



UNIVERSITY OF
GOTHENBURG

THE **QOG** INSTITUTE

QUALITY OF GOVERNMENT

Civil War Spain versus Swedish Harmony: The Quality of Government Factor

Victor Lapuente

Bo Rothstein

QoG WORKING PAPER SERIES 2010:10

THE QUALITY OF GOVERNMENT INSTITUTE
Department of Political Science
University of Gothenburg
Box 711
SE 405 30 GÖTEBORG

April 2010

ISSN 1653-8919

Civil War Spain versus Swedish Harmony:
The Quality of Government Factor
Victor Lapuente
Bo Rothstein
QoG Working Paper Series 2010:10
April 2010
ISSN 1653-8919

Abstract:

In 1936, while Sweden gave birth to one of the most peaceful solutions to class conflict (i.e. the Neo-Corporatist Welfare State) with the iconic signature of the *Saltsjöbaden Accord*, Spain gave birth to the most violent results: the *Spanish Civil War*. Why did the political, social and economic elites choose collaboration in Sweden and violent confrontation in Spain? Building on recent findings by economic historians, this paper shows the notable socio-economic similarities between the two countries: with European-record levels of social conflict, both were also late industrialist economies enjoying remarkable growth rates as well as decreasing levels of economic inequalities. The paper underlines an overlooked factor: the public bureaucracy. In the key decades of state expansion (late 19th-early 20th century), the semi-authoritarian Sweden – where executive and administrative positions, firmly in hands of the Crown, were unaccountable to the parliament – created and consolidated a meritocratic autonomous bureaucracy which promoted impartiality and the rule of law. On the contrary, the instable and, on average, more liberal Spain – where executive and administrative positions were frequently accountable to parliamentary dynamics – built a patronage-based administration which allowed successive political incumbents to implement their most preferred policies above the rule of law. This made that in 1936, facing a leftist government extensively violating property rights, the Spanish capitalist and middle-classes, until then the least supportive of fascism in Europe, actively supported Franco's military rebellion, which ended up becoming one of the longest fascist regimes in the history.

Victor Lapuente
The Quality of Government Institute
Department of Political Science
University of Gothenburg
victor.lapuente@pol.gu.se

Bo Rothstein
The Quality of Government Institute
Department of Political Science
University of Gothenburg
bo.rothstein@pol.gu.se

A Counterfactual Comparison of Spain and Sweden

In hindsight, history often looks self-evident. Explaining different national trajectories during the 20th century in Europe, we usually take the peaceful and largely harmonious development of the Nordic countries for granted while seeing the brutal and bloody development of Spain as more or less a “natural” outcome of its historically inherited social and economic structure. In this article, we take a different view, inspired by the counterfactual approach to political events and combining this with the comparative case study method (Kiser and Levi 1996).

The counterfactual approach rests on searching after factors that never did occur but could have existed in a stream of events that led to a certain outcome. Since such counterfactuals can not be found in any archives or historical documents, the researcher in this approach needs a theory or a model that "will enable him to deduce a counterfactual situation from institutions and relationships that actually existed" (Fogel 1964, p. 224.) In this admittedly speculative approach, researchers have to justify their claim that the outcome of the historical process could have been different by presenting arguments for how and why things could have developed in a different way. Such arguments rest on making it plausible that if the postulated variable had taken on some “value different from the one that is assumed in the actual world,” (Tetlock and Belkin 1996, p. 6) , the outcome would have been different. The relevance of this approach thus hinges on making such counterfactuals plausible.

This is where the comparative case study approach enters the picture. The logic is that if it is possible to find a case B with a different outcome than case A, but for which it is not unreasonable or implausible to state that at the beginning of the process, case B had many features resembling case A, the hypothetical existence of a counterfactual can be made plausible. For example, it makes little sense to argue that if Napoleon would have had nuclear weapons at Waterloo, he would not have been defeated. However, using the comparative case method, one could argue that if he would have used the same military tactics as he did at Austerlitz, or as the Carthage army did at Cannae, Napoleon would have won at Waterloo. Since this (maybe) would have been within the reach of his command, this is a more justifiable counterfactual approach. As this simple example shows, the task for the researchers in the counterfactual approach is then to show that a)

this other tactic could have been used and b) if it had been, the outcome would in all likelihood been different. The comparative case method increases the probability that the researcher will come across counterfactuals that are not obvious if one concentrates on the single case. The counterfactual approach is thus a way to come to grasp with historical explanations that are over-determined by structural factors and that do not give any room for explanations that points at, for example, the strategic choices made by agents or how they operate to change existing or create new institutional settings.

Interwar Europe was a time with intense political conflicts and dramatic clashes between the left and the right. However, the result of these confrontations varied dramatically from the establishment of Leninist and then Stalinist communism in Russia, Fascism in Austria, Germany and Italy, civil war in Spain and peaceful reconciliation between organized labour, the farmers' movement and capital in the Scandinavian countries. The year when the Spanish war started, 1936, was also the year when the famous Saltsjöbaden Accord was signed between the Swedish Trade Union movement and the Swedish Employers' federation which became the backbone for the country's uniquely long period of peaceful and productive collaboration between the parties on the labour market and the state. Thus in this year, while Sweden was giving birth to the probably most admired solution to the class-based type of social conflict worldwide (the Neo-Corporatist Welfare State), Spain gave birth to the most despised one (Civil War).

By comparing these two extreme cases using the counterfactual approach we hope to shed light on factors that have not been obvious in the many analyses – mostly, case-studies – that have sought to explain these different countries' historical trajectories. In particular, our interest is if such a comparison would make it possible to find out some variable (i.e, the counterfactuals) that may have been neglected in explaining the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (SCW). Even if the SCW probably has provoked more books than any other civil war (Beevor 2002: 7), numerous questions remain open to debate. Many of them have of course been (and still are) subject to ideologically charged controversies (Stradling 2008, Payne 2006). The central dilemma in the debate is why Spain, a semi-prosperous parliamentary democracy, entered in such a spiral of political radicalization conducive to some of the most horrendous episodes of violence, by both leftish and rightist extremists, in the history of Western countries?

While the literature has extensively emphasized all the usual suspects as determinants of the SCW – e.g. the international system and the influence of foreign powers; the acute socio-economic, ethno-linguistic or religious cleavages; and the weak democratic or liberal tradition –, the characteristics of the Spanish state and its bureaucracy have mostly been overlooked. To start with, by Spanish administrative scholars themselves, who have tended to regard the Spanish bureaucracy during the Republic as a “quite pond” in a tumultuous environment (Nieto 1976, p.567). The goal of this paper is to underline the importance of two interconnected characteristics of the Spanish bureaucratic state for explaining the collapse of the democratic Republic: the lack of rule of law based on the concept of impartiality and the extensive patronage in personnel policies.

In doing so, we also depart from the traditional approach to the SCW – mostly based on a single case-study methodology. We adopt instead a more comparative perspective, selecting according to the main relevant independent variable (i.e. the bureaucratic structure). As a consequence, we explore the different approach to politics of the state and the rule of law in two countries, Sweden and Spain, which, on the one hand, experienced similar levels of social conflict but, on the other, had inherited very different bureaucratic structures and perspectives on the importance of the rule of law. In the second half of the 19th century, the semi-authoritarian Swedish state – where executive and administrative positions, firmly in hands of the Crown, were not controlled by the parliament – created and consolidated a meritocratic autonomous bureaucracy which was centered on the respect for impartiality and the rule of law (Rothstein 1998). On the contrary, the instable and, on average, more liberal and democratic Spanish state – where executive and administrative positions were frequently controlled by parliamentary dynamics – built a patronage-based administration where either liberal or conservative incumbents consolidated one of the most extensive “spoils system” in the Western world – the so called *cesantía* system in the literature (Jiménez-Asensio 1989: 42; Parrado 2000: 252).

Spain and Sweden: more “similar cases” than at first sight

A first issue we must address is why Sweden in the 1930s, where the foundations of the harmonious Neo-Corporatist Welfare State were laid down as a solution to social conflict, may represent an appropriate comparative counterfactual to 1930s Spain, where social conflict escalated into the most violent forms. A quick intuitive objection to this comparison would be to underline the historically divergent cultural approaches to violence across Europe, and specially between the more peaceful Nordic and the more violence-ridden Southern-Mediterranean societies. Nevertheless, the peacefulness of the Nordic countries can be questioned by pointing at the numerous, although frequently overlooked in the comparative historiography, examples of violent social conflicts in those societies.

The clearest case would be the gruesome civil war that took place in Finland in 1918 between “reds” and “whites”. This war, in which many Swedish speaking Finns took part specially at high levels of command, contained horrible atrocities against unarmed civilians, summary mass executions of enemy combatants, interference from outside military forces and the use of concentration camps in which after the war had ended the winning side let thousands of soldiers and civilians from the losing side starve to death (Roselius 2009; Ylikangas 1995). According to recent estimations, more than one percent of the total Finish population lost their lives in the 1918 civil war. This makes the Finish conflict, if any, even more dramatic than the Spanish one since, despite a very similar proportion of population died, Spain lost those lives over a period of three years, not three months (Ylikangas 1998). Episodes of class violence were also frequent during the first decades of the 20th century in other Scandinavian countries. As late as 1931, the Swedish military fired against protesting unarmed workers killing five persons (Johansson 2001). Going further back in history, violent conflict was as systemic in the Nordic countries as in other parts of Europe. Denmark and Sweden were arch enemies who fought ten bloody wars between the 15th and the beginning of the 19th century and were both involved in most of the major continental wars that took place.

When the modern industrial era starts the historically warlike Sweden, similar to Spain, had been reduced from a major to a minor European power. If Spain had lost most of its colonies, Sweden lost not only its conquests on the European continent but also, in

1809, a great portion of what was considered the Swedish national territory, Finland, which had been an integrated part of the country for six-hundred years.

As well, it can be argued that comparing a Nordic (and traditionally over-achieving) European country like Sweden with a Mediterranean (and traditionally under-achieving) one like Spain neglects their historically notable political, legal and administrative differences. Many divergences may be pointed out: the unequal adoption of the Roman law, the opposite way local communities were internally organized and externally integrated into higher forms of political power during the late Middle Ages or the diverse form of parliamentary representation of social classes during the Modern Era (Ertman 1997). Nevertheless, in relation to the key independent variable in this study – the bureaucratic structure of the state – as an increasing body of evidence indicates, the similarities in terms of patronage between the early 19th century state apparatuses of Sweden (or other Scandinavian or Anglo-Saxon country) and those of Spain (or other Mediterranean country) were as striking as their differences at the end of the 19th century.¹ History matters, but some historical periods may matter more than others and we argue here, following comparative literature on state formation (e.g. Silberman 1993, North, Weingast and Wallis 2009) that the decisive decades in state formation from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century mattered specially.

Regarding cultural or religious differences – such as Protestant vs. Catholic ethics, higher vs. lower levels social trust or particularistic vs. universalistic political cultures – our defense is weaker, since it is inherently difficult to falsify cultural explanations. Nevertheless, as also recent studies, including experimental research, indicate, cultural variables that we tend to assign to deeply rooted characteristics, such as a given level of generalized trust, may be the *result*, and not so much the *cause*, of a certain type of state (Rothstein and Stolle 2008, Rothstein and Eek 2009). In other words, this research indicates that it is more likely that the “virtuous” characteristics of the Swedish society, such as its well-known high level of social trust, to be the result of impartial state institutions than vice versa. In the relatively corrupt-ridden 19th century it

¹ For an overview of how early 19th century patronage-ridden administrations evolved worldwide, see Silberman’s (1993) *Cages of Reason*. Rothstein (1998) and Lapuente (2007) offer detailed accounts of the 19th century evolution of the Swedish and the Spanish administrations respectively.

is plausible to assume that a corrupt state biased towards the interests of some privileged groups was, at least, not helping (and likely undermining) social trust.

The vast majority of scholarly as well as popular accounts of the SCW tend to explain the high degree of political radicalization in 1930s Spain as the result of an “objective” economic structure and/or social conflict.² In general, some specific characteristics of the economy are thought to have given rise to an elevated socio-economic conflict. These characteristics should be, although scholars tend to downplay a bit this aspect, significantly different from other European countries which did not share the Spanish violent experience. One pervasive argument is that the 1930s Spanish polarized politics would simply mirror – or amplify – a deeply-rooted socio-economic polarization in the economy and in particular in the agricultural sector.

Against this prevailing view it should be noted, in the first place, that the existence of relatively advanced social conditions did not preclude many interwar European countries from experiencing violent authoritarian takeovers. For instance, it is frequently remarked the disastrous political consequences for the fate of interwar democracies of having a large percentage of the labour force in the agricultural sector. That would be, for example, the case of Spain or Italy, where people working in the agriculture (many of them peasants) presented a 56 percent of the total labor force in the middle of the interwar period. Landless agricultural workers would be more easily persuaded to join either revolutionary or fascist movements. However, when we compare the weight of the agrarian sector in the failing interwar democracies with that of the surviving ones,³ no apparent pattern emerges. As a matter of fact, some of the countries which experienced the most notorious fascists or authoritarian takeovers had some of the smallest agricultural labour forces in Europe, such as Germany (30.7%) or Austria (31.9%). Generally speaking, there seems to be no clear relation between the level of “sophistication” of the economic structure of an European interwar democracy and its

² It is impossible to summarize here what probably constitutes the largest bibliography on the causes of a civil war. Some classical accounts would be Preston (1994) *The coming of the Spanish Civil War*; Thomas (1977) *The Spanish Civil War*, Carr (1971) *The Republic and the Civil War in Spain* or Brenan (1943) *The Spanish labyrinth*. Stradling (2007) offers – and critically reviews – a selection of recent bibliography that would fall within the category of counts within the category of ‘Revisionist’ History.

³ Out of the 28 states of the Western world, 26 possessed parliamentary democracies in 1920. By 1938, 16 of the 26 countries had succumbed to dictatorship (Mann 1993:2).

probabilities of survival, as Luebbert's (1987) pioneering attack on simple structuralist explanations shows.

Similarly, this paper argues that the existence of a high level of social conflict between organized social classes does not need to lead to civil conflict. The reason is that when it comes to economic conflicts, the main issue parties are in conflict about – money – can be endlessly divided. This is contrary to ethnic and religious conflicts which are “either or” values. Conflicts about a value that can be endlessly divided should, we argue, give rise to processes characterized by negotiations instead of open violence since these conflicts are not “either-or” games and usually also not “zero-sum” games (Rothstein 2005). In a conflict of interests between workers organized in unions and employers' organizations, both types of institutions have much to lose if the conflict results in strikes or blockades since such open conflicts are very costly for the organizations. For example, judging by the number of days of production lost due to industrial dispute, Sweden had, from 1890 to the mid-1930s more social conflict than any other Western country (Åmark 1992). Yet, *precisely because of those circumstances*, actors in Sweden came to realize that constant industrial conflicts – strikes, blockades, boycotts and lockouts – were extremely costly for them. Moreover, they also saw that in the end, almost all conflicts resulted in negotiations about a new contract. From this came a mutual understanding that both parties had much to win if it would be possible to reach such a new contract without having to take to open conflicts. The labor-capital conflict obviously remained, but from 1936 onwards the parties found out that they had a mutual interest in avoiding the high costs of open conflicts (Rothstein 2005).

Spain, with a level of economic backwardness of semi-prosperous Western country (closer to 1930s Sweden than to 1917 Russia), and with a level of industrial conflict at least not higher than other strike-ridden societies that managed to establish a social compromise to “deactivate” the economic class struggle such as Sweden, Spain came to suffer the most backward form of conflict – a brutal and enormously costly civil war. On both sides, extensive episodes of violence took place against non-combatant civilians who simply happened to think differently. An adequate account of the Spanish extremely violent outcome requires explaining why the social, economic and political elites of the Spanish Republic, unlike their counterparts in several other European

countries, were not able to deactivate this social conflict and propose compromising solutions that would have benefitted all in comparison with what happened.

It can be argued that, in retrospect, it is easy to state that the armed solution produced the worst outcome for (almost) all relevant social and political forces, but that, *ex ante*, given the high degree of uncertainty and informational problems, both main left and right wing political forces had no other feasible alternative as to engage in open armed conflict. We claim that a review of the events preceding the outbreak of the civil war – which, as Payne (2006, p.IX) remarks, have surprisingly been subject to little attention given the vast bibliography on the SCW – speaks strongly against this argument. A study of the statements and behaviour of relevant representatives of the civil society reveals numerous opportunities for compromising in which actors exhibited a fairly accurate level of information about the potentially catastrophic consequences of adopting a non-compromising extremist position. The main actors repeatedly chose violent confrontation over compromise/collaboration.

For example, as late as June 7th 1936, only one month before the outbreak of the war, 126 local and regional employers' associations published a manifesto in *La Veu de Catalunya* in which they showed their willingness to reach broad labor-capital compromise. They were ready to accept most points of the leftist Popular Front's governmental economic program, including some of the most controversial labor regulations. It is important to bear in mind that the minister of industry, Plácido Álvarez-Buylla, had clearly stated the government had the "educational" responsibility to change the terms of industrial relations (Cabrera 1983, Payne 2006). In exchange, employers' organizations asked the government to pass elemental measures to keep a basic capitalist activity while economic interactions were subject to constant disruption. They, like many government officials, were conscious that capital was fleeing the country as a result of constant violations of property rights and the rule of law. Nevertheless, these were tolerated and even encouraged by government officials – specially in those provinces civil governorships and in the local councils. Unlike what happened in other parts of Europe, including Sweden, it was Spanish employers' associations themselves the ones who suggested the creation of a national "labor conference". Yet this offer, similar to later ones by the national chambers of commerce and industry in Madrid on June 26th and

July 5th in the newspaper *El Sol*— that is, only two weeks before the war broke out – were plainly rejected by the government (Payne 2006, p. 257).

There are solid reasons to believe that, had this offer been taken seriously by the government, the events in the next few weeks could have been quite different. Not only the upper- and middle-classes would have been reluctant to join the fascist-military uprising that took place on July 17th, but the vast majority of military officers who eventually took part in it, including many of the leading figures such as Franco himself, would have had serious reservations to participate. As Payne (2006) extensively documents, “el director” of the military plot, General Mola, would probably have initiated the rebellion anyway given his deep convictions, yet his prospects of success, given the scarce resources mobilized in the preceding months, would have probably been even more meagre than General Sanjurjo’s 1932 failing attempt. The vast majority of officers were conscious of recent history of military disasters in Spain and they did not want to commit to a rebellion, even if headed by the charismatic Mola. As Payne (2006, p. 314) notes, “many would-be rebels committed themselves fully to the revolt only after reaching the negative conclusion that it would be more dangerous for them if they did not.”

One interesting testimony that the fascist or conspiracy zeal among the majority of military officers was clearly lacking until the very last moment – not even days, but merely hours before the war’s outbreak – is that of Captain Pérez Salas. Since he remained loyal to the Republic during the SCW, Pérez Salas can hardly be considered a biased anti-Republic observer. For him, what made large numbers of officers to support the rebellion was not even the assassination of the rightist leader Calvo Sotelo on July 12th, traditionally considered as the trigger of the SCW. In his own words, “in no way would it have been the drop of water that made the glass overflow” (Payne 2006, p. 333). What affected the decisions of hundreds of key rank-and-file officers was the flagrant violation of the rule of law embodied by the fact that it was representatives of the Republican public forces the ones who had committed the assassination of the opposition leader. For Captain Pérez Salas, “after the details were revealed and it was learned that the forces of public order had themselves been involved, the reaction was tremendous...It is futile to try to deny the importance of this fact. If the forces of public order, on whom

the rights and security of citizens depend, are capable of carrying out this kind of act, they effectively demonstrate their lack of discipline and obliviousness to the sacred mission” (ibid). It is at this point, and not earlier, when a large number of military officials reached the conclusion that it was more dangerous not to rebel than to rebel.

If the capitalist classes, far from an early support for a “fascist” solution, an showed until the very last minute an approach at least as conciliatory as other European employers’ associations, something similar can be argued of their political representatives. This can be inferred by the conciliatory remarks by members of the bourgeois in the Cortes – specially of the Catalans Ventosa or Cambó – as well as by their recent experience in government. The relatively mild response from the centre-right government in the aftermath to the 1934 revolutionary insurrection, involving between 15.000 and 30.000 armed workers, may be an illustration in this sense.

The fighting lasted for only two weeks but caused about a thousand lives and huge economic costs. Several thousands workers who had taken part in the fighting were arrested and the initial repressive military operation had been harsh. Nevertheless, the retaliation against them from the authorities was, according to Beevor (2006, p. 35), “extremely lenient”, compared to the standards used in other European countries at this time. Payne (2006, p.102) goes further, arguing that “the liberality of the Spanish system was astounding.” Most imprisoned revolutionaries were set free already in 1935 and only one out of a total of twenty dead sentences was carried out, representing the mildest repression of a revolutionary insurrection by any either democratic or authoritarian state in 19th or 20th century Western Europe. While in Germany, Estonia, Italy, Hungary or Finland the perpetrators of the revolutionary leftish uprisings were severely repressed and frequently disenfranchised to take part in future elections, in Spain all the revolutionary organizations were allowed to continue their activities. In addition, instead of using the control of some key elements of the state apparatus to adopt an authoritarian turn in the regime to perpetuate repression as a response to organized workers’ revolutionary zeal (like their Italian or Hungarian counterparts), the capitalist-like political forces in Spain – while dominating parliamentary politics during the so-called *bienio negro* (1933-1936) – did not support any authoritarian twist and continued to abide by the Constitution.

Another example of the conciliatory approach of the Spanish bourgeois would be the government initiatives launched by the post-1934-revolution labor minister Federico Salmón. As a representative of the social Catholic branch of the bourgeoisie, Salmón did not dismantle the workers-friendly *jurados mixtos* (joint arbitration committees) established by his Socialist predecessor Largo Caballero. Instead, and similar to what happened in countries where the social-democratic consensus was being built, Salmón introduced civil servants as presidents of the *jurados* in a movement towards neutrality and effectiveness (Payne 2006, p. 108). Had they been accepted by the social actors, these *jurados* would have likely resemble more the impartial Swedish *förlikningskommission* – highly respected arbitrators by both employers and employees – than the mostly one-sided *jurados* devised by Largo Caballero.

Nevertheless, following the general radicalization of the left forces, both the anarcho-syndicalist union CNT and the socialist union UGT refused to participate in the reformed arbitration committees. This rejection unbalanced these *jurados* that in other countries had become cornerstones to transform the social actors' perceptions of the labor-capital conflict from a zero-sum game into a positive-sum game. It would also be premature to assign the reluctance of the unions to compromise to their historical unconciliatory approach. That may be true for the anarcho-syndicalist CNT who, nonetheless, had seen its membership shrinking from one to half million in a few years. Yet this cannot be argued of the Socialist UGT who presented a long history of collaborationist attitude in comparative perspective – including under Primo de Rivera's (1923-1930) dictatorship.

Social actors knew the potentially explosive consequences of the lack of social compromise. A representative of the Catalan bourgeois, Juan Ventosa, stated in April in the Cortes: "I call your attention the similarities between Spain and Germany", in reference to the possibilities that an authoritarian takeover would happen soon in Spain (Payne 2006, p. 249). The editor of *La Vanguardia* echoed the same words a few weeks later: "How many votes did the fascists have in Spain in the last election? None: a ridiculously small amount... Today, on the other hand, travellers returning from different parts of the country are saying: 'there everybody is becoming a fascist' (...) What has

happened? What has happened is simply that (...) there is no government” (Payne 2006, p. 267).

In sum, the Spanish bourgeois exhibited willingness to advance towards compromise with organized labor, although this inclination has tended to be overlooked for long by scholars – probably as a result of the lack of comparative edge in most analyses. Case-study methodology, the overwhelmingly prevalent in the studies of the SCW, is prone to emphasize the dynamics that directly led to the civil war (e.g. right-wing support to the military conspiracy) and overlook the dynamics that could have led to peace (e.g. right-wing support to social compromise). In other words, they embody what some regard as one of the main pathologies of social science: the focus on the things that went wrong or “misery research” (Rothstein 1998, p. 62).

Why Madrid became Moscow and not Stockholm?

This section explores the behaviour of a Spanish political elite who rejected social compromise. The intriguing general question is why did the representatives of the main political forces fail to agree in, even if very precarious, basic institutional arrangements to deal with the socio-economic conflict? Additionally, there are specific puzzles regarding the behaviour of the mainstream political parties: in the right, left and centre of the ideological spectrum. Firstly, in relation to the forces on the right, why did conservative upper-class landowners as well as many urban middle-classes rally around the fascist (or pseudo-fascist) solution proposed by the army rebels in July 1936? As we have seen above, in comparison with other Spanish parties, the large democratic right-wing political parties were committed to the Republican institutions until the very eve of the military coup itself, even when a great part of left had already adopted an explicit revolutionary program (Payne 2004, 2006). When the military-fascist uprising took place, the political forces of the right (with few exceptions, such as the Basque Nationalist) would massively and actively support the coup. One of the most curious paradoxes of the 20th century comparative politics remains thus as to why the country with probably the lowest level of

political support for fascism in the interwar Europe, Spain,⁴ ended up having one of the longest semi-fascist authoritarian regimes in the history (1936/39-1975).

The political behaviour of the parliamentary left presents more intriguing puzzles. It is important to devote some attention to some comparative striking differences between the Spanish and other European mainstream Socialist parties. In Spain, experience in government did not have the expected moderating effect – as it would be the case in other European countries, such as Sweden or France – on the left forces in general and on the Socialist party (PSOE) in particular. This is the more surprising if we take into account that the Spanish Socialists occupied relevant cabinet positions in democratic governments – e.g. PSOE's Largo Caballero and Prieto became ministers of labor and finance respectively in 1931 – before most major Socialist parties in Europe – including the highly influential French one. Not only that but, in addition, the Spanish socialists had allowed the active collaborationist position of its union UGT in the 1920s authoritarian regime of Primo de Rivera – an attitude directly unconceivable for most of their European counterparts. As Payne (2004, 2006) notes, there were important forces inside the PSOE who in the early 1930s argued that the party should take inspiration from the compromise policies used by the Scandinavian Social Democrats. Furthermore, historically, the PSOE had been a founding member of the social democratic Second International (1889) and it had mostly remained a typical party of that international (Payne 2004, p. 9). That is, it kept a Marxist program in theory, but its praxis was mostly social democratic.

From exhibiting one of the most “collaborationist” attitudes in Europe, the Spanish Socialists would evolve in a short period of time into the uncompromising radical force that masterminded the 1934 revolutionary insurrection. PSOE and UGT's radicalization, according to most observers constitutes a (or the) key element in the collapse of the Spanish Republic (Graham 1990, Redero San Román 1992: 15; Beavor 2006, 34f, Payne 2004, 2006). In 1931, right after joining the government of the Republic, both leaders' public statements and government program would probably put PSOE to the right of the French Socialists and in par ideologically with the German or

⁴ As late as five months before the SCW started, in the general elections of February 1936 the fascist party, *Falange*, obtained 46,466 votes – scarcely a 0.5% of the total (Linz and De Miguel 1977). And, at the outbreak of the SCW in July 1936, it only had around 10,000 affiliates.

Scandinavian Social Democrats (Payne 2006: 43). On the contrary, in 1933-34, right after abandoning power, the Spanish Socialists would be closer to a standard Bolshevik party. Only a few days after the electoral defeat of the left in the 1933 elections, the executive commissions of both PSOE and UGT agreed that, in case the right should take power, the Socialists “would have to rebel energetically” (Julia 1989, p.85; Payne 2006, p. 54). In words of several outstanding figures of the party, including Largo Caballero – often called the “Spanish Lenin” – the goal was now the “dictatorship of the proletariat”, irrespective of the violent means to achieve it. A direct quote from Largo Caballero after the 1934 insurrection reads: “I want a Republic without a class war, but for them to happen, one class has to disappear”. In the light of statements like this, as Beevor argues, the middle classes did not need to be reminded “the horrors which followed the Russian revolution and Lenin’s determination to annihilate the bourgeoisie” (2006, p 36).

It is important to note here that scholars point out that the radicalization of both the socialist party and its union happened immediately after leaving power. As Santos Juliá (1994, p. 181) remarks, “as soon as they lost their place in government, the leaders of the UGT took up the practice of the revolutionary general strike, whose manifest goal was no longer simply obtaining improvements for the working class, but rather the destruction of the Republic and the seizure of power.” Shortly after losing the November 1933 elections, at the beginnings of 1934, Largo Caballero himself became the head a Revolutionary Liaison Committee in which members of the main Socialist organizations would start to organize an insurrection that should have “all the characteristics of a civil war” (Largo Caballero 1934/1985, p. 84).

Historians emphasize that this radicalization was not a preventive reaction against an either authoritarian turn or an extreme pro-business attitude of the newly elected government – actually, headed by the moderate Alejandro Lerroux and not by the winners of the 1933 parliamentary elections: the right-wing Catholic CEDA. First, “no one identified Lerroux with fascism” and, second, “no one, not even Lerroux, thought that within two months he would have to govern with the parliamentary support of the CEDA (Juliá 1989, 79). That is, the radicalization of the Socialists did not seem to obey to policy or programmatic concerns. In one of the most established historical analysis of the Spanish socialists (and that this paper sees key for understanding Spanish violence in

comparative perspective), Santos Julia shows that “it was enough for the Socialists to find themselves excluded from government power to announce their new political intentions” (ibid, 1989, 79). It seems that the Spanish Socialists valued remaining in power more than the objective fulfilment of their programmatic demands – at least when we compare them with the mainstream Socialist European parties of the second international (e.g. the Swedish SAP), who were able to reach social compromise while in opposition. Why?

Before addressing that question, let’s have a look onto the possibly most puzzling of all political behaviours: that of the Republican parties that roughly occupied the centre-left and the centre-right of the ideological spectrum. They provided the politicians with both the greatest governmental responsibilities and the greatest veto powers, such as Alcalá-Zamora, Azaña, Lerroux, among other members of what essentially were middle class parties. It is specially surprising that this middle-class “petit-bourgeois” political centre did not energetically act to prevent the collapse of the Republic. Not only were they king-makers (the Republican Presidents, Alcalá-Zamora and Azaña, enjoyed wide powers to draft cabinets almost at will), but they were also “kings” in their own right, having an overwhelmingly strong representation in the main executive positions, from Prime Ministers to ministerial undersecretaries. Nevertheless, while systematically excluding political collaboration with moderate right-wing parties and neglecting business associations’ calls for social compromise, both left-of-the-centre (as well as right-of-the-centre) Republican parties tolerated or even stimulated the process of political radicalization.

Particularly in the preceding months to the SCW, centre-of-the-spectrum forces allowed widespread violations of the rule of law, including illegal seizures of property, several waves of unpunished property destruction, impunity of criminal action for members of the parliamentary majority (*Frente Popular*) and hundreds or thousands of arbitrary political arrests. This represented a puzzle to understand for many groups of the time, chief among them business and landowners. While the confiscation of land without compensation “for reasons of social utility” was extended, one-sided labor terms increasingly onerous for business were imposed in many parts of the country. For instance, the six-hour workday (including the time spent travelling from home to the workplace) was established in the Seville province (Macarro Vera 2000, Payne 2006). In

some parts of the south, harvest wages doubled from 1935 to 1936 (Malefakis 1970). Some landowners associations, in many cases expressing unequivocal commitment to the Republican values, argued that the cost of harvest would exceed its value (Payne 2006, p. 263). Yet their claims were ignored by the government.

As a result, there was a widespread flight of many landowners from the countryside. However, instead of take into account landowners' complaints, the reaction of Republican government was to physically prevent the flight, restricting the issuing of passports and studying the measures proposed by the Socialists to require people to remain in their towns. This implied, in words of an opposition MP in the Cortes, "asserting a novel legal theory that inverted standard exiles and deportations, turning them inside out" (Macarro Vera 2000, p. 443). As Payne states, "landowners could not understand why the left Republican governments permitted such extremism and anarchy, since they considered the left Republicans, as Azaña considered himself, to be 'bourgeois' and in favour of private property"(2006, p. 260). Most violations of property rights and the rule of law were undertaken by civil governorships and local councils in hands of the Socialists and not the more centre-oriented Left Republicans. Yet the Left Republicans controlling the central government did not make almost any use of the resources of the state apparatus in their hands in order to stop this process. The behaviour and attitude of the centre Republican governmental officials led by Azaña increasingly alienated its three main natural constituencies: middle and low army officers, social middle-classes and the foreign residents. As a result, these groups would ended up becoming pivotal supporters of Franco's military rebellion.

Regarding middle and low army officers, the episodes are too numerous as to explain at length, but two examples may illustrate the growing disaffection of the armed forces towards their political superiors. For instance, when the home of one army officer in Alcala de Henares was set fire by leftists in May 1936, the Prime Minister Casares Quiroga, himself a life-long protégée of Azaña, instead of prosecuting the fire perpetrators, ordered the army unit of the officer to move within two days. Similarly, in Oviedo, clashes between workers and Civil Guards (public security guards militarily organized) ended with the detention and prosecution of exclusively Civil Guards (Payne 2006, p.265).

In his detailed account on the collapse of the Spanish Republic, Payne (2006) emphasizes that middle classes were one of the social groups who suffered the most the *Frente Popular* government that emerged from the February 1936 elections. Its major aim, according to Prime Minister Casares Quiroga in his inaugural speech in the parliament, would be “an all-out attack” against the “enemies” (of the Republic), who would eventually be “crushed”. The government would promote the politicization of justice and he added that “when it has to do with fascism, I will be unable to remain impartial. I declare to you that this government is belligerent against fascism” (Payne 2006, p. 248). In a country where the official fascist party represented 0.5 percent of the electorate, it was obvious that the governmental classification of fascist could be arbitrarily extended to cover any social collective considered as dangerous. The religious middle-classes would become soon a main target. The minister of public instruction in Casares Quiroga’s government, Francisco Barnés, made of the closure of the religious congregations’ schools and of the illegal confiscation of private schools an official policy (Robinson 1970, p. 226). Not only priests, but also churchgoers were harassed and “were made to feel that it was unsafe to attend Mass” (Malefakis 1970, p. 374). Additionally, higher civil servants, such as judges and prosecutors, were forced to retire in a straight attack against the rule of law (Payne 2006; 252). Economically, the ambitious expansion of major budget categories (at a time in which public debt was skyrocketing) set by the 1936 Republican government was severely criticized by the parliamentary opposition and eventually by the finance minister, Gabriel Franco. Unable to push through a sound progressive tax reform and to force his government peers to set priorities in public expenditures, Franco resigned (Payne 2006, p. 252).

The economic and political disorder contributed to increase the fears of the foreign community in Spain. The representatives of several embassies – e.g. Argentina, Britain, Germany and the Netherlands – met already in April 1936 to coordinate asylum requests if the government could not prevent a revolutionary breakdown (Payne 2006, p. 269). In particular, the assassination of the British director of a textile factory in Barcelona triggered the panic of British citizens in both Spain and Britain. These international doubts on the Spanish government’s ability (or will) to prevent a social revolution have extensively being explored, among others, in the works of Moradiellos

(1991), Payne (2006) or Little (1988) – the latter one with the illustrative title of “Red Scare, 1936: Anti-Bolshevism and the Origins of the British Non-Intervention in the Spanish Civil War.” In sum, middle and low army officers, social middle-classes and foreign residents and investors, in the light of the systematic violations of impartiality and the rule of law, were increasingly abandoning their support for the Republican centre parties and in general for the institutions of the Republic.

The Quality of Government Factor and the outbreak of Civil Wars

This paper does not aim to answer all these puzzling behaviours among the Spanish Republican political elite, among other reasons because one cannot disregard the importance of irrational motivations in many politicians or, to the say the least, of an “extremely bounded” rationality in a large number of them.⁵ Nevertheless, this paper argues here that institutional factors can be more convincing than psychological ones in this case, since *the willingness to curb the rule of law to remain in power* – at the risk of the ignition of a civil war – cut across all the Spanish political elite, unlike what happened in the relatively similar Sweden.

There seems to be a systematic pattern in the way politicians who “touched power” behaved in office and we argue that this could have had a decisive role in transforming the Spain’s social conflicts into a violent confrontation. Republican incumbents seemed to give an overwhelming preference to party interests over basic respect for the rule of law and, in particular, they seemed to prioritize the implementation of policies that maximized the delivery of targeted clientelistic policies and the occupation of all sort of positions in the entire state politico-administrative apparatus. Unlike their European counterparts, the access to power gave Spanish incumbents access also to a long list of administrative positions to fill with party zealots,

⁵ In particular, the probably most powerful and charismatic figure during the Republic, Azaña, exhibited frequently such a degree of blindness to basic empirical evidence that it is almost impossible not to give partial credit to explanations based on his megalomaniac personality traits for the demise of Republican institutions. For example, he was frequently recalled that if no significant shift of policy was undertaken, uncontrollable violent leftish revolution and/or an equally violent military uprising would be the most likely outcome in just a few months. Socialist newspapers, like *Claridad*, regularly reminded him of his role as a “Spanish Kerenski”. One major reason for this Azaña’s apparently naïve behaviour would lie in a personality defined by fellow ministers at the time, like Miguel Maura, as “pitiless in his judgements of others and their actions (Maura 1968, p. 223) and by recent scholars as “aloof, acerbic and arrogant” (Payne 2006, p. 15).

cronies or members of clientelistic networks. The extensive politicization of the bureaucracy was the result of the particular design of the Spanish administrative state, which took shape during the 19th century, and specially during the second-half, considered by most administrative scholars as a critical juncture in the formation of most Western states (e.g. see Silberman 1993, North, Wallis & Weingast 2009, Rothstein 2009).

We also follow here a recent trend in the research on the outbreak of civil wars. Generally speaking, one can detect a shift in focus in the comparative literature on the causes of civil conflicts: the emphasis has moved from socio-economic characteristics to the characteristics of the state (Fearon and Laitin 2003, Collier 2009, Öberg and Melander 2009, Rothstein 2009b). These scholars are pointing at the character of the state as an important reason for why civil wars start in some settings and not in others. The lack of impartiality in the implementation of laws and policies – considered in the literature as the defining element of “quality of government” (Rothstein & Teorell (2008) – is seen as a major factor for explaining civil wars.

For example, in his analysis of the outbreak of the Civil War in former Yugoslavia, Rothstein shows that the Serb minority in the then newly created Croatian state initially accepted their role as a minority given that their civil rights would be respected by the new government. The radicalization of the Serb minority in Croatia that escalated into violence and the following civil war, took place as a response to a set of major violations of the principles of the rule-of-law, of equal protection under the law and respect for the minority rights that the Serb minority interpreted as real threats to their lives and their possibility to coexist in the new Croatian state. The argument is that it is not being outvoted in elections that will destroy the legitimacy of the political order in the eyes of the losing minority. Instead, it is if they have reason to fear that the winning side will use their powers to destroy the state impartiality in its exercise of power. If belonging to minority not only implies that your influence of the enactment of new policies will be very low, but if it also implies you can not count on being protected by the police, on be given an equal chance to apply for public contracts and government jobs or on getting a fair and impartial treatment by courts and other public authorities that

your livelihood depends on, then legitimacy breaks down and the result may be civil strife that can escalate to full blown civil war (Rothstein 2009).

According to Payne (2004, 2006), as well as Beevor (2009) this is what happened during the popular front government in Spain and what later drove the middle class into the arms of rightist insurrection. As Payne writes: “by refusing to enforce the law equally and by intensifying its policy of harassment of the right, the time would come when many moderate conservatives would be willing to ally themselves with the radical right” (2006. p. 365). Moreover, "it was impossible for the opposition to obtain honest government and equal enforcement of the law" (ibid). This list of violations of the principles of impartiality and equal protection under the rule of law by the popular front government would include, according to Payne, the following:

- Illegal seizures of property
- Several thousand arbitrary police arrests of members of rightist parties
- Impunity of criminal action for members of Popular Front parties
- The politization of justice through new legislation and policies, in order to facilitate arbitrary political arrests and prosecution and to place the rightist parties outside the law
- Subversion of the security forces through reappointment of revolutionary police officers earlier prosecuted for their violent and subversive actions

Obviously some of the targets of these violations of the rule of law were either relatives or fellow party members of the relatively “bourgeois” government parties. In those cases, and basically only in those cases, Casares Quiroga’s government acted. As Payne (2006, p.260) shows, the government only protected the small and medium landowners *who were members of the Republicans parties* instead of *forcefully applying the law* (Payne 2006, p.260). The key figures in the protection of the interests and private property of the Republican parties extensive clientelistic networks were the politically appointed provincial civil governors, who enjoyed a wide array of mechanisms at their disposal, including the replacement of local councils and the discretionary control of the security forces.

It is interesting to compare the situation in 1936 Spain with the current “democracies in dangerous places” analyzed by Paul Collier (2009). His explanation of the standard

violent breakdown of democracy in a stereotypical “bottom billion” country could be applied to 1936 Spain: “if there are no limits on the power of the winner, the election becomes a matter of life and death. If this life-and-death struggle is not itself subject to rules of conduct, the contestants are driven to extremes. The result is not democracy: it think of it as *democracy*” (2009, p.17). In Spain the government, first, hardly had limits to appoint hundreds of positions in the central administration and, thanks to the politically dependent position of civil governor, could replace many positions at local level. In the second place, there were no limits to the governmental capacity to create new positions in the state apparatus – such as the *Assault Guards* – who were politically driven. These Republican guards would play a decisive role in most of the violations of the rule of law during the Republic and in particular in the dramatic events of July 12th, when a group of assault guards (specifically the socialist militant Luis Cuenca) killed the political leader of the Spanish right Calvo Sotelo.⁶ In sum, for the hundreds or thousands of members of the parties in government who obtained a salary from the public budget, consolidating themselves in power was much more decisive than for the members of equivalent European parties, who, on the contrary, could not aim to occupy positions in the state apparatus.

It is at precisely at this point that it is interesting to compare the radicalization of PSOE in the 1930s with its Swedish “sister party”, the SAP, which came to power in a coalition government in 1933. Not only did the SAP respect the impartiality principles of the state and ruled within full respect of the equal protection under the rule of law principles. The party leadership had since long taken a very firm stance against the opposite type of programmatic ideas launched by communists and anarchists. One reason for that law-abiding behaviour was that the SAP and their close allies in the union movement had no reason to fear that the right wing parties, when in power, would part from impartiality, meritocracy and equal protection under the rule of law as guiding principles for the Swedish bureaucracy. After gaining power in 1933, the SAP faced a situation with very high levels of industrial disputes, strikes and lockouts on the labour

⁶ By profession, Calvo Sotelo was a high civil servant, a state lawyer, who, during Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship represented the “technocratic” or bureaucratic developmentalist side of the authoritarian regime. In other words, if Calvo Sotelo’s assassination can obviously be interpreted as the assassination of a rightist by a leftist (Luis Cuenca), it can also be seen as the assassination of a bureaucrat by a politically appointee.

market. Although in principle siding with their close allies in the union movement, the SAP leader Per-Albin Hansson made very clear that the unions could not use any illegal measures in these conflicts, for example physically attacking the much hated strike-breakers which were often organized by employers' organizations. In a statement in the Swedish Parliament in 1935 commenting on such incidences, Hansson made it very clear that none of the parties, not even his allies in the union movement, stood above the law and that he would enforce necessary measures to keep things under the law (Rothstein 2005). In Hansson's own word to the Parliament: "For my part, I have on many occasions explained that the trade union movement must, like other powers in society, subordinate itself to the common interest, and must accommodate itself to the general sense of justice."⁷

In these heated times in Sweden as well as in the rest of Europe (not least in Germany!), the leaders of the SAP thus sent a very different signal to his political opponents than did his fellow Socialist party leader in the PSOE. In sum, the Swedish SAP decided to put class interests under the rule of law, while Largo Caballero and the PSOE – to a greater extent – and Azaña and the Left Republicans – to a lesser extent – chose the opposite strategy. Secondly, the SAP thought that having industrial relations that did not escalate into open conflicts was a "common interest", the PSOE had a different strategy expressed in the following way in its leading paper: "Harmony? No! Class War! Hatred of the Criminal Bourgeoisie to the Death" (Beavor 2006, p 31). Why did one Socialist Party opt for a compromise strategy and the other one for a civil war (even if not sure of winning it)? Our answer would be the counterfactual we present here, namely the character of the state as an organization. If the state will be guided by the principles of impartiality and equal protection under the rule of law, the side that loses an election and becomes the minority does not lose "everything" because its followers and allied organizations still have the protection of the rule of law and the impartiality principles. However, if the state does not operate under these principles, the losing side risks "everything." In such a situation, agents may see no alternative than to go for total confrontation.

⁷ Records of the Swedish Parliament, Second Chamber 1935 - 4:12.

Swedish Bureaucratic Autonomy versus Spanish Politicization

We argue here that 1930s Sweden, where political incumbents (e.g. Socialist SAP ministers) were unable to replace at will public employees down in the chain of command, would neatly fit as well in the category of *powerful administration* as defined by Greif (2007). Powerful administrators act as a check that prevents rulers from predated and violating the rule of law. It is the counter-balancing power of autonomous administrators, and not the enactment of formal constitutions, what would explain the triumph of the rule of law in England and other Modern European countries (Greif 2007, González de Lara, Greif and Jha 2008). On the contrary, public employees in 1930s Spain were what Greif defines as *weak administrators* (or *ruler-controlled administrations*); that is, mere instruments in the executive's hands who would not pose resistance to the attempts to curb the rule of law in order to benefit government's interest groups.

As a result of the consolidation of a coalition of merit-based autonomous bureaucrats in Sweden during the late 19th century, the Swedish state was able to resist the posterior intense attempts by both far-right and far-left political incumbents to, first, politicize the administrative apparatus with political appointees and, second, to subordinate rule of law to class interests during the polarized interwar period. At the time of the introduction of representational democracy (1908-1917), the Swedish administrative state was *already* in hands of a coalition of autonomous bureaucrats with the technical skills and the cohesion to resist attempts of politicization. Interestingly, Swedish bureaucrats did not enter the political game and, since then, they have been both formally and informally precluded to take part in active politics. Hence it is not only that politicians did not occupy administrative positions, but bureaucrats could not become politicians either. This is in sharp contrast with Spain where bureaucrats not only could engage in active politics, but they became leading figures in several parties.

In historical comparative terms, Sweden presents one of the most clear-cut separations of politics and administration (Dahlstrom & Lapuente 2009, 2010). In the first place, there is hardly "politicization from above" – that is, politicians do not occupy positions reserved to bureaucrats. Secondly, the level of "politicization from below" – that is, bureaucrats having themselves a political career and eventually becoming party

leaders – has also been very low. In sharp contrast, Spain represents, in comparative terms, one of the Western examples with a higher degree of integration of politics and administration. Not only there have traditionally been a large numbers of the administrative layers of the state apparatus occupied by political appointees (politicization from above), but it is also remarkable the extremely high proportion of civil servants among the elites of major political parties (politicization from below).

The unions and the Swedish Social Democratic party came to appreciate and make use of the states' impartiality during this crucial period (Rothstein 1992, Rothstein 2005). By taking part on an equal footing with the employers' federation in various corporatist boards and agencies organized by the state, the non-communist left came to realize the value of this system for their own political interests. Starting already in 1903, numerous such corporatist bodies dealing with issues such as the implementation of social insurance schemes, work safety regulations, mediations in industrial disputes and the operation of local labour exchanges were established (Rothstein 1992, 2005). The strength of the meritocratic and rule-of-law oriented bureaucracy was also increased because of the self-interest and "corps-de-esprit" of the bureaucrats themselves. This group certainly had a vested interest in the state to remain impartial given that their future professional careers (which excluded the possibility of engaging in active politics) depended on that.

In the increasingly politicized years of the interwar Europe, the Swedish civil service was thus able to remain as an impartial or neutral power "above politics", using the term coined by Miller (2000). On the contrary, in Spain the continuity of the "spoils system" until at least the enactment of the 1918 Civil Service Act (Jiménez-Asensio 1989: 253), that is, long after the establishment of the male universal suffrage (1890), together with the high fragmentation of the relatively few merit-based administrative bodies made the Spanish state permeable to extensive politicization. The politically-appointed (or non-cohesive merit-recruited) public employees, especially those in the state security apparatus, had a vested interest not in keeping impartiality, but in providing policies as "partial" as possible. In other words, the Spanish state, or at least very significant bits of it, remained not above, but "under politics".

In 1936 the politicization of the state with loyal supporters (including extensive purges) was much more extensive than the autonomy of bureaucracy. The failure to consolidate in Spain what Shefter (1977) defines as a “coalition for bureaucratic autonomy” should be traced back to 1812. Before that, and specially during the 18th century, Spain, like France and Prussia, started to develop several autonomous administrative bodies which enjoyed a notable degree of autonomy from monarchs’ interventions. Yet the Napoleonic invasion produced a disruption of the traditional administrative structure, and a new type of public administration emerged when the 1812 liberal Constitution of Cadiz was enacted. It was based on an extensive use of the spoils system, which was known in Spain as the *cesantia* system (Jiménez-Asensio 1989:42; Parrado 2000:252).

Although the Spanish 19th century presents a scenario of perpetuated failures to install a liberal system, a mechanism of manipulating elections was being improved under the different monarchs. The perfection came during the *Restoration* (1876-1923), where Canovas del Castillo crafted a peaceful system of alternating control through which his Conservative party and the Liberals could rotate in power thanks to a tacit acceptance of electoral manipulation. This alternation was called the *turno pacífico* and it has been often praised for achieving its goal of replacing the military coup as the main instrument of political change in Spain (Carr 1980, p.8) and in general for bringing stability to Spain (Payne 2006). Its pernicious consequences in terms of state building have in turn been clearly overlooked.

The universal male suffrage was introduced in 1890, but the overall government control over the electoral results from above did not disappear. The electoral manipulation was done through, first, the Civil Governors of each province and, second, the *caciques* or local political bosses, employed by each of the two parties in order to secure for itself a comfortable majority in the Cortes. These figures created their clienteles by delivering jobs in the public sector. Backed by the civil governors, caciques handed out all type of jobs within a given territory: from night watchman to judge (Carr, 1980, p11). To do this the *cacique* had a total control over municipalities and judgeships and it was essential that every electoral contest was preceded by a massive change of

mayors and local judges. The electoral manipulation was so high that the electoral results were at some point published in the press *before polling day* (Carr 1980, p.12).

All throughout the 19th century therefore employees' asset which was most required by governments was "electoral loyalty to a party", in particular to a certain stream within the party, and very especially to some political bosses (Nieto 1996, p390-1). Civil servants were mostly considered as an 'impact force' of the government party. In order to show they were complying and not shirking, and in order to intimidate voters of opposition parties, civil servants used to vote in groups and sometimes to decorate their uniforms to make their electoral choice more evident (Parrado 2000:252; Jimenez Asensio 1989:155; Varela Ortega 1977:415). In the second place, their function was to mobilize friends and relatives to vote –the possession of a large family able to vote being the main asset for a civil servant.⁸ The Count of Romanones, who was 17 times minister and 3 times Prime Minister, openly recognized that the elections were not won by providing public policies for the citizenry, but by offering jobs and having friends (Romanones 1934:71).

A key administrative position in the partial behavior of governments during the Republic was, as we have seen, the Civil Governors in each province. The Minister of the Interior Javier de Burgos created in 1830 the Spanish *provincias* which would be the equivalent of the French administrative territorial division (department). To head the *provincias* Javier de Burgos set up a new administrative officer -the *subdelegado de gobierno* (soon latter renamed as Civil Governor)- who would play the same role as the French prefect. But while the latter had a professional profile and soon achieved bureaucratic autonomy from politicians, the Spanish *gobernador civil*, on the contrary, was subject to the general spoils system existing in the administration. Contrary to the technocratic profile of the French prefects, who belonged to the prestigious prefectural corps, the primary – and sometimes unique – function of the *gobernador civil* was "to milk votes" (Garcia de Enterría 1961:55). Had a Spanish prefectural corps been installed in the 1830s, it would, to the very least, have been difficult to imagine some the most evident abuses of the rule of law in 1936, tolerated, if not directly encouraged by

⁸ *El Empleado* 4-4-1887. Initially a means of expression of public employees' views, *El Empleado* became a leading political journal at the time, emphasizing many of the negative consequences of a patronage-based administration.

politically appointed Civil Governors who did not represent the professional (or corporatist) view of an administrative *corps*, but the ruling parties' interests.

The spoils system would officially end with the enactment of the 1918 Civil Service Act, with which Prime Minister's Maura government granted stability to most public employees in order to consolidate their loyalty in the uncertain political and social circumstances of the time (Nieto 1986, p.315). Yet the key position of Civil Governorship or those related to the security forces remained highly politicized. For example, the local governor of Barcelona General Martínez Anido ruled the city at will from 1920 to 1922 (Carr 1980:90). More than relying on traditional police repression, Martínez Anido trusted the counter-terror of the 'yellow' Free Syndicates, organized by his own police chief, thus violating all principles of a neutral Weberian administration.

Even more clearly, dictator Primo de Rivera "behaved as a sultan administering justice at the town's gates" (Ben Ami (1983, p.74). To start with, he appointed and dismissed judges at will (Villacorta 1989:57). Not only did he control most nominations to high civil service offices, but, through a series of decrees in 1926, he put his government above any legal restraints (Carr 1982: 583). Accordingly, government could impose administrative and disciplinary sanctions, even when they contradicted existing laws and regulations (Jiménez de Asua 1930:95). Another decree allowed the government to suspend the verdicts of the Supreme Court (Ben Ami 1983:101). In Primo de Rivera's own words, "the very essence of a dictatorship is (...) while responding to circumstantial imperatives, to prefer the supremacy of the executive power over any other. A dictatorship ought never to be accountable for breach of the law".⁹ Regarding public employees, in spite of the prevailing legislation, the spoils system – who had been abolished in 1918 – was readopted during the beginning of the dictatorship by purges (Parrado 2000:254). Regarding the security forces, Primo re-established the *Somatén*, a sort of special armed police reserve. Later on, its Minister of the Interior, the former governor of Barcelona General Martínez Anido, renewed and widened for the whole country his old alliance with the 'yellow' Free Syndicates that he had successfully implemented in Barcelona (Carr 1982:570).

⁹ Quoted in Ben Ami (1983, 101-102)

Thus, the PSOE and the rest of the Republican forces had little reason to believe that, when in power, their political opponents would respect universalism, impartiality and the rule of law principles so why should they? In contrast, the Swedish state had been dominated by a largely uncorrupt and “enlightened” civil service corps adhering to Weberian ideals since the mid 19th century (Rothstein 1998). As a matter of fact, the politicization of the public administration was put on the agenda of the Republic even before the democratic institutions were fully operating. So, the provisional government who seized power after the departure of the king in 1931 issued the Act for the Defense of the Republic, which already in its first article partially suppressed secure tenure for those civil servants who showed “lack of zeal and negligence”.¹⁰ The Act was deliberately ambiguous to give wide margin of maneuver to politicians to judge on case-by-case bases (Jiménez-Asensio 1989:312). Despite there are no written records of dismissals, and therefore we lack solid evidence on whether this Act was really implemented (Ballvé 1983:329; Jiménez-Asensio 1989:312), the politicization of the administration, specially regarding the civil governorships and the security forces was extremely acute (Payne 2006).

Democracy and State Building – the Importance of Sequencing

Following Shefter’s (1977) thesis on the emergence of bureaucracies, in 19th century Sweden, the moment of mass politics came *after* the consolidation of a coalition for bureaucratic autonomy and the establishment of a Weberian state. The socialist party was “externally mobilized” in Sweden since it had to grow within the boundaries of an authoritarian regime, that is, in regimes where there were no opportunities for the party to become a member of the government. The implication is that the Swedish party (like the German and Austrian socialist parties) could not resort to a patron-client pattern of exchange with their supporters. They could not tell their would-be militants: we will offer you a public job. This meant that the Swedish type of socialist party had to offer a programmatic strategy built on a combination of socialist ideas and the protection of workers’ and unions’ interests instead of patronage jobs and clientelistic policies. In the meantime, within the (authoritarian) state an increasing powerful strata started to

¹⁰ Article 1, Ley de Defensa de la Republica.

consolidate its position: the autonomous high civil servants recruited in a meritocratic way. Mass democracy would come later and male universal suffrage was not established until 1911. In addition, the Swedish state remained firmly in the hands of the Crown, with not only civil servants but also ministers being formally appointed by the monarch. The first minister ever not being appointed by the Crown was in 1905.

This situation contrasts sharply with that of Spain during the crucial decades of the late 19th century. Politicians like Canovas, and even more his liberal counterpart Sagasta (known as the “old shepherd”, because of his abilities to control his huge flock of cronies), were able to appoint thousands of positions in the state apparatus, from central ministerial offices in Madrid to the most remote village in the geography. Unlike Sweden, in 19th century Spain (as well as the US and Italy), the moment of mass politics came *before* the building of a coalition for bureaucratic autonomy. Socialists or left parties emerged in here in a “Jacksonian type” democracy and they could establish patron-client deals with supporters: if you support me, I can offer you a job in the administration. Bureaucratic autonomy with the 1918 Civil Service Act came *too late*, was *too piecemeal*, and it *too fragile*, as the examples of Primo de Rivera’s and the Republican Governments’ politicizations show. There was not in place a civil service elite who could counterbalance politicians’ attempts to curb the rule of law.

In sum, during the second half of the 19th century, the preservation of a mostly unaccountable to politicians state administration allowed the creation of a coalition for bureaucratic autonomy formed by increasingly meritocratic civil servants in Sweden. This coalition was able to keep the impartiality of the Swedish state in the decades to come. On the contrary, the existence of a state administration highly accountable to politicians in Spain during the 19th century prevented the formation of a coalition of meritocratic autonomous bureaucrats who could have resisted the attempts of politicization and who could have also played a mediation role in the social conflicts of the interwar period. In sum, in 1936 Spain was not, comparatively speaking, lacking governmental capacity. Quite the opposite, the Spanish executives had too much governmental capacity in the sense that they was not counter-balanced by a strong body or bodies of administrators who could prevent the politicization (of personnel and policies) and the increasing curbing of the rule of law.

References

- Beevor, Antony. 2002 (1st ed. 1983) *The Spanish Civil War*. New York, Peter Bedrick Books.
- Cabrera, Mercedes. 1983. *La patronal española ante la II República. Organizaciones y estrategia, 1931-1936*. Madrid, Siglo XXI.
- Carr, Raymond. 1980. *Modern Spain 1875-1980*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carr, Raymond. 1982. *Spain, 1808-1975*, 2d ed., Oxford: Clarendon.
- Carrasco Canals, C. 1975. *La burocracia en la España del siglo XIX*. Madrid: IEAL.
- Chapaprieta, Joaquin. 1987. *La paz fue posible. Memorias de un político*, Barcelona: Editorial Ariel.
- Collier, Paul. 2009. *Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*, London: Bodley Head ed.
- Dahlström, Carl and Victor Lapuente "Explaining Cross-Country Differences in the Adoption of Performance-Related Pay in the Public Sector", *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, August 2009
- Ertman, Thomas. 1997. *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press
- Julia, Santos. 1989. "Historia del socialismo español (1931-1939)" vol. 3 of M. Tunon de Lara, ed., *Historia del socialismo español*, Barcelona.
- Fearon, J. D., & Laitin, D. D. (2003). Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War. *American Political Science Review*, 97(1), 75-90.
- Fogel, Robert W. 1964. *Railroads and American economic growth*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Graham, H. (1990), 'The eclipse of the Socialist left, 1934-37', in Lannon and Preston, (eds.), *Elites and Power*
- Gonzalez de Lara, Yadira, Avner Greif and Saumitra Jha, 2008. "The Administrative Foundations of Self-Enforcing Constitutions " *American Economic Review*, American Economic Association, vol. 98(2): 105-09.
- Greif, Avner. 2007a. The Impact of Administrative Power on Political and Economic Development. http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1004394
- Johansson, Roger. 2001. *Kampen om historien. Ådalen 1931. Sociala konflikter, historiemedvetande och historiebruk 1931-2000*. Stockholm: Hjalmarsson & Högberg Förlag.
- Jiménez de Asúa. 1930. *Notas de un confinado*, Madrid: Ibero-Americana.
- Jiménez-Asensio, Rafael. 1989. *Políticas de selección en la Función Pública española (1808-1978)*. Madrid: INAP (Instituto Nacional de Administración Pública).
- Kiser, Edgar, and Margaret Levi. 1996. "Using Counterfactuals in Historical Analysis." Pp. 187-207 in *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics*, edited by Philip E. Tetlock and Aaron Belkin. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Lapuente, Victor. 2007. *A Political Economy Approach to Bureaucracies*, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Oxford.
- Largo Caballero, Francisco. 1985. *Escritos de la Republica* (editor Santos Julia), Madrid: Editorial Pablo Iglesias.
- Luebbert, G. 1987. "Social Foundations of Political Order in Interwar Period." *World Politics* 39:449-478

- Malefakis, E. (1970), *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain: Origins of the Civil War*
- Macarro Vera, José Manuel. 2000. Socialismo, república y revolución en Andalucía, 1931-1936. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla.
- Maura, Miguel. 1968. *Así cayó Alfonso XIII*. Barcelona: Ariel.
- Miller, Gary. 2000. "Above Politics: Credible Commitment and Efficiency in the Design of Public Agencies." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*. 10 (April): 289-328.
- Nieto, Alejandro. 1976. *La burocracia. El pensamiento burocrático*. Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Administrativos.
- Nieto, Alejandro. 1986. "Concepciones burocráticas y reformas funcionariales", in: *AAVV Estudios históricos sobre Administración y Derecho Administrativo*. Madrid: INAP.
- North, Douglass, John Wallis, & Barry Weingast . 2009. *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Human Recorded History*, Cambridge University Press.
- Payne, S. (1993), *Spain's First Democracy: the Second Republic, 1931-1936*
- Payne, Stanley G. 2004. *The Spanish Civil War, the Soviet Union, and Communism* New Haven, CT: Yale University
- Payne, Stanley G. 2006. *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic 1933-1936. Origins of the Civil War*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Parrado, Salvador. 2000. "The Development and Current Features of the Spanish Civil Service System". In Bekke, Hans A.G.M. and Frits van der Meer (eds.), *Civil Service Systems in Western Europe*. Bodmin, Cornwall: MPG Books Ltd.
- Redero San Román. 1992. *Estudios de historia de la UGT*. by Manuel Redero San Román, Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, Fundación Largo Caballero
- Rothstein, Bo. 1998. "State Building and Capitalism: The Rise of the Swedish Bureaucracy." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 21:287-306.
- Rothstein, Bo. 2007. "Anti-Corruption – A Big Bang Theory". The Quality of Government Institute, University of Gothenburg, Working paper 2007:3,
- Rothstein, Bo. 2009. Preventing Markets from Self-Destruction: The Quality of Government Factor The Quality of Government Institute, University of Gothenburg, Working paper 2009: 2.
- Rothstein, Bo, and Daniel Eek. 2009. "Political Corruption and Social Trust - An Experimental Approach." *Rationality and Society* (forthcoming).
- Rothstein, Bo, and Dietlind Stolle. 2008. "The State and Social Capital: An Institutional Theory of Generalized Trust." *Comparative Politics* 40:441-467
- Rothstein, Bo, and Jan Teorell. 2008. "What is Quality of Government: A Theory of Impartial Political Institutions." *Governance-an International Journal of Policy and Administration* 21:165-190.
- Roselius, Aapo. 2009. *I bödlarnas fotspår: Massavrättningar och terror i finska inbördeskriget 1918*. Stockholm: Leopard.
- Shefter, Martin. 1977 "Party and Patronage: Germany, England, and Italy". *Politics & Society*. 7: 403-451

- Silberman, Bernard S. 1993. *Cages of Reason: The Rise of the Rational State in France, Japan, the United States, and Great Britain*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
- Stradling, Robert. 2008. *Your Children Will Be Next: Bombing and Propaganda in the Spanish Civil War 1936–1939*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2008;
- Tetlock, Philip E., and Aaron Belkin (Eds.). 1996. *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Varela Ortega, José. 1977. *Los amigos políticos. Partidos, elecciones y caciquismo en la Restauración (1875-1900)*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Villacorta Baños, Francisco. 1989. *Profesionales y burócratas. Estado y poder corporativo en la España del siglo XX, 1890-1923*. Madrid: Siglo XX.
- Ylikangas, Heikki. 1995. *Vägen till Tammerfors. striden mellan röda och vita i finska inbördeskriget 1918*. Stockholm: Atlantis.
- Ylikangas, Heikki. 1998. Introductory article on "A view from Skillnaden. The civil war in Helsinki, 1918, seen with old and new eyes", Schildts, 1997, Olle Leino, *Books from Finland*.
- Öberg, M., & Melander, E. (2005). *The Quality of Government and Civil War*. Goteborg: The Quality of Government Institute, Göteborg University.