

Religion and Regimes

Support, Separation, and Opposition

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and Ted G. Jelen

LEXINGTON BOOKS

Lanham • Boulder • New York • Toronto • Plymouth, UK

2014

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n Information Available

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l opposition / edited by Ted G. Jelen and Mehran

- ISBN 978-0-7391-7611-5 (electronic)
l. Jelen, Ted G. editor of compilation.

meets the minimum requirements of American
es Permanence of Paper for Printed Library

n of Communalism in Colonial North India. New

l: Patterns of Violence in Gujarat," in Siddharth
a Tragedy. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

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Chapter Seven

The Roman Catholic Church and Political Regime in Portugal and Spain

Support, Opposition, and Separation

Paul Christopher Manuel

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

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

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

Roman Catholic Church and how it relates to

RELATIONSHIPS IN THE RELIGION-REGIME DYNAMICS IN IBERIA

... of support, opposition, and separation especially useful in framing the Iberian political system. I speak of this in terms of three key themes. First, support, involves a reciprocal working relationship based on mutual trust and need. There have been a long history of both nations when pro-clerical and mutually supporting religion-regime relationships of the nation-state and also the rise of the 1930s. The second theme, opposition, can be the first theme. It is commonly associated with a fusion of ecclesiastical and temporal powers that have existed from the beginning of the state at the local levels; anti-clerical calls opposing the state became increasingly dominant after the 1930s. The third theme needs to be nuanced in the Iberian context: opposition to religion as well as opposition to both religious authorities and popular secular moments of Marian apparitions to counter significant anti-clerical activity in the national and cultural phenomenon helped to crystallize the anti-clerical actions of the regime. The relationship between church and regime, is a relatively new phenomenon. New teachings on the role of the church in the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) as well as the 1980s. I speak thematically and episodically: around the 1930s for support by pro-clerical forces dominated by anti-clericals dominated, and during the 1980s constitutional rule.⁴

1. Mutual Support

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

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

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

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

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

is legally binding, and divorce was out-
nesses 2009).⁹

atican Concordat of 1940 deepened the
gime; Lisbon and the Holy See recog-
bassadors, the regime gave the Roman
ate its own education system, and the
internal correspondences between the
Cruz 1978; Manuel 2002).

General Francisco Franco's Nationalist
the Civil War was warmly greeted by a
nd Bishop Isidro Gomá Tomás became
led "Pastorales de la Guerra de España,"
ing Franco's victory.¹⁰ Franco had en-
ism of the brutal nature of his military
is publicly support his new regime. This
ndemn the anti-clerical brutality against
il War (Shubert 1990; Andrés-Gallego
re were, of course, atrocities committed
nd five brave Spanish Roman Catholic
i protest of the violence committed by
s 2001; Atkin and Tallett 2003).

sought to create a mutually supportive
end, his new regime developed a corpo-
-clerical legislation passed during the
96). Also, in 1941 the two sides agreed
amed as Spain's official religion, the
erate without State limits, and the State
rien and Shannon 1997). Unlike Portu-
te with the Falange fascist movement.
Portuguese Church, was a profoundly
ution that preferred a more dormant,
zation. It distrusted the militancy, radi-
ge and was quite wary of their close
is powers (Payne 1984). This situation
victory of the Allies in World War II;
n the Falange and sought improved ties
ne 1961; Mujal-León 1982).

Vatican and the Spanish State was an
f a supporting regime-religion relation-
itimacy of the Spanish government and
of Catholic bishops in Spain. The two
ould continue its status as Spain's offi-
om State taxation; Church documents

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

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

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

Second Theme: The Opposition of Religion and Regime

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

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

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

ty, opposed any religious involvement
 'onstitution of 1931 disestablished the
 eligious organizations, and secularized
 s passed by the Radical Party banned
 me religious orders, confiscated Jesuit
 larized the education system (Andrés-

gal and Spain also triggered significant
 ere were two reported cases of Marian
 h warned the people about the dangers
 ular authorities. The most famous took
 Fátima in 1917, when the Virgin Mary
 country children each month on the
 er. She told the children that God was
 of men and asked them to pray for the
 evils of communism (Bennett 2012).
 rgin Mary at Ezkioga, Spain in 1930,
 did not receive approval by the Vatican
 ver, the socio-cultural phenomenon of
 opular sectors against both the author-
 ch as well as the republic authorities.
 olitical dynamic, opposed to the anti-
 legislature, and received significant
 ernational events. Perhaps one lesson
 ant anti-clericalism that informs strict
 ie might have clear limits among Iber-

1d Regime

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

ouncil (1962–1965) was the first and
 aration of religion and regime in Por-
 If requested a formal separation from
 azar. Following three years of deliber-
 arding the place of the Roman Catho-
 Council rejected the Vatican's former
 state based in a corporatist form of
 stead, the Council produced two land-
 igion relationship: *Gaudium et Spes*:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Following the Second Vatican Council, the Franco-era Concordat of 1954 (Atkin and Tallett 2003). The new Concordat of 1985 redefined religion in a variety of ways: the state relinquishes its right to the appointment of Catholic bishops and the right to block civil divorce proceedings, among other things (Hanson 2011). This new Concordat managed to amicably resolve the long-standing religion and politics relationship in Spain, all the while ending the anti-clericalism of the Second Republic (Hanson

2011). The relationship in Portugal and Spain is currently governed by constitutional procedures providing for a healthy juridical separation of church and state. In other words, the countries have had some difficulty adapting to a political regime during the Second Republic. Constitutional procedures have since been implemented to resolve disputes between the traditional clerical and political spheres. Suddenly come into being. To the contrary, the relationship between the state and religion as continued alternative visions for the common good lived religion-regime relationship in the two countries.

SEE THEMES IN TENSION

It can be understood as dormant sedentary layers of social structure that are starting once another peacefully expires. To be very much in dynamic tension with one another, they exist in a complex array of different points in history. The social forces in Portugal and Spain have been at odds. The state is designed to separate religion from state in a way that is not once dominated by Roman Catholicism, in part because of divorce. For their part, the defenders of Catholicism maintain traditional understandings, practices, and

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

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

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

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

RCH FOR A NEW THEME STRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT

igion and regime in societies formerly domi- takes some getting used to. The weight of ong in Portugal and Spain, where change has ss. It was just not that long ago that a papal rry considerable weight in the Iberian nation- the case. All of this rapid change has caused eria. For instance, the Spanish Jesuit priest / suggested in his brilliantly argued doctoral n fused state of cultural identity.

situation is one of a cultural identity problem, s considered Catholicism as the essential fea- covers itself to be much less Catholic than it vers of other religious communities. Among are Muslims, the very religion against which acted during the Middle Ages.¹⁷

ist Victor Perez-Diez laments a growing "re- society in Spain, as well as "a growing lack hurch's messages of meaning, salvation and veryday life of a considerable part of civil s, since the current structure of church-state anish Church "to just one more 'pressure ' the religion's essential ontological role in eople grasp some of the larger questions of ervations beg the question of whether these ost-Christian era, and whether non-Catholic come increasingly dominant in the future.

clerical and anti-clerical forces in Iberia has rs, a deep gulf remains between them. One of hese countries, then, lies in how to create a ructive engagement among the adversaries, mentary and promising ideas have recently igious and regime perspectives.

s a religious vision for constructive engage- Specs, he argues that the new pluralistic and is up a historic opportunity for the Spanish lectical process of constructive dialogue and ers—including anti-clericals, atheists, Jews, agrán is convinced that the considerable ben- al peace, justice, progress, and harmony, will e greater Spanish society. In all of this, he

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

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

CONCLUSION

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

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

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