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**Democracy, intermediation, and voting in Spain:
some new findings from in-depth
and longitudinal data (vol. 1)**

RICHARD GUNTHER

JOSÉ RAMÓN MONTERO

HANS-JÜRGEN PUHLE



Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials
Adscrit a la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

**Democracy, intermediation, and voting in Spain:
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(vol. 1)**

Part 1: Democracy and Intermediation

(Part 2, on “Voting, Partisanship, and Ideology”, has been published as WP 352)

RICHARD GUNTHER

Ohio State University

JOSÉ RAMÓN MONTERO

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

HANS-JÜRGEN PUHLE

Goethe Universität Frankfurt

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PART 2 (WP 352): VOTING, PARTISANSHIP, AND IDEOLOGY**Abstract****Voting, partisanship, and ideology**

Sources of electoral stability

Learning party identification after a dictatorship

Left, right, and center: the origins of ideological identification

Explaining the vote

The 1993 election

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ABSTRACT

The findings reported in this monograph (in two parts, published as WP 351 and WP 352) are based upon a broad-based, multi-method analysis of Spanish politics and society, including five national surveys conducted over nearly three decades, and many in-depth qualitative interviews with a “panel” of respondents who had been interviewed six years earlier. With these rich data resources, we are able to address a number of important hypotheses. We find that lifelong patterns of active engagement with democratic politics are primarily the product of childhood and young-adult political socialization (including formal education and informal socialization within the family) in both the Franco regime and the new democratic political system. In contrast, support for democracy in Spain was acquired primarily through adult political learning, with prominent political elites and their respective parties playing the key roles. Using both cross-sectional survey data and qualitative interview data, we explore the various and complex ways that individuals receive information about politics through relevant political intermediaries. These same data resources enable us to explore between 1979 and 2004 both the processes through which voters acquire potentially stabilizing long-term attitudinal links to partisan politics (especially party identification and left-right loyalties), as well as those forces (especially socio-economic and cultural change, and strategic decisions made by political elites) that can lead to substantial transformations of parties and party systems.

For technical reasons, this monograph appears in two parts. The first part (WP 351) deals with the origins of support for democracy, disaffection and political engagement, and political intermediation. The second part (WP 352) focuses on voting, partisanship and ideology, and on the factors explaining the vote.

INTRODUCTION¹

This monograph is to some extent different from mainstream literature of political science. While many chapters or articles generally undertake cross-national comparative analysis, here we deal empirically only with the Spanish case. While this literature tends to focus its attention on a relatively restricted number of theoretical and empirical issues, we deal with a broad range of questions, from the origins and nature of support for democracy to the determinants of the vote in nationwide elections. And while standard contributions usually base their analyses almost exclusively on quantitative data, the following study is grounded upon both quantitative and qualitative data gathered over the course of nearly three decades.

There are at least two reasons for giving so much emphasis to the combination of survey and in-depth data on recent Spanish politics. The first is that Spain is an especially good case. It evolved from a long authoritarian regime originated from an unstable democracy in the 1930s to a fully consolidated democratic system in the early 1980s. After four decades of democratic rule, Spain was transformed from a middle-income country on the “semi-periphery” of Western Europe into an affluent, predominantly urban post-industrial society that was fully integrated into the European Union. Thus, comparative analyses using longitudinal data can take advantage of naturally occurring variance in factors that are commonly treated as independent variables in empirical studies of politics at one point in time, while the single-country enables us to hold constant a number of potentially confounding factors that are intrinsic to cross-national analysis of a wide array of historical, social-structural, economic, cultural, and institutional influences.

The second great strength of this Spanish micro-study involves the richness of the data resources available, which support diachronic analysis more than is possible with any other country that has undergone the democratization process. Its analysis is based on five national surveys conducted by the authors of this chapter that span nearly three decades. These empirical data include standard closed-ended survey items as well as rich qualitative information derived from in-depth interviews; cross-sectional post-election surveys and panel studies; and a broad array of contextual data concerning the regions and municipalities within which the in-depth interviews were conducted.

Accordingly, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data enriches the contribution of the Spanish case to the debate on many comparative issues of politics. For example, political intermediation and socialization are inherently interactive and contextualized processes, and yet

¹This paper (published in two parts as WP 351 and WP 352) is a substantially enlarged version of the chapter published by the authors as “Intermediation, Mobilization, and Citizen Participation: Findings from In-Depth and Longitudinal Analyses of Spain”, in Richard Gunther, Paul A. Beck, Pedro Magalhães, and Alejandro Moreno, eds., *Voting in Old and New Democracies* (New York and London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 230-272. Both the chapter and the book are part of the Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP), which includes by now more than 50 surveys undertaken between 1992 and 2017, and to which the authors have contributed to with the previous CNEP book (Gunther, Montero, and Puhle 2007a). We are grateful to the Comisión Interministerial de Ciencia y Tecnología (CICYT), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Comité Conjunto Hispano-Norteamericano para la Cooperación Cultural y Educativa, and the Mershon Center of the Ohio State University.

the limitations in cross-national comparative analyses of single-wave cross-sectional survey data have usually meant that they are relegated to a *black box* and the specific causal processes underpinning general patterns are left unexamined. In conventional cross-national studies, *general* social processes that exert a similar impact across all cases included in the comparative analysis are inherently privileged over country-specific factors whose influence is limited to a relatively small subset of respondents within a large cross-national data set. This single-case study enables us to separate the influence of interactive, contextual, or *country-specific* variables –such as a country’s historical trajectory and the various electoral mobilization strategies employed by political elites and their parties –from the impact of general processes of social change.

The data upon which this analysis is based were collected by the authors at regular intervals over the first three decades of Spanish democracy, often in conjunction with dramatic political events. The nationwide surveys were conducted in 1979 (focusing on the first election under a brand-new democratic Constitution and just two years after Spain’s first election following the death of Franco), 1982 (an election which resulted in a massive party-system realignment), 1988 (at a time when the largest opposition party was undergoing a leadership crisis), 1993 (in the midst of a recession and a series of corruption scandals), and 2004 (just three days after a terrorist bombing in Madrid that killed 191 people, wounded 1,800 others and contributed to the unexpected defeat of the governing party). By replicating analyses over three decades using these data, we can better appreciate the incremental but cumulative impact of long-term societal processes, such as those related to socioeconomic modernization and secularization, as well as the unique impacts of parties, candidates, and campaign strategies in particular elections.

Perhaps the most unique and valuable among these surveys is the multi-faceted study conducted in 1988, which generated both quantitative and qualitative data. This 1988 survey re-interviewed 175 of those respondents who had previously been included within a massive survey ($n = 5,463$) of the Spanish electorate following the 1982 general elections. Consequently, we can undertake panel analyses of changes in attitudes and political behavior that followed the party system realignment of 1982.² More importantly, this study included in-depth interviews with *all* of these respondents, generating over 2,400 pages of verbatim transcripts. These in-depth, open-ended interviews included an extensive battery of questions about the respondent’s childhood socialization experiences and memories of the Civil War, the Franco regime, the transition to democracy, various dimensions of partisanship, preferences about policy issues, and evaluations of the main political leaders; in short, they provide rich qualitative insights that enable us to examine the impact of a wide array of personal experiences on the formation of attitudes that are relevant to political behavior today. In addition, some of these qualitative data were translated into quantitative variables based on subjective evaluations of the open-ended in-depth interview

² It should be noted that neither Catalonia nor the Basque Country were included in this most-similar-systems research design in order to minimize analytical complications that would have resulted from the distinct and highly fragmented party systems and unique constellations of social and cultural cleavages of those regions.

transcripts by the principal investigators themselves, as well as by three other well-trained experts.³ Using these variables, some key characteristics of individuals (such as cognitive complexity and logical consistency) that cannot be measured with standard survey items could be properly captured and operationalized for inclusion in multivariate analyses. Formative influences (from detailed narratives of personal histories) were also captured and their impact assessed in a manner not possible with closed-ended responses to standard survey questionnaires.

For the overwhelming majority of our respondents, the crucial formative events of the transition to democracy (1975-1979) and even of the predecessor authoritarian regime of Francisco Franco were still salient memories, and their impact on the development of political attitudes and behavioral norms could be analyzed. Accordingly, our quantitative and qualitative interview data enable us to explore the nature of the causal processes underpinning fundamental aspects of political culture, including (in the first part: WP 351) the development and evolution over the course of three decades of attitudes supporting democracy (a key element of regime legitimacy and democratic consolidation), as well as norms and values closely related to democratic participation. We shall also undertake a detailed examination of intermediation, particularly the impact of and relationship among its various forms (personal networks, media, secondary organizations), the reasons for selectivity of exposure and media use, the importance of homogeneous versus mixed environments and the impacts of age and the everyday *Lebenswelt* environment. We conclude our study (in the second part, WP 352) with an extensive analysis of the determinants of the vote. While this analysis parallels many standard cross-national studies of voting choice, it goes beyond them in some important ways. First, rather than simply including party identification and left-right self-placement as independent variables in multivariate equations, our in-depth interview data make it possible for us to explore the nature of these concepts, as well as the processes through which they were learned by our respondents. As we will see, this involved both long-term, intergenerational transmission of political orientations (in which the Second Republic and the Civil War played crucial roles), as well as adult political learning based upon assessments of the roles played by political elites in the crucial formative period surrounding the transition to democracy, and in response to the political messages disseminated by them in contemporary partisan politics. Moreover, the long historical span of our data resources (running from the very first elections following the death of Franco to 2004) enables us to monitor and analyse how both the general and country-specific determinants of partisan preferences have evolved over time.⁴

³ Mean scores were calculated on the basis of between three and five assessments of each interview (with inter-coder reliability statistics ranging between .87 and .98). The other three coders were Prof. Bradley Richardson and research assistant Cynthia Iglesias, both of Ohio State University, and Prof. Mariano Torcal, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona.

⁴ After those of 2004, general elections were held in 2008, 2011, 2015, and 2016. But, to some extent, the 2004 elections were the last *normal* electoral period of the Spanish democracy prior to the radical economic and political changes brought up by the Great Recession. After a protracted process of dealignment taking place at the 2008 and 2011 elections, the 2015 and 2016 elections were characterized by a profound realignment that has completely changed the party system and the dynamic of party competition among established and new parties. Thus, the 2004 elections make a sort of a natural endpoint to our endeavor of analyzing basic political attitudes and anchors of electoral behavior of Spaniards over the almost three decades spanning between 1977 and 2004.

THE ORIGINS OF SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY, DISAFFECTION, AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

The consolidation of new democratic regimes depends, to a considerable degree, on the development of widespread support for democracy as the only legitimate framework for political conflict –as “the only game in town” (Linz and Stepan 1996: 5). Similarly, the vitality and proper functioning of democratic systems is dependent on a politically engaged citizenry, and that normally requires that citizens feel efficacious. How do such attitudes develop? Most of the early literature on “political socialization” found that early childhood exposure to basic political norms and values –particularly as articulated or demonstrated through the behavior of parents– had a crucial formative impact on fundamental political orientations. If that were found to be true in the case of Spain, regime consolidation would not be expected to occur for several decades: nearly four decades of authoritarian rule exposed generations of citizens to anti-democratic propaganda and behavioral norms that were decidedly contrary to active citizen participation.

In contrast with predictions derived from “childhood socialization” models of learning democratic support, extensive survey data reveal that Spain’s new democracy had acquired legitimacy and support in the eyes of their citizens by the early 1980s. With regard to attitudes relevant to active engagement with politics, however, relatively high levels of political disaffection have been stubbornly persistent. What explains these differing patterns of attitudinal development?

Support for democracy

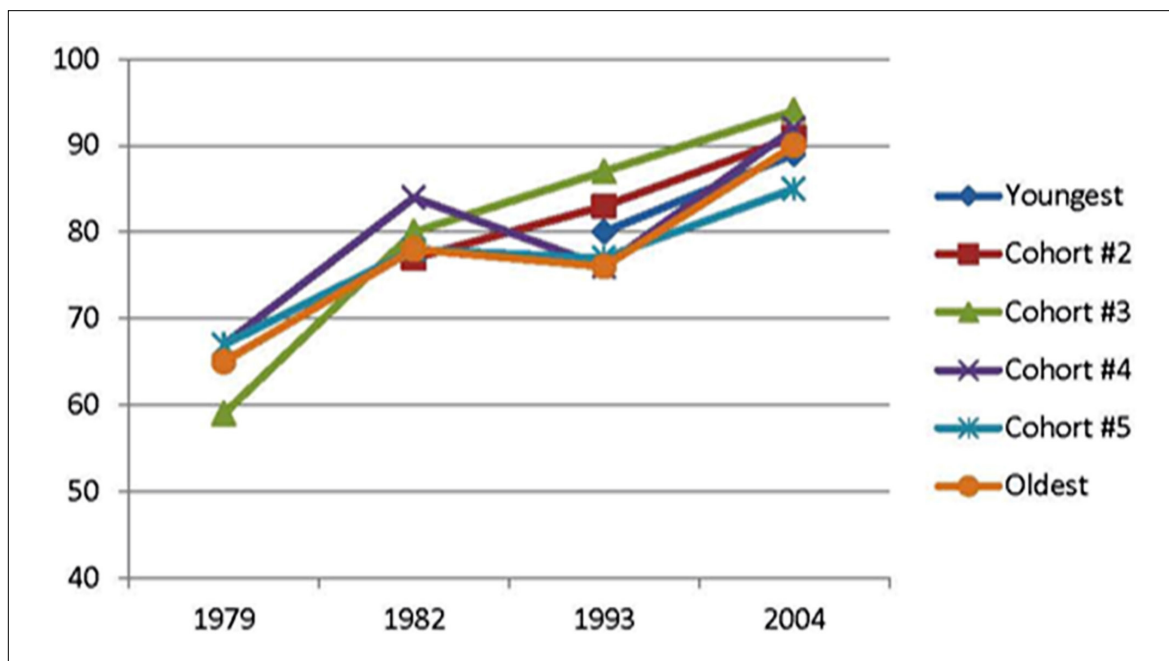
We begin with an analysis of the development of widespread support for democracy. We base this analysis on an item that was administered in four surveys that we conducted between 1979 and 2004. This item asks respondents if they agree or disagree with the proposition that “Democracy is the best political system for a country like ours” (with “it depends” as an intervening option). These data suggest that Spain’s new democratic system was not fully consolidated in 1979 (when fewer than two thirds of Spaniards agreed that democracy was best), but that by 1982 democratic support had reached 80 percent, and over the following two decades continued to strengthen steadily, reaching 90 percent by 2004. This represents a level of support for democracy that is significantly higher than is to be found in such long-established systems as Great Britain, Belgium and Ireland (Gunther, Montero, and Torcal 2007: 35).

What explains this substantial growth in a relatively short span of time? One might hypothesize that support for democracy is a generational phenomenon, in which various age cohorts are endowed with a distinctive and lasting pattern of political attitudes and behavior acquired during crucial formative periods of political socialization. One might therefore expect that older citizens, whose most critical periods of socialization (most commonly regarded as late childhood and adolescence) occurred under the authoritarian regime, might be most reluctant to express support for democracy since the formal political socialization to which they were exposed was supportive of the authoritarian regime and hostile to democracy.⁵ Conversely, succeeding

⁵ An illustrative example of which was the Franco regime’s “civics textbooks;” for one of them see for instance Fernández-Miranda (1965).

cohorts, having been socialized during the partial liberalization that began in the late 1960s, the transition to democracy (the mid-to-late 1970s), or under the current democratic system might reflect levels of support that accord with these time periods.

Figure 1. Support for democracy, by age cohorts, in Spain, 1979-2004 (in percentages)^a



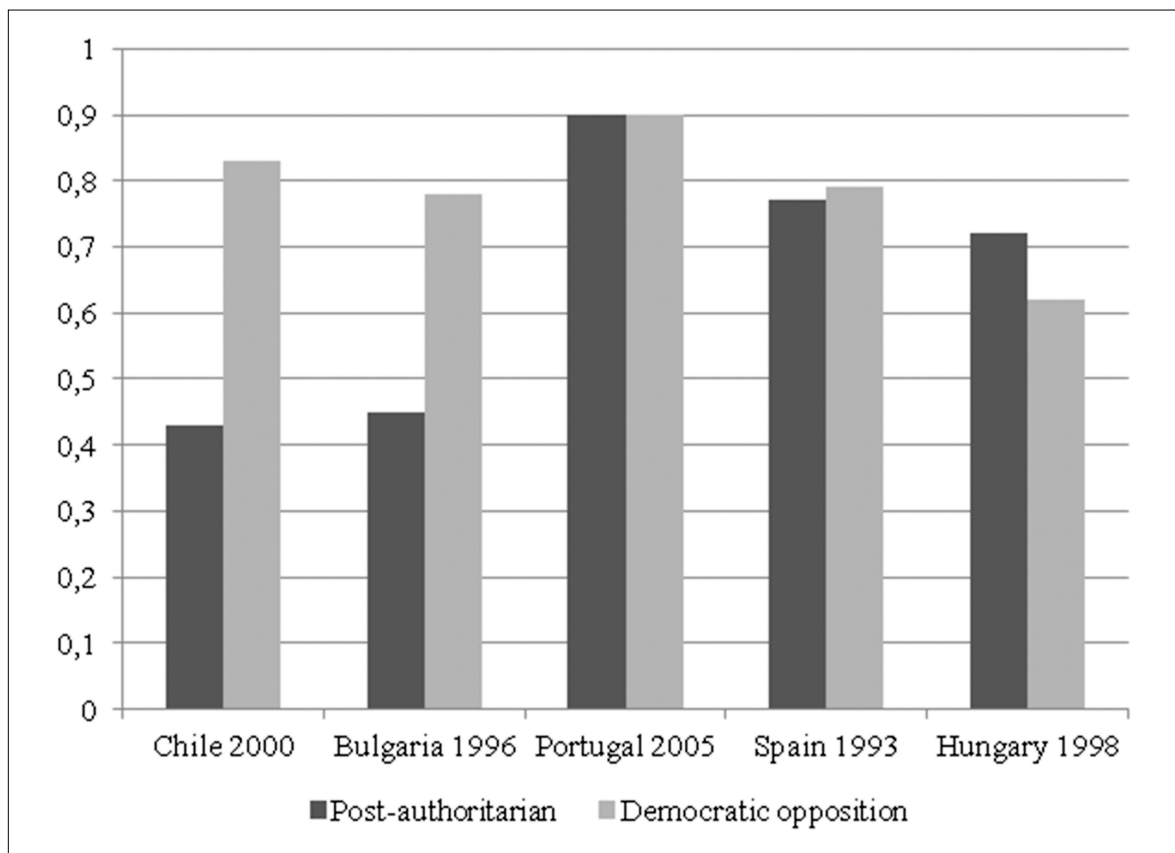
^a Support is measured as agreement to the question that “Democracy is the best political system for a country like ours.”

Sources: Unless otherwise specified, survey data used for Spain in this paper come from those conducted by DATA in 1979, 1982, and 1993, and by TNS/Demoscopia in 2004.

In order to test this “childhood socialization” hypothesis, we have undertaken a cohort analysis of levels of support for democracy among our respondents. The oldest age cohort includes those respondents born before 1922, whose most critical period of socialization would have occurred before or under the Second Republic (1931-36). The second oldest (#5) cohort includes respondents born between 1923 and 1937, whose most salient socialization experiences would have included the Spanish Civil War and the harsh early years of authoritarian suppression under the Franco regime. The cohort (#4) born between 1938 and 1952, would have experienced the political stabilization (if not stagnation) of the Franco regime, as well as an extended period of economic deprivation. The next cohort (#3), born between 1953 and 1962, would have experienced the most rapid period of economic development in Spanish history up to that time. The transition to democracy would have been the most salient political development during the crucial years of socialization for the next cohort (#2), born between 1963 in 1967. And the youngest cohort, the first, born after 1968, would have been socialized under Spain’s new democracy. If this “childhood socialization” explanation of support for democracy were valid, we should expect to find substantial and durable differences among these age cohorts. Instead, as can clearly be seen in [Figure 1](#), there

is no significant relationship linking age to level of support for democracy. Indeed, it is quite clear that these age cohorts are tightly clustered together with regard to their levels of attitudinal support for democracy, and that these attitudes evolved in the same manner over time among all age cohorts. In short, there is no evidence of *generational* effects that would be compatible with a childhood socialization explanation of the development of basic support for democracy in Spain.

Figure 2. Support for democracy among post-authoritarian versus opposition party voters in Chile (2000), Bulgaria (1996), Portugal (2005), Spain (1993), and Hungary (1998) (in percentages)^a



^a These data indicate levels agreement with the statement that “Democracy is the best political system for a country like ours” or “Democracy is preferable to any other form of government” among supporters of post-authoritarian and democratic-opposition parties.

Sources: CNEP surveys for these countries are archived at www.o.osu.edu/cnep/

At the same time, these data suggest a strong *period* effect –that is, with attitudes among all generations varying in response to events that affect all of them at the same points in time. This is consistent with the hypothesis that we have advanced in other studies where we argue that the strategies and behavior of prominent political elites and organizations during particularly salient stages in the democratization process may have a major impact on the political attitudes of their respective sets of followers. In a comparative analysis of cross-national variations in support for democracy emerging from several “third wave” transitions (Gunther, Montero, and Torcal 2007),

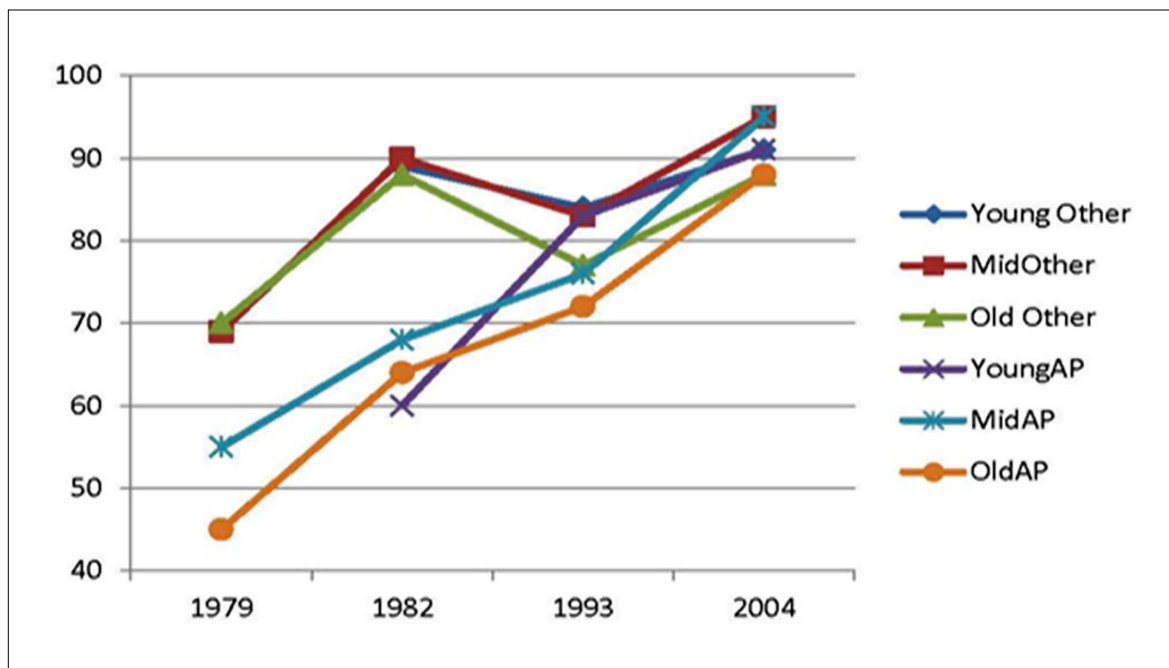
we found that in those instances where outgoing authoritarian elites played a positive and constructive role in the transition to a democratic regime (as for instance in Spain, Portugal, and Hungary), support for democracy did not emerge as a divisive cleavage separating supporters of one party from another, and a broad interparty consensus in support of democracy emerged. Conversely, when the dominant elite from the previous nondemocratic regime opposed democratization (as in Bulgaria and Chile), supporters of those parties with origins in the outgoing regime tend to be skeptical or rather hostile towards democracy and the new regime (see also Mainwaring and Torcal 2003). This can be clearly seen in [Figure 2](#).

As it is well-known, Spain's democratic regime came into being through a process of interparty bargaining commonly referred to as "the politics of consensus" (Gunther 1992). The Socialist and Communist parties on the left, the Catalan Nationalist party, and the governing Union of the Democratic Center (UCD, whose leaders had their origins in reformist sectors of the Franco regime as well as the "moderate opposition") fully supported the new regime which came into being with the December 1978 constitutional referendum. The new democratic Constitution was opposed, however, by small parties on the extreme right, by a significant segment of the Basque population, and by half of the parliamentary delegation representing the right-wing Alianza Popular (AP, whose leaders had their origins in the more conservative and authoritarian factions of the Franco regime). Accordingly, the new democratic system was only partially consolidated by the time of our 1979 postelection survey. Levels of support for democracy closely corresponded to the stands taken by the leaders of the various parties. Among supporters of parties on the extreme right, for example, only 24 percent agreed with the proposition that "democracy is the best form of government for a country like ours," while 44 percent disagreed. With regard to supporters of the conservative AP, which underwent a schism in 1978 (with half of its deputies voting against the Constitution, leading to their marginalization from the party, while the remainder followed party leader Manuel Fraga in supporting the Constitution), an intermediate stance by the party's supporters reflected this elite-level division of opinion: 48 percent of those who cast ballots for AP in 1979 agreed that democracy was best, as compared with 70 percent of those who voted for more fully democratic political parties. The subsequent disappearance from active politics of the anti-democratic faction of the AP's leadership, in combination with the complete discrediting of the anti-system extreme right wing in the aftermath of the 1981 coup attempt, led to a substantial increase in democratic support by the time of our 1982 survey (Morlino and Montero 1995).

Over the long term, partisan differences in levels of support for democracy have disappeared. Replication of this analysis following the 1993 elections, for example, reveals no statistically significant relationship between partisan preference and support for democracy (Gunther and Montero 2001). We contend that this is the result of the substantial transformation of the Partido Popular (PP, successor of Alianza Popular) which had moved in the late 1980s and early 1990s towards the center of the political spectrum, fully embraced democracy, and undergone a dramatic demographic shift to a new generation of leaders (Montero 1988; García-Guereta 2001). This contrasted with the attitudes of AP voters in the 1979 election, which was held just three months after the schism divided the party's founding elites: despite Fraga's firm commitment to the 1978

democratic Constitution, insufficient time had elapsed to allow the AP in that earlier election to demonstrate its new commitment to democracy and shed its links to the authoritarian past.

Figure 3. Support for democracy by party and age cohort in Spain, 1979-2004 (in percentages)^a



^a Support is measured as agreement to the question that “Democracy is the best political system for a country like ours.”

One might suspect that the progressive increase in support for democracy among AP/PP supporters over these three decades was the product of generational replacement –that the older generation of conservative Spaniards, socialized under the Franco regime to oppose democracy, progressively died off and were replaced by a new type of conservative voter more supportive of democracy. In order to test this modified version of a “childhood socialization” hypothesis, we undertook a new round of cohort analyses in which the attitudes of AP/PP supporters can be compared with those of respondents who voted for other democratic parties.⁶ (The number of age cohorts was reduced from six to three in order to generate statistically significant findings for AP supporters.⁷) As can be seen in [Figure 3](#), there is no evidence of a *generational* effect consistent

⁶ The other parties included the Socialist PSOE, the Communist PCE, the centrist UCD, and various regional parties. Excluded from this analysis were parties of the extreme right and Basque nationalist parties, which had anti-system or semi-loyal stands towards the regime at various times under investigation here.

⁷ This was necessary since the number of AP voters who also responded to the question on support for democracy in the 1979 survey was just 147. The oldest of these cohorts included individuals who were born prior to 1937, the second oldest includes respondents who were born between 1938 and 1961, while the youngest cohort were born after that date. Accordingly, the most salient socialization for the oldest group would have included the Civil War and the early years of harsh authoritarian repression; the middle cohort would have been socialized entirely under the Franco regime; and the youngest would have been socialized during the transition to democracy or under the new democratic regime.

with this hypothesis. Both of the older cohorts of AP supporters changed dramatically with regard to their levels of support for democracy. Agreement among AP voters born in 1937 or earlier with the question that “democracy is the best form of government” increased from 45 in 1979 to 88 percent in 2004, while the second oldest cohort shifted from 55 in 1979 to 95 percent in 2004. Overall, these two older cohorts were no less supportive of democracy than the youngest cohort (which was socialized entirely under the new democratic system), 91 percent of whom expressed support for democracy in 2004. But while we see no evidence of a generation effect in this cohort analysis, there is very strong support for a *period* effect, in which AP voters of all ages progressively embraced democracy over time in accord with their party elites’ re-orientation.

Table 1. Predictors of support for democracy in Spain, 1979^a

Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Vote for anti-system party AP or democratic party		.29 [.000]	.26 [.000]
Family side in Civil War			-.12 [.001]
Left-right self-placement			-.03 [.001]
Political talk when young		.06 [.002]	.06 [.006]
Respondent’s religiosity	.02 [.009]	ns [.895]	.03 [.019]
Respondent’s age group	.03 [.087]	ns [.174]	.04 [.032]
Education	-.04 [.002]	-.03 [.005]	ns [.173]
Gender ns	[.370]	ns [.251]	ns [.198]
Rural residence	.02 [.025]	ns [.213]	ns [.261]
Member of organization	ns [.586]	ns [.705]	ns [.332]
Income	ns [.786]	ns [.548]	ns [.737]
R ²	.012	.051	.069
N	3,077	2,152	1,846

^a Figures are beta coefficients from OLS regression analysis, with levels of statistical significance in brackets; ns, not significant at .01 level; the 1979 post-election survey had a $n = 5,439$.

Source: Post-electoral data from survey undertaken in 1979 by DATA.

How can we rule out an alternative interpretation that these political events are actually epiphenomenal, that is, spuriously linked in temporal order but actually caused by some other factors, such as increasing levels of education or affluence over time? A test of this null hypothesis requires a multivariate analysis including as independent variables a number of factors that are plausibly related to one’s attitude towards democracy. As can be observed in Model 1 of [Table 1](#), none of these personal attributes of respondents has a significant impact on one’s level of support for democracy; and the combined impact of all of these independent variables is extremely weak,

with an R2 of just .012. And it should be noted that the extremely low levels of statistical significance of most of these relationships cannot be attributed to a small sample size: this analysis was based on 5,439 interviews conducted in the immediate aftermath of the 1979 election in Spain.

Added to the equation in Model 2 are two variables that deal more directly with the political processes that we have hypothesized are most powerfully related to the development of support for democracy. The first of these is voting in the recent election for an anti-system party (mostly parties of the extreme right), for Alianza Popular, or for one of the other parties that was unequivocal in its support for democracy during deliberations over the new Constitution.⁸ As can be seen, this is by far the most powerful determinant of attitudinal support for democracy. Another political variable added to this equation is the frequency with which the respondent discussed politics when young. As we shall see in the following section, this will emerge as an important variable with regard to subsequent engagement in politics under the new democratic regime. In Model 2, it is the second most significant determinant of support for democracy.

Finally, Model 3 also incorporates a measure of the respondent's family's engagement in the 1936-39 Civil War (defending the Republic versus favoring Franco and the Nationalists), as well as the respondent's self-placement on the left-right continuum. These explicitly political variables are much more strongly related to support for democracy than any of the other individual-level attributes.

Our overall conclusion, then, is that attitudinal support for democracy in Spain was acquired primarily through *adult political learning* (see also Gunther and Montero 2016). Of particular importance are the stands taken by prominent political elites and their respective parties. Individual citizens attracted to parties of the left or right followed the cues disseminated through the statements and behavior of their respective party leaders during particularly salient stages of the democratic transition, and developed attitudes towards the political regime accordingly (Torcal 2008). To be sure, the respondent's left-right orientation and initial partisan preferences were (as we shall see later in this paper) greatly affected by such longer-term factors as which side the respondent's family had supported in the Civil War. But the actual processes relevant to the adoption of pro-democratic attitudes were much more malleable in accord with short-term factors involving prominent political elites than can be accounted for by conventional "childhood socialization" approaches.

The view from the grass roots

As the findings of our 1988 in-depth study revealed, supporters of democracy are to be found not only among those who were mobilized by the opposition to the Franco regime but also among former active Francoists. One of the most interesting cases in our sample is a "quintessential chief" (as described by Daniel Lerner [1958] in his classic *The Passing of Traditional Society*) in a rural area of Spain's periphery who had served as mayor of his town for nine years under the Franco regime. He later became an active conservative politician who followed AP leader Manuel Fraga

⁸These were scored as 3, 2, and 1, respectively, in this analysis.

from dictatorship into democracy. A similar trajectory, though less explicit and activist, was reflected in the case of a 67-year-old retired farmer from an agrarian village in a neighboring province, with a religious and conservative background, who had been politically ambitious and engaged himself at age 20 in the Catholic *Hermandades* and other organizations of the regime. He later served for 11 years as mayor of the town, and had no problems in becoming a democrat after Franco died, regarding democracy as good for his conservative ambitions. Another case is a 62-year-old, very religious school teacher from Valencia who was brought up as a *falangista*—a young fascist who was even sent to Benito Mussolini's Italy at age 14, who joined several religious girls' organizations ("all of them [*de todos!*]"), and who voted for the anti-system *Fuerza Nueva* in 1979. Nonetheless, she became fascinated by the achievements of the democratic transition, which she described as "*estupenda!*" "For me, it's clear that we all won." She became a well-informed and engaged citizen, and said in the interview that it was Manuel Fraga who converted her into both a loyal democrat and AP voter.

Support for democracy could also be the product of attraction to or mobilization by a particular democratic party, or sympathy for a particular party leader (as in the case of Manuel Fraga mentioned above), be it during the transition, which seems to be the most common case, or even before it. For the largest number of those who had supported the Franco regime, the greatest impact was exerted by the leadership of Adolfo Suárez and his party, the UCD. The transformation of Suárez, who only shortly before had been a minister in one of the last governments of Franco, into a driving force behind the democratization process made it clear that profound political change could occur in the absence of radical and destabilizing disruption of the political and social order. And the catch-all nature of that party and its electoral appeals helped to establish a broad consensus supportive of democracy that transcended the former cleavage between the authoritarian regime and the clandestine opposition. As described by a 66-year-old female respondent, and former moderate *franquista*, this was "an independent party of neither the right nor left... which behaved well and did not favor one side over the other."

Among those on the left, we often found that adult political socialization occurred in opposition to the Franco regime. A graphic example here is the case of a 60-year-old university-trained mid-level technician from a leftist Republican family whose members worked for the navy and the shipbuilding industry of El Ferrol (A Coruña). This respondent helped to organize workers' protests in the state-owned Bazán shipbuilding plant in 1972. He joined the clandestine communist-dominated trade union, the *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.), and became a shop steward when his union won its first election against the state corporatist union. In short, this respondent was recruited to political activism within the clandestine opposition to the Franco regime, and he remained active in labor politics.

Another crucial phase for attitude formation occurred during the transition from Francoism to democracy in the second half of the 1970s. These developments were particularly salient for individuals who were university students at that time, as in the case of a 33-year-old housewife from a Nationalist (pro-Franco) family in a small city in Andalucía who became a PSOE supporter when she studied in Granada. Membership in a trade union also heavily influenced our respondents,

such as a 38-year-old middle-level employee in Valencia who, despite being raised within an apolitical environment, became a member of the socialist Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT) at his workplace and has been a loyal PSOE supporter since then. Workplace experiences also sometimes exerted transformative influences, as was the case with a 56-year-old cook residing in Madrid. Despite her religiosity and her upbringing within a *franquista* family (her father was a mayor under Franco), she became an engaged and loyal Socialist during the transition, a change that could be attributed to her daily “struggle for life,” which resembled the political mobilization of workers in the early days of industrialization: she deliberately turned to the left as early as was legally possible, because she felt that her conservative and *franquista* employers exploited her and treated her miserably. She equated *franquismo* with workers’ exploitation, systematic maltreatment, and leaving workers to fend for themselves, whereas she associated “democracy” (and the PSOE) with freedom, caring for the workers, financing their basic needs, and providing for their welfare. For her, democracy “is very beautiful, if you understand it properly and people respect one another.”

For a number of respondents, political mobilization during the transition appears to have activated previously existing (potentially) democratic ties or contacts. This was the case for a 39-year-old mid-level bank employee from Valencia, who had been active within a Catholic youth organization, and explicitly stated that he was profoundly affected by the transition because under Franco “there was no politics.”

Overall, a wide variety of adult socialization experiences –particularly during the transition to democracy and in accord with cues or explicit messages disseminated by party or union leaders and their supportive organizations– emerge from this study as the strongest determinants of support for democracy.

Disaffection and political inefficacy

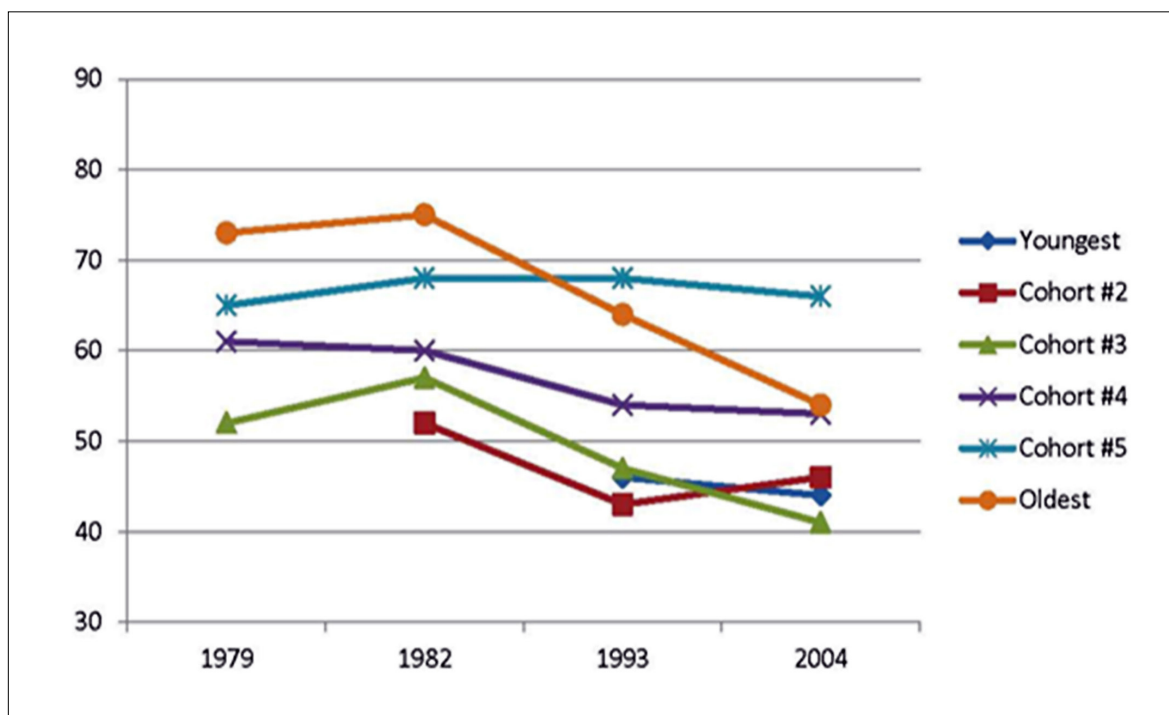
In several earlier works (e.g., Gunther, Montero, and Torcal 2006 and 2007; see also Montero, Font, and Torcal 2006), we found that Spaniards are less engaged with the participatory channels of their political system than citizens of many other democratic regimes in Western Europe. We found that, to some extent, this is a product of a *disaffection* syndrome that was more prevalent among Spaniards than is typical of most other Western democracies (Torcal and Montero 2006). As originally conceptualized by Mariano Torcal (2002), disaffection includes at least two dimensions: “internal” and “external” political efficacy, as measured by three standard survey items.⁹ While not all of the surveys we are using in this paper included all of three of these indicators, they did include one of the internal efficacy items that numerous empirical studies have found to be strongly related to levels of active participation in politics. As we found with regard to the broader concept of disaffection, Spaniards exhibited low levels of internal efficacy at the time of the transition to democracy, although over the following two decades aggregate levels of agreement

⁹ “External efficacy” was measured by disagreement with the statement, “Politicians don’t care much about what people like me think,” while “internal efficacy” was operationalized as disagreement with the statements “Politics is so complicated that people like me cannot understand what is happening” and “People like me do not have influence over what the government does”; see Clarke and Acock (1989), and Pollock III (1983).

with the statement “Politics is so complicated that people like me cannot understand what is happening” declined somewhat: from 63 and 64 percent in 1979 and 1982 (respectively), to 54 percent in 1993, and to 49 percent in 2004.

Does this reflect change on the part of individual citizens over these three decades? That would be somewhat surprising, since earlier studies (cf. Montero, Gunther, and Torcal 1997) found that such attitudes were quite durable. In [Figure 4](#) we present data concerning the evolution of this attitude among six age cohorts between 1979 and 2004. In sharp contrast with the strong period effects that we observed in our previous analysis of support for democracy, we find strong evidence of a generational effect: the older the respondent, the greater the likelihood that he/she will feel inefficacious. This is confirmed by the consistent correlation (across all surveys, ranging between .10 and .17, all significant at the .000 level) between age and this measure of political efficacy. It is also noteworthy that these attitudes are most stable within each cohort –changing very little over more than two decades.

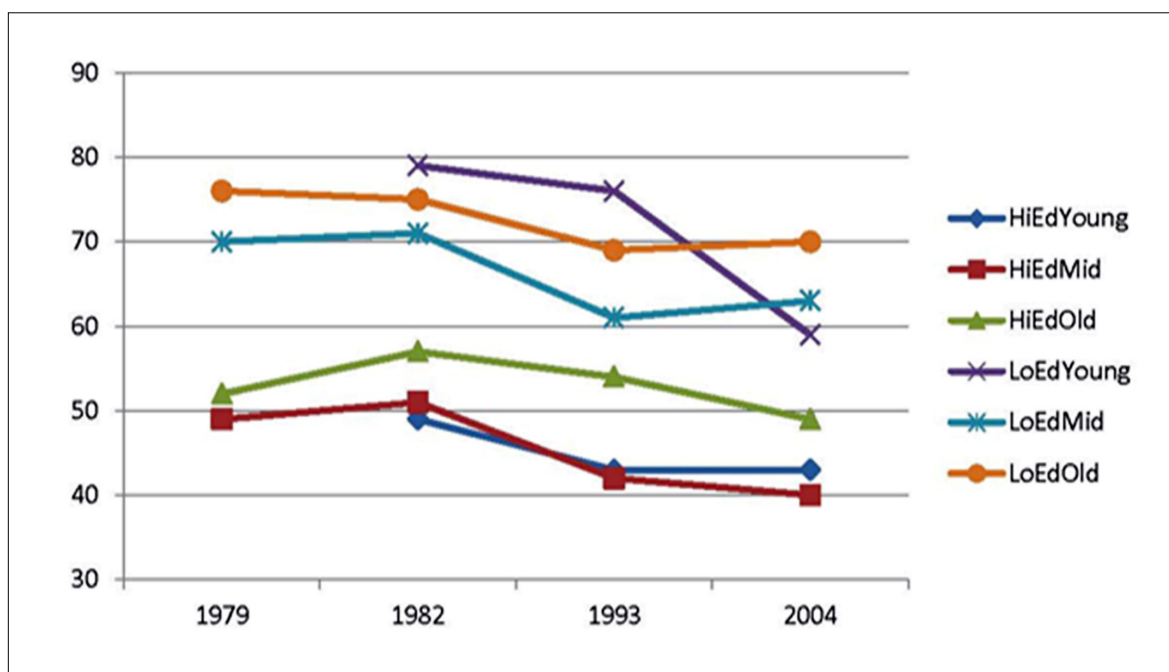
Figure 4. Internal (in)efficacy, by age cohort, in Spain, 1979-2004



So what accounts for the decline in the *aggregate* levels of political inefficacy between 1979 and 2004? The data presented in [Figure 5](#) make it clear that there is a powerful generational effect that is closely related to education. When education is introduced as a control (by separately running the cohort analyses for respondents who had completed no more than the primary level of education vs. those having educational attainments ranging from partial secondary through university education), it is clear that individual age cohorts changed very little with respect to this

dimension of political disaffection. All three of the better-educated age cohorts have substantially lower levels of political inefficacy than all three of the poorly educated age cohorts. What explains the decline in aggregate levels of inefficacy in these countries is the replacement of the poorly educated older cohorts of Southern Europeans by younger and better-educated citizens. Owing to lagging socioeconomic development and extremely stingy public spending on education under the Franco regime (see Gunther 1980 and 1996), the older generations of Spaniards were very poorly educated. This changed dramatically over the following decades, and especially after democratization. The percentage of survey respondents in 1993 with primary-level education or less declined from 86 percent among the oldest cohort (i.e., those born before 1922) to just 4 percent among the youngest (born after 1968).

Figure 5. Internal (in)efficacy, by age cohort and education, in Spain, 1979-2004



Thus, we conclude that the two sets of cohort analyses presented in this chapter reveal that greatly different causal processes were at work in determining key aspects of Spain's political culture. With regard to fundamental attitudes toward democracy, the strong period effect that could be seen in [Figure 1](#) clearly indicated that all age cohorts were evolving in their attitudes toward democracy at the same time and in response to the same external stimuli: this key attitude was shaped to a considerable degree by a *country-specific* factor related to stands taken by party elites during the transition to democracy. However, in our analysis of political inefficacy (one of the key aspects of political disaffection), the strong generational effect suggests that this attitude is a product of childhood socialization and improvements in education –which have the additional benefits of enhancing cognitive skills relevant to active political participation. Insofar as education

is a core component of the broader socioeconomic modernization syndrome, one could argue that *general*, societal processes were at work.¹⁰

But are there *country-specific* determinants of political efficacy as well? To answer this question, we turn to our 1988 survey, whose in-depth interviews provide extensive and insightful information about the socialization experiences of our respondents.

Political engagement

One of the key concerns surrounding the transition from authoritarian to democratic forms of government involves the quality of democracy following the consolidation of the democratic system. Ideally, individual citizens should be empowered with some cognitive skills to make up their own minds about the candidates and parties for which they will cast their ballots. More broadly, the extent to which voters actively seek out relevant political information in the course of election campaigns, upon which they will base their voting choices, is another aspect of the electoral process that speaks to the quality of democracy. Finally, engagement in political discussion with interpersonal networks once again speaks to the notion of active and independent citizenship.

In order to capture these dimensions of active participation, we constructed a composite dependent variable, which we will call *citizen engagement*,¹¹ which was the sum of equally weighted scores on four variables. The first is whether or not the respondent voted in the previous election (in this case, that of 1986). The second involves the frequency with which the respondent follows news about politics through television broadcasts. Related to this is the coders' subjective assessment of the overall level of substantive knowledge demonstrated by the respondent in the course of the interview. Finally, this measure includes the coders' assessment of the frequency with which the respondent discusses politics with friends. In our view, this scale captures the very essence of citizen participation in democratic politics. It also introduces and provides a partial explanation of the varying levels of exposure of Spaniards to flows of political information through two of the three basic intermediation channels (media exposure and political discussions within face-to-face interpersonal networks) that serve as the central foci of the Comparative National Elections Project (see Gunther, Montero, and Puhle 2007a; Beck and Gunther 2016).

Our efforts to explore the determinants of active, participatory citizenship begin with an overview of bivariate relationships linking several of those variables commonly associated with modernization and regarded as underpinning the cognitive mobilization of citizens. These included education, affluence (the interviewer's assessment of the respondent's housing, which we have

¹⁰ This argument cannot be carried too far, however. As Gunther (1980) documented, low levels of spending on education under the Franco regime were not just the product of revenue constraints derived from Spain's lagging socioeconomic development; explicitly political decisions, rooted in the very nature of the Franco regime, were also important—therefore representing a “country-specific” causal factor.

¹¹ To a considerable degree, this scale taps into the essence of other key concepts related to modernization, including “cognitive mobilization” (see Dalton 2007: 276; Inglehart 1990: 47), “social mobilization” (Deutsch 1961) and Lerner's (1958) capacity for “empathy.” Also see more generally Van Deth, Montero, and Westholm (2007).

found to be a better measure of affluence than self-reported income), internal political efficacy (“politics is so complicated”), rural residence, gender, and age cohort. We also included a variable derived from the in-depth interview coders’ assessments of the frequency with which the respondent and his/her family had engaged in discussion of politics under the Franco regime when the respondent was young.

In [Table 2](#), most of the zero-order correlations with our citizen engagement scale are unsurprising. As can be seen in the first column, education, affluence (housing quality), and internal efficacy were positively correlated with our engagement scale, while the correlation with gender was negative (indicating that females had substantially lower scores on this scale than males). The most striking finding from this first step of the analysis was that the frequency of discussion of politics with one’s family under the Franco regime exhibited the strongest association with our composite measure of citizen engagement. This initial examination of bivariate relationships therefore reveals some support for the conventional understanding of the *general* determinants of cognitive mobilization, especially with regard to the significance of education and affluence. But it also reveals that the strongest predictor was a *country-specific* variable, the frequency of discussion of politics under the Franco regime when the respondent was young.

Table 2. Correlates and predictors of citizen engagement in Spain, 1988^a

Variables	Zero-order correlates (Pearson’s r) with engagement scale	Linear regression equations: engagement scale as dependent variable (standardized betas)	
Frequency of political discussion when young	.45 [.00]	.37 [.00]	.37 [.00]
Gender	-.30 [.00]	-.27 [.00]	-.27 [.00]
Quality of housing	.33 [.00]	.18 [.02]	.21 [.00]
Internal efficacy	.31 [.00]	.12 [.12]	.13 [.08]
Education	.29 [.00]	.05 [.57]	
Rural Residence	-.09 [.25]		
Age Cohort	-.05 [.52]		
R ²		.354	.352

^a In brackets, levels of statistical significance.

Source: Data come from the 1988 in-depth interview study, n = 175.

A subsequent OLS regression analysis of the citizen engagement scale was undertaken that included only those variables that were statistically significant at the bivariate level. Accordingly, our initial group of variables was reduced to the following four: Gender remained quite significant, with women substantially less politically engaged than males. Our measure of affluence was also significant, as was internal efficacy (barely). Somewhat surprisingly, education becomes statistically insignificant once the impact of the other variables is taken into consideration and was therefore

removed from the final equation.¹² The strongest variable by far was the frequency with which the respondent had discussed politics with his or her parents under the Franco regime. The percentage of variance explained by the four variables included in this equation (.352) was quite high, and it is noteworthy that it did not decline significantly after the removal of the education variable. Our most noteworthy finding is that informal childhood socialization within nondemocratic systems is a powerful long-term determinant of subsequent democratic engagement –a result that has, by and large, been neglected in most previous research. We also find that the lasting impact of the frequency of discussion of politics with one’s parents is widespread and impressive. This variable has a (Pearson’s r) correlation of .53 with the coders’ assessment of the respondent’s present-day emotional involvement with politics; of .47 with interest in politics; of .49 with substantive knowledge of politics, of .45 with richness of left-right conceptualization; of .48, .46, and .40, respectively, with frequency of discussion of politics with friends, neighbors and co-workers; and of .40 with frequency of following political news through the newspaper.

Political discussion under an authoritarian regime

Most of the empirical literature on the impact of childhood socialization on subsequent political attitudes and behavioral patterns was based on classic studies conducted in established democratic systems (Hyman 1959; Greenstein 1965; Miller and Glass 1989). One could therefore argue that formal socialization by a democratic regime (“civics training”) is consistent with the democratic practices and attitudes that the regime seeks to encourage. What is striking about our finding is that exposure to discussion of politics within an authoritarian system, whose formal socialization efforts were *explicitly anti-democratic*, nonetheless led to higher levels of civic engagement and active involvement in politics following the transition to democracy. This kind of childhood socialization experience is largely unexplored in the literature.¹³

Only a minority of our in-depth interview respondents reported that they had engaged in frequent discussion of politics with their families under the Franco regime or during the Civil War. This talk was either supportive or critical of the regime, but the most common outcome *in either case* was that these persons became politically interested and engaged in the present democratic era. There were very few cases where a respondent discussed politics when young and later became apathetic and disengaged, or vice versa. Among those who were in favor of the regime and discussed politics frequently was a 73-year-old, and very religious, retired mid-level civil servant from Madrid. Raised in a monarchist family, he attended religious schools in Barcelona, and became a *franquista* with an adventurous war trajectory. Nonetheless, after the demise of the Franco regime, he had no problems whatsoever in becoming an informed and active citizen of the new democracy and a loyal

¹² We do not mean to imply that education is unimportant as a determinant of our citizen engagement scale. Its decline to statistical insignificance is the result of its high correlation with two of the other variables in this equation: affluence (Pearson’s $r = .55$) and political efficacy ($r = .38$).

¹³ Only a few monographic studies or autobiographical narratives have suggested this seemingly paradoxical relationship. For examples with respect to Nazi Germany and the repressive Communist regime in East Germany, see Dahrendorf (2002), Kohl (2004), Wehler (2006), and Stern (2001).

voter of the conservative AP. Indeed, like many other *franquistas*-turned-democrats, he regarded the democratic transition to be the evolutionary (if not logical) consequence of the Franco regime: democracy is simply what came after Franco.

Those who discussed politics under Franco from a more critical or oppositional perspective appear to fall into two different types. A minority had been politically mobilized before the end of the Spanish Civil War and became *antifranquistas*. Most respondents interviewed in 1988, however, had been socialized after the Franco regime was established. Of these, respondents whose families had supported the Republican side during the Civil War tended to adopt an anti-regime and pro-democratic stance from the very beginning. One example of the former is a 33-year-old salesman from a working class district whose parents always discussed politics extensively with him, although they did not dare to actively engage in oppositional politics at the time. This respondent joined the Communist-dominated trade union, the CC.OO., at age 18 and participated in clandestine activities during the last years of Francoism, becoming a loyal supporter of the PCE. Likewise, a 29-year-old who was raised in a Socialist family which always discussed politics, stated that he first became mobilized by the religious youth groups of the regime (i.e., Acción Católica), participated in protest activities against the regime, and joined the Socialist party (PSOE) at the beginning of the democratic transition.

Other respondents gradually moved from a *franquista* and pro-regime socialization to criticism and opposition. In this category is a 68-year-old retired upper-level manager from Madrid, a religious believer and loyal centrist who, despite his upbringing within a *franquista* family, joined the moderate opposition to the regime and continued voicing his “great disappointment with *franquista* politics of the early years,” at least within the family: “We were not happy with the dictatorship and the manner in which it did things –often stupid, inappropriate, and unjust things that benefitted no one– and especially with the prolonged existence of the regime.” Another example is a 46-year-old middle-level technician living in Madrid. Raised within a religious and conservative military family from a traditional agrarian province, he nonetheless said that in the frequent political discussions within the family, the regime was usually criticized. He was first mobilized by Catholic and other regime organizations in the university, but later joined the PCE and PSOE.

The great majority of the respondents in our qualitative in-depth interview study stated that they never or almost never talked about politics in the family or otherwise under the Franco regime. Eight percent said that they often discuss politics, and another 15 percent fell into the top three categories on a seven-point scale. Conversely, 49 percent of our respondents said that they had never discussed politics and another 23 percent joined them in the bottom three categories on a 7-point scale.¹⁴ One example is a 56 year-old university-trained middle-level professional from a rural area in the country’s periphery who had been socialized in the Nationalist camp during and after the Civil War. When asked whether he was interested in politics, he responded, “In the epoch of Franco? No, *nada, ninguno*, absolutely nothing about politics, absolutely not.” Many other

¹⁴ These findings accord very closely with those from our 1979 post-election survey ($n = 5,439$): 4 percent of respondents said they had “often” discussed politics with their parents and another 15 percent “sometimes” doing so. The overwhelming majority of these respondents either “rarely” (35 percent) or “never” (46 percent) did so.

respondents used almost exactly the same words to describe this period, including both those on the right, as well as the left. A 62-year-old housewife from a well-off neighborhood of Madrid offered a rather benign view of the absence of political engagement at that time: “We never got into that, and nothing happened, either good or bad; we were comfortable ... and we never talked [about politics]. I don’t know if the Franco period was good or bad, we just kept on living as if we were asleep, while [Franco] took care of us from El Pardo [his palace].” Another respondent put it quite simply: “We worked, we earned our salaries, and we lived, period.” Overall, the great majority of respondents who lived under the Franco regime offered similar descriptions of the lack of political interest, engagement and discussion of politics at that time, and this contributed to political alienation and “low-intensity” citizen engagement over the long term.

The roots of political disaffection

These quantitative and qualitative data concerning the importance of childhood socialization for the development of active democratic engagement suggest a possible explanation of some of our earlier findings with regard to the low level of political engagement of most Spaniards. As we have already mentioned, in several earlier works we found that Spaniards are less engaged with their political system than citizens of other democratic regimes in Western Europe.¹⁵ We also found that this is a product of a *disaffection* syndrome that was remarkably resistant to change. Individuals who entered the democratic era as uninterested and unengaged in politics have remained largely marginalized from active involvement. Other studies (Linz 2009 [1964]; López Pina and López Aranguren 1976) have spoken of a “lost generation” of Spaniards, a term that nicely captures the intense demobilization and depoliticization of those who were socialized under the Franco regime. Their disinterest in and lack of involvement with democratic politics under the current regime is greater than is to be found among younger citizens who were socialized under the democratic regime or during the politically stimulating years of the transition to democracy (whose first phases, arguably, began with the massive protest demonstrations of 1968). For example, among those respondents in our 1993 survey who were 44-years-old or younger at the time of the survey (i.e., who were 17-years-old or younger in 1968), only 28 percent said that they “never” discussed politics with their friends, while among older Spaniards 50 percent fell into this category (Tau b = -.24). Similarly, 46 percent of older Spaniards said that they had no interest in politics, as compared with 29 percent who were 44 years or younger (Tau b = -.14).

Our analysis of the transcripts of in-depth interviews conducted in 1988 suggests that what underlies these attitudinal and behavioral patterns is the nature of political socialization under the authoritarian regime. Only a small minority of our respondents reported that they had frequently discussed politics under Franco. The small minority of Spaniards who were politically engaged under Franco have remained politically active, while the majority of Spaniards do not rank high on our citizen engagement scale, and many are politically disaffected.

¹⁵ See Torcal (2002), Gunther, Montero, and Botella (2004), Gunther, Montero, and Torcal (2006 and 2007), Torcal and Montero (2006), and Gunther and Montero (2009: 176-183).

What, then, are the causes of low levels of discussion of politics under Franco? These in-depth interviews suggest that there were three different processes at work, all of which led to a low-level of discussion: (i) a reaction to the regime's repression of dissent; (ii) a perception of politics as conflictive and divisive, and (iii) a disinterest in politics because it simply was boring.

(i) *Repression*. The first of these is the one that comes to mind most naturally when we think of the nature of authoritarian systems. Civil and political liberties were sharply restricted, and active engagement in politics could be severely repressed and punished. As one respondent (a 59-year-old upper-level manager living in a mid-sized city in the south) recalled, "I remember one day when two men were criticizing [the regime]. A member of the Guardia Civil overheard them and told them to shut up. When they didn't shut up, he dragged them off to police headquarters. Nothing ever happened to them, because they didn't really do anything [illegal], but this is an example of how we suffered." In certain periods (especially under the harsh repression in the years immediately following the Civil War), a pervasive "culture of fear" had been established. A number of our respondents gave vivid testimony of the experiences under the Franco regime that would fall into this category. A 79-year-old retired Valenciano technician with a university degree clearly stated that there was no political talk or any interaction under Franco for simple fear of repression and punishment: "I had to shut up and not talk because they had arrested me ..., and I had no alternative but to shut up." She had come under suspicion for her leftist political views, and for her punishment she was forced into service as the cleaning lady for a convent which, given her anticlericalism, she bitterly resented. Similarly, a 59-year-old unemployed middle-level worker from Valencia claimed that, due to the high level of social control, it was dangerous to discuss politics under Franco: "You couldn't talk because, if a neighbor overheard you, you would be in trouble." Many people were frightened and discouraged, and became disengaged or cynical at an early stage of their lives, like a 51-year-old unemployed office worker from Valencia, raised in a socialist family, who had been traumatized by the war and the Nationalist seizure of power, and stated that everybody had to be concerned over hiding their political feelings. This respondent became deeply cynical and never voted.

In general, the Civil War and the subsequent implantation of Franco's authoritarian regime acted as a powerful catalyst for depoliticization and disinterest in politics. Even those respondents who recalled parental discussion of the Second Republic regarded *franquismo* as something that profoundly inhibited conversations about political matters. And while this silence might have been anticipated among former supporters of the Republican side, who were repressed under the authoritarian regime, it is noteworthy that it also characterized those whose personal or family sentiments were supportive of Franco.

(ii) *Politics as conflict and division*. The long-term consequence of these frightening or even traumatic historical memories is the belief that "politics" and competition (or, more broadly, conflict) between rival parties, and party politics and political contestation as such, are disruptive of the social order, and, for the individual citizen, unpleasant or downright dangerous. A 57-year-old

man, born in 1931 (when the Second Republic was founded), and who was *antifranquista*, regarded himself as “very distant” from all political parties. For him, “they’re all the same... I guess some of them might be OK, but I have no sympathy for any of them.” An 80-year-old unreconstructed *franquista*, widow of a bricklayer from a port city in the far northwest, made it clear that she hates partisan contestation: “They just criticize each other... That’s why nothing ever gets done.” She preferred undisputed leadership over competitive democracy. A 30-year-old university-trained social worker from the same region contended that political parties are all about “useless and personalized differences” and “they’re all the same to me.” And an unemployed 28-year-old, who had previously voted for the UCD and the PSOE gave vent to his irritation by saying, “We’d be better off if politics ... where everybody is looking out for his own self-interest and filling his own pockets ... did not exist.” In short, a substantial number of Spaniards harbor anti-party sentiments that are not entirely compatible with competitive democracy (see Torcal, Gunther, and Montero 2002).

It should be noted that such attitudes were explicitly encouraged by the formal political socialization imparted by the Franco regime itself. As the most commonly used “civics education” textbook under the regime explained, liberal democracy and competing political parties are unacceptable because “there exists no certainty about what is truth or error, about what is good or bad in the sphere of social life. Everything is a question of opinions... Whatever the people want is legitimate. It is the doctrine of the absolutism of the popular will, characteristic of extreme liberalism, that has been expressly condemned by the Catholic Church” (Fernández-Miranda 1965: 121 [emphasis his] and 30). More specifically, political parties, interest groups, and universal suffrage were regarded as “mechanistic”, unnatural, inorganic, and inherently disruptive of social order. Instead, a corporatist conception of society under a single leader was preferred, according to the formal education imparted to Spaniards under the Franco regime. However, one should exercise caution in not overestimating the impact of this formal socialization by the regime. As we have seen, higher levels of educational attainment (i.e., more exposure to these anti-democratic messages) are positively correlated with present-day attitudes and behaviors associated with active democratic engagement. And the most amusing evidence of the widespread cynicism with which Spaniards regarded the regime’s anti-democratic messages is that the author of the civics textbook quoted above, Torcuato Fernández-Miranda, eventually played one of the three key roles (along with King Juan Carlos and prime minister Adolfo Suárez) in dismantling the Franco regime and setting in motion the transition to democracy in 1976!

(iii) *Between boredom and irrelevance.* Perhaps more common as a reason for political disengagement under the Franco regime, particularly during its relatively benign final decade and a half of existence, is that most citizens were simply bored by the stupefyingly lifeless coverage of “politics” on television, on the radio, or in newsreels in movie theaters under the Franco regime (see Gunther, Montero, and Wert 2001). And this boredom was reinforced by the widespread belief that politics was, at best, irrelevant. Endless coverage of government officials opening the sluice gates of newly constructed dams, of rolling fields of wheat waiting for the harvest, of smiling and laughing children on their way to state sponsored holidays, of filmed reports of Franco presiding

over meetings of the Council of Ministers passing new laws “beneficial to all Spaniards,” and, above all, of the triumphs of Spanish athletes in international competitions constituted the stuff that made up “news coverage” under this regime in its later years (Aguilar 2008: 118ff.). Consistent with this disparaging view of the media under Franco, a 52-year-old unemployed bricklayer from a rural village in the northwest (now completely uninvolved and apathetic) said that under Franco “we did not hear anything” about politics, and an alienated 70-year-old university-trained retired salesman from Valencia complained about having “been bored ... throughout the 40 years” of Francoism. Boredom and lack of information as reasons for disinterest and disengagement are also referred to by many others. A 55-year-old housewife even asserted, “Now I understand nothing about politics, but before I understood less.” It is not surprising that when she was asked about whether she discussed politics, she responded: “No! I do not discuss politics. Here [in my house], politics does not exist.”

Mobilization during the Franco regime

The long-term political impact of socialization experiences under the Franco regime was not limited to childhood socialization and passive absorption of political stimuli from parents. Some of our respondents were active under the Franco regime, either within its semi-representative institutions or in clandestine opposition, and have remained active in politics ever since. The “quintessential chief” from a rural area of the north-western periphery we referred to above is a good example for that. This respondent was the product of a well-connected right-wing family, with strong credentials in religious associations. He had negative recollections of the Republic and the Civil War, and still gave much credit to the Franco regime for its accomplishments. But, as he adds, “Despite all of that, we wanted more freedoms, more liberty... Franco did many good things, but for me the worst thing was that he didn’t leave a little earlier.” As mayor in the 1950s and 1960s, he showed an open and tolerant, almost democratic, and non-polarizing leadership in city hall. He even claims that “there was more democracy in the city government that I presided over for nine years than there is today... [We used to] discuss things extensively; today no. [I used to] call for a show of hands, and we would have a vote to see which side was supported by a majority.” After Franco’s death he served for many years as local president and vice president of the conservative AP. It is evident that in this case the respondent’s pragmatic involvement in the semi-representational institutions of the Franco regime helped to develop fully democratic attitudes and behavior.

Our data have, however, clearly confirmed that those who were politically mobilized during the Franco regime (be it for the regime or against it) remained a minority. Most Spaniards were depoliticized, turned off by the mechanisms and the everyday atmosphere of the dictatorship which intentionally eschewed mobilization as a strategy of legitimation and survival –in contrast with the highly ideological totalitarian regimes of Stalin or Hitler. This accords well with the analysis of Juan Linz (2009 [1964]), who modelled the concept of “authoritarian regime” after Spain under Franco.

Another group are those who had great expectations and shared all the joy and enthusiasm of the transition, but later became disappointed and alienated, or were just not capable of maintaining their political engagement. One example is a 57-year-old unskilled laborer from Madrid with an

antifranquista upbringing who appears to utilize *franquismo* as an excuse for remaining apathetic, although he praises the transition in almost literary terms: “Before, nothing could be moved, nobody could say anything, and he who was a Communist was killed... Throughout those 40 years, we were stuck in a lagoon. Suddenly, freedom arrives [and] it’s as if after four decades of darkness we were dazzled by the light which leaves you half blind. That’s more or less what happened to me.” Disappointment and apoliticism can also be found in the statement of another respondent who claimed that the transition had been an important key experience for her: a 62-year-old AP-voting housewife from an affluent neighborhood in Madrid from a rightist family who said, “Politics is something that emerged after Franco ... and now it’s a sickness that affects all of us ... and it’s getting worse.” Many others of those who had been mobilized by the transition, however, remained fully engaged or adjusted to a less euphoric (and less ideological) “normalcy”.

Our assessment of these extensive interview transcripts has revealed a number of common features that can be broken down into different patterns of political socialization that often correspond with distinct cohorts. On the side of the engaged and active citizens we first found the traditional partisans of *longue durée* who either had been politically socialized (on the monarchist and Nationalist Right, or the Republican Left) during the Second Republic, or were first mobilized by their polarizing, often traumatizing experiences in the Civil War. Second, we found those who were mobilized by the Franco regime. Several of these were militant *franquistas* who, after 1975, either turned into active, usually conservative, democrats, or became depoliticized; while others who were socialized by the organizations of the regime (mostly Catholic youth or student groups) later turned away from the regime. A third group includes those who were politically mobilized by the clandestine opposition against the Franco regime, particularly in the universities and in the emerging labor unions. A significant fourth group are those Spaniards who became mobilized by the transition to democracy after Franco’s death, which for many was a key political experience. As discussed above, their mobilization occurred in different professional or cohort contexts, and many of them, for various reasons, became passive and alienated after the excitement of the transition ended. Among the respondents who could not be considered engaged and active citizens, we could, besides the usual “lukewarm citizens” and the continuously apolitical, basically distinguish two substantial groups: the (typical) cohorts of the above mentioned “lost generation”, and those who had been more recently disappointed, be it by the performance of a particular party they felt close to or of democratic politics in general.

POLITICAL INTERMEDIATION

In this section we explore political intermediaries. As defined by Richard Gunther, José Ramón Montero, and Hans-Jürgen Puhle (2007b: 1), they refer to “the varying channels and processes through which voters receive information about partisan politics during the course of election campaigns and are mobilized to support one party or another. These include the flow of campaign messages and the exertion of influence through face-to-face contacts within personal networks, through membership and involvement in secondary organizations, and through the mass communications media.” Although we have devoted two books to comparative analyses of exposure to processes of political intermediaries,¹⁶ we will be able here to take advantage of the much richer data available concerning Spain to address a broader set of questions. Given the creation of new variables based upon expert coding of in-depth interview transcripts, for example, we can explore some of the consequences of specific intermediation patterns, such as their varying capacities to convey detailed factual information about politics, and the causes and consequences of selective media exposure. More importantly, in-depth interview data provide empirical support for specific causal processes that underpinned some of the patterns observed in those cross-national mappings. They enable us to go beyond speculation about why political discussion with neighbors and co-workers is much less frequent than among friends and family members, for example. Finally, this study makes it possible to measure the long-term impact on intermediation of country-specific contextual factors, such as historical origins of low levels of organizational membership in Spain.

The mass communications media

In Spain, as in most contemporary democracies, television has become the dominant mass medium of political communication (Beck and Gunther 2016: 23 ff.). Spaniards regularly followed news about politics through television (92 percent in 1993 and 86 percent in 2004), while relatively few frequently receive political information from newspapers (48 and 46 percent, respectively) or radio (40 and 43 percent).¹⁷

What factors help to account for this pattern? One possible explanation is that the low level of newspaper exposure in Spain is a long-term consequence of late modernization (which began in earnest only in the 1960s) and the highly inadequate education system under Franco (Gunther, Montero, and Wert 2000). Consistent with this interpretation, it is noteworthy that most of those countries that usually rank below Spain in newspaper reading are less developed socio-economically. Also supporting this hypothesis, our 1993 CNEP survey data reveal that 42 percent of those over

¹⁶ Gunther, Montero, and Puhle (2007a) and Gunther, Beck, Magalhães, and Moreno (2016).

¹⁷ Media consumption surveys with very large samples and many detailed questions regarding media use largely confirm these findings included in our 1993 and 2004 surveys. See, for example, *Estudio General de Medios*, October-November 1994, and 2005. More recently, levels of exposure to television has remained stable at 87 percent, while those of newspapers have declined to 26 percent and those of radio has increased to 59 percent; see the report on the 2016-2017 *Estudio General de Medios* by the Asociación de Investigadores de Medios de Comunicación (AMIC), *Resumen general abril 2016-marzo 2017*, at <http://www.aimc.es/a1mc-c0nt3nt/uploads/2017/05/resumegm117.pdf>, accessed November 28, 2017.

age 50 (whose childhood socialization would have taken place prior to the economic takeoff of the 1960s) stated that they never read newspapers, as compared with only 30 percent of those under 50. This would imply that as the older generation of less well-educated Spaniards is gradually replaced by cohorts whose educational achievements are comparable with those in other advanced postindustrial societies, this distinguishing characteristic of Spanish political culture should progressively diminish, although the shift from newspapers to the Internet as a source of political news, especially among the young, appears recently to have offset this consequence of demographic replacement, as data from our 2004 survey suggest.

An additional factor explaining low newspaper readership might be that the four dominant nationwide dailies in Spain (*El País*, *ABC*, and *El Mundo*, and the Catalan *La Vanguardia*) are modeled after the small handful of “quality newspapers” found in Western democracies, whose relatively demanding vocabulary and detailed presentations of often complex issues make them distant if not inaccessible to many citizens. To be sure, not all newspapers can be regarded as examples of the “quality press,” especially many of those regional or provincial newspapers which account for about two thirds of total sales. But the strong commitment by the major national newspapers to aspire to the most demanding standards of the international quality press, preferring hard news over soft, and paying much more attention to politics, economics, and international relations than to human interest or crime stories, gossip columns, etc., may have made them unappealing to less educated or politically involved Spaniards.

Our 1988 in-depth study of the Spanish electorate provides valuable insights into the consequences and potential causes of these patterns of media exposure. Coding of the open-ended portions of these interviews generated new variables that go beyond those included in typical survey questionnaires. Among these is an assessment of the extent to which the coders regarded the respondent as well informed about politics—one of the most important behavioral consequences of media exposure. Frequent reading about politics through newspaper accounts has a very strong impact on the respondent’s level of information about politics, with these two variables linked by a (Pearson’s r) zero-order correlation of .61. Following politics on television has much less of a positive effect, correlating with our political information scale at .15. Radio coverage of political news has an intermediate impact on the respondent’s overall level of information ($r = .29$). We regard this as a qualitative behavioral consequence of exposure to different types of media. The print media (especially Spain’s “high quality” newspapers) present readers with a very high density of political and policy-relevant information. Television, in contrast, not only disseminates a substantially lower volume of such information, but also allows for passive exposure to the news that does not cognitively engage the recipient to the same degree that newspaper reading requires.

[Table 3](#) presents data concerning the likely determinants of exposure to each type of communications medium. With regard to newspaper readership, education emerges in Model 1 as the strongest determinant. This is not surprising, particularly in light of the aforementioned high quality of the Spanish press and the relative inaccessibility to the less well-educated that is the flip-side of this information density. What is most striking is that age becomes insignificant. Its zero-order correlation was a moderately strong $-.21$ (indicating that the young are more frequent

newspaper readers than older age cohorts), but once the impact of education is taken into consideration in this multivariate equation it becomes statistically insignificant. This lends strong support to our interpretation of the likely effects of “lagging socioeconomic modernization” and the lack of educational opportunity under the Franco regime. The frequency with which the respondent had discussed politics under the previous authoritarian regime emerges in Models 1 and 3 as the second-strongest, and the only one in Model 5, determinant of frequent newspaper readership in the first equation (which does not include “political interest”). Women are less likely to follow political news frequently through newspaper reading, and it is noteworthy that this relationship remains significant even after the effects of education (and, in the following equation, political interest) have been taken into consideration. Finally, affluence has a weak positive impact on the propensity to follow political news through the print media, although it becomes statistically insignificant once a control has been introduced for political interest. In the equations corresponding to Models 2, 4, and 6, the coders’ assessment of the respondent’s level of interest in politics is introduced in an additional attempt for “explaining” the exposure to media. Its addition as an independent variable increases the explanatory power of the equations, particularly those of newspapers, which raise from 39 to 44.5 percent of the variance explained, as measured by R² statistics. It is noteworthy that discussion of politics under the Franco regime remains significant in this second equation, even though, as we argued earlier in this paper, its impact on present-day political behavior is mediated through other “motivational” variables, such as political interest.

Table 3. Predictors of media exposure in Spain, 1988^a

Variables	Newspapers		Television		Radio	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Education	.38 [.00]	.32 [.00]	ns	ns	ns	ns
Political talk when young	.29 [.00]	.18 [.01]	.19 [.01]	ns	.30 [.00]	ns
Gender	-.19 [.00]	-.14 [.02]	ns	ns	ns	ns
Affluence	.15 [.04]	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Age cohort	ns	ns	.29 [.00]	.30 [.00]	ns	ns
Political interest		.29 [.00]		.26 [.00]		.44 [.00]
Adjusted R ²	.390	.445	.099	.141	.068	.198

^a Figures are beta coefficients from OLS regression analysis, with levels of statistical significance in brackets; ns, not significant at .01 level.

Source: Data come from the 1988 in-depth interview study, n = 175.

Our efforts to “explain” differences among respondents regarding their frequency of following political news through television and radio are much less successful. This is largely because passive exposure to these broadcast media does not entail overcoming a significant barrier, in

terms of the amount of effort or cognitive skills required to access political information through these intermediation channels. Instead, our two “motivational variables” –political interest and its temporal antecedent, discussion of politics under the Franco regime– are the two most consistent determinants. Even gender disappears as a significant factor. Finally, and as expected, older respondents rely more heavily on television for political news than do the young.

Media bias

One of the most widespread concerns about the relationship between the communications media and politics involves partisan bias. The three principal nationwide newspapers in Spain have distinctly different partisan profiles. Although there is a general tendency of most newspaper readers to deny that their favorite journal is biased in favor of any particular party,¹⁸ 31 percent of readers of *El País* in 1993, and an almost equivalent 33 percent in 2004, stated that their newspaper favors the PSOE. *ABC* had a more clearly partisan profile in 1993, with 50 percent of its readers believing that it favored the Partido Popular, decreasing somewhat to 37 percent in 2004. In contrast, *El Mundo* has become much more sharply partisan: only 7 percent of its readers in 1993 believed that it supported the Partido Popular, but this increased to over 24 percent by the 2004 elections.

Measuring the impact of media bias on electoral behavior is more difficult to achieve in most cross-national comparative studies: media bias is a contextual variable that is inherently country-specific, and the mapping of partisan favoritism requires detailed information about each individual media outlet. Assessing the extent to which exposure to systematically biased information influences voting decisions is particularly difficult insofar as we don’t know the direction of causality of this relationship. Does partisan bias by a newspaper lead voters to cast ballots consistent with its preferences, or, alternatively, do readers choose newspapers in accord with their own previously established partisanship?

With regard to the direction of causality of empirical associations between exposure to biased media and the partisan preferences of respondents, our qualitative data provide evidence in support of both alternative views. Some respondents in our in-depth interviews stated that they selected their newspaper in accord with their partisan predispositions. As a 27-year-old labor lawyer employed by the leftist CC.OO. trade union explained, “They’re all biased. That’s normal – each one has its own political tendency, and in accord with that tendency, there’s a clear manipulation of the news. Therefore, you buy the newspaper that best accords with your ideology.” Accordingly, a plurality of *El País* readers (36 percent) supported the PSOE in 1993, and this partisan preference strengthened substantially over time, to 65 percent in 2004 and 69 percent in 2008. Similar polarization appears to have occurred with regard to *El Mundo*, 38 percent of whose readers supported the Partido Popular in 1993, increasing to 56 percent in 2004 and 74 percent in 2008. At the same time, *ABC* became somewhat less clearly associated with the PP, at least with regard to

¹⁸ 78 percent of our respondents in 1993 said that their preferred newspaper is unbiased, as did 75 percent of our respondents in 2004.

the composition of its readership: the percentage of PP voters declined from 74 percent in 1993 to 54 percent in 2004, then recovered some of its decline back to 63 percent in 2008.¹⁹

Radio has become a highly partisan communications medium, particularly with the emergence of call-in talk shows and radio debates among highly partisan journalists. The tone of these discussions is often quite contentious, and goes well beyond the bounds of what would be tolerated in the print media. The radio audience is much smaller than that of television: 92 percent of respondents polled in 1993, 86 percent in 2004, 76 percent in 2008, and 71 percent in 2016 said that they had followed the election campaign by watching television news at least once a week, but only 40, 43, 30 percent, and 25 percent respectively, claim to have listened to radio news broadcast about these three election campaigns.²⁰

As we saw with regard to newspapers, most of our survey respondents who follow political news on the radio said that their respective networks were impartial in covering the news and did not favor a political party. Nevertheless, among regular listeners who acknowledged bias by their favorite stations, unequivocally clear pictures of partisan favoritism emerged. COPE (the station of the Catholic Church) and Onda Cero were perceived as favoring the PP in 1993, while SER and RNE were regarded as supporting the PSOE. As one might expect, self-selection and screening processes lead conservative voters to listen to conservative radio stations. In 1993, when RNE was under the control of a socialist government, 28 percent of those on the left (self-placement ranging between 1 and 4 on the 10-point scale) preferred that network as their principal source of radio news, while another 22 percent listened most frequently to SER news broadcasts. In 2004, however, when the government was controlled by the conservative PP, there was a massive shift among leftist listeners away from RNE (which fell from 28 percent to 10 percent of those on the left) to the progressive SER network (which dramatically increased its share of leftist listeners from 22 percent to 54 percent). Similar processes could be observed during the subsequent terms of Socialist (2008-2011) and conservative PP governments (2011-2015).

With regard to news broadcasts on television, it must be stated at the outset that partisan biases are relatively modest (certainly in comparison with American cable news networks), and most viewers claim that their preferred channels are impartial. To some extent, this perception of impartiality is illusory. If the news on a television channel accords with an individual's own political orientation, it is not surprising that the viewer would tend to regard its coverage as "fair and balanced." Television may benefit from another factor as well: the more direct personal connection between the news presenter and the viewer may impart a greater sense of credibility. A surprisingly large number of in-depth interview respondents used similar language to describe this phenomenon.

¹⁹ In 2016 (according to CIS survey 3145, July 2016), the voting behavior of the newspaper readers changed somewhat due to the presence of two new parties, Podemos on the left and Ciudadanos (C's) on the center-right. 40 percent of *El País* readers voted for the PSOE in the 2016 elections, and 36 percent for Podemos. The readers of *El Mundo* were split between the PP (54 percent) and C's (26 percent). And three out of four readers of the two most conservative newspapers, *ABC* and *La Razón*, voted for the PP.

²⁰ In the 2016 electoral campaign, radio and television audiences were reduced even more to 70 and 25 percent, respectively (CIS survey #3145, July 2016).

As one of them put it, “the mere fact that you’re seeing it [with your own eyes], makes you believe it more.” Another respondent said that the reason he trusted television more than other media is that “It’s because I can see it. [In contrast,] newspaper journalists can write whatever they want, and can disguise [their biases].” Yet another explained, “I regard television as more credible because you can see the subject; and they can explain it at the same time as you’re seeing it.”

Many viewers in Spain select television news broadcasts that largely conform to their own partisan or ideological preferences. In 1993, when TVE-1 was under the control of a Socialist government, 54 percent of those who position themselves on the left of the ideological continuum (self-placements 1-4 on the 10-point scale) most frequently followed the news on that network. In sharp opposition, in 2004, when TVE-1 was under the control of a conservative PP government, only 22 percent of leftist viewers used TVE-1 as their principal source of news about campaign politics. Instead, they shifted massively to Tele 5 as their preferred television news outlet, with the percentage of leftist viewers regarding that as their primary news source increasing from 13 percent in 1993 to 39 percent in 2004. This pattern, again, was repeated in the following legislatures with PSOE and PP governments.²¹

Reversing the hypothesized direction of causality to explore the impact of media bias on electoral behavior, one study using the 1993 Spanish survey found that it varies in accord with the salience of the respondent’s left-right self-identification (see Gunther, Montero, and Wert 2000: 63-71). For those with clear ideological orientations (placing themselves at positions 1-4 or 7-10 on the 10-point left/right scale), the impact of media bias appears mainly to be that of reinforcing initial partisan predispositions, and the net impact of exposure to biased media on electoral behavior is therefore quite modest. Those at the center of the political spectrum, however, appear to have been quite responsive to media biases. Among centrist voters –whose political attitudes may be mixed, weakly held, or nonexistent–, even subtle biases in news coverage may have a measurable impact on electoral preferences. It is important to note that those individuals who are most susceptible to media effects –those with malleable centrist attitudes– are most commonly the key “swing voters” whose ballots can often determine the outcome of the elections.

Membership in and political contact by secondary associations

There are two different types of organizational links between parties and voters. The most obvious involves the organizational structures developed by parties themselves, with regard to either the membership of voters in those parties or their organizational capacities to establish direct contact with voters. The second indirectly channels electoral support to parties through allied secondary associations.

²¹ It should be noted that José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, the president of the PSOE executive, eliminated in 2016 the government control over television and shifted to a process of electing its president by a two-thirds majority at the Congreso de los Diputados—a “supermajority” which required inter-party dialogue and agreement, and which represented an important step towards guaranteeing that the state-owned media would be free of partisan manipulation. In 2012, however, the very first decision by the new PP government, adopted a new procedure according to which the conservative majority was able to select an individual with close ties to the governing party.

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of Spanish society is the low level of organizational affiliation of its citizens. This dates back to the Restoration Monarchy of 19th century and seriously undermined the representation of interests by various sectors of society (Linz 2013 [1981]). Organizational underdevelopment was reinforced under the Franco regime, which repressed a wide variety of organizations (trade unions, in particular) that had opposed the Nationalist side during the Civil War. The arrival of democracy increased the freedom of groups to organize, but the legacy of under-institutionalization would persist (Montero, Font, and Torcal 2006). In 1993, only 25 percent of the respondents interviewed in our postelection survey claimed to belong to a secondary association of any kind, ranking Spain 11th out of the 15 CNEP countries for which we have these data (Beck and Gunther 2016: 51). By 2004, organizational membership had increased to 39 percent (Morales and Mota 2006: 104), to fall later to 31 percent in 2016 (CIS survey 3145, July 2016).

This is reflected in the low level of organizational penetration of Spain's political parties (Montero 1981). In both our 1993 and 2004 surveys, fewer than 2 percent of respondents claimed to be members of a political party.²² This is substantially below the 6 percent average for West European democracies reported in surveys conducted between 2002 and 2010 (Scarrows and Gezgor 2010: 825). By the late 2000s, party membership as percentage of the electorate was 4.4 percent, the average of 27 European parties being 4.6 percent (Van Biezen, Mair, and Poguntke 2012: 28). These figures increased somewhat in the 2011 and 2016 election campaigns, when survey data yielded 9 and 7 percent, respectively. Accordingly, the ability of Spanish parties to mobilize voters through person-to-person contact is quite limited. Our survey respondents stated that, in the course of both the 1993 and 2004 campaigns, only 3 percent were personally contacted by a member or representative of a political party, with another 1 percent receiving such contacts by telephone. These percentages were much below the average among the 15 countries that had collected such data through the CNEP, where an average of 12 percent of respondents were personally contacted by party members and 11 percent received telephone calls from party representatives. Spanish parties attempted to compensate for these low levels of personal contact with massive mailings of party campaign materials or hand-to-hand distribution of party propaganda: in 1993, 49 percent of our respondents reported receiving printed campaign materials (declining somewhat to 36 percent in 2004), as compared with an average of 16 percent among our 15 CNEP countries. The electoral impact of this form of contact, however, appears to be quite limited. As Laura Morales (2010: 216; also see Green and Gerber 2008) found, mass mailings of campaign propaganda are generally ineffective means of mobilizing voters, and certainly much less so than face-to-face contacts with party representatives. In the more recent 2011 and 2016 electoral campaigns, contacts with potential voters using whatever means (in person or by phone, WhatsApp, SMS, e-mail, or regular mail) only reached around 40 percent.

²² This is consistent with findings from other studies, such as Katz and Mair (1992), Morlino (1998), and Bosco and Morlino (2013). For comparisons with other CNEP countries, see Beck and Gunther (2016).

One of the characteristics of mass-membership parties is that they often attempt to contact voters through allied secondary associations (Gunther and Diamond 2003). In this respect, as well, Spanish political parties are weak. First, unlike the Italian Christian Democratic party, conservative Spanish parties lacked any institutionalized contacts with the Church or with religious organizations from the very beginning of the new democratic system. Second, even though both the Socialist and Communist parties of Spain had traditional trade union allies, the level of union affiliation is quite low and has declined over the past two decades. Trade union membership as a percentage of the employed labor force fell from 25 percent in 1979 to 16 percent in 2011. Consistent with these aggregate data, only 7 percent of our respondents in both our 1993 and 2004 surveys (representing a cross-section of the entire electorate, not just the active labor force) said that they belong to a trade union.²³

More importantly, the qualitative nature of the relationship between parties and unions in Spain has become increasingly problematic. This is especially true with regard to the Socialist party, which previously had received significant support from its trade union ally, the UGT. The bonds that linked the UGT to the governing party, however, became frayed in reaction against the allegedly “neoliberal” economic policies of the PSOE government in the mid 1980s, and eventually snapped in 1988 (Astudillo 2001). In addition, the Communist Party’s ties to the CC.OO. were always complicated, but this was further exacerbated by the formation of Izquierda Unida, with its infusion of young, middle-class, and “post-materialist” affiliates into this PCE-dominated coalition (Astudillo 2004).

The overall weakness of secondary associations in their capacity to mobilize voters can be seen in the low percentage of Spanish survey respondents who reported that they were contacted by any such group during the course of the 1993 and 2004 election campaigns. In 1993, only 5 percent of respondents reported such contacts, while eleven years later this had fallen to 4 percent (Beck and Gunther 2016: 54). This stands in contrast with much of the literature on mass membership parties in West European polities in the 20th century, which often regarded allied secondary associations as “transmission belts of electoral support” for the parties. The general organizational decline which has occurred in many modern societies has contributed to a weakening of previously strong “anchors of partisanship” (Gunther and Montero 2001). In the case of Spain, this is also the result of the fact that the parties which reemerged in the late 1970s were, either from the very beginning (as in the case of the UCD) or as a long-term product of organizational evolution (the PSOE), catch-all parties, which by their very nature eschew explicit ties to other organized groups in society (see Gunther and Diamond 2001 and 2003; and Gunther, Sani, and Shabad 1986).

Face-to-face flows of political information through interpersonal networks

Spanish society has undergone a massive transformation over the past 50 years. Industrialization in certain regions has led to massive migration from rural villages to burgeoning urban centers.

²³ According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD [<https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TUD>, accessed 3 May 2017]), trade union density (or the proportion of union members among the active working population) in Spain was 17.7 percent in 1993, 15.4 in 2004, and 16.9 in 2013, in all cases among the lowest in Western European countries (www.stats.oecd.org, accessed 3 May, 2016).

Family relations and structures have also been affected. Migration and salaried employment has dispersed family members geographically and made them economically autonomous, undermining the strong extended family networks typically found in rural societies. This has been accompanied both by a major change in gender roles (with women much more active in the labor market than had previously been the case) and patterns of political socialization, as well as a significant reduction in the size of families and households. The net effect of these massive changes in residential patterns, the structure of employment, and the exposure of much larger segments of the population to higher education, in combination with the extraordinarily low levels of affiliation with secondary associations, has been a significant transformation of patterns of interpersonal interactions relevant to politics. In general, Spanish society has become highly “atomized” with regard to flows of political information to individuals, particularly with regard to two-step communication flows through secondary associations (Giner 1990).

One of the principal features of socioeconomic modernization in Spain has been a change in the social environment within which individuals reside, from relatively homogeneous rural villages and agro-towns to politically heterogeneous urban centers. Insofar as individuals are reluctant to engage in political discussion with those with whom they may disagree, this demographic shift has tended to discourage discussion of politics with neighbors. This is reflected in our data concerning the frequency of discussion among different types of interpersonal networks. While Spaniards are extremely gregarious and place great emphasis on cordial interpersonal relations, political discussion is extremely infrequent among neighbors. In our 1993 and 2004 surveys, approximately 9 out of 10 respondents said that they “never” or “almost never” discussed politics with their neighbors (92 percent in 1993 and 89 percent in 2004). In contrast, between 39 and 47 percent of respondents said that they “often” or “sometimes” discussed politics with friends, co-workers, and family members. In all cases, the unprecedented harshness of the Great Recession, which affected almost every Spaniard and most economic indicators, contributed to a remarkable upsurge. Taking, for instance, the year 2013, in the apex of the economic crisis, 69 percent of respondents declared they talked or discussed politics with some frequency with family members, 57 percent with friends, and 31 percent with their fellow students or co-workers.²⁴

Analysis of in-depth interview transcripts provided insights into why there are such strong differences among various types of interpersonal networks. Many respondents residing in large urban areas spoke of a lack of any sense of community or personal integration with their neighbors. These kinds of comments stood in sharp contrast with those of rural residents, who indicated that they knew and interacted with many of their neighbors. Typical of the comments made by residents of large metropolitan areas were these, from a 79 year-old retiree (who had a university-level education) living in downtown Valencia: “I’ve lived in this building for nearly forty years, and I know almost nobody, except to recognize them in the street. I get along well with everyone, but when I go home, I close my door, and that’s all.” She drew a sharp distinction between this atomized

²⁴ These data come from CIS survey #2984, April 2013.

urban life and the village where she was born and raised, which was decidedly leftist, anti-clerical, and Republican. Another urban Valenciano said of his neighbors, "I don't know anybody. In Spain today, neighbors can have totally different views... In my neighborhood, there's a firefighter who lives on one side of me, and another guy who drives a Mercedes Benz on the other. You've got people from both extremes."

Some in-depth interview respondents made reference to micro-environments that have their own impact on the propensity to engage in political discussion. One respondent pointed out that the most common venue for lively political conversation is the bar (of which, there are over 15,000 in Madrid alone, one per 211 inhabitants). He pointed out that since he doesn't drink and is "not a friend of bars," he has much less opportunity to engage in political discussion. A housewife living in Valencia pointed to the nature of the markets where she purchases food as an important variable. "I heard [political] commentaries at the meat market, but nowadays much less because I shop at the supermarket. Really, the only 'neighborhood' that I know is the newsstand—the only shop with a personality—because the supermarkets don't have any." Insofar as there has been a substantial (indeed, dramatic) shift in shopping habits from family-owned shops specializing in a narrow range of goods (bread shops, meat markets, vegetable stands) to enormous, big-box supermarkets, the sense of community and the homogeneity of one's immediate political environment has declined substantially.

Finally, the nature of the workplace is another variable that emerged from our analysis of in-depth interview transcripts as having a significant impact on discussion with co-workers. Unionized employees in large industrial firms tended to discuss politics with each other rather frequently. In general, these discussions took place within politically homogeneous interpersonal networks. In contrast, employees working in small shops described their reluctance to make public statements of their political views, such as this 54-year-old woman who works in a shoe-repair shop: "No, no, you can't talk here, because sometimes one customer who supports one party will come in [to the shop], and then another supporting a different party will arrive, and you can't express your own opinion because they're both clients, and one or the other would get mad. So I shut up; I listen, and nothing more". Another respondent (age 24) in this same small town (Carballino, in Galicia) was a small-business owner and militant regional-nationalist who strongly supports the Bloque Nacionalista Galego; but he nonetheless scrupulously avoids political discussion in the workplace. This is because her business partner is a supporter of the AP (the PP after 1989), "and we get along quite well, but we don't discuss politics, since she has her views and I have mine." She fears that if they were to discuss politics at work, it would create conflict.

The most common denominator to emerge from a review of these interview transcripts is that Spaniards are reluctant to enter into discussions of politics with those who are likely to hold conflicting opinions, and the likelihood of such disagreement is much greater among neighbors than among friends and family members. With regard to co-workers, this appears to depend on the structure of the workplace, with unionized workers in large factories at one end of the continuum and employees in small shops at the other. As one respondent (a politically engaged and well-informed retired businessman residing in the small town of Allariz, Orense) put it, "It's difficult

to talk [with neighbors] because if you talk with someone who thinks differently it will usually end up in an argument and we'll wind up pulling each other's hair out. For that reason, I generally avoid [political] dialogue and discussion." Another resident of Carballino (a 24-year-old middle-level technician) said of his non-engagement in political discussions, "I limit myself to listening, because that's much more fun. Some of my friends are AP, others support the PSOE, others the [regional] Bloque [Nacionalista Galego], and I just laugh because they're always on the verge of killing each other."

The historical memory of Spain's politically polarized and sometimes tumultuous past reinforces this tendency to avoid discussion within politically heterogeneous social networks. As Laura Morales (2010, 208) writes, the "common experience of a bloody Civil War prior to the authoritarian regime is likely to have shaped ... how citizens relate to political disagreement in everyday life. It is not unreasonable to suspect that traumatic political events of this kind will contribute to structure interpersonal political communication and overall cleavage and ideological polarization, thus rendering homogeneity more likely." In short, although Spain's low level of political discussion is not unique, its historical trajectory has made this pattern more extreme than elsewhere. And our survey of in-depth narratives by our respondents helps us to understand how and why such *country-specific* factors can once more exert a significant influence on intermediation processes.

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