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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

DEMOCRATIC STABILIZING STRATEGIES: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE  
SECTOR ELITES IN SPANISH REGIME POLITICS

A Dissertation

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Doctor of Philosophy

By

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Spain was one of the first cases in the current “third wave of democratization” that has swept over the world since April 25, 1974. Long before the current fascination in the Political Science literature with the importance of “social capital,” Spanish civic life was built around community, in public squares, festivals, outdoor malls and the like. However, political life in Spain varies widely by its internal regions. The intent of this study is two-fold:

1. To learn how elites in the regions of Spain devised strategies to ensure regional political stability during the transition to democracy in their region, and
2. To learn how the Spanish have built their democracy around community life, known as communitarianism in Political Science literature.

As Myron Weiner observed, in order to explain democratization, one should examine the “strategies available to those who seek a democratic revolution” (Weiner in Huntington 1993, 38-39).

The study of the consolidation of democracy at the sub-state or regional level has broad implications for countries

is a study that, according to Van Evera's criteria (1997, 89ff), attempts to make a contribution to the larger literature on democratization, and political leadership in a democratizing context, by performing a "historical evaluative" function of a specific set of actors at a specific time and place. To a lesser extent, it is hypothesis-generating within a larger theoretical framework.

The bulk of the political science literature on democratization is still largely focused on understanding and classifying the strategies, behaviors, and institutional arrangements made by national elites during the relatively brief "transitional" phase, i.e. the short period of time during and directly after the change of regime type from authoritarianism to at least a nominal democracy.<sup>1</sup> In general, two areas have been neglected in this now-large body of scholarship: an in-depth consideration of what occurs *after* the transitional phase in a given country that helps the democratic regime survive over a long period of time (*viz.*, democratic consolidation), and secondly, the role of non-national elites in democratic consolidation. The dissertation will examine the second neglected area in some depth.

In this dissertation, I examine three selected regions in Spain--*Catalunya*, *Galicia*, and *Andalucía*<sup>2</sup>--as a series of case studies of a successful consolidation of a

democratic regime.

### **Statement of the Problem and Research Question**

Why has democracy been successfully consolidated throughout Spain despite significant inter-regional variations in approaches and strategies among regional elites, variations that some of the literature (e.g. Diamond, Linz and Lipset 1989) predicts will lead to a breakdown of democracy? What role was played in the process of democratic consolidation by strong inter-regional cleavages in Spain, such as separatist movements, and ethnic and linguistic differences? Against this remarkable backdrop, the research question is, “what strategies do regional elites use to promote democratic stability in their region of Spain?”

### **General Theory**

According to Van Evera’s (1997) criteria, all hypotheses must be derived from a more general theory, along with explanations and antecedent conditions (pp. 8ff.). This is similar to the requirement of *audiat et altera pars*. The general theory employed here is that of Huntington (1993), Putnam (1993), and, to a lesser extent

that “context matters”; context being equated with the underlying society. Putnam (1993, 8) phrases it well: “the practical performance of [democratic] institutions, we conjecture, is shaped by the social context within which they operate.” Therefore, societal variations must be accounted for, and “societies” tend to vary by regions of countries, i.e. very seldom is a country of any size composed of only one society. Wildavsky concurs that it is futile to try to understand leadership without understanding the society within which it is embedded, which he calls a “regime.” I borrow from all three theories to develop a hybrid theory that purports to explain regional variations in democratic institutionalization by variations in regional political leadership, acknowledging regional context as important antecedent conditions. These antecedent conditions, in turn, shape leadership potential to bring about democratic stability in that region. As the literature review makes clear below, however, there is no general body of theory on the role of *regional* political leadership in a country undergoing democratic transition/consolidation. Therefore, it is the intent of this study to make an original contribution to the theory in this important new area of comparative politics scholarship, in addition to the historical-evaluative function mentioned at the outset.

### **Hypothesis**

Within any theory worthy of the name, Van Evera continues, is a “prime

Regional elites' strategies and behaviors → democratic stability → degree of democracy.

While "degree of democracy" is the ultimate dependent variable, the focus will be on the independent variable (regional elites' strategies), and the intermediate dependent variable (democratic stability).

The prime hypothesis can be restated in the form of a testable hypothesis, as follows:

The variation in behavior and strategies of regional elites in Spain, conditioned by regional factors to be defined, resulted in variations in democratic stability in each region.

The nature of the independent, intervening and dependent variables can be depicted more clearly as follows:

{Int. Factors}

↓

$E(s,b)$  → indicators of democratic stability. [ → level of democratic consolidation.<sup>3</sup>]

factors are an intervening variable, democratic stability is the study dependent variable and finally, degree of regional democratic consolidation (D.C.), is the ultimate dependent variable, which will remain unstudied. Because of more direct links with the international community, international factors are postulated to be more strongly causative in one of the cases (Catalonia) than the others. Regional economic and social conditions are, in the words of Hempel and Van Evera. “antecedent condition variables” meaning that they are variables “whose presence activates or magnifies the action of a causal law or hypothesis” (Van Evera 1997. 9-10).

It was impossible to spell out all of the possible antecedent condition variables affecting  $E(s,b)$ , but below are those variables that were assigned beforehand, based upon prior research and theorizing:

$X_1$  = Regional institutional structure and the actor’s position within it.

$X_2$  = Regional actor's position vis-à-vis national (and in some cases international) actors and institutions.

e.g., a populist strategy, or intra-regional elite cooperation strategy.<sup>4</sup>

$E(s,b)_3 =$  Strategy and behavior of regional actor(s) vis-à-vis national elites.

$E(s,b)_4 =$  Strategy and behavior of regional actor(s) vis-à-vis international elites;  
e.g., pursuing international assistance directly (bypassing the  
center/national elites).

Style is defined as the characteristic strategy and behavior exhibited by regional elites in pursuit of both electoral gain and “higher” values like democracy and regional political and economic advancement. Although one could attempt to quantify “real change,” a more useful rule of thumb would be, do the citizenry and fellow elites perceive or *believe* that real change and more of the “higher values” have been implemented *after* the political leader came into power than before? And, since this reaches to states of mind, subjective judgements are necessary on the part of the researcher.

The difficulty of “proving

The difficulties identified by Wildavsky are addressed in this study by utilizing a standard set of variables (above) *across* regions to operationalize “leadership style,” and through the use of the concept of “elite culture” from Diamond (1999) below; i.e. it is the judgement of fellow elites, not the distant analyst, that matters in assessing the degree of “intended real change.” The focus on elite culture (beliefs, perceptions) helps escape problems identified with the approach of McFarland and Greenstein<sup>5</sup> that constraints in which a leader acts, eg. “general social forces” or the “environment,” are too vague to operationalize. Finally, by identifying a limited number of political institutional contexts (or “regimes”) in which these elites operate, and creating ideal-typical models based upon the combination of style and context, the study avoids the problem of infinite regress identified by Wildavsky.

Each of the component variables of leadership styles are hypothesized to be both dichotomous and continuous, and to show a wide range of variation when continuous.. Each of these component variables of leadership style could theoretically matter to democratic stability and bridging social capital in the following ways.

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<sup>5</sup>The books cited, respectively, are Andrew S. McFarland, *Power and Leadership in Pl*

| <b>Regional Elite Leadership Style</b>                                          | <b>Democratic stability</b>                                                                                   | <b>Social capital</b>                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>E(b,s)1</i> “choice of exit or voice options”                                | if exit option—low<br>voice option—medium to high                                                             | if exit option—low;<br>voice option—medium                                                                           |
| <i>E(b,s)2</i>                                                                  | if populism—medium to high<br>if intra-elite cooperation—low to high, depending on intent of pacting/exchange | if populism—medium to high<br>if intra-elite cooperation—very low to medium, depending on intent of pacting/exchange |
| <i>E(b,s)3</i><br>“characteristic relations with national elites/organizations” | if cooperative—medium to high<br>if confrontational—very low to medium, depending on purpose of the challenge | if cooperative—medium to high<br>if confrontational—low to medium, depending on purpose of the challenge             |
| <i>E(b,s)4</i><br>“characteristic relations with international elites/orgs”.    | if cooperative—medium to high                                                                                 | if cooperative—low to medium, depending on use of funds and expertise                                                |

include shared mind-sets, recurring social practices, etc. They are important to this study because, as Putnam notes, “they shape actors’ identities, power and strategies” (1993, 8)

**Elite strategies and behaviors** will be operationalized to mean:

1. Strategies-- calculations, plans and intentions of the identified political actors as they and other elites understand and/or perceive them;
2. Behaviors-- will be operationalized to mean elite actions that were actually observed.

**International Factors** will be operationalized to mean only those identifiable links between international and regional elites whose purpose was to directly assist a region in Spain during the phase of democratic consolidation (Phase 3 in my definition, below).

The final key variable is **Democratic Consolidation**, the ultimate dependent variable. In attempting to come to grips with this variable, the purpose is not to perform an exhaustive literature review on the concept, but rather to clarify the relationship of the independent variables to the ultimate dependent variable.

than “550 subtypes of democracy” cited in 150 recent studies of the phenomenon (Diamond 1999, 7). It is therefore with a great deal of humility and perspective that anyone should propose yet another understanding of democracy, or specific sub-components of the term.

First, some background discussion to the formal definition of democratic consolidation is in order. The concept “democratization” is a multi-dimensional term that is used in the literature for the sake of convenience and not clarity. It describes a host of historical and theoretical “moments” (or phases) on the road to self-governance that have vague beginning and ending points.

Democratization is usually broken down into two large component-phases known in the literature as “transition” and “consolidation.” A book on the consolidation of democracy in neighboring Portugal insists that:

...the issues of democratic transition and consolidation are both conceptually and empirically distinct. Whereas transitologists seek to discover the origins of a democratic regime, consolidologists search for variables that keep a regime robust, stable and durable (Manuel 1996, 1-2).

was unfair to the prospects for developing democracy elsewhere in the world, and, as it turns out, the assumption was empirically inaccurate as well (Przeworski and Limongi 1997, 156ff.).

More recently, Larry Diamond has contributed a synthetic work on the subject of democratic consolidation, drawing on his two decades of work and collaboration in this field, and his thorough knowledge of a voluminous number of cases and studies. He reminds us of the dangers of teleological assumptions that plagued the first generation of political scientists (at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century); i.e. there is nothing inevitable, permanent, or intrinsically “good” about democratic governance; rather it is the result of deliberate choice and can be undone almost as easily as it was created (1999, 273ff.). His normative concern centers around preventing a “third reverse wave” by helping to consolidate the currently fragile democracies, and even moving beyond that to an enlarged “fourth wave,” which would include much of Asia. Especially relevant to this study is his concern with the *process* of democratic consolidation, and his *indicators* of the process. His indicators are sub-divided into “norms” (or political culture) and “behavior,” much like my  $E(b,s)$ , above. The most important shared norms and behavior, he reaffirms, are on the elite level because of their disproportionate influence on the process, but any complete account should include the intermediate and mass level as well (



first step, it is not enough to bring about a genuine consolidation of democracy (see especially Rosenberg 1991). As Karl (1991, 36) notes: "The notion that you can simply have elections and resolve conflict is false; it will not work."<sup>10</sup> Diamond calls Phase 1 regimes, hollow "electoral democracies," and cites Pakistan as an example (1999, 72-73). In the same vein, Touraine (1991, 268) attempts to move beyond elections in his definition of democracy, which is as follows: "the free choice of a government which represents the interests of the majority and respects the fundamental rights of all human beings to live according to their beliefs and basic interests." The spirit of Touraine's definition will help guide this study, but it is still necessary for clarity and agreement to have technical markers of the phenomenon under discussion, as in the definition offered above.

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<sup>10</sup>A short, popular synthesis of this new literature can be found in the article, "In Failed States, Can Democracy Come Too Soon?" by Michael Massing, *New York Times*, February 23, 2002, electronic edition.























































































































































































































































































































































































