use of radical rhetoric was just too much of a temptation to resist; or possibly that their own views were still in the making and, under these circumstances, they allowed themselves to stray, temporarily, back towards their original and (possibly) more genuine sentiments, given that the majority of the socialist leaders had had their original formative experiences during the time of their opposition to Francoism in the sixties and seventies and had drunk from the (conceptually somewhat cloudy) waters of a socialism understood to be revolutionary.³²

The socialists were successful with their electoral propaganda and assumed power and, in so doing, modified the state of public opinion as regards NATO. In earlier years the general public had taken part in opinion polls, with many 'don't knows/not sures' and the rest divided up almost equally (but with more in favor until 1981). After the socialist campaign and victory, the number of 'don't knows' dropped and those who held an opinion were firmly against NATO.³³ Thus the socialists had been successful in crystallizing (confused or latent) public opinion in a direction in favor of their electoral interests, but as was later demonstrated, contrary to their interests as the government of the country. In this way their success turned

³¹On the debate about Spain's integration into NATO, see Gil & Tulchin eds. (1988). On the linkages between Spain's integration into NATO and the process of modernization of the army, see Rodrigo (1989).

³²At the beginning of the transition period, in 1976 Felipe González (already Secretary General of the PSOE and later to become Prime Minister in 1982) said: "NATO is nothing more than a military superstructure built by the Americans to guarantee the survival of capitalism. It is not only directed against the communist countries, as officially stated, but against all possible revolutionary transformations in capitalist countries themselves." (Quoted by Share 1989, p. 79.) In 1982, another leading Socialist, Javier Solana (who became Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1992), explained: "The international policy of a Socialist government has its backbone in the cause of peace, making of Spain a catalyst of concord and detente. For this reason, our country must not belong to NATO." (Quoted by Santesmases 1985, p. 74.). The basic changes in the assumptions implied by these statements made them increasingly irrelevant in the following years, and the very people that pronounced them bore the responsibility of the full participation of Spain in NATO. In any case, these kind of declarations remind us that those changes took place in a very short time and that they are still relatively recent.

³³Percentages in favor, against and undecided about entry into NATO from 1978 up to the beginning of 1983: October 1978 (27, 15, 58); July 1979 (28, 26, 46); March 1980 (28, 18, 54); July 1981 (20, 35, 45); September 1981 (13, 43, 44), March 1983 (13, 57, 30). See CIS (n. d., pp. 22-23).

against them. Overcoming this contradiction took several years and during that time delayed maturing the process of public opinion on the issue.

The socialists had decided upon their strategy in view of domestic political considerations. But for this they had chosen an especially delicate moment on the international scene (dominated, to some extent, by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan), which one of their mentors, the German social-democrat, Helmut Schmidt, had described as a change of phase and a return to the Cold War and the arms race (Schmidt 1985, p. 15). Therefore excessive tolerance towards the strategic frivolities of the new government on the part of the Western community was not to be expected. What followed was a fascinating mixture of a comedy of errors and a strange educational experience. Felipe González had named Fernando Morán as Minister of Foreign Affairs, a man determined that Spain should not form part of NATO (Morán 1980, esp. pp. 119-125). At the same time, González himself took the initiative on foreign policy and began to adopt a broader, more comprehensive view of Western defence requirements. He approved the deployment of the Pershing 1-A and Cruise missiles in 1983 and encouraged conversations between the Ministry of Defense and its European counterparts. All of this prepared the way for his later claim that his experience in power had gradually led him to understand the link between the entry of Spain into the European Community and her duty to contribute to Western defense, including her duty to remain within the Atlantic Alliance (PSOE 1986, p. 297). In the end, González replaced Morán with Francisco Fernández Ordóñez and persuaded his own party to support him in his policy to keep Spain within NATO, with the addition of the proviso not to integrate Spain into the military command and to reduce the United States' presence on Spanish territory.³⁴ After a debate during the second half of 1984 and throughout 1985, the party allowed itself to be persuaded inasmuch as it lacked an alternative leader with any chance of success in an electoral battle. Then a referendum on the issue was called in January, 1986 to be held in March. The government framed the question so as to include the provisos as a token to the left-wing sentiments of a large part of the public and as a way of making the evolution of their own position more plausible.³⁵ Public opinion fluctuated. It moved from a majority against NATO in 1983-1984 and the first half of 1985 to a slight majority in favor in the first months of 1986 (CIS, n.d.). In the end the vote was 32% in favor, 24% against and a high abstention rate of 40%.

The referendum and the debate about it were rather confusing experiences for the public. The issue of remaining within NATO was clouded with that of the acceptance of González's leadership and the PSOE government. The link between the European Community and NATO

³⁴Conditions which had been consistently and repeatedly tested by opinion polls carried out by the governmental CIS (Center for Sociological Research).

³⁵The text of the question was the following (Share 1989, p. 83):

"The government considers it appropriate for the national interest that Spain stay in the Atlantic Alliance according to the following terms:

1. Spain's participation in the Atlantic Alliance shall not include its incorporation into the military command.
2. The installation, storage or introduction of new nuclear arms in Spain will continue to be forbidden.
3. There will be a progressive reduction of U.S. military presence in Spain.

Do you think it appropriate for Spain to remain in Nato under these conditions?"

was posited rather than explained and the debate was conducted more in terms of ill-defined fears and anxieties (to war if the referendum was passed, or to the political instability resulting from González's defeat if it failed), than in terms of a commitment to a coherent and consistent political course of action. In spite of these limitations, the referendum gave additional stimulus to the discussion on foreign policy in a variety of public and private forums. Parliament had ratified the treaty of Spain's integration into the EC almost without debate but the more controversial NATO affair was hotly debated and caused a flood of public declarations; these were somewhat unconvincing since the PSOE had to retract earlier affirmations and the conservative party (Alianza Popular), having redefined the issue as domestic, in which case the subject of debate was the acceptance or rejection of González (Fraga 1986, p. 40), surprised many of its followers by campaigning in favor of abstention.

To interpret the upsurge of political passion, punctuated by occasional argument, as a useful learning experience may be seen perhaps as an overly optimistic appreciation.³⁶ As a matter of fact, the immediate conclusion reached by the majority of professional politicians (including many of the political commentators) was decidedly pessimistic. They 'learned' that the public was swayed by inconstant passions and lightly-held opinions which had to be feared and manipulated and, as a result, they had no desire to repeat it on the following occasion. Thus, they agreed almost unanimously to rule out the possibility of a referendum on the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 (similar to the one held in France in September of the same year), in spite of the fact that the polls showed a majority opinion in favor of doing so.³⁷

However, there are also good reasons for qualifying and revising that melancholy reflection on public opinion. To begin with, the referendum obliged politicians to think carefully about public sentiment and to work hard at refining and explaining their own positions. The campaign gave rise to a series of opinion polls which had to be analyzed by the parties and a response given. Thus the public debate that took place can be construed as a two-level conversation: one, of explicit arguments and public statements among political contenders; and the other, of the careful reading which they make of the polls, trying to guess the changes in public attitudes and to accommodate them.

Furthermore, the referendum is to be seen in the context of a sequential process for establishing institutional forums and mechanisms for public debate at many levels, which was to take place in the following years. Without going into the detail of these late years (which could be a matter for another discussion), suffice to say that foreign policy, especially that relating to Europe, has acquired a growing importance on the agenda of the public administration; advisory and policy-making bodies have proliferated in this respect, together with the corresponding number of personnel: in the Office of the President, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ministries and in the embassies abroad; and increasing attention has been paid to foreign affairs on the part of regional governments, in particular those (like the

³⁶For a different view see Pérez Royo (1988), and Tusell (1988).

³⁷According to a Demoscopia survey carried out between the 10th and the 13th June 1992, 74% of Spaniards eligible to vote were in favor of holding a referendum. If it were held, 29% said they would vote for the Treaty, with 9% against and a high percentage of 'don't knows' (62%). In any case, what was known about it was very limited: 24% had never ever heard of the Treaty of Maastricht and 35%, although they had heard of it, knew nothing about it. See *El País*, June 18, 1992, p. 6.

Catalan and Basque governments) desirous of playing a role on the European stage.³⁸ All of this has meant that, in the eyes of the public, government activities appear to be increasingly part of and intertwined with the course of European events, and this is a dimension which has been emphasized by the mass media. We can also point to the growing interest in international affairs on the part of business and the unions, which have formed pressure groups to act on a level with European institutions, in an attempt to alert their members to the European dimension of their domestic problems.

As a result, by the early 1990s, Spain is enmeshed in a network of diplomatic, defensive, political and economic interdependence with other West European countries, her economy has become just one more component of the European economy, and her foreign policy is dependent on her broader commitment to the process of European construction. At the same time, the country has become gradually required to learn the defense implications of that commitment; and her participation in the Gulf War of 1990-1992 (as an important logistic base for the US war effort) and her role in the peace-keeping operations in different parts of the world (especially in former Yugoslavia) bear witness to this learning process. In sum, by the early/mid 1990s Spain sees the main thrust of her diplomacy to be that of serving the basic tenets of a 'liberal' foreign policy which tries to ensure the expansion of free trade together with worldwide financial stability, the promotion of democracy, the protection of civil rights and the maintenance of world peace.

6. Concluding remarks, and suggestions for further discussion

By the late 1940s, Spain was a country with a nationalist and protectionist foreign policy, known for her sympathies towards the Fascist powers, contaminated by the 'original sin' of having received Fascist help in the establishment of her authoritarian regime. She was, therefore, treated almost as an outcast by the Western community. Half a century later, Spain has become a full citizen of the Western world and an active participant in the European Community. The irony of contemporary Spanish history lies in the fact that the fundamental transformation of foreign policy came about as the result of a number of factors, one of which was the basic continuity of certain objectives central to foreign policy between the authoritarian and liberal regimes in the period that goes from the early 1950s to the mid 1980s (the period under consideration in this paper) and up to the present day. Although Franco's economic liberalization policies were based upon particular institutional and cultural premises of his own, they were also the result of critical political choices made to locate Spain within a network of interdependence with the rest of the Western community. This move allowed for the development of a civil society which proved decisive in shaping the public dispositions that gradually changed the institutional and cultural premises of foreign policy, which led to both a redefinition of Spain's national interests and her national identity which was now far more clearly and emphatically tied to Europe. By the mid-1970s, this process was sufficiently advanced to make the democratic transition possible, bringing with it a fully consistent liberal foreign policy.

³⁸On the attitude of some of the Catalan circles on the subject, see the prospective book *Catalunya a l'horitzó 2010. Prospectiva mediterrània* (De Jouvenel & Roque dirs. 1993, esp. pp. 255-348).

We can summarize our argument with four conclusions: a) economic liberalization implied a significant change of Franco's policy in a pro-Western direction and also made the development of civil society possible; b) the functioning and development of this civil society over a period of time brought about the shaping of the public's dispositions in such a way that it gradually changed the basic premises of foreign policy and implied a limited development of the public sphere; hence, political liberalization could be based not only on the 'liberal antecedents' of economic liberalization but, above all, on the growth of civil society; c) precisely because it was built upon these two bases, political liberalization was able to give birth to a pro-Western, liberal foreign policy, oriented towards Spain's full incorporation into the Western community; and d) for that incorporation to be pursued, however, political liberalization had to include the development of the public sphere well beyond the limits imposed upon it by the previous authoritarian regime, so that both political and other elites and the public were required to debate and to take up explicit positions on matters of foreign policy.

From this discussion the suggestion of some generally applicable hypotheses may follow. First, we make a significant development of civil society a critical variable and a prior and necessary condition if economic liberalization is to be followed by political liberalization and by a fully consistent liberal foreign policy. In our interpretation civil society refers not merely to any kind of social organization which can be shown to function autonomously in relation to state power, but to a specific type of sociopolitical organization, including the rule of law, and limited and accountable state, as well as markets, voluntary associations and social pluralism, and a public sphere (Pérez-Díaz 1993 and 1995). Second, we suggest that the existence of a 'Western type' community of liberal polities which the country in question can identify with (or have strong cultural and institutional affinities with, and aim to belong to) is a strong facilitating condition for the successful completion of the sequence that goes from economic liberalization to political liberalization and a consistent liberal foreign policy. In turn, these two orienting statements imply the generally applicable conclusion that the weaker the civil society, and/or the weaker the perceived links with the community of liberal polities with which the country may identify (or aspire to be a member of), the less likely the successful completion of the transition from economic liberalism to political liberalism *cum* a liberal foreign policy will be.

There is room for exploring the application of these hypothesis to countries with differing degrees of development of their civil societies and differing degrees of connection with the community of liberal-democratic (and advanced capitalist) societies, such as the countries of Latin America, the Arab World and Eastern Europe. They all have different degrees of development of civil societies of the Western mould, and different degrees of cultural and institutional distance from them. The fact is, that, unlike Spain and her relationship with Europe, it has been, and still is, very difficult for most Latin American societies to either want or be able to identify themselves either with a country like the United States (Mexico is a good illustration of this) (see Cornelius 1994) or with Europe (despite their obvious historical and cultural links with it). Also, Arab countries have always felt close not so much to a community of liberal polities of the Western kind as to a community characterized either by bureaucratic-authoritarian political regimes (some of them fairly similar to the Francoist regime) or (more recently) by Muslim fundamentalism (Carré 1991; Salamé ed. 1994; Azmah 1993).

By contrast, the experiences of Eastern European countries (particularly Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary) seem much closer to the Spanish one. They have experimented

(intermittently) with cultural and economic liberalization and their civil societies have been able to develop (within limits) for a period of some years previous to the collapse of their totalitarian states, at the same time that they gradually strengthened their economic and sociocultural ties with Western Europe. This may indicate that some of these countries may have fulfilled most of the conditions for following the 'Spanish model', and the evidence suggests that they are aware that this is the case and are making use of that rationale in their dealings with the European Community (De la Serre *et al.* 1994).

Finally, and on another score, we would like to add a note of caution regarding the 'learning process' of Spanish opinion and the development of Spanish public debate. It has been the thrust of our argument so far that Spain has gone from 'reluctant choices' to 'credible commitments'. Still, questions remain in regard to the degree of credibility of these commitments and of public support to them, in difficult and confusing times. In this respect, it may give us pause to consider some of the ambivalences shown by Spanish public opinion. Let us remember that the results of the referendum of 1986 were 32% in favor and 24% against Spanish participation in NATO with a 40% abstention rate; and that the government's question in that referendum was worded in such a way that the continuity of Spain within NATO was accompanied and counterbalanced by reservations which the government had an interest in emphasizing (which led some observers to conclude that the Spanish position was that of a semi-aligned country: Snyder 1988, p. 145). Later, during the Gulf War (1991) there was such a strong show of public sentiment against sending Spanish soldiers to the theater of operations that the government gave most of its logistical support to the United States Army in a covert manner, so that the public only learnt of it after the event and mainly through the foreign press. In 1992 opinion polls indicated that people were still of two minds as regards the Spanish presence in NATO (see INCIPE 1992), and there were telling signs of anti-American attitudes (fuelled from both the right and the left) which sprang up again at the time of the renegotiation of the US-Spanish treaty in 1992 (Alonso Zaldívar, Castells 1992). It has also been asked whether Spain's identification with the European Union, which is apparently so obvious, may not in fact be based upon relatively fragile foundations; at least the political class saw it in this light when it refused to hold a referendum on the Maastricht Treaty (as France did, for instance) in 1992.

All these things considered, we should reflect upon the fact that the foreign policy of a democratic state is only 'credible' when it can count upon the stable and reasoned support of public opinion, and this requires development of the public sphere, which, in the Spanish case, we must consider as an on-going process. And this brings us back to the general discussion of the two-level game approach. In the literature on the factors and conditions which affect the position of a government when it comes to negotiating foreign policy there is usually an insistence on the domestic resources and restraints affecting it and, therefore, on the support of public opinion; but there is hardly any reference to the importance of the 'intensity' of that support: in other words the 'extension' of the 'win-set' (that is to say, the range of all the policy alternatives 'ratifiable' by domestic actors) (Moravcsik 1993, pp. 24-30) may be considered, but the 'intensity' of the different positions included in the win-set goes usually unnoticed. This is, however, a most critical problem, since 'intensity' of the public support indicates the length the public may be disposed to go, and the costs and risks it may be disposed to endure, in backing such position. By contrast, the ambivalence of the public detracts from the intensity of its support, and results in 'weakness of the will' (or 'akrasia' or

'lack of leadership') on the part of the political elites, as it has been shown to be the case with the process of construction of the European Union.³⁹

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³⁹On this ambivalence and the subsequent problems for the development of a European public sphere see Pérez-Díaz (1994).

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