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8. The Iberian dictatorships and agricultural modernisation after the Second World War

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I. Introduction

Where the relationship between the state and agriculture is concerned, the three decades that followed World War II in Europe proved to be especially significant. Two dominant historical processes can be identified: the consolidation of the democratic model of the welfare state and the rapid modernisation of the agrarian sector. As Portugal and Spain were ruled between the 1930s and the mid-1970s by fascis dictatorships — the New State in Portugal (1933-1974) and Francoism in Spain (1939 1975) — they clearly did not conform to the constitutional arrangements of libera democracy. But to what extent did Portugal and Spain under fascism embrace the rapid modernisation of the agrarian sector? This is the issue addressed in this chapter

While there was no question of regime change in 1945, the defeat of the fascis regimes of Italy and Germany forced the governments of Portugal and Spain to adap to the new international political and economic realities. To this end they undertook internal reshuffles, changing the governing elites and the direction of certain policies New strategies were devised towards the external world that sought to keep up with trends in diplomatic relations and the move towards greater economic integration Recognition by other countries and international organisations was a key factor in ensuring regime survival in Iberia.

Despite state repression and the limitations imposed by peripheral spatial location closer external relationships promoted receptiveness (at least among the Iberian technical and economic elites) to the sorts of innovations that were driving European agricultural modernisation. In line with increased state intervention in the economy and society, which had been obvious since World War I, technical and economic specialists supported modernising measures to assist the Iberian countries overcom their economic and social backwardness.

How well were the policy measures drawn up for agriculture able to deliver on the sort of modernisation being championed by the specialists? The specialist view o agricultural modernisation, in line with the wider consensus of the 1950s, favoured increasing the productivity of land and labour. Such intensification would depend on the use of fossil fuels, a greater application of external inputs (capital /machinery, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, etc.), the reduction in rural manual labour and the enlargement of urban consumer markets.

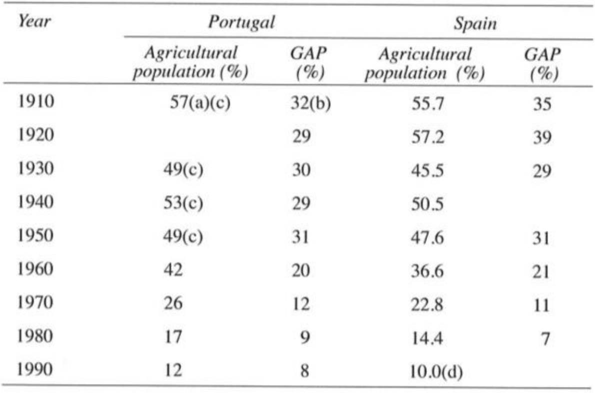
If the post-war model of agricultural modernisation demanded strong state intervention and was associated with profound social, economic and institutional change, how did the Iberian regimes embrace and implement it? What adjustments were made in public bodies to provide a new administrative framework for stimulating agriculture? How were the political measures designed and applied?

These questions will be discussed in a number of sections, the first of which will consider the general economic trends relating to state intervention in agriculture. We will then review the organisation and functioning of public and corporate services relevant to agriculture. From here we will proceed to analyse the measures taken to promote land restructuring, irrigation and technical assistance, measures viewed by external and internal agronomists and economists as indispensable to agricultural modernisation. Although the productive success of this model of agricultural modernisation is widely acknowledged (Federico, 2005), an adequate explanation of the factors underlying its mixed fortunes in Iberia has yet to be provided.

II. Agriculture, economy and policy: a general portrait

A current debate in Iberian historiography — to date more advanced in Spain (Baptista, 2004) — concerns the backwardness of agriculture and the evaluation of agriculture's contribution to economic convergence with the Iberian countries European neighbours. As shown in Table 8.1, general trends in rural population size and the contribution of Gross Agricultural Product (GAP) to GDP were broadly similar in both countries. During the twentieth century, the high percentages of the economically active population engaged in Iberian agriculture and the GAP s significance were constantly invoked as evidence of vast economic and social problems. Of course, delayed change did not mean that no progress was being made. Recently a consensus has developed that Portuguese and Spanish agriculture, despite their competitive disadvantages (both ecological and institutional), narrowed the gaP between them and central Europe (Clar & Pinilla, 2009; Lains, 2009). Yet general patterns cannot disguise important chronological and regional variations in processes of agricultural change and economic growth.

Table 8.1. Active agricultural population as a proportion of the total active population and Gross Agricultural Product (GAP) as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)



Year	*Portugal*		*Spain*	
	Agricultural population (%)	*GAP (%)*	*Agricultural population (%)*	*GAP (%)*
1910	57(a)(c)	32(b)	55.7	35
1920		29	57.2	39
1930	49(c)	30	45.5	29
1940	53(c)	29	50.5	
1950	49(c)	31	47.6	31
1960	42	20	36.6	21
1970	26	12	22.8	11
1980	17	9	14.4	7
1990	12	8	10.0(d)	

Notes. (a) 1911; (b) 1915; (c) includes fisheries; (d) 1991.

Sources. TORTELLA (1994: 227, 242); SOARES (2005: 162)

During the first half of the twentieth century, with the exception of the two world wars, the performance of Portuguese agriculture was comparable with other sectors of the national economy (Soares, 2005: 159). The average annual rate of growth of agricultural output, which Lains has estimated at 0.35 per cent between 1902-1927 and 2.36 per cent between 1937-1951 (Lains, 2003), exceeded the equivalent French rates in the same periods. Similarly agricultural output grew in Spain in the decades leading up to the civil war. The 55 per cent growth recorded between 1900 and 1931, with a cumulative annual increase of 1.37 per cent, was greater than that of France (0.58 per cent per annum over the same period). Land productivity also increased (by 53 per cent between 1900-1931), as did labour productivity (by 76 per cent) (Jimenez Blanco, 1986; GEHR, 1983). There were of course short periods, as during the civil war and the 1940s, when productivity either stagnated or regressed, but the overall tendency since the end of the nineteenth century was clearly one of growth (Simpson, 1995; 1997).

For the four agricultural regions of Spain (North, Mediterranean, Andalusia and Interior) that Simpson (1995) identifies it was the first two, and particularly the Mediterranean region, that saw the most vigorous economic growth. In response to the late nineteenth century crisis, the Mediterranean region created an irrigation infrastructure and intensified production of goods with a high commercial value (such as vegetables and dried and fresh fruits). In the Northern region there was increased specialisation on cattle farming (both meat and dairy), associated with the intensification of crop rotation. However, in the two other Spanish regions, which accounted for 72 per cent of the agricultural land area, land and labour productivity remained stubbornly below the national average. Although the regional growth patterns are less well documented for Portugal, there are indications that similar trends towards specialisation occurred in some regions (Serrao, 2009). As in Spain, however, much of the territory showed low levels of labour and land productivity.

Ever since the nineteenth century, technical specialists had argued that natural and institutional characteristics were among the greatest obstacles to the modernisation of Iberian agriculture. Guided by the assumptions of agronomy, and inspired by the example of the industrially advanced countries (especially the USA), agronomists desired that both private initiatives and public policies create the conditions for the maximum exploitation of available resources. To that end they argued that it was necessary to change the agrarian structure, extend the area devoted to irrigated crops, introduce laboratory-improved plant and animal species, intensify the use of fertilizers and pesticides and replace labour with technology. Some of these proposals were implemented in both countries before the 1950s, but what greatly fostered rural change from then on was the increasing domestic and international demand for labour, raw materials and food.

The data in Table 8.1 are suggestive of the rapid and profound changes that affected the Iberian countries in the last decades of dictatorship. But did agriculture modernise in the same way in the two countries? An analysis of agricultural output can provide one answer to this question. Between 1954 and 1966 Portuguese agricultural production increased at an average rate of 1.2 per cent per annum compared to an average 3.8 per cent increase in Spain (OECD, 1969: 13). And despite changes in agricultural practices, differences in overall agricultural growth persisted in the two countries (Clar & Pinilla, 2009; Lains, 2009).

The composition of agricultural production reveals further differences. The livestock sub-sector was the most successful, growing in response to the changing dietary habits that accompanied rapid urbanisation. Both countries registered a significant relative decline in cereals used in the making of bread. While Spain experienced a growth in the production of animal fodder (Clar, 2005), Portugal's livestock industry was based on the importation of large quantities of animal feed (Soares, 2005). Overall, traditional crops (like cereals for bread and vines) shrank proportionately more in Spain than in Portugal. In both countries we find a diversification of production and the adoption of crops dependent on irrigation (for example, citrus fruits, horticulture, sugar beet and maize), though the trend was more pronounced in Spain[1]. Contemporary experts subjected the different indicators published nationally and internationally to close analysis[2]. For contemporary Portuguese agronomists and economists the emerging trends were further proof that the New State, unlike the European democracies and even the Franco regime, was not adopting the most appropriate policies to modernise agriculture.

The Spanish data indicate that pre-civil war levels of production and productivity were reached again during the 1950s in response to changing government policies. The changes began when the agronomist Rafael Cavestany held the agriculture portfolio between 1951 and 1957. The modernisation model Cavestany favoured is well summarised in his declaration: 'Fewer farmers, more agriculture'. Once it came to be implemented, Cavestany's programme brought about a rapid increase in both agricultural output and exports. **In** the decades that followed, the model adapted itself without major difficulties to the many challenges of modernisation. The economic and social development plans *(planes de desarrollo economic° y social)* of the 1960s — the first running from 1964-1967 and the second from 1967-1971 — reinforced the basic patterns established since the 1950s, thus consolidating the agricultural sector's capacity to respond to the expanding demands of both domestic and external markets.

Many Portuguese researchers believe that the New State made no real effort to help agriculture benefit from post-war modernisation possibilities, despite Portuguese technicians going abroad to be educated. Early in the 1950s development plans *(pianos de fomento)* were outlined that contemplated agricultural modernisation (settlement, irrigation, product specialisation, mechanisation, etc.), but these plans, even when enacted in legislation, were rarely implemented (Baptista, 1993; Rosas, 1994). Rather than extending intensive production, extensive agriculture was allowed to continue. There was a change in the system of guaranteed prices for certain products in the early 1960s, though these reform measures too had little impact. It was therefore not surprising that the dictatorship's final development plan in 1974 insisted on the `urgent need to provide agriculture with conditions of recovery that can no longer be delayed' (Presidencia do Conselho, 1974: 333).

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[1] The quantification of global agricultural output (percentages, calculated at current prices) indicates that Spanish vegetable production amounted to 80.5% of global output between 1950 and 1955, 73.0% between 1961 and 1965 and 65.6% between 1971 and 1975. The equivalent livestock percentages for the same dates were 19.4%, 26.9% and 34.4% (OAR & PINILLA, 2009: 317). Turning to Portugal, vegetable output as a proportion of global agricultural output amounted to 525% between 1950 and 1954, 50.7% between 1960 and 1964 and 51.8% between 1970 and 1973; for the same dates livestock production was recorded at 31.5%, 32.9% and 31.3% of global agricultural output (Lains, 2009: 343).

[2] Besides the annual Economic Surveys, the OECD commissioned more specific studies, such as the Mediterranean Regional Project on education in the 1960s (OECD, 1966) and a slightly later study that focused on agriculture (OECD, 1969).

Clar (2009) suggests that compared to Portugal the process of agricultural modernisation in Spain began ten years earlier (in the 1950s) due to the strong pressure exerted on the Franco regime by international economic bodies. The Spanish Government, politically sensitive to international opinion and free from domestic agrarian opposition, committed itself to promoting policies that accelerated the modernisation of agriculture. In contrast, the New State was anxious to maintain the support of a conservative agrarian lobby. Yet Clar's interpretation is not entirely satisfactory in explaining the different agricultural paths taken by the two countries. For one thing Portugal was also subject to international pressure and[3], while rural support was important to the regime, this did not mean that the State did not take unpopular decisions (as in its support for industrialisation). What still remains to be explained as well is how the Franco regime reconciled the new agrarian policy with economic interests, and with the power of the large landowners to exert political pressure.

Given that the modernisation of agriculture aims to meet the demands of consumers, we must also assess the power of market forces. Here the differences are striking. Not only did Portugal have a weak domestic market historically (Lains, 2003), but also it retained its colonial empire until 1974. While Spanish agricultural exporters had to respond to free market conditions, the Portuguese were tied to the protected markets of the colonies. Economic relations with the colonies made for the production of surplus goods and for a poor ability to compete on the open market (as with wine, for example). They also made expansion difficult in some of the modern products becoming increasingly popular in Spain. Certain crops (sugar beet, maize, cotton, etc.) competed with colonial agricultural output in Portugal, while others (barley, hops and oil seed plants) competed with traditional wine and olive oil production. In both countries, protectionism concentrated on certain products (wheat, wine, olive oil). The factors of production may have increased, but were they used efficiently? Agronomists would say 'no' due to the poor implementation of reforms. As industrialisation and urbanisation intensified, Portuguese agriculture failed to respond adequately to rising market demand, thus forcing the increased imports of basic foodstuff (Soares, 2005).

While attempts at agricultural modernisation may have been influenced by the international context, domestic political and economic considerations were also of great importance. An analysis of how agricultural policies were devised and implemented in our two cases promises therefore to clarify the key factors accounting for the different prospects modernisation proposals faced in Spain and Portugal.

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[3] Portugal was a founder member of NATO in 1949 and EFTA in 1959; it also joined the FAO in 1946, the OEEC in 1948, the OECD in 1960 and the UN in 1955. For its part Spain joined the FAO in 1951, the UN in 1955 and the OECD in 1960.

III. Agriculture's institutional framework

How did theexisting institutional arrangements impactors agricultural modernisation? Independent ministries for agriculture pre-dated the Iberian dictatorships. Once formed, the autocratic regimes inspired by the fascist *Corporazioni* model of the 1930s began to create new organisations along both production and spatial lines, a process that continued into the post-war period.

The Portuguese Ministry of Agriculture established in 1918 survived, with some minor changes, until the 1940s. In 1940, however, agriculture was added to commerce and industry within the Ministry of the Economy. This change, which the government claimed was necessary in view of war economy demands, remained in force until the end of the dictatorship. Those who supported a speedy modernisation of agriculture believed that the persistence of this arrangement became an obstacle to change (Caldas, 1978). A basic difficulty was that industrial and commercial interests seemed more capable of influencing the state's decisions within the Economy `super-ministry' .

Yet despite these criticisms and the presentation of alternatives, frequently based on international examples, the New State refrained from introducing significant changes. Up to 1958 agriculture was represented by an under-secretary of state and thereafter by a secretary of state. There were, reflecting the changes of the 1930s, three administrative departments (directorates general): Agriculture, Livestock and Forestry. There was also a Committee for Internal Colonisation *(Junta de Colonizactio Interna)* created in 1936 with its own directorate general and which acquired financial and juridical independence in 1946. Each of these central departments had its own separate regional and sub-regional offices.

Spain was an example that the Portuguese agronomists could easily evoke. Francoism would retain its inherited Ministry of Agriculture (created in 1931) with only some minor denominational alterations. The ministry's internal structure, with its *direcciones generales de agricultura, ganaderfa y montes* (general directorates of agriculture, livestock and forestry), and provincial directorates *(direcciones provinciales)*, did not differ greatly from Portugal's Secretariat of State forAgriculture. During the lifetime of the regime some important organisational changes were made, as for exemple when Rafael Cavestany established the General Directorate for Coordination, Credit and Training *(Direccion General de Coordinacion, Credito y*

Capacitacion), a body that in certain ways was the predecessor of the Agricultural Extension Service *(Servicio de Extension Agraria)* of 1955. Prior to this technical assistance had been provided by the *Servicio Nacional de Concentracion Parcelaria* (1952). Cavestany's innovations were aimed at facilitating the implementation of the new policy guidelines for agriculture in the 1950s.

Alongside state administrative structures, the creation of hierarchical corporatist systems during the 1930s occurred concomitantly in Iberia with the repression and destruction of agricultural trade unions and other associations. The Spanish corporatist organisation, which appeared in 1942, implemented a plan conceived in the civil war that called for the complete destruction of existing unions and nonreligious agricultural and co-operative societies. *Falange* pressure even prompted the partial destruction of bodies operating within the orbit of the Catholic Church[4]. Francoism's brutal repression had one clear goal: the political demobilisation of the rural population. The approach in Portugal, where political mobilisation appears to have been significantly weaker, was not as extreme, though there too the idea was to weaken local initiatives, destroy social networks and prevent the persistence of solidarities not favoured by the state.

In theory, the New State's view was that corporatist organisations should emerge from civil society (Lucena, 1976). In reality, however, they emerged only when and where the state determined. The new corporatist organisations, as was equally true of cultural, sporting, educational, welfare, technical and economic associations, remained subject to strict political and administrative control. In Spain, on the other hand, where syndicalist structures were imposed from above, there was never any question of corporatist organisations emerging from civil society. This would have conflicted with the principles of totality, unity and hierarchy that were intrinsic to the *Falange's* national-syndicalist organisational policy.

Both the Francoist Agrarian Trade Union Organisation (OSA — *Organizacion Sindical Agraria)* and the Portuguese New State's Agriculture Corporation (OCL — *Organizacdo Corporativa da Lavoura)* were ideologically conceived as vertical syndicalist structures that sought cross-class integration (with strongly paternalist connotations in Portugal) within the rural communities. Viewed as a re-creation of the (supposed) 'natural order' of rural society, the new corporatist order amounted to the doctrinaire defence of elite interests in either case. The actual creation of the new corporatist structures generated multiple tensions between private agents and several state bodies and other entities. Nor did they enjoy the state's full support, something that gave rise to delays and contradictions.

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[4] *Falange,* the only political party recognised by the Francoist regime, succeeded in converting itself into a powerful bureaucratic machine that mobilised support for the regime and controlled important institutions. Relatively speaking, the *Falange's* political and administrative presence was greater than that of the National Union (UN — *Unitio Nacional),* the single party recognised by the Portuguese political authorities. The National Union exercised no control over corporatist organisations and had but weak and inconsistent political functions.

The activities of the New State's OCL were closely linked to those of the economic co-ordination bodies (OCE: *Organismos de Coordenaceio Econdmica),* organisations that had no equivalents in Spain. In fact, the Portuguese corporatist system was controlled *via* these OCEs, membership of which was obligatory. As public organisations responsible to the secretary of state for commerce (within the economics ministry), the OCEs were appointed to oversee the main productive sub-sectors. Guided by common basic principles, their main duties were to intervene in domestic markets where they exercised a powerful influence over pricing policies. Their activities in the external market were designed to protect the privileged access to colonial markets. From the 1950s on, OCE activity concentrated heavily on encouraging the creation of new cooperatives that remained under state supervision.

In Portugal, as in Spain, the agricultural corporatist structures functioned on three territorial administrative levels: the local, the provincial-regional and the national. In Spain the local level revolved around the Brotherhood Union of Farmers and Ranchers *(Hermandades Sindicales de Labradores y Ganaderos).* As with the Portuguese Agricultural Societies *(Gremios da Lavoura),* the Spanish Brotherhoods were responsible for the distribution of factors of production and collaborated with other organisations in the fixing of prices in local markets. Mostly the *gremios* were nothing more than extensions of the heavily bureaucratised Portuguese state. The Spanish Brotherhoods also assumed responsibility for the management of social security and benefits that formed part of the system of rural social welfare. In Portugal the limited functions of social welfare assumed by the state did not become a responsibility of the *gremios,* but of the *Casas do Povo* (People's Halls), corporatist bodies responsible for providing medical and social assistance at the local level.

The regional level of agriculture's syndicalist organisation was more diffuse in nature. We find in Spain the Agrarian Trade Union Official Chambers *(Ccimaras Oficiales Sindicales Agrarias)* functioning as intermediaries between the state and the farmers in implementing agricultural policies (for example, in relation to agricultural credit or new crops). The official desire to convert these bodies into real commercial enterprises, specialising in the distribution and promotion of inputs, generated strong opposition from agricultural specialists as well as from Catholic co-operativism. Something similar took place in the New State with the few (but highly dynamic) Federations of Agricultural Societies *(Federag 'des de Gremios da Lavoura),* which from the 1950s were led by agrarian technicians, agricultural businessmen and some local authorities. Despite the obstacles that the state erected, the federations brought about a swift integration of economic activities and demonstrated entrepreneurial flair in several sectors (Lucena, 1980; Larcher Graca, 1999).

The organisations that came to occupy the peak of the corporatist structure made a late appearance in our two cases. The Portuguese Agriculture Corporation *(Corporagao da Lavoura)* was created only in 1956; the Spanish National Brotherhood *(Hermandad Nacional)* followed in 1962. In the event, the syndicalist structures were left incomplete. Portugal lacked both the first (local) and the intermediate (district/regional) levels, whereas in Spain, even though all municipalities possessed corporatist organisations, in some towns and in every province these were frequently inoperative, inefficient and excessively bureaucratic (Lanero, 2010).

If in the 1940s there was a predominance of *Falangists* and Catholics in the institutional framework of Spanish agriculture, from the early 1950s the conception and application of modernising agricultural policies were almost exclusively controlled by agricultural and forestry engineers and by some large agricultural companies (Gomez Benito, 1996). While Portuguese specialists also sought to influence the direction of government policy, they were less successful than their Spanish counterparts. In part this was due to the political weight of the Corporate Chamber *(Camara Corporativa)*, the dictatorship's consultative body, in which interests linked to traditional metropolitan agriculture, commerce and the colonies dominated (Rosas, 1994). This body ratified the most important decisions and often opposed the most innovative measures. And even when technocratic proposals were enacted, the public and corporate bodies frequently lacked the capacity to implement the legislation (Baptista, 1993).

IV. Agrarian restructuring and the expansion of irrigation

For decades Portuguese and Spanish experts argued that inequality in Iberian land ownership between the north and the south was a fundamental cause of social and economic problems. This problem persisted, despite ameliorative attempts since the end of the nineteenth century by the state and individuals. An OECD report of 1969, in arguing for land reform, stated that 'farm structures are far from adequate *in* southern Europe' (OECD 1969: 18)[5].

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[5] In Portugal the average size of arable farms was 5.1 hectares; in Spain it was 7.1 hectares. Another, problem resulted from the number of fields, with the average farm having six fields in Portugal and' fourteen in Spain (OECD, 1969: 18).

Resistance to agrarian reform had been important to the rise of the authoritarian regimes during the 1930s. After World War II agronomists highlighted the prospective technical and economic benefits of land reform that would result in economically viable farms. Solutions based on the creation of economically efficient family farms were promoted, as well as the provision of education in the various types of 'group agriculture' . Proposals for agrarian reform that called for the large southern estates to be divided and the northern smallholdings to be restructured into economically viable peasant farms were seen as inseparable from the need for increased irrigation. How effective in our two cases did these proposals prove to be in practice?

The legislative framework of Spanish settlement policy during the 1950s, based on a model in use in the western United States, was set out in the law on the settlement and distribution of property in irrigated areas *(ley sobre colonizacion y distribucion de la propiedad de las zonas regables)* of 1949. Quite distinct from the rather limited Italian Fascist-inspired settlement *bonifica integrale* projects of the 1940s that had relied on private ventures, state action was central to the Spanish initiative. It fell to the National Settlement Institute (INC — *Instituto Nacional de Colonizacidn)* to encourage technical transformation in agricultural practice in places with potential and where the law had decreed irrigation. Typically the state expropriated for itself the 'excess' marginal land that landowners chose not to include within their irrigation zones (Barciela & Lopez Ortiz, 2000).

The Franco regime did not seek to undermine the large estate owners with these initiatives; indeed, the landowners benefited in two significant ways. Firstly, the INC subsidised the cost of irrigating arid land and paid the landowners for the expropriation of their poorest land. And secondly, the regime's settlement legislation scrupulously respected private property rights; expropriations were subject to numerous limitations and provided 'exemplary' compensation. From 1950 onwards the policy strove to make the interests of the large estate owners compatible with the more efficient cultivation of the best land. Between 1951 and 1960 c. 200,000 hectares were thus settled and irrigated. Western Andalusia, where the greatest concentration of large estates was found, became the region with the largest irrigated land surface in Spain.

I/[1] Simultaneously, the Franco regime invested in other elements of settlement policy. Legislation passed in 1946 allowed for additional funded activities and increased the resources placed at the farmers' disposal. State assistance thus became available for numerous improvements to the rural infrastructure, such as the collection and distribution of the water required to turn small barren fields into well-watered land (Barciela, 1990). More than one million hectares of previously marginal land were improved between 1941 and 1971.

If Spanish settlement policies were closely bound up with irrigation, the same was not true of Portugal. While Rafael Duque was minister of agriculture in the New State he created the Committee for Internal Colonisation in 1936[6], which was authorised to sub-divide and parcel land; it was further empowered to provide finance for capital and labour while implementing local improvements and offering technical assistance to farmers. Law No. 1949 of 1937 sought to develop irrigation projects and committed the state to expropriating poorly utilised land that would benefit from irrigation. A total of 50,000 hectares of land, including alluvial plains and drained marshlands, was irrigated between the 1940s and 1960s. During this same period, only about ten tenant farms were established over an area of 22,500 hectares (Baptista, 1993). These farms were located in barren areas, as in the largely infertile mountain areas where small estates predominated. The state tended to expropriate communal and public land, taking great care not to upset the owners of the large estates who employed every means to stop the agricultural reform initiative from impinging on their property. In fact, most of the expropriations envisaged in the legislation never occurred.

Faced with the inadequacy of earlier measures, the experts proposed a new set of solutions in the 1950s. The ambitious Alentejo Irrigation Plan *(Plano de Rega do Alentejo)*, which covered an area of 170,000 hectares, was published in 1957. The plan's implementation was to be slow (indeed, it is still being implemented today); it was not integrated with the settlement project and its impact was very localised. The Portuguese experts, faced with the crisis of traditional agriculture in the early 1960s, prepared new legislation that called for changes to the structure of land ownership and for ending water wastage in the south. The project was submitted to the Corporate Chamber but, when published in 1962, it had been expunged of the agrarian reform and irrigation proposals central to the agricultural modernisation model. In fact, the irrigation public works were little more than a way of occupying the excess agricultural labour that the clandestine opposition (linked to the Communist Party) was successfully mobilising against the dictatorship (Freire, 2007).

Just as the division of large estates was intended to create economically efficient farms, so too was the consolidation of the smaller farms. The chief goal was to correct what was regarded to be the distortion caused by the multitude of smallholdings. The plans sought to ensure that each landowner had enough relatively similar land to permit intensive cultivation of the fewest possible fields.

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[6] Duque, as the New State's last minister of agriculture (1936-1940) and its first minister of the economy (1940-1944), supported modernising policies and (particularly during the 1930s) made some attempts to implement them.

The measures to consolidate smallholdings into larger units had no more success in Portugal that those aimed at the division of large estates. Only two consolidated areas were created in the northwest of the country during the 1960s, affecting less than 400 hectares (Baptista, 1993: 47). The situation was very different in Spain where the first experimental law for consolidating smallholdings was introduced in 1952, a year that also saw the creation of the National Service for Farm Consolidation (SNCP — *Servicio Nacional de Concentracion Parcelaria).* More proposals were published during the years that followed, particularly the definitive farm property consolidation law of 1955 (revised in 1962). However, in Spain too the results were very modest, prompting the government to reinvigorate consolidation programmes during the 1960s through the introduction of 'rural organisation' plans. As well as proposing farm consolidation and land redistribution, these plans offered guidance as to which crops were suitable for each zone, the planning and exploitation of natural resources, the development of collective agriculture and the promotion of agri-industries, etc. While in many cases the results were not as positive as was hoped, a total of four million hectares were consolidated between 1953 and 1975.

The objectives set by agronomists were often left unrealised (Scott, 1998; Federico, 2005). In both Spain and Portugal the greatest tensions were experienced with interventions in the South, though plans for irrigation and land restructuring were more successful in Andalusia than in the Alentejo where efforts to improve specialised production in irrigated areas failed. Here the different political and financial capacities of the two states proved telling. The large Portuguese estates reacted unfavourably to the new opportunities and deliberately under-utilised the new infrastructures, despite the state granting them several enticements, including an exemption from the irrigation tax introduced as a means of amortising the government's expenditure. All the Portuguese agronomists could do was to praise the Spanish irrigation projects and lament the fact that the Portuguese experience had not followed suit.

V. Technical assistance

In the years under review the Iberian countries were not at the vanguard of applied agricultural research. Yet despite living under repressive regimes and experiencing many material limitations, the agronomists were able to follow the scientific and technological developments emanating from foreign research centres in the more `advanced countries', particularly the United States, the Netherlands and France. Diffusion of imported innovations still required prior research to determine how suited they were to local conditions; and this required the creation of scientific research units.

The separation of education and research was among the changes that both the New State and the Franco regime made to the organisation of the research centres. Contemporary witnesses noted nonetheless that the research units were subject to severe budgetary limitations and that there was a lack of co-ordination between them (Fernandez Prieto, 2007; Bernardez Sobreira, 1999). Apparently, the way in which scientific research was organised did little to encourage the dissemination of results or the provision of technical assistance to the farmers. The view of the research units as little more than ivory towers is especially true of Spain, where the institutions charged with promoting research and applying the innovations to regional agriculture had been both diverse and dynamic in the pre-Franco period (Fernandez Prieto, 1992; 2007; Bernardez & Cabo, 1996; Lanero, 2010).

From early in the 1950s American specialists arriving in Portugal and Spain under the auspices of the Marshall Plan[7], began to influence research and technical assistance. The specialists best positioned to design agricultural extension programmes were trained in the United States and, in some cases, at the International Agricultural Centre in Wageningen, which from early in the 1950s was collaborating actively with North American agronomists in Western Europe. The sort of agricultural modernisation associated with such cooperation fared better in Spain than in Portugal.

The establishment of the Agrarian Extension Service (SEA — *Servicio de Extension Agraria)* in 1955 brought several North American agricultural extension specialists to Spain[8]. The SEA's main goal was to promote the modernisation of agriculture through the development of cooperatives, animal nutrition and the use of fertilisers, for instance. Its work centred on areas dominated by the large estates with settlement projects already underway and on the smallholding areas in which consolidation projects were anticipated. Predictably the creation of an autonomous SEA, with its own budget and goals, led to a dispute over its competence with the regime organisations, particularly those controlled by the *Falange.* Countering the *Falange's* influence was no easy task for the SEA. Nonetheless the SEA had 44 agencies by 1957 and 135 by 1961. Throughout the 1960s it continued to expand and by 1971 had 755 county agencies, reporting to 50 provincial agencies under the control of 11 regional centres.

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[7] Although Spain was outside the Marshall Plan, it did sign co-operation agreements with the USA (September 1953). Under the terms of the 'Food for Peace' programme (Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act, 1954. Public Law 480), the United States' economic mission provided technical assistance.

[8] The Minister for Agriculture, Rafael Cavestany, favoured the US model of agricultural extension, having observed it at first hand prior to the SEA's creation.

Another phase began in 1962 when the SEA, at a time when farm mechanisation was proceeding rapidly, began to take on a rural development remit that was much broader than technology transfer. By 1971 the SEA, employing many different types of specialists (including sociologists skilled in group dynamics), had therefore assumed a more local orientation closer to the farmers (Sanchez de la Puerta; 1997).

The stress laid on development via stimulating collective activity did not appeal to the dictatorship. It was therefore not an accident that, during the regime's final years, agricultural extension agents and other specialists were important to the emergence of clandestine political and union organisations intent on overcoming social inequality and other rural problems. In this way SEA activity had the effect of contributing to the outbreak of social, environmental and economic conflicts between 1960 and 1975 (Lanero, 2008; Cabana, Lanero, 2009).

Under the auspices of the United States Technical Assistance and Productivity Programme (promoted by the Economic Cooperation Administration of the European Recovery Plan), American specialists arrived in Portugal in the late 1940s and early 1950s (Rollo, 2007). With the support of Vit6ria Pires, an agronomist and undersecretary of state for agriculture (1950-1958), they encouraged the education of Portuguese experts and the establishment of several experimental and extension research centres[9]. However, some projects lacked continuity, and their impact on agricultural modernisation has yet to be sufficiently assessed.

Even though the training of agronomists was relatively up to date, it turned out that the technical assistance to farmers provided by public services was ineffective. Such assistance required co-ordination between regional public services and local corporate bodies that were unevenly spread across the country and often overwhelmed by the daily bureaucratic requirements of distributing state aid. Another problem was that candidates for direct assistance or training were selected more for political reasons, a practice that favoured the largest landowners or their clienteles. It appears as well that the normative advice of agronomists did not meet the immediate needs of the farmers (Freire, 2007).

To remedy some of the many evident failures, a group of renowned agronomists (some with close ties to the regime and occupying public positions of responsibility) proposed in 1957 that the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation create a centre for the study of agrarian economics (CEEA — *Centro de Estudos de Economia Agrciria).* For almost 30 years, this privately funded centre promoted research and debates that —

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[9] Only in 1977, after the 1974 revolution had overthrown the New State, was a law introduced to expressly create a public service for agricultural extension.

among other things — sought to provide official services and economic agents with the knowledge needed to make agricultural modernisation projects viable (Freire 2007). During its early years, often in collaboration with corporatist and official bodies, researchers and technicians also strove to develop extension programmes in specific areas, even if the implementation of these almost always proved to be problematical. In fact, the nature of the CEEA kept it even more isolated from institutional and political power structures than was the case with the SEA in Spain.

VI. Conclusions

The post-war decades were crucial to the advance of an agricultural modernisation model based on maximising income from land and labour. Our study has shown how it became possible to promote a measure of modernisation in Iberian agriculture —more successful in Spain than in Portugal — without profoundly altering the state's institutional structure. The fate of Iberian modernisation policies depended on two essential factors: the flexibility and independence of the institutional framework and the willingness and capacity to implement modernising measures.

Very conspicuously the Portuguese central state deprived agriculture of the necessary institutional independence during what proved to be the crucial years for modernisation. The large-scale agricultural interests, linked to traditional cultivation, had sufficient power to control state agricultural policy. The dictatorship could never dispense with the political support of the traditional elites and so found itself unable to foster the structural changes that agricultural modernisation required.

In Franco's Spain, the ministry of agriculture resisted the *Falange's* attempt to contest its control of agricultural policy in the 1940s so effectively that even the *Falangist* syndicates came under ministerial control. For their part, the large-scale agricultural interests remained linked to the political power centres through the channels that corporatism provided.

Franco's government considered it necessary to create a body — the SEA, closely linked with North American experts — that promoted new agricultural methods at local level and that was independent of the ministry of agriculture. While the SEA made some notable progress, the same cannot be said of Portugal's CEEA. This body, despite being a prestigious research organisation, never managed to influence either state policy or the production practices of farmers.

These institutional realities had a big bearing on the ability of specialists to design and apply modernisation methods and on the opportunities available to agronomis^{ts}

in our two cases. In Spain, in line with the general technocratic redirection of economic policy during the 1950s, the regime trusted the experts to conceive and pursue programmes of agricultural modernisation. Far from opposing them the large estate owners viewed many of the measures — particularly land settlement — as a state-subsidised opportunity to capitalise and develop their estates. Fortuitously, the specialists saw the medium and large estates as ideally suited to the development of an economically efficient agricultural sector. And the rural exodus beginning in the 1950s helped defuse the potential for social conflict on the land, making the industrialisation of agriculture even easier.

In contrast, the Portuguese agricultural specialists did not have the political and institutional independence that their Spanish peers enjoyed. While there were plans (sometimes enacted in legislation) for modernisation, the more ambitious proposals were opposed by the influential traditional agrarian elites. This was so despite their knowledge that modernisation would deliver more economic efficiency in a context of increasing mechanisation and intensified rural exodus in the 1960s. Changes in Portuguese agriculture were therefore stimulated more by the growth of other sectors and by international developments than by specific state measures.

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