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# Spanish International Orientations: Between Europe and Iberoamerica

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### Introduction

Spanish foreign policy has had traditionally two main orientations (leaving aside USA which may be the most important from the point of view of *realpolitik*): Europe, because of historical coexistence, and America, because of the “discovery, conquest, and colonisation”, and the complex relationships which they brought about. Both are central ingredients of Spanish identity, either as a nation or as a Nation State. Given the simultaneous belongingness to these two worlds, one can think of a possible conflict of identifications and interests, if an exclusive commitment to any of these had to be made.

In the context of increasing “Europeanisation”, the position of the Latin-Americans as a referent group for Spanish people becomes worthy of investigation. Is there any specifically differentiated feeling of attachment, or community, with the Latin-Americans among the Spaniards? Is there still a belief or a feeling that there exists a cultural and/or psychological affinity with, or belongingness to, a symbolic community beyond Spain itself? Are there any psychological bases for the so called “Iberoamerican Community of Nations”?

This chapter draws on survey data to explore the extent to which this dual orientation is reflected in Spanish public opinion and to discuss its characteristics. I shall consider data from three different surveys within a briefly sketched sociohistorical context. Two of the surveys involve a representative sample of 1200 Spanish people aged 18 and above and they took place in January 1991 and January 1992. The sample of the third survey comprised 100 people from each

of seven professional groups: writers, University professors, clergymen, managers, journalists, liberal professions (medical doctors, lawyers and engineers) and politicians. The sample was drawn from respective groups in Madrid (243), Barcelona (224), Seville (80), Valencia (76), Bilbao (76) and La Coruna (56). This survey was conducted in the autumn of 1992.

### Europe as an Aspiration

By the turn of the twentieth century Spanish society was living through a period of a deep social crisis, starting with the Napoleonic invasion, the traumatic war with the United States and the loss of its last colonies in 1898. This year was called the year of "National Disaster".

In this context of generalised pessimism a current of thought known as *regeneracionismo*, a main proponent of which is Joaquin Costa, defended the idea that Spain should look to Europe and assimilate its values and patterns of social organisation in order to come out of its decadence. It should stop searching for its "national essences" in an idealised past and look towards its current European environment.

This point was taken over by Jose Ortega y Gasset who may be considered as the central figure of twentieth century Spanish thought. Mirroring that collective mood, in 1911 Ortega said:

To be Spanish is certainly a painful destiny . . . Spain does not exist as a nation . . . Regeneration is inseparable of Europeanization; that's why immediately after the reconstructive emotion was felt that Europeanization idea came to mind. Regeneration is the wish, Europeanization is the means to satisfy it. It was truly seen from the beginning that Spain was the problem and Europe the solution.

(Ortega, 1989, 19)

And a little before in the same text:

To feel the distressing Spanish reality implies the comparative perception of the splendid European possibility . . . To grieve for Spain is the will to become Europe.

(Ortega, 1989, 18)

A literal interpretation of this text would certainly be misleading. It is not the mimetic spirit, but that of emulation, stimulation. It is not a question of abandoning a historical identity in order to copy another one. Rather it is to recognise the open character of it and, in spite of its serious situation, to undertake creatively its reconstruction in view of the values represented by Europe, that is those of Modernity. According to Ortega, above all Europe is science.

It might be interesting to recall that Ortega was an early theoretician of the European supranationality. He pointed out how the political reality in the form of national independent states did not respond any more to the sociocultural and economic reality of Europe. Underlying this national plurality and as a result of multiple relationships, a common psychological layer has been developing which

was to give rise to the formation of the European nation and the European state.

Europe is not and will not be the inter-nation because that means in the view of the historical record a hollow, a vacuum and no more. Europe will be the supranation.

(Ortega, 1976, 238)

Certainly, there were other currents of thought proposing similar ideas to those of Ortega in the beginning of the century in Spain. I have focused on Ortega's position because the scope and pervasiveness of his influence have been incomparable since early 1920s until today (even though he died in 1956). His influence was not limited to academic or political circles. It reached the public at large. Even today's modernising rhetoric which the socialists are using in the electoral campaigns could be traced to the views held by Ortega y Gasset. If we come down from the plane of ideas, or ideologies, to that of social processes, it might be appropriate to recollect that from the late 1950s until the early 1970s, millions of Spaniards were emigrating to European countries looking for work. Similarly, a few years later, millions of Europeans travelled as tourists to Spain. In both cases the Spaniards could experiment with the *comparative perception of the splendid European possibility*.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, for social movements, labour, students and the political opposition to the Franco regime, Europe meant freedom (*la libertad*), the referent which should be involved against the authoritarian Regime. Even the Regime itself asked to be admitted to the Common Market at a date as early as 1962, taking into account its political and economic dependence.

On the other hand, given the sociohistorical conditions so briefly portrayed, the formation of a strong unitary Spanish nationalism was impossible. The weakness of the Spanish Nation State manifested as we have seen in the year of 1898, and later on in the Civil War of 1936–39, had as a consequence the formation of a diversified and plural Spanish national identity, in which some "peripheric" nationalisms (mainly Catalan and Basque) will not only appear as alternatives but as a negation of the Spanish national identity itself. In this context, Europe meant, on the one hand, the solution by dissolution of all internal problems, and on the other hand, the membership which could increase the so much needed collective self-esteem. It is not surprising then that under these conditions resistance to the entry into the European Community was so scarce, in spite of the restriction that it supposed for the agrarian sector, or the tariff disarmament in the industrial one. The signing of the Treaty was presented, and probably experienced symbolically by the great majority of the population, as a *confirmation* of an historical aspiration to "Europeity".

Therefore, either from the perspective of the history of ideas and social movements, of economics, or from the point of view of the mirror glass game of collective identities, the experience of Europe as an aspiration had to be strong among the Spaniards. The survey data considered in this chapter shows this.

TABLE 7.1 Mean ratings of favourable sentiments towards world areas or countries\*

European Community	3.18	3.80	6.09
Iberoamerica	3.00	3.52	5.81
Eastern Europe	2.87	3.42	5.25
Japan	2.75	3.24	4.74
Countries of Black Africa	2.73	3.20	4.80
India	2.72	3.15	4.59
North America (USA and Canada)	2.62	3.13	4.79
Arab countries of North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Egypt)	2.53	3.02	4.71

N1 = 1200 N2 = 1200 N3 = 744

\* In N1 scores range from 4 (very favourable) to (very unfavourable) with no neutral point.  
 In N2 scores range from 5 (very favourable) to 1 (very unfavourable) with 3 as neutral point.  
 In N3 scores range from 7 (very favourable) to 1 (very unfavourable) with 4 as neutral point.

Table 7.1 which includes the responses to the question "what are your sentiments towards each of these countries or block of countries: very favourable, fairly favourable, fairly unfavourable or very unfavourable?" shows that the most favourable sentiment seems to be for the European Community in all cases. Also, when the question is put in a hypothetical way, asking "who would you like to be the winner in a football match in which the European and Latin-American selections will face each other?", the great majority seems to identify with Europe; 48% and 55% of the first and second sample respectively preferred Europe to win while 23% of the first sample and 21% of the second sample preferred Latin-America to win.

Now, if the confrontation instead of being global between continents is between countries, some of which belong to Europe and some to Latin-America, the preferred country to win in the first place is a Latin-American one (Argentina) (see Table 7.2).

TABLE 7.2 Preferred winner in football match between the European and Latin-American selections

	First Place	Second Place		First Place	Second Place
Japan	10.5	8.2	Ecuador	10.3	11.3
Hungary	2.8	4.5	Austria	8.3	8.6
Nigeria	4.4	4.7	Hungary	4.3	6.1
Holland	8.3	16.6	Honduras	5.9	8.9
Algeria	2.7	5.4	Holland	10.0	17.8
Great Britain	9.7	11.0	Argentina	32.5	15.7
Argentina	28.5	13.0	None	8.2	8.7
None	5.2	6.5	D.L./N.A.	20.5	23.5
D.K./N.A.	27.3	29.2			

N1 = 1200

N2 = 1200

TABLE 7.3 Mean ratings of liking for different peoples

Italians	6.37	5.95	6.88
Mexicans	6.37	—	6.66
Argentiniens	6.31	6.25	6.69
Japanese	5.98	5.71	5.94
Germans	5.61	5.45	6.09
Russians	5.56	5.42	6.41
Chinese	5.54	—	5.47
Portuguese	5.47	5.45	6.58
French	5.37	5.23	5.76
North Americans	5.18	5.08	5.48
Polish	5.14	—	6.18
Africans	5.14	—	5.86
English	4.89	4.96	5.59
Gypsies	4.14	—	5.66
Moroccans	4.12	4.10	5.20

N1 = 1200

N2 = 1200

N3 = 744

To identify with Europe as a whole seems to be different from identifying with specific countries which are part of Europe. This observation finds further support in another type of question shown in Table 7.3 "who do you like . . . the following peoples". The responses ranged from 0 (not at all) to 10 (very much). First, the similarity in rank orderings mainly in the first two samples which are representative of the adult Spanish population is notable. Table 7.3 shows that a Latin group of peoples (Italian, Argentinian, Mexican) is the most liked by the Spanish, while the Moroccans, Gypsies, English and North Americans are the least liked. The fact that this structure of preferences happens to emerge in a sample of well-qualified and educated persons suggests that this is a structure of international attitudes quite generalised among the Spanish. The post positive attitudes towards the Latin, with the exception of Portuguese, in the two general population samples seem to respond to a sentiment of sympathy and perceived similarity between the Spanish and these peoples. The origins of these perceptions can be found in history. Historical factors may also account for the relatively little liking for the English and North American and, to a lesser extent, for the French. It is obvious that European national identities have been constructed to a great extent through wars with each other; one only has to go for a walk in the squares, schools, museums or palaces in European countries to be reminded of this. Victory halls, triumphal arches, statues of generals and admirals, heroes of "la Résistance", all appear before us as symbols in which national identities have been forged and kept in the collective memory of European peoples. It is many years since Spaniards have had any war, with the exception of the Civil War. However, they seem to keep memory of those which they had in the past, as it seems to appear in their international

attitudes. Otherwise, it is difficult to understand how peoples so admired in other respects are comparatively so little liked.

### The Orientations towards Iberoamerica: On the Iberoamerican Community of Nations

The idea of achieving a certain form of continental unity in Latin-America goes back to the same beginnings of its independence. Bolivar envisioned such unity in the form of a confederation of peoples sharing the same language, religion, customs and traditions.

This imagined community by "*el libertador*" did not go very far in reality however. The newly liberated peoples had to lay a new institutional base and a new legitimacy and reorganise their economies. The immediate and urgent problems left little time to the new leaders for unitary undertakings (Safford, 1987). On the other hand, the United States of the North actively opposed any such project for a united states in the south, according to sound *realpolitik* logic.

The rapprochement sentiment started to arise anew once the old colonial power, Spain, ceased to be a threat and hegemonic North America was perceived as a new one. So a process of rapprochement started again among the Latin-American peoples and their old "mother country". The North American interventions in the area, specially when Mexico lost half of its territory in 1847, had created resentment towards the United States in the Peninsula as a consequence of the humiliation due to the war of 1898.

Sectors of the Spanish intelligentsia which did not share the Europeanism of Ortega but who fostered a re-encounter of archetypes in Spanish history as opposed to the modernity represented by Europe, will find in the idea of America and its potential development a way in which to reaffirm their collective identity. It was rediscovery which soothed wounded national sentiment; but it allowed also to look to the future.

Such a mood accompanied the intensification of relations which went on until the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Civil War.

After the war thousands of professionals, scientists, professors, who were on the republican side, went in exile to different Latin-American countries, mainly to Mexico and Argentina. This was a different emigration from that which went to America before and comprised mainly peasants and workers. The exile experience of these republicans forced them, from a situation of direct personal involvement, to think about the relationship between Spain and Iberoamerica, and to a widening of their identifications and national loyalties. From the beginning they could feel that they were not simply exiled or "*desterrados*" but "*trasterrados*" (moved from one country to another). This is a notion put forward by the philosopher Jose Gaos; to express that although not in their country of origin, the one to which they now arrived was not alien or foreign to them. Because of the intellectual prestige of many of these exiles it is difficult to

overestimate the importance this "pilgrim Spain" has had in increasing the awareness and interest of the Spaniards for America (Abellan and Monclus, 1989).

In Spain itself, intellectuals and politicians of Franco's regime did not forget the theme of Hispanoamerica. On the contrary they used it as a central element of the Spanish national identity designed by the authoritarian ideology. With a fascist and nostalgically imperialist rhetoric in a first period, and later emphasising the traditional and Catholic values of "eternal Spain", "Mother country" and "Hispanicity" (*Hispanidad*) were spoken about as a space of cultural and spiritual integration constituted by a set of values which was opposed equally to socio-liberal materialism of the west and to Marxist ideology.

This idealistic and authoritarian discourse was well tuned with the conservative and Populist Latin-American sectors, providing the regime with an international support that it so badly needed. However during this period the Institute of Hispanic Culture was created, designed and conceived as a state organisation for promoting and facilitating educational and cultural exchanges. Working groups of specialists in Latin-American themes were formed and some periodicals and publications started (Rubio Cordon, 1989). With the transition to democracy this Institute was renamed as the Institute for Iberoamerican Cooperation.

So the two ideological Spains had, at least, one thing in common: their links to Latin-America.

With the commemoration of the V Centenary of 1492, America was very present in Spanish public opinion. Many encounters, meetings and all sorts of events have taken place over several years. This commemoration has been criticised on many grounds. Starting with the words "discover", "commemoration", "celebration", indigenous writers and leaders have pointed out that it may be inappropriate to celebrate a date which implies the violent conquest and destruction of their culture and ancestors. The eurocentrism implied by the term discovery has also been pointed out, and other terms like "encounter of cultures", "civilisations shock", "concealment" have been proposed.

The commemoration of events of this nature, which imply a retrospective look, can be considered as part of a process of maintaining and/or changing collective identities, particularly national identities. The past may be invoked to reinforce communication and understanding or even for a collective mea culpa and expiation. All of that may have happened to different degrees during the commemoration of the V Centenary by Spanish society.

One of the possible meanings of this commemoration may lie in the concept of the Iberoamerican Community of Nations. This is the meaning given by the Mexican philosopher Leopoldo Zea:

"The point of departure of a Motherland of motherlands which would embrace all our peoples on both sides of the Atlantic dreamed of by the great leaders of the Hispanoamerican independence" (Zea, 1989, 204).

Defined in this manner the concept of this Iberoamerican Community expresses the wish of a project, more or less utopian, of convergence and integration of the Iberoamerican countries in some form of supranational organisation. Psychologically it would imply an emerging sentiment of cultural and/or political belongingness wider than that of the national states integrated in it.

In recent years the concept has had more visibility and organisational concreteness for public opinion as a result of the institutionalisation of the conference of Heads of State and Government of those countries. In this context, in which intellectuals and politicians speak of the reality of a project and the project of a reality, it may be asked to what extent it is possible to use survey data to examine the existence of orientations, attitudes, opinions, beliefs and sentiments which may be interpreted as evidence of the presence of this project in public opinion and ultimately in Spanish identity.

Concerning the stated interest of the Spanish population towards different areas of the world, it is Europe for which they show the highest interest and, with much difference in the second place, Iberoamerica. We have also seen that in terms of favourable or unfavourable sentiments the samples show a similar pattern, although in this case the differences are smaller (see Table 7.1). It is difficult to know the meaning of responses to questions of this type, referring to abstract attitudinal objects such as areas of the world or countries. But it does not seem an overstatement to think that higher scores reflect a certain positive predisposition towards these countries. It is possible that this trend does not imply an underlying attitude but an orientation created by the perceived desirability of the response in the interview situation, or other normative expectations. But even in this case the problem of having to account for why certain areas or countries—some of which have a clear historical meaning for the Spanish—give rise to more or less favourable sentiments still remains.

On the other hand if the stated preferences for specific winners in sport competitions or matches may be interpreted as a form of identification, the higher identification with Europe seems clear in the data. This result is obvious, particularly if we take into account the fact that the question assumed that Spain was part of the European selection. However, what is worth emphasising is that even under these conditions more than 20% of the sample seems to prefer the Latin-American selection as winner. Besides, if the question is not presented in terms of a dilemma implying an option between two continental selections but in terms of specific countries the preferences are clearly in favour of the Latin-American ones (Table 7.2).

These survey data seem to point to a generalised sentiment of affinity or identification with Iberoamerica (or at least with a very significant country such as Argentina). Here it will suffice to remind ourselves of what happened with Spanish public opinion, and in Iberoamerica in general, during the war in the Falklands, in spite of the negative image in which the military Argentinian government had previously been perceived.

TABLE 7.4 Percentage of sample agreeing with the idea "Nowadays there is much talk about the possibility of organizing an Iberoamerican Community of Nations, which would integrate the Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries"

Agree very much	18.2	16.0
Agree much	22.1	23.0
Agree	26.5	29.0
Do not agree at all	10.3	10.2
D.K./N.A.	22.9	21.8
	N1 = 1200	N2 = 1200

Another body of evidence which is consistent with what I am trying to point out is the survey data about Spanish attitudes to the so-called economic immigration. In the last decade Spain has changed from being a country of emigration to one of immigration. There does exist justified concern about increasing signs of xenophobia and ethnic discrimination, sometimes with open expressions of violence. Three surveys about the attitude of the Spaniards towards immigrants show a consistent *positive discrimination* towards Latin-Americans (CIRES, 1991, 1992, 1993) in comparison with the attitudes towards other ethnic or national groups. This is specially true among the most educated strata of the population. These differential attitudes would be hard to understand but for the fact that it can be assumed that a sentiment of belongingness or of inclusion in the same linguistic or historical and cultural community exists, transcending the dividing political and geographical lines.

Responses to the direct question about the agreement with the idea of the Iberoamerican Community of nations appears in Table 7.4. Put in such a way, it seems difficult to disagree with. The same categories in which responses are codified are not symmetrical; having three steps of agreement and one of disagreement. Even if the respondents do not understand the question being posed to them it is consequently easy to be in agreement. The high percentages of N.R. makes one suspect such a bias. These considerations seem less relevant if they are extended to the third sample (N3) in which the university level of education and the social position of respondents suggest a good understanding of the question. In this case an analogy between the British Commonwealth and the Iberoamerican Community was established and they were questioned about the "desirability" and the "possibility" of such a community in the Spanish-speaking peoples. Scores could range between 0 (not at all) and 10 (yes, wholly). The mean "desirability" for all the sample was 7.1 which fairly coincides with general samples, and the mean for "possibility" was 4.3 which indicates that expectations about the implementation or realisation of such a community are not very optimistic.

If the attempt is made to oppose the perception of Spain's membership to Europe or Latin-America, as it happens with the first two items in Table 7.5 we

TABLE 7.5 Percentage of agreement and disagreement with the notion that Spain should align itself with Latin-America

	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
The Iberoamerican Community of Nations is no doubt a great idea but Spain is Europe and its roles are essentially in Europe	55.6	25.4	66.8	18.6	52.2	31.3
Spain is geographically in Europe, but because of its language, history and traditions should mainly relate itself to Latin-America	49.6	39.4	53.0	37.7	40.5	37.8
Spain is the mother country of Latin-America and this role should prevail above all other considerations, even economic interests	26.7	54.1	32.2	49.7	8.1	81.0
	N1 = 1200		N2 = 1200		N3 = 744	

can see again a general trend of a preferred orientation towards Europe. However, the statement that "Spain in spite of being in Europe, must relate itself mainly to Iberoamerica", also has considerable support. The intended problematic character of these two items in Table 7.5 seems to have been perceived, given the high overlapping in both responses. The contradiction implied in these two options does not seem to be experienced by the population; although in the third sample it holds to some extent (about 15% of the sample). Finding themselves in the dilemma of having to decide between Europe and Iberoamerica they again will go for Europe (in fact they have already done so).

Nevertheless, it is also evident that the idea of a strong link with Iberoamerica has been, and it seems that it will be, a central reference for Spanish international orientations, although they do not have the perception that this aspect of their identity is contradictory with the other one.

Finally it seems that those links should lose their idealistic overtones implied in the concept of "Mother country" (Table 7.5) and establish the links in a more pragmatic way.

### Concluding Remarks

From survey data about international opinions and attitudes of Spaniards it is possible to observe differential response patterns that we believe do not only express a transient collective mood but a more stable structure of evaluations, preferences, opinions and so on, which are related to significant aspects of their collective memory and of their future aspirations, that is their collective identity as a nation which, although in a different way, is involved in two ongoing

processes of supranationality, Europe and Iberoamerican Community of Nations. The European aspirations do not seem to exclude negative recollections about its relationships with other European nations as the rankings on the liking of different peoples seem to indicate. The lower liking of the British and North American could be interpreted as an expression of an "historical resentment" towards the Anglo Saxon world.

The acceptance of the idea of the Iberoamerican Community of Nations may be said to have a collective psychological foundation in: (a) a sentiment of affinity and belonging to a cultural and historical community, shown in the differential responses towards countries and peoples as well as a positive discrimination towards Latin-American immigrants and (b) an historical resentment to which I have just referred.

The sociohistorical and psychosociological perspectives of these international orientations help us to understand the idea of an Iberoamerican Community as a project of supranationality, however Utopian it may be, in which the Spanish identity feels involved.

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