

Religion and Regimes

Support, Separation, and Opposition

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and Ted G. Jelen

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Chapter Seven

The Roman Catholic Church and Political Regime in Portugal and Spain

Support, Opposition, and Separation

Paul Christopher Manuel

The weight of history is particularly strong in Portugal and Spain. In the two hundred years since the French Revolution, generations of children of the Enlightenment have battled against the staunch defenders of the Roman Catholic Church over the proper relationship between religion and regime in each country. This conflict has occasionally turned violent and was especially brutal during the fratricidal civil war in Spain from 1936 to 1939, when atrocities were committed by both sides.

The sides are no longer killing one another, but the divide between the laic, or anti-clerical, and Christian, or pro-clerical, remains a pronounced feature of Iberian civil and political society. These historical combatants continue to hold profoundly different views of the common good, human rights, and justice. For example, in more recent times they have fought over abortion, same-sex marriage, and whether the preamble of the European constitution should mention the Christian roots of European understandings of humanity, justice, and solidarity.¹

This conflict takes place within a Roman Catholic cultural space. Portugal is a relatively small country, with a population of just under 11 million. Different surveys indicate that between 84.5 and 90 percent of the population is Roman Catholic.² Spain is much larger, with a population of 46.8 million. The number of Roman Catholics in Spain varies among surveys, ranging between 83 and 93 percent.³ The official numbers of Roman Catholics are down from the past, and there has been a slight increase in other confessions, but it is still the case that when speaking about religion and regime in Iberia,

oman Catholic Church and how it relates to

S IN THE RELIGION-REGIME NSHIP IN IBERIA

uct of support, opposition, and separation is especially useful in framing the Iberian political relationship. I will speak of this in terms of three key themes. First, mutual support involves a reciprocal working relationship based on mutual trust and need. There have been a history of both nations when pro-clerical and mutually supporting religion-regime relating of the nation-state and also the rise of the 1930s. The second theme, opposition, can be the first theme. It is commonly associated with a fusion of ecclesiastical and temporal power that have existed from the beginning of the state. At all levels; anti-clerical calls opposing the church became increasingly dominant after the 1930s. The third theme needs to be nuanced in the Iberian context. There is opposition to religion as well as opposition to both religious authorities and popular secularity. Key moments of Marian apparitions to countervailing anti-clerical activity in the national cultural phenomenon helped to crystallize the anti-clerical actions of the regime. The third theme, is a relatively new phenomenon, new teachings on the role of the church in the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) as well as the 1970s.

Both thematically and episodically: around 1920s for support by pro-clerical forces dominated, and during the 1930s for constitutional rule.⁴

Mutual Support

Support for the church, which during different periods was a legally established national religion as well as a dominant religious tradition. The Vatican played a significant supporting role during the wars of *reconquista* of the national

territory against the invading Moors. With victory, to be Portuguese or Spanish naturally implied membership in the Roman Catholic Church.⁵ The fusion between religion and regime linked religious and political identities, rendering these countries profoundly Catholic. With each passing phase of Iberian history, Catholicism became increasingly interwoven with Iberian identity. The cries of the Reformation did not penetrate this fused religious-cultural identity; in its extreme form, the Iberian regimes started to view membership in any other religion as a treasonous act—the *auto da fé* during the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions is a good example (see Kamen 1997; Lea 1906–1907).⁶

Let us fast-forward to the twentieth century. The idea that Roman Catholicism was indistinguishable from the national fabric started to fracture among reformers, who sought to disabuse their countries of that notion by means of anti-clerical legislation. In response, there was a rise of reactionary nationalist movements in each country, who claimed part of their political legitimacy on the past. Indeed, these right-wing fascist regimes of the twentieth century hearkened back to the very founding of their countries, and sought the blessing of the church to maintain popular acquiescence, or perhaps support, of their power (Brassloff 1998). They also sought to codify the religion-regime relationship by means of formal state-to-state agreements, or Concordats, with the Vatican.

The mutual support between religion and regime in Portugal is perhaps best personified in the close friendship between Antonio Salazar and Manuel Gonçalves Cerejeira. As students at the University of Coimbra, they helped to form a pro-Catholic group in 1912; later, they established a mutually supporting religion-regime in the 1930s. The two leaders agreed on the need to design the New State based on anti-liberal principles. In this, they were profoundly influenced by the papal encyclicals *Rerum Novarum: The Condition of Labor*⁷ and *Quadragesimo Anno: After Forty Years*⁸ (see Hollenbach 1979). The New State's corporative system of government and societal organization reflected these documents and was explicitly designed to correct the twin errors of excessive individualism and materialism associated with capitalism and communism. This so-called "third way" of political and social organization was supposed to enhance the common good of the society; Portugal was declared to be a corporative and unitary Republic, predicated on the family and Roman Catholic Church (Gallagher 1983). These papal encyclicals helped to frame a close relationship between religion and the regime.

The founding document of the New State, the Constitution of 1930, actually recognized Catholicism as the nation's official religion (de Sousa Franco 1987). In addition, the regime allowed for the creation of *Radio Renscença* (the Church radio station) and implemented new legal prohibitions against Protestant missionary activities in the country (Bruneau 1976). The regime

is legally binding, and divorce was outlaws 2009).⁹ Vatican Concordat of 1940 deepened the regime; Lisbon and the Holy See recognized ambassadors, the regime gave the Roman Catholic its own education system, and the internal correspondences between the Cruz 1978; Manuel 2002). General Francisco Franco's Nationalist Civil War was warmly greeted by a and Bishop Isidro Gomá Tomás became led "Pastorales de la Guerra de España,"ing Franco's victory.¹⁰ Franco had enism of the brutal nature of his military is publicly support his new regime. This ndemn the anti-clerical brutality against il War (Shubert 1990; Andrés-Gallego re were, of course, atrocities committed and five brave Spanish Roman Catholic protest of the violence committed by s 2001; Atkin and Tallett 2003). sought to create a mutually supportive end, his new regime developed a corporo-clerical legislation passed during the 196). Also, in 1941 the two sides agreed named as Spain's official religion, the erate without State limits, and the State (Brien and Shannon 1997). Unlike Portugal with the Falange fascist movement, Portuguese Church, was a profoundly nation that preferred a more dormancy. It distrusted the militancy, radi ge and was quite wary of their close cis powers (Payne 1984). This situation victory of the Allies in World War II; n the Falange and sought improved ties ne 1961; Mujal-León 1982).

Vatican and the Spanish State was an of a supporting regime-religion relationship of the Spanish government and of Catholic bishops in Spain. The two could continue its status as Spain's official State taxation; Church documents

were exempted from state censorship religious personnel were to receive a state subsidy, and the Church was permitted to supervise religious education in schools (Atkin and Tallett 2003). This Concordat provided Franco with an important source of legitimacy.

Franco also enlisted the help of *Opus Dei*, a technocratic, conservative and secular Catholic religious group. Several *Opus Dei* members held ministerial roles in Franco's cabinet and played an important role in the industrialization of the Spanish economy in the 1950s. The actual nature of their involvement with the regime is unclear; some *Opus Dei* members actually opposed the Franco regime (Preston 1996).¹¹

In both Portugal and Spain, regime support for religion clearly dominated during those historical periods of clericalism, including—but not limited to—the founding of the nation-state and at the rise of the Iberian dictators.

Second Theme: The Opposition of Religion and Regime

The second theme may be understood as a corrective to the first one. The consensus on the legitimacy of a dominant religious tradition in Iberia started to erode in the nineteenth century. When the First Vatican Council (1869–1870) introduced the concept of papal infallibility—as it denounced the democratic and liberal political and economic reforms across Europe—anti-clerical sentiments surged among the Republican elite (Costigan 2005). These reformers felt that the removal of religion from the regime was prerequisite to social progress, and sought to codify the right of an individual to follow his own consciousness. There are noteworthy examples of regime efforts opposing religion in twentieth-century Iberia, including the First Portuguese Republic (1910–1926) and the Second Spanish Republic (1931–1936).

In Portugal, under the leadership of Prime Minister Afonso Costa, the National Assembly passed the *Lei de Separação* of 1911 (see de Meneses 2011). In spite of its name, the law was less interested in the building of a Jeffersonian "wall of separation" between religion and regime, and instead enabled the regime to oppose (and perhaps even to control) religious activities. For instance, the 1911 measure contained provisions providing for the closing of many seminaries, the elimination of the national observance of holy days, the secularization of cemeteries, and the nationalization of some Church property. These actions followed in the tradition of the Marques de Pombal (1699–1782), the first significant Portuguese leader to enact anti-clerical legislation in the name of the Enlightenment. He was particularly known throughout Europe for the expulsion of the Jesuits from Portugal (Maxwell 1995; Carvalho 2009; Salgado de Matos 2011).

We can find a similar pattern in Spain during the Second Republic (1931–1936) (Callahan 1984). The regime, led by Prime Minister Manuel

ty, opposed any religious involvement. The constitution of 1931 disestablished the religious organizations, and secularized. It passed by the Radical Party banned the religious orders, confiscated Jesuit property, and secularized the education system (Andrés-

gal and Spain also triggered significant events. There were two reported cases of Marian apparitions. The Virgin Mary warned the people about the dangers of the communist authorities. The most famous took place in 1917, when the Virgin Mary appeared to three country children each month on the hill. She told the children that God was angry with men and asked them to pray for the evils of communism (Bennett 2012). The Virgin Mary at Ezkioga, Spain in 1930, did not receive approval by the Vatican. The socio-cultural phenomenon of popular sectors against both the authoritarian regime as well as the republic authorities. A political dynamic, opposed to the anti-legislature, and received significant international events. Perhaps one lesson from anti-clericalism that informs strict limits among Iberian regimes might have clear limits among Iberian regimes.

Religion and Regime

Religion and regime—may be understood the regime-religion relationship into the problematical nature of the first two

Council (1962–1965) was the first and last iteration of religion and regime in Portugal. It requested a formal separation from the authoritarian regime. Following three years of deliberation regarding the place of the Roman Catholic Church in the state, the Council rejected the Vatican's former state based in a corporatist form of government, the Council produced two landmark documents on religion and regime relationship: *Gaudium et Spes*:

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World and *Dignitatis Humanae: Declaration on Religious Freedom*.¹² These documents denounced political regimes that violate the rights of free assembly, free speech, and of religious freedom (Dorr 1992; Flannery 1996; Manuel 2002). For the first time in history, the Vatican went on record in favor of a liberal democratic form of government, predicated on the separation of religion from the political regime. Much of the credit for these new documents has rightly been ascribed to Pope John XXIII, who convened the Second Vatican Council in 1962 but died during the meeting. His successor, Pope Paul VI, released the final Council documents and oversaw their initial implementation. These documents now govern the Vatican's engagement with nations around the world.

These documents had an almost immediate positive impact in Portugal and Spain. When the countries adopted democratic governments in the 1970s, the new governments sought to institutionalize a formal separation between religion and regime. But this has been a slow and gradual process.

The close religion-regime relationship in Portugal ended in the 1960s following the Second Vatican Council. The trigger for the change was a deep disagreement over the colonial wars in Africa. Pope Paul VI encouraged a negotiated end to the hostilities, but the regime insisted on victory at any cost. Salazar became physically impaired in 1968 and was removed from office the following year. Cardinal Cerejeira also stepped down from his post in 1969. Their replacements, Marcelo Caetano and Antonio de Ribeiro, the new Bishop of Lisbon, were not personally close and disagreed on the course of the war. The Caetano regime simply began to ignore any church statements on the matter, which led to a period of hostile separation between the two.

Following a successful military coup on April 25, 1974, and the eventual victory of moderate forces following a two-year transition struggle, the relationship between religion and regime was recalibrated in line with *Gaudium et Spes* (Manuel 1995). The current legal framework governing religion-regime relations dates to the Constitution of 1976 and provides for freedom of religion as well as a separation of religion and regime (Manuel 1996). Later, the 2001 Law of Religious Liberty guaranteed equal treatment for all confessions and the right of a religion to establish churches and to run schools (Sousa e Brito 2004).

The revised 2004 Concordat between Portugal and the Vatican reflects the spirit and declarations of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). It effectively separates religion and regime by providing for freedom of worship and equal treatment under the law for all confessions in Portugal.

In Spain, King Juan Carlos launched a negotiated process of political discussion among all interested constituencies with the intention of restoring democracy in the aftermath of Franco's passing in 1975. This eventually

adoption of the new Spanish Constitution in 1978. Bishops' Conference, the new Constitution provisions leading to separation of religion and state finally declares Spain to be a secular state with no other noteworthy measures are Article 27, public education, and Article 32, which allows (Hastings 1991). The Constitution permits the state with religions as necessary.

the Vatican Council, the Franco-era Concordat of 1953 (Atkin and Tallett 2003). The new Concordat of 1979 religion in a variety of ways: the state relinquished the appointment of Catholic bishops and the right to block civil divorce proceeding, among other things (Hanson 2011). This new Concordat managed to amicably settle the religion and politics relationship in Spain, all the while continuing the anti-clericalism of the Second Republic (Hanson 2011).

relationship in Portugal and Spain is currently governed by procedures providing for a healthy juridical separation, the countries have had some difficulty adapting to this, just because the church adopted new policies with a political regime during the Second Republic. Constitutional procedures have since been implemented in affairs between the traditional clerical and state suddenly come into being. To the contrary, the church as well as continued alternative visions for the future of the religion-regime relationship in the two countries.

THE THREE THEMES IN TENSION

be understood as dormant sedimentary layers of base starting once another peacefully expires. To be very much in dynamic tension with one another, this is an array of different points in history.

cal forces in Portugal and Spain have been attempting to separate religion from state in a country that once dominated by Roman Catholicism, including divorce. For their part, the defenders of Catholicism maintain traditional understandings, practices, and

In Portugal, the government of Socialist Prime Minister José Sócrates legalized abortion during the first ten weeks of pregnancy in 2007. That move took place following a national debate on the question, and the results of a national referendum in favor of the proposed measure. However, the referendum was not legally binding, since only 40 percent of registered voters turned out for the referendum (well below the required 50 percent threshold). Prime Minister Sócrates went ahead with the legislation anyway, justifying his actions in terms of respecting the will of the people. Three years later, and just after an official state visit by Pope Benedict XVI to Portugal, the government adopted same-sex marriage.¹⁴ What is particularly noteworthy is that the Pope spoke strongly against same-sex marriage during his visit a few days before the new law was approved, but his appeal for legislators to defend traditional marriage fell on deaf ears.¹⁵

The situation was much more dramatic in Spain under Socialist Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, but with similar results. The Prime Minister brought his own personal family story to his legislative work; his paternal grandfather, Juan Rodríguez y Lozano, was executed by Franco's Nationalist forces during the Spanish Civil War. His final will included his desire for a non-Catholic civil burial; all the while he expressed a belief in a Supreme Being (Madrigal 2004).

One of the lessons Prime Minister Zapatero may have taken from this family tragedy was that the role of religion needs to be removed from the public square. Three particular legislative measures designed at expanding human rights, from a non-Catholic perspective, are illustrative of this point. First, Zapatero's government passed a measure legalizing same-sex marriage in 2005. That law includes the right for same-sex couples to adopt children. The administration then passed the Gender Identity Law in 2007—a measure obligating the government to legally recognize the identity of transsexuals. Third, the administration also legalized abortion in 2010.

In both Portugal and Spain, elected socialist governments passed legislation that successfully grafted their non-Catholic vision of human rights and the common good onto the legal structure of their societies. Conservative forces and the Roman Catholic Church strenuously opposed the measures, and there were reports of up to one million demonstrators in Madrid against these laws, but to no avail.¹⁶ Iberian clerical forces still desire that Scripture might meaningfully influence public policies, but have yet been unable to muster sufficient political support among the people to overturn the progressive legislation.

igion and regime in societies formerly dominated some getting used to. The weight of long in Portugal and Spain, where change has less. It was just not that long ago that a papal bull held considerable weight in the Iberian nations—the case. All of this rapid change has caused consternation. For instance, the Spanish Jesuit priest suggested in his brilliantly argued doctoral thesis an infused state of cultural identity.

situation is one of a cultural identity problem, as considered Catholicism as the essential feature. It covers itself to be much less Catholic than it does of other religious communities. Among are Muslims, the very religion against which Christians reacted during the Middle Ages.¹⁷

ist Victor Perez-Diez laments a growing “recession” in society in Spain, as well as “a growing lack of church’s messages of meaning, salvation and everyday life of a considerable part of citizens, since the current structure of church-state in Spanish Church “to just one more ‘pressure’ on the religion’s essential ontological role in people grasp some of the larger questions of salvation.”¹⁸ These questions beg the question of whether these are post-Christian era, and whether non-Catholicism will become increasingly dominant in the future.

While the clerical and anti-clerical forces in Iberia have been in conflict, a deep gulf remains between them. One of these countries, then, lies in how to create a constructive engagement among the adversaries. Promising and promising ideas have recently emerged from religious and regime perspectives.

Specs, he argues that the new pluralistic and is up a historic opportunity for the Spanish clerical process of constructive dialogue and others—including anti-clericals, atheists, Jews, and agrán is convinced that the considerable benefits of peace, justice, progress, and harmony, will be greater Spanish society. In all of this, he

insists that contemporary Catholic evangelists respect the individual’s right of religious freedom. He simply proposes a start of a new conversation on the role of religion in society, apart from the regime, which might one day lead to a renewal of Catholic faith in Spanish culture and society by bringing the joy and beauty of Scripture into the public square (Villagrán 2012).

Second, former French President Nicolas Sarkozy offered a decidedly more secular vision on how to recalibrate the relationship between religion and political regime in Europe. During his important 2007 speech at Saint John Lateran Cathedral in Rome, he introduced the concept called *laïcité positive*, or positive laicism, and argued that a political regime need not be anti-religious, and religions need not be anti-regime. Instead, Sarkozy encourages clerical and anti-clerical forces to engage in “an open secularism, an invitation to dialog, tolerance, and respect,”¹⁹ in the firm but somewhat controversial belief that “the progressive ideals of laicism and the traditional emphasis on European Christian roots can be joined.”²⁰ This soaring rhetoric may actually get clerical and anti-clerical sides to think about starting a conversation on how to recalibrate their relationship. A foundational problem, of course, remains: thus far, they have only managed to agree on the areas in which they disagree (Gomes 2009). The search for a new theme based on constructive engagement has yet to be discovered.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that in the thousand years since their founding as distinct nation-states with a strong church presence, clerical and anti-clerical forces within Portugal and Spain have each fought over the proper relationship between religion and regime. It has also found that the “support, separation, and opposition” theoretical construct usefully frames the clerical-anti-clerical dynamic in both countries. The rapid pace and depth of the political, social, and cultural transformations over the past few decades have caught many by surprise, causing much consternation and uncertainty regarding the proper place of religion in each society.

As we have also seen, each theme in the religion-regime relationship carries its own set of problems. The previous *pro forma* mutually supporting relationship between religion and regime in Portugal and Spain during much of the twentieth century limited the church’s pastoral work and also created a certain mindless catechism among baptized Catholics²¹ (the first theme); the period of regime-religion opposition was politically and culturally unstable, and perhaps even untenable in a Catholic-majority society (the second theme); the current state of separation contains the danger of sidelining religion as only a private concern, or, as Perez-Diez argues, becoming irrelevant to society (the third theme). As such, the suggestions by both Villagrán and

y forward; their complementary concepts positive laicism might help to move future competing visions of the common good to a and mutual respect.

NOTES

<http://www.cfr.org/article/6th-june-2003/1/vatican-saddened-as-eu-2012.html>. Also see an interesting background article at http://www.cfr.org/article/e-2004/review_howse_mayjun04.ms.

¹ International Religious Freedom Report, at <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irfreport/2009/103711.htm>, accessed July 10, 2012. The 2009 CIA World Factbook as Roman Catholic in Portugal, at <https://www.cia.gov/library/factbook/geos/sp.html>. Also, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irfreport/2010/124.htm>, accessed July 10, 2012.

² International Religious Freedom Report, at <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irfreport/2011/124.htm>, accessed July 10, 2012.

³ on religion and politics in Iberia in Paul Christodoulou, Clericalism, Anticlericalism, and Democratization, Jérard Jelen and Clyde Wilcox, *Religion and Politics Few, and the Many*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge

⁴ al, "To be Portuguese is to be Catholic." See <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irfreport/2011/124.htm>, accessed July 12, 2012, read as an "act of faith." Its specific use took place gal as a form of severe spiritual contrition forced s; civil authorities followed with the final sentence, cution. Of note, the 1822 Portuguese Constitution onal religion, but exempted non-Portuguese living

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/hf_jc-xiii_enc_20050710.html, accessed July 10, 2012.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/hf_jc-xiii_enc_20050710.html, accessed July 10, 2012.

⁶ *Religious Orthodoxy and Popular Faith in European Society*, New York: Enigma Books, 2009, relates, and People: A History of European Catholicity Press, 2003.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/hf_jc-xiii_enc_20050710.html, accessed July 10, 2012.

⁷ Josénaria Escrivá in 1928. Also see http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/hf_jc-xiii_enc_20050710.html, accessed July 12, 2012. Also http://www.vatican.va/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes.html

⁸ engagement with the Islamic Commission in 1992. prohibited adoption by same-sex couples. www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1893946,00.html. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abortion_in_Portugal, ac-

⁹ Family in Spain," *National Catholic Reporter*, *Religion in a Foreign Land: A Proposal for Bringing Christ*. Doctoral Dissertation. Directed by Thomas J.

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¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ <http://www.zenit.org/article-21354?l=english>, accessed June 28, 2012. He also made the same point in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2008.

²¹ Related to this point, the writer Winfred Ernest Garrison writes in his 1950 piece "How Catholic is Spain" that: "I can go no farther than to say that, if the Spanish people are profoundly and devoutly attached to Catholicism as a religion, they will still have to show me. I was reminded of a remark which a brilliant Frenchwoman made to me many years ago: 'Of course we are all Catholics. We are baptized and married in the church and buried from it and we go to mass occasionally as a matter of course, just as we brush our teeth—only not so often.'"

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