The Iberian divergence in political inclusion

In this essay I examine the Iberian divergence in political inclusion, a pattern of contrast in the way politics is conducted in Portugal and Spain which I attribute to the routes to democracy taken by these neighboring countries. In doing so I rely on an eclectic methodology – in the tradition of Manuel Villaverde Cabral and other great social scientists such as Juan Linz – a strategy which I consider by far the best approach for understanding empirical reality as it genuinely is. Given the well-known critical abilities of Villaverde Cabral I also take up several possible objections to my central argument and offer considerations on why Portugal has suffered from relatively high levels of income inequality despite the tendencies of the political system toward broad inclusion of the poor and socially disadvantaged.

Fundamental claims

Historically oriented social science that focuses on large-scale transformations – such as those capable of remaking social hierarchies, economic structures, cultural expression and political organization – may appear to represent a fundamentally different approach to the pursuit of knowledge than survey research with its examination of individual-level variation at one point in time, but I argue here that at a deep level these two research traditions hold much in common and can prove highly complementary to one another. Both historical analysis and survey research serve as vehi-

\* The intellectual debts I have accrued in the work underlying this essay are too numerous to mention in full here.
icles for constructing a type of social science knowledge which addresses large theoretical questions while acknowledging the immense complexity of the empirical world and its stubborn refusal to adhere perfectly to expectations deductively extracted from abstract theories; historical and survey-based research share an underlying affinity for the Weberian approach to social science with its simultaneous commitment to theory construction and the building of knowledge about the world as it really is – in all of its complexity (Fishman 2007). Perhaps this is why the scholarly work of a surprising number of major social scientists is characterized by both of these methodological forms – rather than just one. Manuel Villaverde Cabral, the great Portuguese social scientist who began his career as a historian (Cabral 1974; 1976; 1977; 1988), and went on to lead in the development of survey research in his native country, is a prime example of this broader tendency and much the same can be said for the great Spanish sociologist and political scientist, Juan Linz.

Much of Villaverde Cabral’s work deals with the themes of social inclusion, participation and justice – and I will take up those themes here, attempting to build an argument in the spirit of much of his work, even if he would not fully agree with all of my specific claims. On the basis of a wide range of evidenciary sources including survey data, historical documents, qualitative interviews and ethnographic fieldwork I will take up the question of the relative degree of political inclusion characterizing the neighboring countries of the Iberian Peninsula in the decades following the demise of authoritarian rule in the 1970s. I seek to build a methodologically eclectic basis for answering the large question of how well Portugal and Spain manage to provide genuine political equality for their citizens despite the large economic inequalities found in these (and other) societies.

I argue that the Iberian Peninsula neighbors of Portugal and Spain have manifested a fundamental divergence in their propensity toward political inclusion of the poor – and powerless – in the nearly four decades since they inaugurated the worldwide turn to democracy of the twentieth century’s final quarter (Fishman 2011). I attribute this difference, and its implications for the attainment of democracy’s promise of full political equality among citizens (Dahl 1998; Somers 2008), to the sharply dissimilar roads to democracy followed by the two cases in the mid-1970s. Whereas Portugal reached democracy through a social revolutionary process (Bermeo 1987; Hammond 1988; Maxwell 1995; Durán Muñoz 2000; Palacios Cerezo 2004) which transformed not only political institutions but also social hierarchies and cultural repertoires, Spain moved from authoritarianism to democracy in a consensus-oriented process of reform which changed the country’s political regime but left state, societal and cultural structures far less open to challenge than in post-April 25 Portugal (Fishman 1990a). I contend that these contrasting pathways to democracy created a sustained basis for greater political incorporation of the poor in Portugal than in Spain, and that this inclusionary orientation operated not only through institutionalized forms of politics but also through social movement and protest dynamics. Before presenting this argument I turn first to an inescapable issue which might seem to place in question this reading of the contrast between the Iberian neighbors.

**Examining the paradox of income inequality in Iberia**

The relationship between socio-economic inequality and democratic politics in the neighboring countries of the Iberian Peninsula presents us with a large paradox. Although Portugal is characterized by substantially greater public consensus in support of the principle that state policies should diminish inequality, Spain is currently currently appears to be the less unequal of the two societies – if we rely on the most widely used measure, namely the Gini coefficient. Survey data collected and analyzed by Manuel Villaverde Cabral and his collaborators (Cabral et al. 2003, 54) show that in 1999 an overwhelming 69.3% of the Portuguese public – but only 31.7% of Spaniards – agreed fully with the proposition that government has the responsibility to diminish income inequality among persons. Indeed, Portugal is a world leader in the breadth of public support for policies intended to promote income equality, those holding this position include not only supporters of left-oriented parties but also many within the electorate of the two parties located to the right of the Portuguese center. Yet the country’s overall income distribution is among the most unequal in western continental Europe and is only slightly less unequal than the level found in the United States – where high and growing inequality (Bartels 2008; Hacker and Pierson 2010) has failed to produce a broad consensus in favor of state-led redistribution. In their broadly cross-national analysis of social costs of inequality, Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) identify Portugal as an instance of relatively unequal distribution. Spain, in contrast, has managed to attain a lower Gini, evidence suggesting that the larger Iberian case holds at least a moderate ad-
vantage over Portugal in income distribution (Huber and Stephens 2012).

The empirical reality of this paradox seems quite clear but that element of clarity sheds little if any direct light on the cause of this disjunction or on its implications for this essay's broader argument on political inclusion which assigns to Portugal the more egalitarian position. I rely here on a methodologically eclectic approach to make sense out of the paradox and to offer a broad claim on historical reasons why the neighboring democracies on the Iberian Peninsula deal with inequality in quite different ways.

Several factors help to explain why Portuguese income inequality has been greater than that of Spain despite the political approach to equality of the two democracies. Indeed, I argue that the fundamental political divergence between the cases is the reverse of what the income distributional contrast might lead one to expect. I identify several outcomes on which Portugal has addressed the needs of the poor to a greater extent than its larger Iberian neighbor and specify the mechanism that accounts for those outcomes, namely a form of political practice - rooted in the polity's revolutionary origins - which enhances the openness of institutional power holders to social protest. As I develop at greater length elsewhere (Fishman 2011), the democratic practice of Portugal provides a substantially more central role to mobilizations articulating the demands and concerns of poor, and seemingly powerless, actors than that of Spain.

The comparison of the two Iberian Peninsula cases holds great theoretical relevance precisely because they shared numerous historical and structural parallels for centuries prior to their nearly polar opposite pathways to democracy in the 1970s. Granted, the authoritarian regimes which ruled the two countries for several decades in the mid-twentieth century were not identical (Fernandes 2007), nor were the processes of democratic breakdown (Linz 1978; Schwartzman 1989; Wheeler 1978) in the interwar years. An exhaustive accounting of all the ways in which these countries' political histories have shaped their relative degree of political inclusion in the early twenty-first century would require an analysis not only of the critical juncture, or turning point, constituted by their polar opposite democratization scenarios in the 1970s but also of critical antecedents (Slater and Simmons 2010). The history of the two countries prior to the 1970s clearly does matter, and the two histories were not identical despite their many similarities. But in purely political terms, and when the Iberian countries are contrasted against other national cases, what stands out is the extraordinary series of historical parallels in their development prior to Portugal's Carnation Revolution and Spain's consensus-oriented process of reform in the mid-1970s. However, if we focus instead on socio-economic development broadly construed, the Portugal-Spain parallel prior to the 1970s is much less close – and this point is of crucial relevance for understanding the magnitude of the challenge faced by the two democracies in their ongoing efforts to address inequality.

Portugal and Spain are still shaped by a double legacy encompassing the enduring effects not only of their 1970s transitions to democracy but also of their prior experiences under authoritarianism (Costa Pinto 2010). The most important enduring legacy of the authoritarian period for the configuration of the current stratification system in the two countries is that of educational access. Whereas universal primary-level schooling of children was not implemented in Portugal until the mid-1950s (Candéias 2007), and the broad-based expansion of education beyond the primary level came later (Vieira 2007), in Spain these developmental objectives were attained, or at least approximated, decades earlier. As the data analyzed by Huber and Stephens (2012) demonstrate, contemporary Portugal still shows the mark of this late start in universal schooling, and structurally embedded educational inequality - resting above all on low levels of schooling among those above the age of sixty - stands as a major constraint limiting the society's approximation to the goal of relative income equality. Given the continuing demographic presence of large numbers of people with very low educational attainment, Portugal has faced a classic Kuznets-curve dynamic generating an increase in pre-transfer inequality as the number of Portuguese with high levels of educational attainment grew quickly in the decades following the carnation revolution. Until the legacies of historical backwardness - especially in educational access - have been thoroughly overcome, improvements concentrated in younger age cohorts can paradoxically lead to rising inequality in the population at large.

Another likely cause of Portugal's difficulty in approximating relative income inequality concerns an unfortunate side-effect of the country's relative success in incorporating women into the labor force following the Carnation Revolution (Fishman 2010; Ferreira 1998). Esping-Andersen has shown that high levels of labor force participation by both men and women can contribute to the growth of household income inequality under conditions of marital homogamy - even in the relatively egalitarian social democratic cases (Esping-Andersen 2007). Where marital or

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1 I am indebted to Tiago Fernandes for emphasizing the importance of this point.
household partners share relatively similar positions in the occupational hierarchy, labor force participation by both marital partners amplifies household income inequality beyond what it would be if households held only one income earner each. For this reason, Portugal’s advantage over Spain in the incorporation of women into the labor force is paradoxically likely to increase the magnitude of pre-transfer household income inequality in the smaller of the two Iberian cases. Thus, structural features of the two societies help to explain the Iberian paradox in income distribution.

One important quantitative indicator provides a more favorable image of Portugal than the Gini data. Eurostat data on poverty in 2008, released on December 13, 2010, report that the proportion of the Portuguese public considered at risk of poverty (on the basis of earnings below 60% of the national median income) was 18.5%. Although that figure is higher than the EU27 average of 16.5%, it is the lowest incidence of poverty in southern Europe in the Eurostat report. The comparable figure for Spain in 2008 was 19.6%. The figure for Italy, at 18.7% of the national population, was only marginally higher than Portugal but the proportion of the population at risk of poverty was 20.1% in Greece. Thus Portugal’s efforts to reduce income inequality have made a large impact in the bottom two deciles of the income distribution, reducing poverty to a lower proportion of the national population than in the rest of southern Europe. It should be stated that this most recent data on poverty continues a pattern manifested in prior years. In a related vein, both taxation and social spending have represented a higher proportion of GDP than in Spain although they are both lower than in the Nordic social democratic welfare states.

One fundamental component of government transfers, and of their impact in changing the pre-transfer distribution, deserves emphasis. Given Spain’s chronically higher unemployment, in the larger Iberian case unemployment insurance has played an especially large role in state social expenditures and in configuring the impact of government transfers on income distribution. The greater efforts of Portuguese policy makers to focus on employment creation or protection (Fishman 2010) have diminished the need for unemployment insurance payments – at least relative to Spain. In this sense, the positive impact of Portuguese state policies on distributional outcomes is not limited to income transfers per

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2 See Eurostat news release 190/2010, posted on the Eurostat website on December 13, 2010 and still available there.
to the voices of protesters, thus leaving the poor with a substantially weaker impact on public policy and on matters of direct interest to them. Spanish political elites have been more inclined toward exclusionary practices; even within the Socialist Party, a virtual fault line has separated local leaders open to the voices of social movements from others quite antagonistic toward extra-institutional dissent from below, essentially denying its legitimacy (Fishman 2004). This contrast between the neighboring countries on the Iberian Peninsula is rooted in the historical process constituting democratic practice in the two cases, the theme to which I now turn.

The distinctiveness of the social revolutionary path to democracy

The Portuguese case of democratization is of great comparative and theoretical significance not only because of its differences with the historically and geographically proximate case of Spain but more importantly and in a broader sense because it constitutes an archetypical instance of democratization through social revolution - a historically unusual but nonetheless important pathway to political freedom. Other cases which fit within the relatively small universe of democracies which emerged from social revolutionary processes include France, arguably Nicaragua, and in parts of the national territory El Salvador (Wood 2003). Of course, social revolution, where it occurs (Skocpol 1979; Goodwin 2001) is no guarantee that democratic arrangements will triumph. Democracy requires an institutional set articulated around free and competitive elections as well as a bundle of rights and legal guarantees without which elections would stand as a hollow enterprise (Shapiro 2003). Yet the basic institutional framework required for democracy is, on its own, no guarantee of the quality and depth of democracy or of attaining genuine political equality among citizens, and herein lies the theoretical significance of the Portuguese case. In post April 25 Portugal, the design and launching of representative political institutions overlapped in historical time with a social revolution which strongly shaped the more strictly political and (formal) institutional dimensions of democratization.

For this reason, I argue that one cannot fully comprehend the aspects of political reality revealed by survey data for Portugal - and their contrasts with neighboring Spain - without understanding how in this case political attitudes and practices are embedded in a system historically shaped by revolution. A comprehensive analysis of contemporary Portuguese politics requires not only the reliance on conventional institutional and survey analysis, important though such mainstream forms of social science are, but also the intertwining of the evidence culled from such research with insights rooted in historical and cultural analysis.

The Skocpolian state crisis unleashed in 1974 by the Estado Novo's anachronistic effort to maintain Portugal's colonial possessions in Africa quickly generated two characteristic features of social revolution: a partial inversion of social - and political - hierarchies coupled with a thorough reconfiguration of cultural repertoires and structures. The challenge to hierarchies which initially emerged in the Armed Forces, where captains famously played the central role in the country's «liberation by golpe» (Schmitter 1975), quickly spread to other state institutions as well as schools and universities, private enterprises, agricultural estates and to some degree social relations within the family. Emblematic of the partial inversion of hierarchies were the purges which took place in schools where students themselves participated in assemblies intended tooust teachers thought to be supporters of the old regime (Costa Pinto 2006). At the same time the revolution gave birth to a process of widespread cultural renewal which included the emergence of new symbols, forms of expression and discourse, a remaking of unstated assumptions about what constitutes normal practice, and - alongside these «bottom-up» phenomena - a «top-down» effort of revolutionary authorities to transform cultural and civic practices through the cultural dynamization campaign (Vespeira de Almeida 2007) and a broad project of educational transformation (Stoer 1982; 1986). This widespread reconfiguration of cultural repertoires and structures crucially took place in the context of the challenge to hierarchies discussed above. The cultural renovation produced by April 25 and its aftermath accentuated social inclusion, participation and more or less egalitarian principles.

Many analyses of the legacies of revolution focus more or less exclusively on important indicators located squarely within the formal institutional arena - encompassing issues such as the ownership structure of enterprises - but I argue that important legacies of democratization scenarios, and especially of the social revolutionary pathway, are located within the cultural sphere and are manifested in practices which can prove more or

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3 Scholars continue to debate the Nicaraguan case. For a recent argument which classifies the regime as a «semi-democracy» see Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán (2005).
less inclusionary than the formal design of official institutions would suggest. It is precisely in the culturally constituted terrain of democratic practice where I locate the largest enduring contrast between Portuguese and Spanish democracy – a divergence rooted in the two countries’ virtually polar opposite pathways to democracy in the 1970s.

Through the term democratic practice I refer to the way in which actors within a democracy understand and make use of opportunities for political action and influence, and interact with other participants in the polity. Democratic practice, in this sense, involves not only what goes on inside parliaments, government ministries and voting booths but also what transpires in demonstrations, schools and the newsgroups of the communications media – to name only some of the venues where democratic practice can be observed and studied. Democratic practice is shaped both by what sociologists of culture have called implicit culture (Wuthnow and Witten 1998), that is, unstated understandings of what constitutes normal action, and by explicit culture with its symbols, discourses and often elaborate efforts to imbue life and institutions with meaning.

Whereas April 25, and the social revolution which it initiated, brought socially subordinate actors – and demonstrators – into the center of political activity in democratizing Portugal, transition by reform in Spain placed a series of more or less firm limits on the ability of bottom-up initiatives to shape the design of the new system. This is not to say that Spain’s transition can be reduced to a series of elite-level pacts, and the most complete theorization of the Spanish pathway to democracy (Linz and Stepan 1996) incorporates a broader array of actors and processes into its conceptualization of the post-Franco transition, but that said, the important contribution of social pressure to the Spanish transition (Fishman 1990b; Threlfall 2008; Herrera and Markoff 2011) was politically contained in ways that stood in stark contrast to the Portuguese experience. The important comparative analysis of Rafael Durán Muñoz (2000) shows that the initial demands of workers in the context of democratization were remarkably similar in the neighboring countries but the initial parallelism quickly gave way to an ongoing divergence in the nature of worker mobilizations as a result of the juxtaposition of state crisis in Portugal with state continuity (but regime change) in Spain.

The style and substance of popular mobilizations as well as their relevance for system-wide political developments diverged fundamentally between the two cases. It is in this light that we can understand the testimony of Mário Murteira, a left-oriented economist and government minister in revolutionary Portugal, who relates an experience in which he and then Prime Minister Vasco Gonçalves were powerfully influenced by popular demonstrations. In the words of Murteira, «Várias vezes quando estava em grandes conversas com o general Vasco Gonçalves, no gabinete, íamos à janela ver o que se estava a passar com as manifestações. No fundo, e em larga medida, éramos mais espectadores de uma grande movimentação popular do que actores.» (Silva et al. 2006, 105). The unwritten assumptions which undergirded the emergence of the new democracy through a revolutionary process made demonstrators – including those of limited economic resources and power – into significant actors, whereas the assumptions underpinning the Spanish pathway to democratic freedoms left such actors at a far greater distance from the center of political life. I now turn to contemporary practice in the two Iberian cases to illustrate the enduring nature of the differences which emerged in the 1970s.

Contemporary democratic practice

Perhaps no type of «contention» or protest better captures the fundamental contrast between the two systems than the mobilizations of immigrants and other economically disadvantaged actors with grievances about housing. The metropolitan areas of both Lisbon and Madrid have seen the emergence of large areas of «informal» housing in which immigrants and others lived in dwellings that lacked a fully legal status. Informal housing – much of it providing homes for immigrants – has been especially prevalent in the large area known as the Cañada Real outside Madrid and in certain Lisbon-area neighborhoods in the municipality of Amadora and other suburban communities. In both countries many of those residing in informal housing have been expelled from their homes and the structures demolished. But the two political systems have responded in highly dissimilar ways to the voices and demands of those affected. In greater Lisbon, those expelled from their homes in January 2006 organized a broad campaign in favor of o direito à habitação. They marched on the Assembleia da República, gained a hearing from major news media outlets and sought meetings with political parties in the parliament. Crucially – and in a fashion which clearly reflects the parameters of Portuguese democratic practice – all of the parties present in the parliament agreed to meet with the immigrants in need of housing to discuss their situation. Various other instances of housing related protests confirm this general pattern (Fishman 2011). Institutional office holders in
Portugal have been repeatedly willing to meet with poor and socially marginal demonstrators who appeal to the constitutionally guaranteed right to housing.

In a very real sense, demonstrators and institutional office holders have formed part of one democratic conversation. This has afforded the poor and socially powerless with a measure of political equality that is greater than what is to be found in many other democratic systems. Moreover, this inclusionary tendency in Portuguese democracy cannot be easily captured by the description or design of formal institutions. Instead, it is on the terrain of practice itself where the inclusionary nature of Portuguese democracy is especially visible.

Despite the presence of numerous points of similarity between the two Iberian societies, Spanish democratic practice has been remarkably different. The cross-national difference is clearly manifested in numerous important and more or less parallel historical episodes in which structural similarities of events taking place in the two societies have not led actors to confront problems and processes in the same way. In Spain, the immigrants who in 2008 lost to demolition their Cañada Real homes in the outskirts of Madrid could find no negotiating partners inside official governmental institutions to parallel the access of their counterparts in Portugal to political parties present in the Assembleia da República. Indeed, the former residents of informal housing outside Madrid were forced to move into a Catholic parish in southern Madrid where the activist priest welcomed them and championed their cause.\(^4\) In a more broadly systemic sense, one point of contrast between the cases is highly illustrative: Whereas Portuguese demonstrators routinely take their causes – and their voices of protest – to the steps of parliament or even inside the building – Spanish demonstrators are legally prohibited from doing so and are typically kept at a distance from Madrid’s Congreso de los Diputados. Perhaps as a result, Spanish protestors are less inclined than their Portuguese counterparts to seek out dialogue with governmental office holders.

This pattern of cross-national differences in the form taken by housing protests and in their treatment by office-holders is to be found in numerous instances in both countries. Whereas the Okupas who take over unoccupied dwellings have often been dealt with harshly by the police in Spain, in Portugal municipal authorities in Lisbon and Okupas protestors have searched for avenues of dialogue and accommodation.

The relative openness of institutional power holders to voices of dis-

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\(^4\) I discuss this episode in Fishman (2011).

How broadly shared and how durable is the Iberian divergence in political inclusion?

This essay argues for a systematic difference between the Iberian cases in their propensity toward political inclusion of the poor but critical and careful readers will surely ask themselves at least two obvious questions: How broadly based – within each society – are the predispositions favoring the forms of democratic practice briefly introduced here? And, in a related vein, how durable will these two national patterns prove to be? The first question directs our attention above all to the Portuguese center-right and the Spanish center-left, to see whether the political parties so situated are more reflective of the national tendencies formulated here or of the ideological proclivities of similarly situated parties in other polities. The second question raises the issue of mechanisms of reproduction and change in culturally rooted practices. But in purely empirical terms the analytical distinction between these two questions largely vanishes and it is to the relevant empirical terrain that we now turn.

Despite the obvious and expected presence of some differences be-
An important cautionary note

The analysis presented here might encourage one to think that country differences could be seen as the key to explaining the emergence of different patterns of political change in Portugal and Spain. However, a closer look at the rich historical context of these countries reveals that, despite their similarities in many respects, they have also experienced significant differences. These differences, in turn, can be attributed to a variety of factors, including the legacy of authoritarian regimes, the role of the Catholic Church, and the impact of economic factors.

For example, in Portugal, the process of democratization was driven by a combination of external pressures, such as the influence of the European Union, and internal factors, such as the decline of the communist party and the rise of a new middle class. In Spain, on the other hand, the process of democratization was more gradual and was characterized by a strong emphasis on consensus-building and the participation of various social groups.

In closing, it is important to recognize that while there are clear similarities between Portugal and Spain, there are also significant differences that have shaped their political development. These differences highlight the complexity of the political process and the importance of understanding the historical context in which political change occurs.
Portuguese polity and society continue to face significant challenges of many sorts and all such challenges need to be carefully studied and understood through precisely the sort of methodologically eclectic work promoted and practiced by Villaverde Cabral. If this essay’s argument is largely valid, in such research the legacies of Portugal’s carnation revolution will often be found to exert a positive and socially inclusive role in shaping how the country confronts its challenges.

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Capítulo 21

British young people and politics: a disengaged generation?*

Introduction

In the 11th century a celebrity known as Peter the Hermit is said to have delivered these rather irritable thoughts:

«The world is passing through troubled times. Young people have no reverence for their parents; they are impatient of all restraint; they talk as if they alone know everything; what passes for wisdom with us is foolishness for them.»

He was, of course, referring to the well-worn belief – even then apparently - that the young are a generation apart, not only with silly, new-fangled ideas but also with little or no interest in the important things in life – that is the things that interest ordinary people (who are naturally not young and possibly never were). Some ten centuries later, we cannot pick up a newspaper that does not either bemoan or rejoice in a newly-discovered putative youth culture, sometimes referred to as the product of «Generation X», which has heterodox views and habits that will soon engulf us all.

The question we address here is whether «things are what they used to be», or whether the «generation gap» has become more (or less) marked, and – if so – in what respects. This is a large question to which we will only attempt partial answers. Unlike Peter The Hermit, we confine

* An earlier version of this paper was published by the Citizenship Foundation London in 1998 in «A Report of a Colloquium on the values, attitudes and behaviour of young people in the 1990s».
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a Manuel Villaverde Cabral
Homenagem
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