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Francisco Colom González

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Author: Francisco Colom González

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Francisco Colom González
Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas
f.colom@csic.es

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Political Catholicism and the Secular State: A Spanish Predicament

Francisco Colom González

Francisco Colom González is Research Professor at the Centre for Humanities and Social Sciences of the National Research Council (CSIC) in Madrid, Spain. His work has mainly dealt with the normative relations between culture, political identity and social change. He was the president of the Ibero-American Association of Political Philosophy and of the Spanish Association for Canadian Studies. Currently he is directing the project *Philosophy and the Political Space: A Topological Approach to Politics and Democracy*.

Abstract

This paper explores the origins of the religious/secular cleavage in Spanish modern politics. Such cleavage emerged within a broader historical process, namely the response of the Catholic Church to political secularization. 'Political Catholicism' appeared in this context as a reaction against modernity and as an attempt to create a new social and political environment for the Catholic worldview. Here, this term does not merely refer to the involvement of Catholics in political activities, but to the political strategies that have consistently and steadily claimed a Catholic inspiration for their aims and values. The paper concludes that the historical status of the Catholic Church in Spain reflects the changing cleavages of Spanish society and the corresponding weight of organized religion in it. Although Catholicism is still a prevailing cultural force in the country, it has lost much of its former clout as a political lever. Nonetheless, the organizational expertise of the Catholic Church and its mobilization vis a vis the state, combined with the inertia of its historical hegemony, have compensated for this loss of influence. This is a doubled-faced process though, since it also reveals the deep-rooted dependency of the Church on public resources and state cooperation.

The loss of the last colonies to the United States and what was perceived as a long national decline led a large group of Spanish intellectuals, mostly known as the *Generation of 98*, to adopt a *regenerationist* stance toward their own country by the end of the 19th century. The diagnostic on the origins of what some authors then called the 'national problem' (Macías Picavea 1899) and years later the 'Spanish predicament' (Brenan 1955) was diverse, but the lack of modern secular institutions was recognizably one of them (Ridao 2008). The public status of the Catholic Church, the disentanglement of ecclesiastical property, and religious freedom had been major issues during the early constitutional history of the country, but in the 20th century they developed a new and more virulent dimension. In 1931, with the accession of the Spanish Second Republic, the separation of church and state, the secularization of the educational system, and the emancipation of social customs from the religious umbrella fuelled a wide range of tensions. In a historical milieu marked by social unrest and increasing political division, anticlericalism functioned as a catalyzer of the conflicts that eventually led to the Spanish Civil War (1936-39).

Even if the institutional role of religion in contemporary Spain has little to do with that of the past, the relation of the state with the Catholic Church and its lobbies still stirs occasional tensions and maintains its salience in the political scene. Political secularization in Spain has not followed the path of French *laïcité* or the American ‘wall of separation’ between church and state, as Thomas Jefferson famously interpreted the First Amendment. The current Spanish Constitution declares that no religion enjoys an official status in the country. However, it also impels the state to take into consideration the majoritarian beliefs of the Spaniards and to cooperate with the Catholic Church and the other denominations. This regime of public cooperation has been sometimes branded as ‘non-confessional’, and as being supposedly different from the purely secular system, but there is no general agreement on the constitutional meaning of this term and its institutional consequences (Tribunal Constitucional 2008).

The secularization of political sovereignty

For centuries, the collective allegiances and the perception of the social order in Western societies were molded after religious references. Religion reflected the sacral character of social bonds and was deeply involved with the legitimacy of political power. European Christianization can be in fact described as a process of religious co-option of political authority. Since the Edict of Thessalonica in 380 AD, in which Emperor Theodosius declared Christianity as state religion of the Roman Empire, continuing with the Christianization of the Germanic tribes and the Northern and Eastern European peoples, religious conversion was a top-down development: the nobility embraced the new faith first, and then came its imposition upon the general population. At the turn of the 11th century, the Greek/Latin schism of the Christian Church led the Eastern Roman Empire, with Byzantium as its core, to subordinate ecclesiastical authority to the secular ruler - what Max Weber later termed *caesaro-papism* - and to the organization of the ‘Orthodox’ Church into a series of autocephalous and hierarchical jurisdictions. In Western Europe, the Roman Catholic Church remained relatively independent from political power, but it soon evolved into a hierocracy that competed with the secular authority of the Holy Roman Emperor and the other Christian monarchs. Until the 15th century, the elected Emperor was indeed required to be crowned by the Pope before he could exercise his title.

The Protestant Reformation opened a new and decisive chapter in the relations between power and faith in Europe. On one hand, it permitted the schismatic princes to reaffirm their political autonomy and to loosen their religious dependence on Rome. On the other hand, this emancipation was to have longer-term consequences, for the translation of the Bible and the catechization of the masses into vernaculars created an incipient space for the emergence of nationalities (Anderson 1991; Hastings 1997). *Cuius regio eius religio* - the principle under which the Peace of Augsburg was signed in 1555 - permitted the achievement of a precarious agreement for the religious co-existence of Protestants and Catholics within the Holy Roman Empire. According to this, the subjects of each realm were forced to adopt the religion of their rulers. Such an agreement further dissolved the overlapping of the worldly and the spiritual authority that characterized the medieval period and basically designed the religious map of Western Europe until today, but it did not prevent the intertwining of religious affiliation with geopolitical rivalry in a series of wars that would devastate the continent for over a century.

The control on religious authority proved to be essential for the stability of the body politic. The alternative was religious tolerance or internal homogenization. Protestant rulers were able in most cases to place ecclesiastical governance under their sway, but in the Catholic area religious authority depended on a hierocratic structure with an external and autonomous center. This is the reason why Locke, while considering tolerance a lesser evil,

excluded English Catholics from enjoying it, and why in France Bossuet, a few years before him, defended the divine right of Louis XIV against the authority of the papacy.

The religious reverberations also affected the European expansion overseas. The first Puritans fleeing from England intended to found a New Jerusalem amid the forests of America and perceived themselves as a chosen people predestined to start a new redeeming period in the history of Humankind. Millenarianism was similarly present, although in a different guise, in the Iberian evangelization of the New World. Apart from the papal *Bulls of Donation*, which jurisdictionally divided the newly discovered territories between the Iberian monarchs, the conversion of the natives and the culmination of the eschatological cycle of Revelation became a standard legitimation for the Conquest of the Americas.

By the end of the 18th century this scheme started to collapse while a new type of actor came forth in history: the 'national state'. The secularization of political power was a critical element in the emergence of this new political form. Laying aside the different historical narratives, the legitimacy of the national state rested on popular consent and on the representation of the sovereign will of the people. Religion thus lost its former pre-eminence in the tasks of socialization, which were transferred to the state and to secular organizations. In modern societies it is the state that exercises, even if in a receding way, the type of cultural and political hegemony formerly exercised by religion. Linguistic, not religious homogeneity became a functional priority, and nationalism - i.e. allegiance to the 'nation' - superseded religious affiliation as the main source of political motivation. This does not mean that religion ceased to influence political alignments, but it necessarily had to coalesce with other elements to become socially effective.

All these features reveal a general trend toward social and political 'secularization' in modern history. This term has become a standard label for a theory describing an axial change in the functions of religion. Although it has multiple implications, in its simplest form this theory states the gradual disappearance of religiosity at the pace of social modernization. Classical sociology described it as the irrevocable vanishing of the traditional worldview, but there are different interpretations. August Comte envisioned the substitution of conventional religion by a new secular creed devoted to the worship of Humanity. The secularization thesis was later reformulated by Max Weber as *disenchantment* of the world triggered by large-scale *rationalization*. Émile Durkheim understood it on the other hand, as a general transformation of the mechanisms of social cohesion, whereas Karl Marx saw it as the unveiling of self-deluding interpretations of the world.

The equivalence of secularization and modernization has been thoroughly discussed in contemporary sociology (Esteban Sánchez 2013). The main critique to the standard thesis argues that secularization should not be understood as an all-encompassing trajectory, but as a more complex and contradictory process, for the secularization of social values is always a matter of degree, not an absolute measure. In fact, a complete separation of state from organized religion cannot be found in any country (Bader 2011). Secondly, the massive drop of religious observance in Europe during the 1960s was mainly related to issues of moral and political authority, not necessarily of religious belief. For this reason, secularisation should not be defined as the disappearance of religion but as its retraction as the sole normative source of political allegiance. The role of politics in this process has not been passive, or as merely receiving the consequences of secularization. Politics has indeed had a decisive role in the outcomes of secularization. In any case, European history does not purvey a universal standard for interpreting it, nor has this process been homogeneous within Europe itself. For this reason, we can distinguish multiple paths of secularization and different historical and national patterns in the political governance of religion (Casanova 2009; Katznelson & Jones 2010).

The Catholic reaction to Modernity

The Catholic Church took great pains to adapt to the conditions of political modernity. In some cases - as I will try to show with Spain - it became deeply involved in the shaping of national institutions. Even if the Church is an ecumenical organization and Catholicism conceives of itself as a universal faith, their historical contours have been fashioned by specific circumstances. After the Napoleonic wars, Catholicism entered the modern political arena in Europe with a significant handicap. Not only was it a living example of a type of traditional authority that was gone with the French Revolution but it also had become an adherent of residual absolutism. In 1832 Pope Gregory XVI issued an encyclical (*Mirari Vos*) condemning the separation between state and Church, elected assemblies and representative government. Catholic reactionaries like Joseph de Maistre and Louis de Bonald advocated a return to the confessional state of the *Ancien Régime*. Late century traditionalists would eventually change their mind, favouring a reattachment of the constitutional state to Catholic principles. The turning point in this evolution must be searched for in the First Vatican Council (1869-70), when the dogma of papal infallibility was first announced. In his encyclical *Quanta cura* (1864) and in the attached Syllabus, Pius IX gave a detailed account of the 'errors' of Liberalism. The belief in the unlimited character of the state as source of rights stood out conspicuously among such faults. The political consequences of this stance were numerous, for it made the doctrine of Gallicanism and similar claims of government's interference in Church affairs obsolete. Bismarck found here the definitive reason for engaging in the *Kulturkampf* ('cultural struggle') against German Catholic forces. Austria used it as an excuse to abrogate the Concordat with the Holy See, whereas the French government denounced it in a memorandum to the Vatican Council, which was acceded to by Britain, Spain, and Portugal.

The tenet of the infallibility merely reflected the Vatican's effort to use all the legal and theological resources within its reach to reaffirm the papal authority over the Roman Curia and the national episcopates. An additional purpose was to renovate and homogenize the Catholic dogma. The cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of Christ the King and the new forms of Marianism are only some examples of the efforts to advance a new devotional culture. Apart from this, the Vatican Council also paved the way for a new Catholic doctrine on modern society. This doctrine endorsed the creation of a universe of organizations ready to react against the social, political and economic predicaments of modernity. Much as these initiatives were intended to restore the traditional worldview, their result created a distinctively new political culture indeed. Like secular ideologies, political Catholicism tried to reshape the social environment in a context of rapid and intense changes. Ultramontane tenets certainly defended the prerogatives of the pontiff, its dogmatic infallibility and its ecclesiastical supremacy, but they also encouraged Catholicism to develop its own worldview against the dissolving effects of the modern condition. This was precisely the path that moved Lammenais to evolve from his initial ultramontanism to liberal Catholicism and Christian-democratic positions at the end of his life. The challenge was not really whether to embrace or to reject modernity as a whole, but how to respond most adequately to the social changes that were impelled by it. Some authors have envisaged in this process a particular 'Catholic modernity' (Taylor 1999). From a historical perspective though, it has been more often compared to a conservative *aggiornamento* trying to instil religious references in a period of great uncertainty, but unwilling to accept the rationalistic dimension of modern culture (Clark 2003; Botti 1992; Álvarez Bolado 1999).

The core of this renovated creed rested on an organic conception of society, subsidiarity, the promotion of intermediate bodies as its natural constituents, and the rejection of liberal individualism. The so-called 'social doctrine' of the Church was displayed in two major encyclicals: *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo Anno*

(1931). According to the theory of 'Christian personalism', the fabric of society consists of a series of human and 'collective' persons whose natural autonomy must be protected by the state. Collective persons are the organizations that the individuals create in order to achieve what they could not attain separately. Among these organizations we can distinguish 'complementary associations' (like municipalities, districts and regions), 'derivative associations' (like schools, universities or guilds) and the Church, which is a 'perfect' social body, for it contains all the functional elements necessary to subsist by itself. The general coordination of this structure is a responsibility of the state, whose legitimacy derives from the 'natural associations' in which it originates. These social bodies should mediate the relations of the individuals with the state. The most basic unit is the family, within which authority is exercised by the *pater familias*. Municipality, a natural legal corporation, stands second to it in the social order, and it should enjoy full administrative autonomy. The professional guild, modelled after the medieval image, comes last, its task being to conciliate the conflicting interests within the economic sphere.

This social and political agenda had on the whole a decidedly anti-liberal and anti-national leaning, as it placed traditional authority above national sovereignty and it disputed the state monopoly over the means of socialization. Ultramontane doctrines firmly opposed the ecclesiastical devolution of civil functions - like the registration of births, marriages, and burials - the disentanglement of the Church property, and the Civil Constitution of the clergy. The immediate consequence of this stance was the transformation of the Catholic Church into a self-confessed opponent of the national state. The examples of such belligerence were manifold: the resistance to Italian unification, the dispute over state secularism during the Third French Republic, the *Kulturkampf* in Germany, the *Cristero* War in Mexico, the conflict with the Second Spanish Republic, etc.

In spite of having a diverse origin, the secularization of Catholic and Protestant societies in Europe has not been too dissimilar in the final outcome (Fundación BBVA 2010). The main differences relate to the pace of the historical changes and to the political instruments used for their implementation. Where state neutrality prevailed or ecclesiastical authority stayed under secular control, the separation of the civil and religious spheres ran relatively free of conflict. In Catholic societies though, most of the competences of the modern state had to be carved out of the jurisdiction of the Church, which often displayed a fierce resistance to it (Champion 1993; Cueva Merino 2008). For this reason anticlericalism, as a specific phenomenon of Catholic modernizing societies, need not be equated with an attempt at eradicating religion, but rather with the determination to bring the cultural instruments for social reproduction under secular sway. The Catholic forces, with the active support of the Vatican, responded to this hostility by organizing political parties that defended their interests in the national institutions. The political organizations that emerged from the Catholic movement during the late 19th and early 20th centuries did not display the typical features of the cadre or the mass political parties. What gave them their particular character was the platform of confessional associations upon which they rested (Buchanan & Conway 1996). Such parties were mainly founded and managed by Catholic laymen of a middle-class origin, but their situation was different in each country.

The first Catholic parties in Europe are to be found in Belgium and Germany. The Belgian Catholic Party was created in 1869 out of a federation of religious organizations. In 1884 it was able to win an absolute majority in the parliament in the wake of the schools dispute (Witte 2003). In Germany, the creation of the *Zentrumspartei* coincided with the establishment of the *Reich*, and it soon became the main opponent of Bismarck's 'cultural struggle' against German Catholicism. In independent Ireland the two main parties, the *Fine Gael* and the *Fianna Fáil*, equally wooed the Catholic vote, making the existence of a confessional party redundant. The situation was somehow similar in Poland, where the Christian Democratic Party received a rather weak backing from the Polish Church. On the contrary, in post-war Austria the Vatican and the national Church actively supported the Christian-Social Party, one of the forces that raised Chancellor Dollfuss to power in 1932.

In France, political Catholicism forged itself in the anti-clerical struggles of the Third Republic and as a consequence of the *ralliement* of the French Catholics after the advice of Leo XIII in his encyclical *Inter sollicitudines*. Their main organization, *Action Française*, was not properly speaking a party but a cultural and political lobby that fed from the ranks of traditional monarchists and *anti-Dreyfusards* (Sternhell 2000; Thomas 1965). With its doctrine of ‘integral nationalism’ *Action Française* - led by Charles Maurras, an agnostic - reached the peak of its influence in the inter-wars years and eventually connected with the Vichy regime, but it lost the favour of the Vatican in 1926, when its instrumental clericalism was perceived by Rome as being alien to the real interests of French Catholicism.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Spain and Portugal were the only Catholic countries in Europe without a major confessional party. This, again, may be explained by the cultural hegemony of Catholicism in both societies, but in the Spanish case we must take into consideration the dispersion of the Catholic vote as well, which was divided between the Conservative party, the ultramontane monarchists, and the Basque and Catalan movements. The first openly Catholic organization in Spain was the Social Popular Party, founded in 1919 after the successful model of the Italian Popular Party. During the Second Republic (1931-39) José María Gil Robles tried to agglutinate the strewn forces of Spanish Catholicism into a single political alliance - the Spanish Confederation of the Autonomous Right, or CEDA - but the experiment collapsed with the outbreak of the Civil War.

The origins of Spanish National-Catholicism

The roots of Spanish Catholic traditionalism are to be found in the dynastic rift that occurred after the death of Ferdinand VII (1784-1833). A staunch opponent of liberalism, Ferdinand suppressed the first Spanish Constitution (1812), which had been proclaimed while he was held hostage by Napoleon in France. He also forced the liberal patriots into exile after his return to the country. However, in order to secure his daughter’s Isabella accession to the throne, shortly before his death he carved a political compromise with the moderate branch of the liberals. His brother Carlos María Isidro contested Isabella’s succession under the Salic law and allied with the ‘Apostolic’ (ultra-Catholic) traditionalists in order to assert his right to the throne. Since then, and for over a century, *Carlism* would violently oppose the idea of national sovereignty, fighting the constitutional governments in two major wars (1833-40 and 1872-76).

The Spanish Constitution of 1812 was ‘liberal’ in a limited sense, mainly in that sovereignty was to be exercised through laws and as a representation of the will of the nation, but it was not a modern Constitution based on democratic accountability. The executive power stayed with the king, who was not responsible before the parliament, and the legislative initiative of the assembly was limited. The Constitution did not include a declaration of rights either, religious freedom being certainly not one of them. Article 12 expressively declared that “*the religion of the Spanish nation is, and ever shall be, the Catholic Apostolic Roman and only true faith; the state shall, by wise and just laws, protect it and prevent the exercise of any other*”. In 1834, after the king’s death, a watered-down version of a constitutional regime was reinstated with the accession of Isabella II, who was still a child, to the Spanish throne. The document that regulated it, the *Estatuto Real*, was not a Constitution in the strict sense but a Charter granted by the Queen Regent - much like the *charte octroyée* passed by Louis XVIII in France. This regime of restricted liberalism initiated a series of reforms that included the disentanglement of ecclesiastical property and the curtailment of Church jurisdiction. While the religious hierarchy reluctantly abode by these changes, the rank and file of the clergy often took a more belligerent stand, abandoning their parishes to join the *Carlist* guerrillas fighting the government in the countryside.

By mid-century, an influential group within the ‘moderate’ liberals in power –the so-called ‘Neo-Catholics’– had developed a peculiar synthesis of ultramontane Catholicism and doctrinarian liberalism. According to it, Spanish national identity and the Catholic faith were welded into an indissoluble unity (Herrero 1988; Novella Suárez 2007; Colom González 2011). As it is with the Spanish reactionary tradition in general, this current was deeply inspired by French theorists, in this case by Lammenais and Chateaubriand on the Catholic side and by Royer-Collard, Guizot and Cousin on the liberal one, but unlike Carlism, the Neo-Catholics opted for a constitutional system and were able to achieve substantial leverage on late-century Conservative cabinets. The legal and political consequences to this stance were various: religious freedom was not legislated until 1856, and only after the democratic revolution of 1868 did freedom of conscience receive the highest constitutional consideration; the Criminal Code promulgated in 1848 granted a similar degree of protection to the Catholic dogma and to civil norms; the laws regulating civil marriage and the civil registry were not passed until 1870 (Alonso García 2008).

On the other side of the political divide, the ‘progressive’ liberals tried to carry out their own modernizing agenda, but they alienated the support of a sizable portion of the rural population, who resented the social effects of liberal mercantilism or simply could not understand the secular language in which the liberal ideas were framed. While the moderates turned to the Church for support and denounced their antagonists program as a betrayal to Spanish tradition, the progressives used their connections with the military as their main political lever (Álvarez Junco 2001). This cleavage between moderate and progressive liberalism eventually institutionalized in a spoils system within which the Conservative and the Liberal parties took turns in power. With occasional changes, this system would remain in existence from the restoration of the Monarchy in 1874 – after a short-lived republican experiment - until its final crisis in the late 1920’s. Long before that, Donoso Cortés - a ‘neo-Catholic’ intellectual - was the first to publicly endorse an authoritarian solution to the purported self-defeating tendencies of liberal society. In a discourse at the Spanish parliament shortly after the revolutionary wave that shook Europe in 1848, he described the ‘dictatorship of the sabre’ as a means to prevent the ‘dictatorship of the dagger’, i.e. the necessity to choose between a dictatorial state and the social revolution at the gates (Donoso Cortés 1849). Donoso, whose thought would later be vindicated by Carl Schmitt, was thus anticipating the authoritarian turn that political Catholicism would experience during the following century.

Republican and left wing organizations in Spain traditionally perceived the Catholic Church as an ally of the oligarchy that tried to preserve its old privileges while prevented the emergence of a modern society. The episodes of social unrest increasingly included outbursts of anticlerical violence, like during the *Tragic Week* in Barcelona in 1909 – originally a mutiny against the conscription for colonial wars - the miner’s rebellion in Asturias in 1934, and the years preceding the Civil War. The Second Republic was a failed attempt to establish a secular regime similar to France and its *Loi de séparation des Églises et de l’État* (1905). The Republican Constitution of 1931 declared an end to public subsidies to the Church, unified the school system, regulated or dissolved the religious orders, and limited the right of the clergy to teach without proper academic qualifications. As Manuel Azaña – a republican leader and future President - announced in a famous discourse to the parliament in 1931, Spain had ceased to be Catholic (Azaña 1931). The public school became the cultural bastion of the Republic, with the local priests and the schoolteachers replicating the competition between the Catholic Church and the state as socializing agents in the small towns. It is no surprise then that both groups would suffer a large number of losses during the Civil War, when the religious conflict exploded in full violence and retaliation devastated the rearward.

The resentment against republican anticlericalism and the fear of an imminent Communist revolution pushed a wide sector of Spanish Catholics to endorse the nationalistic and authoritarian movements that proliferated throughout Europe since the

1920's (Botti, Montero & Quiroga 2013). As soon as the Spanish military and the right wing groups rebelled against the Republic in July 1936, the Church aligned with the insurrectionary. Its position was not made official until one year later, when a *Collective Letter of the Spanish Bishops to the World* was made public, but the immediate consequence was that the leftist militias in the republican side targeted the Church as an internal enemy. The result was the assassination of over 6,000 Catholic priests, friars and nuns, mostly during the first months of the war.

Against this historical background, the regime issuing from the Civil War turned Catholicism into one of its ideological benchmarks. The term 'National-Catholicism' is commonly used to describe the ideological and political rule that under General Franco combined Catholic values, authoritarian nationalism and socio-economic corporatism. Franco's dictatorship granted the Church the type of autonomy and political protection that it had been seeking for over a century. The main purpose of this collaboration was to secure the political loyalty of the Church in exchange for handing over to it a sizable portion of the cultural apparatus of the state - the educational system, part of the mass media, and censorship. As described by one of the earliest eulogists of Franco's regime:

A Catholic state is the same as a confessional state. A confessional state does not mean that the instruments of government should be absorbed by religion, or that the state will be run by the clergy and the positions of the civil servants taken by priests. It basically means that the state as such, its codes, laws and institutions abide by God's commandments and the laws of the Church, so that she can dedicate to spread the reign of God on Earth. A confessional state means having the cross and receiving religious education at school; it means recognizing the sacred nature of marriage between Catholics, and the religious status of the cemeteries (Azpiazu 1939, 116; my translation).

Being the unexpected outcome of a failed putsch against the Republic and the subsequent civil war, Francoism lacked a unified ideology and it initially displayed a low degree of institutionalization. Its main pillars were the military, the *Falange* - an autochthonous version of Italian Fascism - and the Catholic Church. Each of these groups received and administered a portion of the state institutions. The regime lacked a proper Constitution. Instead, it enacted an accumulative series of 'Fundamental Laws of the Realm' (eight in total until 1977) that served to organize the basic structure of the state. In 1945, the 'Charter of the Spanish People' (*Fuero de los Españoles*) recognized in Article 6 the official status of Catholicism and 'the protection of religious freedom by the state', but tendering it to judicial tutelage and to the proviso of safeguarding 'morals and the public order'. In fact, non-Catholic denominations - with the exception of Islam in the colonial territories in Northern Africa - could only be practiced privately, and most Protestant churches in the country were closed or operated clandestinely. In 1967, foreign diplomatic pressure and the reforming trends stemming from the Second Vatican Council moved Franco's government to pass a new Law of Religious Liberty that allowed wider tolerance for minority religions, but not real freedom (Moreno Seco 2001). Religious objectors to the military service, like Jehovah's Witnesses for instance, faced no other alternative but imprisonment.

Franco's regime had defined itself as a 'Catholic, social and representative state' for the first time in 1947, with the Act of Succession - the fifth among the 'Fundamental Laws'. By then its former alliance with the Axis powers had become an embarrassment. With time, the regime would evolve toward a limited pluralism within its own political coordinates, which allowed Juan Linz to typify it in the 1960's as an example of an 'authoritarian regime', as being different from totalitarian states (Linz 1964). Some analogies can be found with other authoritarian and clerical systems - like Dollfus' short-lived Austro-fascist experiment in Austria, and Josef Tizo's and Ante Pavelic's Nazi puppet

states in Slovakia and in Croatia during the Second World War (Payne 1987) - but unlike these cases, Franco's regime was able to survive and adapt to the new international environment created by the Cold War.

The doctrine of *Hispanidad* ('Spanishness'), a notion developed by Catholic intellectuals in the early 1920's under the influx of Maurras, would purvey an additional element for the ideological self-representation of the regime (Colom González 2006). The *Hispanidad* basically proclaimed the historical commitment of Spain to Catholicism and its redeeming mission in a world that had gone afoul under the influence of secular materialism. Bizarre as this idea may seem nowadays, the collaboration with the Vatican and with some strategic Latin American countries helped the regime to curve its isolation and to develop a surviving strategy in a hostile milieu. The Concordat of 1953 established a mutual assurance between Franco's government and the Holy See. The regime thus guaranteed the homogeneity and the cultural hegemony of Catholicism in Spain in exchange for a religiously legitimized conception of the nation and an appropriate design of the Spanish Church. Apart from some isolated tensions in the aftermath of the Civil War, this alliance would not erode until the 1970's, shortly before Franco's death, when Cardinal Enrique y Tarancón monitored the transition of the Spanish Church to the new democratic situation. By then the state was entirely managed by civilians, and *Falange* had become a residual bureaucracy consigned within the official unions system. During the last period of the regime the Catholic influence was revamped with the technocrats of the *Opus Dei*, who were pushed to the highest ranks of the administration by Admiral Carrero Blanco - Franco's second in command - and led the economic modernization of the country.

The ambiguities of Catholic disestablishment in democratic Spain

After Franco's death in 1975, the new Spanish Constitution, which was proclaimed in 1978, disestablished Catholic religion. Article 16.3 of the Constitution states:

No religion shall have a state character. The public authorities shall take into account the religious beliefs of Spanish society and shall consequently maintain appropriate cooperation relations with the Catholic Church and other confessions.

Unlike strict secularism, the non-confessional clause of the Spanish Constitution compels the state to collaborate with the different denominations while recognizing a special status for the Catholic Church. After the long and violent conflicts for secularization, the purpose behind this clause was to achieve a new compromise between the reformist party of Premier Adolfo Suárez and the main anti-Francoist groups. In 1979, a few weeks after the new Constitution had been ratified in a referendum, a new agreement concerning juridical, educational and economic issues was signed between the Holy See and the Spanish government (Santa Sede 1979). In this agreement, that replaced the Concordat of 1953, the Church accepted to become financially self-sufficient within a foreseeable future. In 1987, the Socialist cabinet of Felipe González signed a new arrangement that provisionally assigned the Church 0,52% of the personal income tax of Catholic taxpayers, but with the proviso that the state would supplement this amount if it did not reach the expected global sum. In 2007 this assignment was increased up to 0,7% by the Rodríguez Zapatero's government while the state supplement was suppressed. Nonetheless, the Church still received that year an estimate of 5 billion Euros through the public funding of Catholic schools, religion teachers, NGOs and the restoration of artistic patrimony (Romero & Gutiérrez Calvo 2013).

Since the transition to democracy, the educational system has become a testing ground for the interaction of the Spanish Church with the state. Loyal to its historical

tradition, the Church operates as a powerful lobby that mobilizes its associational network and uses its social weight to put pressure on the government. In 1985, the first Socialist cabinet reorganized the national educational system in two segments: a public sector and a network of private schools subsidized by the state. This network overwhelmingly corresponds to Catholic schools, which nowadays comprise about one third of the primary education in the country. It is particularly telling that the Church and the Catholic lobbies have systematically opposed the legal definition of education as a 'public service'. They have framed it instead as a 'right' connected to religious liberty, and more concretely as the right of the parents to procure a Catholic education for their children. Accordingly, this right should be guaranteed by the state through educational subsidies to Catholic schools.

The 1979 agreements with the Vatican also established that public education should be 'consistent' with Christian values and that the teaching of Catholic religion should be made available in public schools. Catholic instructors are thus paid by the state, but their appointment or dismissal exclusively relies on the decision of the bishops. This has originated several labour disputes that ended in court, for the labour rights of the instructors often conflict with the legal prerogatives of the Church. Similarly, the type of alternative activity for those students who decide not to take up the subject of Catholic religion has created recurring frictions and legal disputes between the Church and the educational authorities. The latest education law passed by Mariano Rajoy's conservative cabinet in 2013 not only has entrenched the presence of religion in the syllabus, but it has also suppressed the subject of civic education and has granted an academic value to the marks in religion. Given the wide contestation that this initiative has provoked, it is unlikely that the law will survive a future change of government.

The Church is also active outside the educational field. A number of charity organizations receiving occasional public funding are run by ecclesiastical and lay personnel at the national and the local levels. The Catholic lobbies and religious organizations of civil society are a chapter aside. Although they are not always organically linked to the Church, they allow the Catholic views to be perceived through their presence in the professional boards that regulate sensitive fields like healthcare and medical ethics. In this case it is sometimes difficult to separate the religious bias from the seeking of economic profit, since many of the politicians and administrators who had publicly defended Christian standards in medical practice while they were in office, were later found to be running denationalized health services in private corporations (El País 2013).

The Organic Law on Religious Liberty that was passed in 1980 regulates the status of non-Catholic denominations in Spain. This law allows for special agreements between the state and the religions recognized as being 'significantly rooted' (*con notorio arraigo*) in the country. Such recognition is a prerequisite for any type of public cooperation, but it has no legal consequences by itself, except for the right of the registered denominations to participate in public consultations with the government through the Advisory Board for Religious Freedom. So far, this status has been granted to seven confessions: to Muslims, Jews and Evangelicals in 1992, to the Mormons in 2003, to the Jehovah's Witnesses in 2006, to the Buddhists in 2007, and to the Orthodox Church in 2010. From them, only the first three groups have signed agreements of cooperation with the state. The standing of these cooperative arrangements is in any case very different from those signed with the Vatican. Concordats have the status of an international treaty, whereas the agreements with the Muslim, Jewish and Protestant communities are ordinary laws issued by the Spanish parliament. Since the law compels the different branches of every denomination to federate in order to negotiate with the state, occasional frictions have arisen concerning the representativeness of the resulting organizations. This happened at one point with the Union of Islamic Communities and the Spanish Federation of Islamic Religious Entities, which together constitute the Islamic Commission of Spain, the representative organ of the Muslims before the government. Out of concern for the security implications of a sprawl of uncontrolled Muslim groups, the government has tried to consolidate this body, but the

material conditions for managing everyday religious life lie in fact within the local governments, which hold the authority to approve or deny the opening of new worship centers.

When it comes to issues that are particularly sensitive - like abortion, same-sex marriage or the teaching of civic morals - the Catholic Church has not hesitated to openly project its influence by mobilizing its educational organizations, the media and its contacts within the political parties. In 2005, the bishops personally marched on the streets of Madrid demonstrating 'in favour of the family' - and against the recent law on same-sex marriage. The fact is that Spanish Catholics do not necessarily share the conservative stance and the patrimonialist attitude of the Church hierarchy towards the state. The ideological fossilization of the Spanish Church is not in tune with the new winds coming from Rome and Pope Francis either. According to a 2009 European-wide survey on social values, 71.8% of the Spaniards declared to adhere to a religion - which is above the 67.6% standard for the whole European Union - and they matched the average opinion in the continent favorable to the separation of state and religion. However, they evaluated the intensity of their religious feelings slightly below the European average (Fundación BBVA 2010). In a more recent survey, the religious attitudes of the Spanish population appear quite evenly distributed into three main groups: 37% define themselves as non-practicing believers, 31% as practicing believers, and 31% as being indifferent to religion, agnostic or atheistic. Among those who identify themselves as believers, 83,7% declared themselves as being Catholic, but only 17% attended mass regularly (Observatorio del Pluralismo Religioso en España 2013). Spanish Catholics overwhelmingly accept divorce and are in favor of the use of contraceptives. They are more divided though - but on the whole favorable - on the issue of homosexual marriage and the interruption of pregnancy under certain conditions (Tejedor 2013).

Unlike the hegemonic Catholicism, Muslim, Jewish and Evangelical groups have preferred to advance their religious and proselytising strategies outside the educational system and the political sphere. The agreements signed by these communities with the state in 1992 included the possibility of religious instruction in the schools, provided that there were enough children demanding this service, but the economic chapter of this agreement has never been developed. Since a large part of the Muslims living in Spain are of foreign origin, the provision of this service mostly depends on the political interests of some Muslim countries - particularly Morocco, which uses it as an instrument to monitor and influence its citizens abroad, and Saudi Arabia, which has financed the construction of several mosques in the country.

We can conclude then that the historical evolution of political Catholicism and of the status of the Church in Spain clearly reflect the changing cleavages of Spanish society and the diminishing weight of organized religion within a broader context of overall secularization. Catholicism is still a prevailing cultural force in the country, but it has lost much of its former clout as a political lever. It is rather the organizational expertise of the Catholic Church and its mobilization *vis a vis* the state, together with the inertia of its historical hegemony, that compensates its loss of social grip. This is a doubled-faced process though, as it also reveals the deep-rooted dependency of the Church on public resources and state cooperation. It is still to be seen if historical inertia will suffice to permit the Spanish Church to continue operating under the same state-focused premises in a context of growing religious diversity and wider life choices.

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