

Factionalism in the Spanish Socialist Party

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INTRODUCTION

The reappearance of conflict within the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) in the late 1980s and early 1990s has shown once more the propensity of this Iberian party to behave differently from other European socialist and social democratic parties. Although this paper is not comparative, there are a couple of domestic factors that may help to explain this peculiarity. First, there is the unusually strong position of the PSOE in relation to its electoral rivals, which in Sartori's analysis would favour internal party factionalism (1), although it also means that the PSOE leadership has abundant rewards for party loyalty at its disposal. Second, there would seem to be a clear relationship between factionalism in the PSOE and the existence of autonomous trade unions that have had to be assertive because of their own organizational weakness and the effects of neo-liberal government policies.

Clearly one would not want to try to extrapolate any long term trends from the recent disputes. Already, in the 15 years that have elapsed since the PSOE regained its legality on 18 February 1977, intra-party conflict has evolved very considerably and one can distinguish three distinct phases through which it has passed. Initially, there were two years of considerable strife (1977-79) during which the party served as the main opposition to governments formed by Adolfo Suárez's Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD). Then, following the felipista triumph at a party congress in 1979, and even more clearly following election to national office in 1982, the PSOE attained far more internal coherence, leading some commentators to dismiss the validity of factionally-focused analysis (2). However, since 1988 the PSOE has been identified with troubled, indecisive government and resurgent factionalism. Electoral trends suggest that the party may need allies if it is to retain office beyond the next general election, and such a development could itself become a further basis of internal party division in the future.

In seeking to explore the nature of intra-party conflict, this paper will be concerned only with the latter two periods. The assumption made is that, even in the event of electoral defeat, there is unlikely to be a return to the level or quality of internal party democracy that existed in the late 1970s, when grass roots agrupaciones had a significant input into party decision-making. Strong party management and internal authoritarianism are now the norm among European socialist parties (3); and the obstacles in Spain to a reversion to the status quo ante include highly restrictive party organizational rules adopted since 1979, the clientelist dimension to party recruitment which has grown with electoral success, and a broad public antipathy to activism in political parties.

The dominant image of the PSOE in the 1980s was one of outstanding internal coherence, which some writers have attributed to the charismatic qualities of Felipe González and the highly effective partnership formed by him and his deputy

Alfonso Guerra (4). As important as these factors were, one must also attribute party coherence to a lingering socialist determination to avoid a return to the factional strife of the 1930s, the recentness of socialist electoral success at national, regional and municipal level, the mid-1980s economic and international successes of the Socialist government, the lack of attractive rival parties, and above all the ample opportunities for rewarding political loyalty with public office, which were particularly plentiful in Spain, both due to the process of regional devolution and doubts about the reliability of Franco-era appointees. However, the existence of anodyne PSOE party congresses, designed to highlight this coherence, never denoted a total lack of disagreement: rather the near impossibility of airing dissidence in a party whose leaders were able to make or break political careers and exclude dissentient voices.

In the circumstances, anti-oficialista sentiment among activists found vocal expression mainly in the streets, when workers, school students or peace campaigners mobilised, and through the traditionally fraternal but autonomous socialist union federation, the General Workers' Union (UGT). Indeed it was the general strike of December 1988, called by the UGT in conjunction with the Workers' Commissions, partly to protest over the employment policies of González's government (5), that really cracked open the edifice of PSOE coherence. In its wake came widespread internal concern about the party's loss of labour support, whose electoral implications were confirmed during 1989. The strike helped to "loosen up" the PSOE, to provoke a more questioning attitude among its members, some of whom began to form groups to lobby for democratic debate in the party and policy changes in the government.

Equally important was the national and international context of economic downturn, which put an end to the aura of success that the government had acquired chiefly from Europe's fastest growth rates and entry into the EC. Finally, the loss of unity owed much to the adverse media publicity provoked by corruption within the party. The PSOE had been able to withstand exposés of high-living and corrupt dealings on the part of some of its officials, and it had survived earlier questioning over the origins of party finances, but destabilization was sure to ensue when the exposure of corruption undermined the standing of party boss Alfonso Guerra through the "Juan Guerra scandal" (named after his brother), which came to light in January 1990. In a case involving the use of government offices in Sevilla by Juan Guerra for allegedly illegitimate party and private money-making purposes, it seemed highly unlikely that his brother had no knowledge of what was going on. The weakening of the iron man of the party apparatus through this scandal encouraged his critics to challenge the distribution of power within the Socialist hierarchy, especially after González removed him from the government in January 1991. The start of the 1990s thus saw the PSOE more internally divided than at any time during the previous decade.

This paper will first examine the sources of conflict within the party, and then discuss the sources of cohesion. An attempt will be made to identify variables that have influenced the level of internal tension, and the specific dimensions of intra-PSOE conflict will be explored. We shall also analyse the techniques used by the party leadership to manage conflict, and finally consider the overall effects of factionalism.

THE SOURCES OF CONFLICT

Conflict within the PSOE is far more concerned with "power, careers, spoils and rewards" than with "strategy, policy or ideology" (6), and what appears to be ideological confrontation is often little more than a facade for battles designed to redefine the internal distribution of power. To the limited extent that ideology is relevant, the divergence is twofold. One can differentiate (a) between traditional social democrats and New Left elements, and (b) between neo-liberals and those who remain sceptical about the market. During the 1980s the classical social democrats (José Maravall, Javier Solana, Joaquín Almunia, José Barrionuevo) formed a minority group among González's ministers, which was also identified by the media as a clan (an informal group of like-minded associates) within the Madrid federation of the party. Although highly pragmatic, these social democrats were generally to the right of the New Left elements that constituted the "Socialist Left" current, Izquierda Socialista. The latter was founded by neo-Marxist intellectuals after the defeat of the left-wing sector crítico in 1979 and it functioned as the party's only officially tolerated "current of opinion" during the 1980s, its main support coming from Madrid, Catalonia and Valencia. It was not fundamentally at odds with social democracy but was distinguished by its post-materialist emphasis, particularly a pacifist commitment that led to involvement in campaigns against NATO membership and US military bases.

The other ideological cleavage is slightly more recent and dates from the early years of Socialist government. Notwithstanding a 1982 election manifesto that raised hopes of radical change, the Socialists' economic policies, first under Miguel Boyer and later under Carlos Solchaga, were consistently inspired by orthodox liberal ideas, with little regard for the social consequences (7). Although these policies were accepted by social democrats as a means of achieving Spain's modernization, sooner or later they provoked criticism from the weak left-wing current, the UGT, and the followers of deputy party leader and deputy Prime Minister, Alfonso Guerra. It must be emphasized, however, that initially both the UGT and the "Guerristas" went along with the liberals' economic policies, accepting that austerity was necessary for economic recovery. For the UGT it was the government's persisting subordination of redistribution to growth even after economic recovery had been achieved that led to tension from 1985. The UGT was particularly sensitive to the steep rise in

unemployment that industrial restructuring and monetarist policy brought: this not only affected the lives of ordinary trade unionists, but also had serious implications for UGT affiliation and bargaining power (8).

Guerrista opposition to neo-liberal policies was still less a matter of principle. It arose in the course of a government power struggle in 1985, when Finance Minister Boyer sought unsuccessfully to increase his influence at the expense of Guerra and the latter cynically responded by echoing complaints made by the UGT about government policy. The power struggle continued after Boyer's replacement by Solchaga, in part because after 1986 liberal economic policies were helping to erode the electoral standing of the PSOE. Since they controlled the party, masterminded its electoral strategy and actually organized and ran its election campaigns, the guerristas were much more concerned than the liberal ministers with the effects of government policies on public opinion. And largely for this reason -and because Guerra has a populist discourse (among others) in his repertoire- they are often characterized as "populists".

Involved here is not just the standard behaviour of modern party managers, duly concerned with opinion polls and party image. Electoral reverses were bad news for the guerristas, not simply as party officials, but as the builders of a clientelistic empire for which electoral success provided further opportunities to expand their influence, while electoral decline involved the possible alienation of political clients whose careers were disrupted. At the peak of his success, Guerra's empire was depicted as including the party executive and apparatus, the Socialist Parliamentary Group, some key positions in the Moncloa (government headquarters), seven ministries, three regional governments, two universities and growing influence in the judiciary; while in its principal regional fief of Andalucia, the empire extended to the regional government, seven of the eight provincial councils (diputaciones), 80 per cent of the municipal councils, the regional television channel, cultural and sporting associations, and several savings banks (9).

Guerrismo is a clientelistic network that has thrived on the Spanish political culture and the power that the electoral list system gives to the party elite. It has manipulated ideology in an instrumental way, for example by using Programa 2000, ostensibly an exercise in programmatic renewal, as a means of attacking and isolating the liberal technocrats in the government (10). One of the real complaints of the guerristas is that the party has been denied opportunities for patronage in liberal-controlled domains: for example, Guerra is reported to have lamented the fact that in the Treasury there was only one PSOE appointee among 36 senior officials (11). There is an element here of tension between technocrats and politicians, over whether expertise or political criteria should prevail in appointments, although both sides sponsor their supporters for posts in the Administration and public sector.

Consistency is not a hallmark of the guerristas. They have defended PSOE collaboration with the United Left (IU) in Asturias, because in that region co-operation with the left is an obstacle to the liberals' plans to close coal mines, whilst in the Madrid region, where their rival Joaquin Leguina has survived as president with IU support, they have opposed such collaboration. In comparison (12), the liberals are more principled and have been rather more consistent; they have been more prepared to take unpopular economic decisions, safe in the knowledge that in the event of electoral defeat they can easily resume former careers in the world of banking or business. Their problem has been that most members of the party consider their market-oriented principles to lie either beyond the frontiers of socialism or at least on the very edges of what social democracy can embrace. They have thus functioned as a small group of ministers, officials and public sector managers, commended by bankers and foreign investors, but lacking organized support in the party, and are therefore crucially dependent upon González's patronage.

Besides ideology and the pursuit of power, the party rules also provoke conflict within the PSOE, although usually other dimensions of conflict are interwoven with disputation over the contents and application of the statutes. Especially in the hands of the guerristas, who have never seen pluralism as a particularly positive party feature, the post-1979 party statutes have imposed great limits on the tolerance of public disagreement with the party line: monolitismo has been the main charge levelled against the Guerra camp by liberals and social democrats.

Democratic representation within the party is undermined by the way in which central and regional officials intervene to influence the composition of congress delegations, and by federal congress decision-taking often being based on open voting by just the heads of regional delegations. In the case of the 1988 congress, when regional filtering mechanisms helped keep Izquierda Socialista (IS) representation to just 7 per cent of the delegates, it is revealing that in the election of the large Federal Committee (which in theory controls the executive), IS won 22.5% of the delegates' votes in what was the only congress vote carried out on the basis of a secret, individual ballot (13).

The left has undoubtedly been the most consistent agitator for party democracy, but two other groups also deserve mention. Since the start of 1987, party democracy, combined with opposition to neo-liberalism, has served to inspire a group known as the Centro de Estudios Políticos y Sociales (CEPES); and internal democracy together with social democracy and solidarity with the UGT were the banners of Democracia Socialista, a group led by the PSOE leader in the Basque province of Vizcaya, Ricardo Garcia Damborenea, which tried unsuccessfully to develop semi-autonomously within the PSOE in 1989-90. However, there is a strong element in both cases of internal democracy being campaigned for only when Socialist officials have suffered personally from a loss of patronage or have become

victims of party disciplinary procedures. CEPES was founded by former Socialist minister Julián Campo and three former politically-appointed ministerial under-secretaries, all of whom felt they had been dismissed from their posts because they were to the left of the government (14). The democratic credentials of Democracia Socialista were still less unequivocal. Vizcaya had been the only provincial federation of the PSOE to openly sympathize with UGT complaints about government policy, but as a small federation it had only 14 delegates (2%) at the 1988 party congress. on that occasion it alienated party democrats by being the only province not to respect the norm whereby minority lists in congress delegation elections are given 25% of the places if they receive a minimum of 20% of the votes (15). Minority groups can be particularly intolerant of their own minorities' rights.

The case of Democracia Socialista, which Garcia Damborenea subsequently attempted to register as a party current, provides an illustration of the extent of group toleration within the PSOE. Initially, registration was deemed impossible because the existence of a coordinating committee, founding documents, meetings to which provincial groups were invited, the discussion of political resolutions and the adoption of its own symbols were all seen as evidence of the existence of a "tendency" (proscribed under the party statutes). Garcia Damborenea was subjected to party disciplinary proceedings both for factional activity and for publicly comparing a rally addressed by Alfonso Guerra with the Francoist rallies of yesteryear; in the end he decided to form an independent party rather than accept a long suspension. No sooner had he announced the launch of the new party, however, than the PSOE decided that it could, after all, see its way to registering a current with the name of Democracia Socialista! The remarkable elasticity of the party statutes on this occasion served an apparent party objective to confuse potential supporters of the new party or deny it its sigla (16).

Although there were suggestions of UGT financial support for Democracia Socialista, the Socialist union took a deliberate decision not to try to change government policy by urging members to intervene en masse in the party in the late 1980s. Here it was mindful of the close subordination of the party to the government, the limited size and influence of the party's rank and file, and the pretext that intervention would give for pro-government PSOE "entryism" in the UGT. There is not then an organized basis for conflict between economically-oriented "workerist" elements and social groups with post-materialist values within the PSOE. Nor has there been a generational basis for conflict in recent years. The veterans of the 1930s have in some cases been co-opted, and in many others have ceased to be active due to old age or political disgust. At the other end of the age-span, the party has lost support amongst young people and maintains only a small, domesticated youth organization. The bulk of the party is middle-aged and forms part of the González generation (17).

There is, however, one remaining cleavage underlying party factionalism: that between central and regional interests. What has helped prevent the emergence of nationwide factions in the PSOE is the strength of regionalism and peripheral nationalism, and their reflection in the territorial structure of the party. Conflict within the party's regional federations is rarely about ideology and nearly always about power (18). Where the regional government presidency and the post of regional party general secretary are in separate hands, there is often a struggle to unite the two power bases; and where power is concentrated in one set of hands, there is often a struggle for a division of regional power. Interacting with these struggles, the 1980s saw tension between certain regional powerholders and the central party apparatus, often when the latter was sponsoring a local guerrista offensive.

In the case of the PSOE's Catalan federation, the Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya, there has been tension with the centre because of the persisting strength of Catalan nationalism and the existence before 1977 of a strong independent Catalan socialist party, which subsequently merged with a weaker official PSOE federation. Well aware that they pay an electoral price, especially in regional contests, for tolerating the PSOE's rejection of full-blooded federalism, the Catalan Socialists have pressed for regional power to be developed to the full under the existing Constitution and for regional federations to enjoy more meaningful autonomy within the PSOE (19). More generally, regional leaders often find it frustrating to wield considerable power in their own bailiwicks and then find that they lack weight in the party nationally.

The term "baron" is often applied to regional leaders, especially those heading both regional party federation and government simultaneously. During the 1980s, the central party apparatus tried to control these men. In Madrid, Andalusia and Castilla-La Mancha, however, local barons who had been helped into office by the guerristas subsequently asserted their autonomy. Barons are able to exploit their own command of patronage and sometimes of large congress delegations in order to assert some autonomy from the centre. But, initially at least, due to the difficulty of joining forces, they proved vulnerable to guerrista counterattacks, which in Madrid and Andalusia deprived regional presidents of their general secretaryships before threatening their presidencies. Only after Guerra had been weakened by the Juan Guerra scandal did opposition to the central party apparatus become widespread among the regional leaders, whose ideal is a more federal party in which they would be more influential (20). Rather too late, perhaps, did Guerra begin sponsoring the municipal cause of PSOE mayors demanding a larger proportion of public funds; they were courted in 1991 as a potential counterweight to baronial power (21). However, by this time González himself had started holding regular meetings with the regional leaders. Although such meetings had no status in the party statutes, they seem to have played a part in persuading key figures to abandon guerrismo as it became openly critical of the González government (22).

SOURCES OF COHESION

For much of the 1980s, unity rather than disunity was the dominant feature of the PSOE. Open warfare within the party was rare. True, considerable publicity surrounded the abandonment of the party by González's predecessor, Pablo Castellano, who left to join the small Socialist Action Party (PASOC), where another PSOE leftwinger, Francisco Bustelo, was later to join him. And UGT leader Nicolás Redondo caused a stir when he resigned his seat in Parliament in 1987, having been the only PSOE deputy to defy the party whip. However, there were no large-scale desertions by PSOE activists: indeed the party was a net importer of members and benefited from quite substantial incorporations of former communist party factions that had been led by Santiago Carrillo and Enrique Curiel.

Some of the sources of the party's cohesion have been mentioned already. There is González's own charismatic appeal, which both impresses party members through direct experience and as a proven electoral asset. Almost a decade after taking office, González remains Spain's most popular politician (23). Related to his success are his managerial ploys, which are commented upon below.

Among party members there is a shared sanctification of González's leadership, a devotion so strong that even after the party leader turned against him in 1991, Guerra felt unable to criticize González directly: instead he continued to concentrate his fire on Solchaga and claimed that Felipe had been "kidnapped" by bankers and entrepreneurs, and needed to be "rescued" (24). The importance of the González factor has been Underlined also by Izquierda Socialista leader Antonio Garcia Santesmases, who described the timing and circumstances of González's departure as crucial variables in any perspective on the future of the PSOE and the outcome of its internal struggles (25).

Between 1982 and 1991, and much earlier in opposition, González's relationship with Guerra was also crucial. The involvement in the government of the man exercising de facto control over the party meant that the latter and its parliamentary group would (until the relationship started to break down) loyally echo government messages. Guerra's presence in the Moncloa also strengthened the intelligence network upon which his empire relied: he concerned himself personally with masses of reports coming in from the provinces via government delegates, local leaders and PSOE stalwarts. Information on opponents was carefully stored for later use (26).

Eventually Guerra's grip on the PSOE would prove problematic for, González when the guerrista apparatchiks started disavowing or pre-empting policy statements

by government ministers, and successfully thwarted a bid by González to introduce non-guerrista ministers into the party executive at the 1990 party congress. But for much of the 1980s, the arrangement suited González, releasing the general secretary as it did from potentially heavy party commitments and enabling him to concentrate principally on the international political work that appealed to him so much more. The vice-presidency gave Guerra great influence upon policy-making, especially as chairman of the committee of under-secretaries which every Thursday prepares the business for the cabinet meeting the following day. At the end of the day, though, González always had the option of removing the guerristas from his government, as he did effectively in March 1991.

Large numbers of non-compliant socialists suffered for their defiance of Guerra by their being discredited within the party, replaced in public office, dropped from election lists or suspended from membership. One Malagá veteran, 75-year-old José Fernández Gálvez, was suspended for criticizing Guerra and other party members, after no less than 55 years of service to the PSOE (27). Of course, the harsh internal regime would not have worked if the rewards for loyalty had not been so great. The proportion of public office-holders in the party has varied but what has remained steady over the last three party congresses (1984, 1988, 1990) has been the proportion of delegates (over 70%) who are on the government payroll. González has voiced the ambition to increase this percentage to 100% (28).

It is really this combination of effective discipline and patronage, together with the personal leadership factors, that provided the main internal sources of party cohesion in the recent past. Ideology has not been a strong binding force in a party that deliberately set out to "de-ideologize" itself in 1979. "Modernization" may be a theme unifying most PSOE members, but by no means exclusively. However, except for those who remain silent, party members do tend to "internalize" and echo the official party discourse (29).

Moreover, party cohesiveness benefits from a party culture that frowns upon the external airing of disagreements: the legacy of a party with a long history of hardship, exile and clandestinity.

In the long term, the weakness of ideological and normative integration may present problems for the pragmatic PSOE's coherence, especially if economic conditions fail to return to the heights of 1986-9, if the party continues to lose votes and the resultant need for pacts with other parties proves divisive. Also, of course, when González decides to call it a day. The full effects of the González-Guerra rift are not yet clear, but the immediate result was a deterioration in party-government relations. González has attempted to regain control of the party but has met with resistance. Given González's relative youth, there is no great risk of his demise threatening to unleash internal conflict, as in the case of PASOK in Greece, but he

has expressed ambitions to move on to fresh pastures, particularly the presidency of the Socialist International or of the EC Council of Ministers. There is no heir-apparent waiting in the wings: rather a series of candidates among whom there might be a struggle over the leadership succession when the time comes.

VARIABLES AFFECTING PARTY CONFLICT

In order to appreciate the dynamics of conflict within the PSOE, it is not sufficient simply to identify where the antagonisms and the sources of coherence lie: it is necessary also to identify variables that facilitate or inhibit conflict. The party's statutes seem to have engendered conflict at some times and helped ensure coherence at others. In the early 1980s there was fairly broad party acceptance of the quasi-Leninist discipline, it having helped give the PSOE a unified image in the 1982 election while party rivals were being destroyed by their own factionalism. The party had benefited from it electorally; moreover, González's ambition to make the PSOE "as solid as a rock" was shared by many so long as the coup attempt of 1981 remained a fresh memory. Only in the second half of the decade, with democracy more consolidated and the PSOE's continuing electoral success now inspiring self-confidence, did the demands for internal democratization become more insistent.

Electoral performance has been a crucial variable governing PSOE cohesiveness. Not only can national victories disarm leadership critics, and reverses give them ammunition: regional and local election results have been important too. The guerristas were pushed onto the defensive by the Juan Guerra scandal at the start of 1990 but the following June their strength was restored by the regional election in Andalucía, where the PSOE list was headed by the guerrista Manuel Chaves and Guerra's identification with the campaign was so strong that many saw the poll as a plebiscite on whether the vicepresidente should remain in office. The increase in the PSOE's vote, from 47.2 to 49.6 per cent (30), encouraged the guerristas to stage a fresh offensive against the liberals, and to stubbornly resist any power-sharing with them at the following party congress. Conversely, after they had already suffered reverses as a result of González's government reorganization in March 1991, the guerristas lost further ground in May as a result of the electoral failure of their candidate, on this occasion Luis Yáñez, when heading the PSOE list in the municipal elections in Sevilla. Defeat in what had been a heartland of Spanish Socialism since the 1970s immediately led to intra-PSOE conflict in the provincial federation, as a result of which the guerristas lost positions (31).

In the case of the PSOE liberals, the state of the economy would seem to influence the extent to which they are prepared to compromise with other groups in the party. Within considerable limits, Solchaga was willing to tolerate moderately inflationary pay settlements as a means of buying industrial peace in his early period

as Finance Minister, yet since then he has become distinctly more intransigent over pay and public expenditure. Not only has economic growth become sluggish: there has also been greater determination to push through liberal policies because of the pressure to adapt to the challenge posed by 1993, and more recently to achieve adequate "convergence" with the EC's more successful economies in the aftermath of Maastricht. This has inevitably provoked tension within the government between the liberals and their critics, the latter mindful of a growing unrest within the party.

Finally, individual gestures by leaders, or changes in their circumstances, may also have a bearing on the internal harmony of socialist parties. To paraphrase Adolfo Suárez, González "destabilized his own party" by suggesting in October 1989 that the general election campaign would probably be his last: this immediately triggered a battle over the succession, which González halted only with some difficulty, through a subsequent retraction (32). Conversely, González's initial solidarity with his deputy when the Juan Guerra scandal broke -declaring that he would resign if Guerra did- mitigated the effects of the event on party cohesion for several months. A year later, however, when González decided finally to dispense with Guerra, this immediately triggered internal party instability because it broke a partnership around which the party hierarchy had hinged for over a decade, and particular bitterness was added to the ensuing struggle because many socialists who hitherto had been loyal to Guerra now turned against him.

THE DIMENSIONS OF CONFLICT

It is possible that the type of governmental structure chosen by the Socialists encouraged conflict between different sectors of the party once it gained office. The existence of a powerful vice presidency and eventually of another "superministry", with the Finance Minister deciding all appointments pertaining to the economy, meant that there were two extremely coveted positions which party groups sought to conquer. The governmental structure may have made the executive itself an arena of conflict, more so than in other countries.

However, open power struggles within the Socialist government occurred only in 1985 and 1990. To account for their absence at other times one should also mention that with the exception of González and Guerra, members of the party executive have tended not to double as government ministers: a fact that helped reinforce the dominance of the two Sevillians until 1991 (33). It should also be noted that liberals and guerristas have not been the only groups present in the executive, and that although González has played the main mediating role between these two sectors, since March 1991 the vice-president, in the form of Narcís Serra, has often acted as a mediator in intra party disputes (34).

A more distinctive dimension of conflict in the PSOE is the regional one. Although in other countries there may be sub-national exceptions to a national pattern of intra-party conflict (for example, Liverpool in the case of the British Labour Party), sub-national variation is much more complex and persistent in the Spanish case. National leaders of the PSOE have had considerable success in subordinating local party groups but at the expense of enhancing the power of intermediate authorities, above all at the regional level. Regional power has grown both through devolution and due to the encouragement by national party leaders of the practice whereby provincial party federations usually agree to form part of a regional delegation to the party congress, rather than send their own.

Over the last decade the regional level has been a very significant "site" or "arena" of conflict in the PSOE. Here regional issues, and regionally-specific issues, add a further dimension to conflict, although, as has been noted already, the centre-periphery cleavage cuts across other cleavages, and thus helps to prevent ideological polarization in the party.

No one regional federation of the party represents a microcosm of the national PSOE. By no means all of the "barons" rebel against the centre: while regional autonomy has been defended by regional leaders and their supporters in Catalonia and Andalucia, party federations in other parts of Spain have been strong supporters of centralism -for example, in poor Extremadura, where central power is viewed as the only possible basis for a national redistribution of wealth. Proregionalism does not even exist in the PSOE wherever there is a similar trend in the society at large: while the Catalan socialists do reflect the sentiments of Catalan nationalism up to a point, the Basque socialists have reacted much more sceptically to Basque nationalism. Of course, in recent history the latter has had more pronounced separatist tendencies than Catalan nationalism, and ideologically it has been the more conservative. But perhaps more important here is the way in which Basque socialism traditionally was based on workers migrating to the region, while the Basque nationalists represented a reaction against the industrial revolution (35). The strong historical ties between party and proletariat in the Basque Country (and Asturias) still tend to differentiate intra-party conflict in northern Spain from that in most other parts of the country.

Throughout the country, however, regardless of such differences, there is very limited factional organization. This reflects both the salient strain of personalism in the PSOE and the statutory intolerance of strongly organized factions. With the exception of Izquierda Socialista, internal party groups in the 1980s tended either to be "clans" of likeminded elite figures, or an elite figure to whom followers were linked as much by patronage as by ideas. Unable to survive or succeed simply through collective action within the party, such groups have relied on occupying positions within the party or the state structure and then using these to build further support by

means of clientelism. Even when in firm control of the party apparatus during the 1980s, the guerristas often acted with the sectarianism and exclusiveness of an organized tendency. However, they have never accepted that a sector guerrista exists in the party: until Guerra's departure from the government, their claim was that the whole party was loyal to Alfonso (36).

Given these circumstances, conflict within the party has had the character of power battles between elite groups and a challenge to the leadership "from below" has seemed unlikely. Here one must acknowledge the current attempt to build a significant left alternative on the basis of CEPES. By 1991, the PSOE's alienated sectors were substantial enough to contemplate their own coordination and joint development of an alternative to the government's economic liberalism and the party's internal authoritarianism. A conference held in November brought together former Socialist ministers and officials, including ex-foreign minister Fernando Morán, Izquierda Socialista activists, UGT leaders and former Communists. Among the main criticisms voiced of the government and liberals were that they reduced "modernisation" to economic growth. The conference attracted an impressive list of participants (37). However, it does not necessarily herald the rise of right-left conflict in the PSOE: the regional dimension must be seen as permanent, and the rise of a party left wing will be resisted by the regional barons, whose own influence would be diluted if factionalism were to find greater expression at regional party level. Moreover, the development of CEPES will be handicapped by its lack of organic roots in the party and its internal diversity (including the social distance between the academic-led Izquierda Socialista and mainly blue-collar UGT). Even less likely is collaboration between the nascent CEPES coalition and the displaced guerristas. Not only did the latter mobilize energetically against the general strike in 1988: they also put pressure on the SPD in an effort to prevent German deputy Friedhelm-Julius Bencher from participating in the CEPES conference (38). Yet the very existence of CEPES shows that the authoritarian party model is in crisis. Just a few years ago its movers would not have dared to meet openly.

THE MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT

It is deeply ironic that González and Guerra opted for a tight managerial regime, for earlier they had been leading figures in the battle for renewal of the old PSOE led by Rodolfo Llopis, and had accused him of confusing political discipline with military discipline (39). Yet right up until this pair's public divergence in 1991, it was an internally authoritarian organization that they built, reflecting their preference for coherence, even if engineered, over the give and take of consensus politics.

The standard means of securing party unity was to offer activists the alternative of rewards for loyalty or harsh penalties for dissidence. In a relatively

small party seeking to fill an expanding number of public positions, which formed the basis of political, administrative and managerial careers, activists who echoed the official line were rewarded with posts very quickly, even in the case of former Communist Party people. Those who dissented found only a small, hostile audience for their views within the party, while for them to seek external sympathy constituted grounds for exclusion under the party statutes.

Suspension or expulsion from the party, often with little regard for the notional rights of the victim, has career implications for some of those affected, and may bring political despair too. For those deeply committed to political activism, ideological self-policing is very common in the PSOE because of a belief that there is "no world elsewhere". Of course, there is the tiny PASOC, but its attraction is limited for many by its failure to grow during the past decade and by its being a distinctly junior partner to the PCE within the United Left.

Besides the traditional stick and carrot approach, co-option has been used as a technique of party management. Although denied freedom of debate, party intellectuals have been provided with opportunities for discussion (usually at an attractive coastal location) and for publication. Moreover, there was an obvious attempt by the party to channel debate following the launch of CEPES. An attempt was made through the party's Fundación Pablo Iglesias to integrate this left-wing initiative into an officially-sponsored exercise in pluralist debate which would focus on specific policy questions (40).

As regards governmental management, González relied until 1991 on a fine balance between liberals, usually in possession of the economic portfolios, and the guerristas, who delivered party loyalty and organized the electoral victories. The liberal-guerrista partnership was always an uneasy one, but at least there was no fundamental divergence over basic questions of economic, foreign or defence policy. For several years, González served as arbiter between these two main contenders for power, his own authority based upon public popularity and the inclusion always of a handful of relatively independent ministers who were personally loyal to him. Government reshuffles were in part an attempt to "perfect" the balance within the government (41).

González's balancing act eventually proved unsustainable. Internal tensions in the aftermath of the general strike and then the Guerra scandal affected the efficiency of his government to such a degree that in 1990 the Congress of Deputies only approved one complete piece of legislation, apart from the budget (42). A desire to make the Spanish economy internationally competitive eventually persuaded González to give the liberals their head in the government, but by this time he had also become annoyed at the way in which spokesmen in the guerrista party apparatus had contradicted ministerial statements and at the refusal of Guerra to

admit non-guerristas to the party executive at the most recent party congress, even in the face of González's own entreaties. There is also a sense in which Guerra fell victim to his own "populism": with the adverse publicity surrounding the Juan Guerra scandal gradually taking its toll, opinion polls showed more Spaniards favouring the deputy PM's departure from the government than his survival (43). González finally tried to break the impasse, not by fighting an open battle within the party, but by using his autonomy as Prime Minister to change his government. He has not been able to avoid a battle entirely, however. Despite the strong subordination of party to government during the 1980s, the former has not been reduced to a mere cypher of the former.

It is not easy to differentiate between the managerial techniques used in party and government, since González is at the helm of both of them. Both as party general secretary and as Prime Minister in a strongly "presidentialist" executive (44), he has repeatedly used the threat of resignation when faced with opposition. This threat is a credible one because he did resign as party leader in 1979 and on that occasion exposed the inability of his rivals to produce a viable alternative. Since then, he has threatened Spaniards with his resignation repeatedly. In 1986 he inferred that he would resign if the NATO referendum went against him, and in 1990 he declared that he would resign if critics forced Guerra to go, during the early months following the Juan Guerra revelations. At other times he has tried to surmount difficulties in the PSOE by having his confidants let loose revelations that "Felipe is tired" of government, that he is contemplating resignation, that his ambitions extend to the presidency of international organizations, and so on.

Here González exploits the fact that he has remained at the head of the politician popularity polls for more than a decade; he knows too that the media is broadly sympathetic, ready to rally to him when his permanence in office seems uncertain. Unchallenged in the PSOE leadership since 1979, his departure could bring great disunity to the PSOE for there is no clear, undisputed successor to him, nor is there much experience of pluralism in the party executive.

THE IMPACT OF INTERNAL PARTY CONFLICT

It is not easy to conclude whether the recent internal party conflict has proved damaging to the PSOE. Opinion polls do not show any clear pattern of decline in the PSOE vote that can be correlated with the resurgence of factionalism in the party (45). This may be because the public focuses chiefly upon the government, which has grown in coherence since Guerra's departure; moreover, although currently intra-party disputes are being aired in public, there have also been displays of party unity, designed to show voters that the PSOE is at least as united as the competition. As in the past, the electorate's perceptions of the PSOE's unity/disunity

will be influenced by the situation in rival parties, and thus far opposition parties have not shown themselves adept at exploiting the PSOE's misfortunes.

In the recent past factionalism did affect the policy-making process negatively, greatly reducing the legislative productivity of the Socialist government in 1990, as has been noted. The problem of immobilism may just have been a transient one, largely resolved by Guerra's removal from the government; yet fresh tensions have emerged in the government and party since the announcement of Solchaga's drastic European convergence plan, which envisages major cuts in public expenditure between 1992 and 1996. To the extent that opposition persists in the cabinet and Parliamentary Socialist Group, disagreements over the plan (which to an extent are a continuation of the former liberal/anti-liberal antagonism) could again disrupt the Socialists' legislative output.

On the other hand, some degree of intra-PSOE pluralist tension is surely beneficial to the policy-making process: not if it is restricted simply to polarised factions echoing personal attacks directed by one leader against another, but if a climate conducive to a critical discussion of policy matters were to emerge. The rubber-stamping role of the Socialist Parliamentary Group and party congresses in the 1980s fuelled public scepticism about the quality of democracy, and helped explain why the PSOE by 1991 appeared to have run out of legislative steam.

Whether the party can arrive at a satisfactory compromise between unity and diversity, 11 conflict and cohesion, will not depend solely on its own initiatives. If the party's electoral attrition continues and inter-party pacts become more important in the future -with Catalan and Basque nationalists, and with the United Left at regional and local level- then these alignments, combined with concern about party decline, could generate further conflict on top of the present disputes. On the other hand, even a PSOE that continued to enjoy electoral success would probably consider the quasi-monolithic model of the 1980s inappropriate or impossible to maintain in the 1990s. The party itself has developed and at least its leaders, at all levels, seem keen to exert a degree of influence. Perhaps then we, have seen the last of those party congresses that were so "bland, uneventful, colorless and smooth as a play being performed on the stage for the third year running" (46).

NOTES

- (1) SARTORI, G.: Parties and Party Systems. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 85.
- (2) JULIA, S.: "Pasiones Socialistas". El País, 6-10-91.
- (3) HINE, D.: "Leaders and Followers: Democracy and Manageability in the Social Democratic Parties of Western Europe" in PATERSON, W.E. and THOMAS, A.H. (eds.): The Future of Social Democracy: Problems and Prospects of Social Democratic Parties in Western Europe. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1986; GILLESPIE, R. and GALLAGHER, T.: "Democracy and Authority in the Socialist Parties of Southern Europe" in GALLAGHER, T. and WILLIAMS, A.M. (eds.): Southern European Socialism. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1989.
- (4) JULIA, S.: "Simplificar las cuestiones". El País, 9-2-90. Note: all references to this newspaper are to the daily edition, except where the international edition is specified.
- (5) GILLESPIE, R.: "The Break-up of the 'Socialist Family': Party-Union Relations in Spain, 1982-89". West European Politics, 13:1, 1990; JULIA, S.: La desavenencia: Partido, sindicatos y huelga general. Madrid, El País/Aquilar, 1988.
- (6) HINE, D.: "Factionalism in West European Parties: A Framework for Analysis". West European Politics, 5:1, 1982, p. 41.
- (7) SHARE, D.: Dilemmas of Social Democracy: The Spanish Socialist Workers Party in the 1980s. Westport, Greenwood, 1989, chs. 4, 5.
- (8) GILLESPIE, R.: "The Break-up...".
- (9) Cambio 16, 950 (5-2-90) and 970 (25-6-90).
- (10) GILLESPIE, R.: "Programa 2000: The Appearance and Reality of Socialist Renewal in Spain", forthcoming, West European Politics, January 1993.
- (11) El Mundo, 6-11-91.
- (12) For summaries of the main differences between the Liberals and "guerristas", see Mercado, 510 (11-11-91) and Cambio 16, 974 (23-7-90).
- (13) El País, 25-1-88.
- (14) *Ibid.*, 31-12-87, 21-4-89, 11-1-90.
- (15) *Ibid.*, 30-11-87.
- (16) On Democracia Socialista, see *ibid.*, 18-11-89, 1-3-90; El País, international edn., 7-5-90, 5-11-90; and El Socialista, 15-3-90. The party won a mere 5,000 votes (0.49%) in the Basque regional elections of October 1990.
- (17) By 1990 the average age of party members was 45, having been 47 in 1980. Party membership had reached 260,000, from 107,000 in 1981. See PSOE, 32 Congreso (1990): Memoria de Gestión de la C.E.F. -C.F. y C.F.C. (1988-1990) pp. 9, 27; GILLESPIE, R.: "Spanish Socialism in the 1980s" in GALLAGHER and WILLIAMS, *op. cit.*
- (18) El País, 14-10-91.
- (19) On the precise relationship between the PSC and the PSOE, see, COLOME, G.: "The 'Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya'" in MARAVALL, J.M. et al.: Socialist Parties in Europe. Barcelona, ICPS, 1991, p. 45-48.

- (20) Cambio 16, 1043 (18-11-91). Guerra has hardly endeared himself to regional party Leaders by branding them "califas" (caliphs).
- (21) El País, 13-11-91: central government currently accounts for 60% of state expenditure, autonomous communities 24% and municipal government 16%. The "guerrista" formula is 50:25:25.
- (22) Cambio 16, 1042 (11-11-91).
- (23) El País, international edn., 61-92: González as always, led in the polls on the electorates judgement of political leaders in December 1990. on a scale of 1-10, his rating of 5.5 was well ahead of those of rival party leaders Aznar (4.1) and Anguita (3.9).
- (24) El País, international edn., 4-11-91.
- (25) Personal interview. Madrid, 27-11-91.
- (26) Cambio 16, 950 (5-2-90).
- (27) El País, 3-8-85.
- (28) El Socialista, 513 (15-11-90).
- (29) SOTELLO, Ignacio: "Paradojas y aporías de los socialistas en el poder". Leviatán, nº 13, 1983.
- (30) El País, international edn., 25-6-90.
- (31) Cambio 16, 1023 (1-7-91); El Independiente, 19-10-91.
- (32) Cambio 16, 983 (24-9-90).
- (33) HEYWOOD, Paul: "Governing a New Democracy: The Power of the Prime Minister in Spain". West European Politics, 14:2, 1991, p. 102.
- (34) El Siglo, 18-11-91.
- (35) FUSI, Juan Pablo: Política obrera en el País Vasco, 1880-1923. Madrid, Turner, 1975.
- (36) El País, 22-4-90.
- (37) *Ibid.*, 16-19 Nov. 1991.
- (38) *Ibid.*, 16-11-91.
- (39) GILLESPIE, R.: The Spanish Socialist Party. A History of Factionalism. Oxford, Clarendon, 1989, p. 408; Le Socialiste. París and Toulouse, 2-11-72.
- (40) El País, 28-11-91.
- (41) Tiempo, 18-7-88; El Globo, 11-7-88.
- (42) El País, international edn., 17-12-90, 7-1-91.
- (43) *Ibid.*, 1-10-90.
- (44) HEYWOOD, Paul, p. 111.
- (45) El País, international edition, 6-1-92.
- (46) SHAPIRO, L.: "Keynote-Compromise". Problems of Communism, 20:4, 1971, p. 2. Shapiro was

describing the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.