

Spain

# *Ethnicity in Spain*

## *Group selection*

Spain has witnessed a peaceful transition to democracy following the death of Dictator Francisco Franco in 1975. The new Constitution of 1978 started the process of democratic consolidation. Rapid economic modernization gave the country a dynamic and fast growing economy and turned it into a global champion of freedom and human rights (cf. <sup>4808</sup>).

<sup>4808</sup> [CIA World Factbook, 2015]

Following Fearon's (<sup>4809</sup>) list, the population of Spain consists of the following groups: **Spanish** 68 percent, **Catalan** 16.9 percent, **Galician** 6 percent, **Basques** 5.4 percent and **Roma** 1.9 percent.

<sup>4809</sup> [Fearon & Laitin, 2003]

## *Power relations*

### *Franco Regime, 1946–1976*

Moreno and Arriba (<sup>4810</sup>) describe the “sacred unity of the homeland” as *raison d'être* for the Franco regime. Any form of federalism, separatism or ethnic identity in the form of language or cultural differentiation was suppressed (<sup>4811</sup>). Although Linz and coauthors (<sup>4812</sup>) report that many of the ministers of the Franco regime were in fact of minority-origin—and Franco himself was born in Galicia, the fact that the dictatorial regime suppressed any form of strive for greater regional autonomy should be taken as a sign for the exclusion of the political interests of the respective ethnic groups from executive government. Hence, the ethnic representatives can be seen as mere token representatives. Moreover, any form of political organization that supported any form of nationalism different from Spanish nationalism was forbidden. Therefore, the Spanish are coded as being dominant while the Catalans, Galicians and Basques are coded as being discriminated. All three groups can be considered as being politically relevant due to (1) their special role of having had autonomy rights in the second republic and fostering polarization in the wake of the civil war, as well as (2) the existence of regionalist opposition movements in the late years of Franco's dictatorship (<sup>4813</sup>).

<sup>4810</sup> [Moreno & Arriba, 1998]

<sup>4811</sup> [Moreno, 1997]

<sup>4812</sup> [Linz, Jerez & Corzo, 2003]

<sup>4813</sup> [Moreno & Arriba, 1998]

During the time, the Roma were persecuted and harassed by the fascist regime (<sup>4814</sup>) - therefore, they are coded as being discriminated.

<sup>4814</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2014]

*Transition to democracy, 1977–1979*

A new constitution was drafted under the broad inclusion of all ethnic groups, leading to the compromise of “(1) the idea of an indivisible and solely Spanish nation-state and (2) a concept of Spain as an ensemble of diverse peoples, historic nations, and regions”<sup>4815</sup>. The so-called historical nationalities, Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia, gained regional autonomy in the process. There was a distinct involvement of regional political elites in the drafting of the constitution<sup>4816</sup>, and particularly the Catalans had representation among the seven political leaders (the so-called ‘Fathers of the Constitution’) who participated in the writing of the Constitution. However, all minority groups were still excluded from the executive power. Given that the former Francoist restrictions and bans to political organization were abolished in late 1976 (Law 1/1977 for the Political Reform), Catalans, Basques, and Galicians are considered powerless from 1977 on. Indeed, ethno-nationalist political organizations flourished during this period, although they never got enough electoral support to be included in government.

<sup>4815</sup> [Moreno, 1997]<sup>4816</sup> [Linz, Jerez & Corzo, 2003]

After the death of Franco, the persecution of Roma stopped and policies were crafted to further their inclusion into society. However, they were not included into the national executive. Therefore the Roma are coded as being powerless throughout the whole period. No signs have been found neither for their discrimination nor for their inclusion into executive power at the national level (see also<sup>4817</sup>).

<sup>4817</sup> [US State Department, 1999-2013]

In 1978, Spain ratified its new Constitution, creating the possibility for a system of differentiated regional autonomy for its major ethnic/linguistic groups, and of equal rights for Roma. In 1979 the first elections of the new democratic regime were held.

The political relevant ethnic groups have had representation in the national parliament in every legislature, but have never been formally part of the government. Although politicians from Galicia, the Basque Country, and Catalonia have been ministers (and Prime Ministers) in different national governments<sup>4818</sup>, they were not part of nationalist political organizations and therefore did not represent the interest of these minority groups. Even the left-wing Socialist governments, which have included members of its Catalan branch Partido de los Socialistas de Cataluna (PSC), supported a form of federalism that extends to all regions in Spain and therefore did not support the interest of any region in particular. Following the same reasoning, the support of Basque and Catalan parties of the investiture of national governments did not mean direct access to executive power, but a set of policy concessions or exchange support at the regional level. Given all of this, the powerless status is extended to the whole period.

<sup>4818</sup> [Linz, Jerez & Corzo, 2003]*Democracy, 1980–2021*

Catalonia and the Basque Country had their Statues of Autonomy approved in 1979, so autonomy is coded from 1980 on. Galicia ap-

proved its Statute in 1981, so regional autonomy is coded from 1982 on for Galicians. Despite the existence of regional autonomy, the situation regarding access to central executive power remains the same throughout the whole period.

In Catalonia tensions recently increased: In November 2014 a symbolic vote for independence was held. 80% of the 2.3 million people that voted (of a total of 5.4 million eligible voters) were in favor of a Catalanian independent state. Three years later the regional Catalanian government calls for a referendum on independence from Spain, taking place on October 1st 2017. The Spanish government opposes this referendum and claims it is violating the constitution (<sup>4819</sup>).

<sup>4819</sup> [The Guardian, 2017]

In June 2018, a motion of no-confidence against the right-wing government was approved, resulting in a new socialist government. Elections were held twice during the following year, in May and November 2019. Finally, a new coalition government—the first one in Spain since the 1930s—was sworn in in early 2020, with the Socialist Party (PSOE) as the senior partner and the far-left Unidas Podemos as junior partner.

Both the 2018 government and the new coalition have a more open stance towards minority ethnic groups in Spain, particularly in the case of Podemos. Some members of the cabinet are close to non-Spanish nationalist positions, such as the Labour Minister Yolanda Díaz, member of the Galician section of the Communist Party. Moreover, a key factor behind the support for the new coalition government was “the abstention of the pro-independence Catalan Republican Left party (ERC), which agreed to sit out the investiture vote after Sánchez vowed to find a solution to the ‘political conflict’ that has dogged Spain since Catalonia’s separatist regional government tried to secede in 2017” (<sup>4820</sup>).

<sup>4820</sup> [The Guardian, 2020]

However, there are no reasons to change the coding of Basques, Catalans, and Galicians: The promises of the new government have not led to a meaningful resolution of the Catalan conflict yet, and the relationship between the government (particularly its senior partner, the PSOE) and the Catalan ERC is tense. The position of the executive towards the Catalan question is a source of tension between the two coalition partners as well. Moreover, the late 2017 referendum led to a secessionist attempt by the Catalan government that was fiercely repressed by the Spanish government and all of the Catalan leaders that were jailed in response to it are still in prison. Indeed, the national issue has strongly intensified since then, and it is one of the reasons behind the rise of a far-right party, Vox, that supports an exclusionary form of Spanish nationalism.

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## Political status of ethnic groups in Spain

*From 1946 until 1976*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Spanish	0.68	MONOPOLY
Catalans	0.169	DISCRIMINATED
Galicians	0.06	DISCRIMINATED
Basques	0.054	DISCRIMINATED
Roma	0.019	DISCRIMINATED

*From 1977 until 1979*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Spanish	0.68	DOMINANT
Catalans	0.169	POWERLESS
Galicians	0.06	POWERLESS
Basques	0.054	POWERLESS
Roma	0.019	POWERLESS

*From 1980 until 1981*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Spanish	0.68	DOMINANT
Catalans	0.169	POWERLESS
Galicians	0.06	POWERLESS
Basques	0.054	POWERLESS
Roma	0.019	POWERLESS

*From 1982 until 2021*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Spanish	0.68	DOMINANT
Catalans	0.169	POWERLESS
Galicians	0.06	POWERLESS
Basques	0.054	POWERLESS
Roma	0.019	POWERLESS



Figure 948: Political status of ethnic groups in Spain during 1946-1976.



Figure 949: Political status of ethnic groups in Spain during 1977-1979.



Figure 950: Political status of ethnic groups in Spain during 1980-1981.



Figure 951: Political status of ethnic groups in Spain during 1982-2021.

## Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Spain

From 1946 until 2021



Figure 952: Map of ethnic groups in Spain during 1946-2021.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
Spanish	428 861	Regional & urban
Catalans	47 430	Regional & urban
Galicians	35 170	Regional & urban
Basques	11 605	Regional & urban
Roma	0	Dispersed

Table 350: List of ethnic groups in Spain during 1946-2021.



## *Conflicts in Spain*

*Starting on 1968-06-06*

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Spain	ETA	Basques	1968-06-06	Explicit	Yes	No